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CHUTZPA: NO FAUX PAS IN THE FINAL ERA

This is especially relevant now, as we are presently in the Era of the Heels of Moshiach. In fact, today – at the end and finale of this era – chutzpa is even more obtrusive. However, it is self-understood and obvious that this Talmudic statement is actually referring to something positive, something overtly good.

Translated by Boruch Merkur

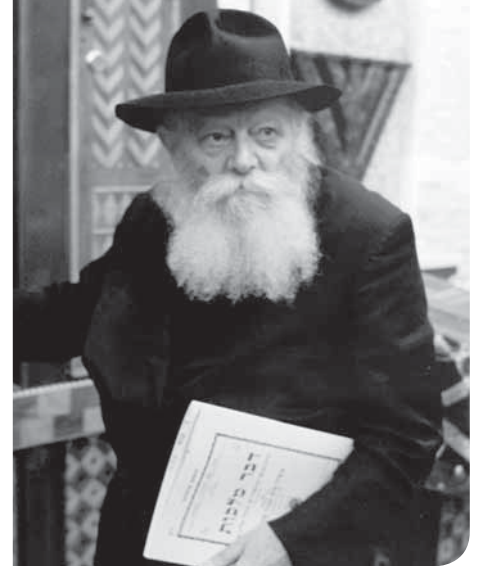
One of the details enumerated at the end of Meseches Sota is that “In the Era of the Heels of Moshiach [i.e., the period immediately preceding the redemption, when the footsteps of Moshiach are heard approaching] there will be an abundance of audacity, chutzpa.” This description is especially relevant now, as we are presently in the Heels of Moshiach. In fact, today – at the end and finale of this era – chutzpa is even more obtrusive. However, it is self-understood and obvious that this Talmudic statement is actually referring to something positive, something overtly good.

As said on various occasions, it has already been ruled in the Torah, according to all opinions, that “All the predicted dates [for the advent of Moshiach] have passed, and the matter is dependent solely upon repentance.” [Although this may sound like a tall order, the Torah assures us that repentance is not out of reach, nor is it necessarily a drawn-out process. Rather] repentance is achieved “in a single day, in a single hour, or

in a single moment.” Therefore, [to prevent any further delay] a Jew must show that he sincerely wants Moshiach. He must yearn for the redemption and demand it with audacity, for chutzpa directed towards Heaven is efficacious.

At first glance it may appear that chutzpa directed toward Heaven must be vehemently shunned. However, the Torah clearly rules that this approach is necessary, and in fact, it is a tremendous merit (as brought in the Midrash, *HaRokeiach*, and several works of Chida, indicating that this concept is accepted at face value by both Sephardim and Ashkenazim). Thus, a Jew must pray, etc., for the fulfillment of “May the scion of Dovid, Your servant, swiftly sprout forth,” speedily in our days, literally.

Indeed, this constitutes the Torah’s commandment (which itself provides the capacity to fulfill it) that if the redemption is delayed even the blink of an eye, or even a fraction of that time, it is incumbent upon the person to demand the redemption,



harnessing his strength to petition the L-rd, and G-d will surely fulfill his request that it should be literally in our time, speedily in our days.

And not only “in our **days**”; every single **moment** is pertinent, as it says, “Every single moment he performed his task.” The true “task” of every moment of the Heels of Moshiach is to draw down into our reality the true and complete redemption, which stands ready On High, and which will soon manifest itself in this world, an eternal revelation beheld by the physical eye.

The process of redemption will then unfold to the extent that “The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of G-d.” Rambam explains that the intent here is that it should fill “the entire world,” meaning all seventy nations of the world, whose occupation will be “solely to know G-d” and that He is the G-d of the Jewish people, “the king of the Jewish people and their redeemer,” with the true and complete redemption by Moshiach Tzidkeinu.

*(From the address of
Erev Chag HaShavuot 5746,
biliti muga)*

LOYAL SOLDIER



*Rabbi Dovid Raskin a”h was a soldier of the Rebbe. When an order came from the Rebbe, he did not ask whether it could be carried out, but how to carry it out. Because of his utter devotion to the Rebbe, whenever a new horaa or takana from the Rebbe was announced at a farbrengen, he was the first to get it implemented. * When the Rebbe appointed him as a member of the board of Agudas Chassidei Chabad, he wrote next to his name, “quick to take action.” No wonder then that R’ Raskin was a member of every one of the Rebbe’s mosdos.*

By Avrohom Rainitz

Rabbi Dovid Raskin *a"h* passed away at the age of 84 after years of illness. He served in many positions: as member of the hanhala of Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim – 770; Director of the Lubavitch Youth Organization; member of the Vaad HaMesader, member of the hanhala of Agudas Chassidei Chabad; member of the board of Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch; member of the board of Machaneh Israel; He also served as the Baal Korei (Torah Reader) in the Rebbe's minyan on weekdays for many years.

R' Raskin was a soldier of the Rebbe. When an order came from the Rebbe, he did not ask **whether** it could be carried out, but **how** to carry it out. Because of his utter devotion to the Rebbe, whenever a new horaa or takana from the Rebbe was announced at a farbrengen, he was the first to get it implemented.

Right after the Rebbe's farbrengen, R' Dovid would arrange a Chassidishe farbrengen in 770 in order to come up with ways and means to carry out the Rebbe's wishes immediately.

Although he suffered greatly in his personal life, you did not hear him express his pain. He always arrived at 770 with a smile, as though he had no personal problems.

The Rebbe was greatly mekarev R' Dovid. When R' Dovid's cousin, shlucha Mrs. Rochel Pinson of Tunisia, had yechidus with the Rebbe, the conversation turned to R' Dovid whom she

referred to as Dovid Raskin. The Rebbe asked, "Who?" and she said, "Dovid Raskin." The Rebbe asked, "Who?" once again, and again she said "Dovid Raskin." When the Rebbe asked, "Who?" once more, she finally said, "Reb Dovid Raskin." But the Rebbe corrected her and said, "I call him HaRav Reb Dovid Raskin."

At the special farbrengen the Rebbe held on Shabbos Parshas Shmini 5712, which the Chassidim referred to as "Shabbos HaGadol," the Rebbe spoke about R' Dovid's devotion to matters of Chassidus and said, "Dovid lives without calculation," i.e. he sacrificed his entire life for the Rebbe. On another occasion the Rebbe said about him, "Dovid is mine."

Rumor has it that when certain individuals wrote to the Rebbe out of "concern" for R' Raskin, and asked that he be relieved of the running of Tzach since he was so busy with the yeshiva, the Rebbe dismissed this and R' Raskin remained in all of his positions, which he fulfilled with mesirus nefesh and hiskashrus to the Rebbe.

Rabbi Shmuel Butman, director of Tzach in New York, who worked with R' Dovid for many years, noted the fact that in addition to R' Dovid's being the chairman of LYO and a member of the hanhala of Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim, he was a member of every one of the Rebbe's mosdos: Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch, Machne Israel, Aguch, and Vaad HaMesader.

Rabbi Dovid Raskin was born in 5787/1927 in Bobruisk, White Russia. His parents were Rabbi Yaakov Yosef and Droiza Raskin. He was born during a period when Chassidim were under terrible persecution by the communist government, and his entire childhood was one of suffering, wandering and fear.

He was about two years old when his father was arrested for the first time, in Elul 5789, for his holy work and sentenced to a term in prison. Shortly after he was released, the family moved to Leningrad where his father continued his activities on behalf of Jewish life, with mesirus nefesh.

His father and uncle, the brothers Yaakov Yosef and Yitzchok Raskin, were two of the outstanding members of the Chabad community in Leningrad and leading activists on behalf of Judaism there. R' Yaakov Yosef was not willing to allow his children to attend public school, so he hired R' Sholom Morosov to teach his sons and other Lubavitcher children, in his home.

The persecution followed them to Leningrad, with R' Yaakov Yosef taken for interrogation on many occasions. He would sometimes be taken to KGB headquarters where he would be questioned for hours about his Lubavitcher

acquaintances, but he kept his mouth closed and did not say a word about his friends.

ESCAPING FROM LENINGRAD

R' Dovid celebrated his bar mitzva in the shadow of World War II. The Nazis laid siege to Leningrad and bombed the bridges that crossed the rivers that surrounded the city. None of the bridges were usable except for one and whoever was able to, used it to escape the city. On Tuesday, 3 Elul 5701/1941 a neighbor went to the Raskins and excitedly announced, "At work I got tickets for the train but since my son is fighting on the front in



The Raskin brothers, from the right: R' Leibel a"h (shliach to Morocco), R' Dovid a"h, R' Sholom Ber, R' Mendel a"h



Three Raskin brothers: from the right – R' Mendel, R' Dovid, R' Sholom Ber

“The Raskins boarded the last train, and as soon as they crossed the bridge the Germans bombed it, cutting Leningrad off from the world.

Leningrad, I don't want to leave him. Take these tickets and go!”

People waited for days to obtain tickets and here, the tickets had miraculously come

to them. The Raskins boarded the last train, and as soon as they crossed the bridge the Germans bombed it, cutting Leningrad off from the world.

After fifteen days of wearying travel, the train arrived in Omsk, Siberia, a few days before Rosh HaShana. Omsk was overflowing with refugees and the local government could not provide shelter for them all. So, for over two weeks, the Raskin family lived outdoors.

From Omsk they traveled by train to Novosibirsk, and from there they decided to travel to Alma Ata, the capital of Kazakhstan. They had heard that numerous refugees had gone to Tashkent and Samarkand and that it was difficult to live there, so they thought that it would be easier to manage in Alma Ata where there were fewer refugees.

After exhausting days of travel, the train stopped on Chol HaMoed Sukkos 5702 in Alma Ata. When they got off the train, they were surprised to see that the exit was locked. They were told that the local government did not want masses of refugees. To that end, they posted policemen at the train station located eight kilometers from the city, and did not allow the refugees out. The Raskins had to remain at the train station and sleep on the cold, wet ground.

It took them weeks but they finally found a way to enter the city and made their way to the Tastag area on the edge of the city. Near the house of a gentile, they found a structure used as a barn where they lived for a short time. Then they moved to the city, where they met some Lubavitchers, the Wilschanskys, Rabinowitzs, and others.

Only a short time after they arrived in the city, the Raskin parents were arrested and the children remained in the house alone. His mother was released two weeks later while his father was detained for a month and a half.

WITH RABBI LEVI YITZCHOK

The Raskins knew that Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Schneersohn zt”l was in exile in Chili in Kazakhstan. R’ Yaakov Yosef did all he could to have him released and brought to Alma Ata. R’ Levi Yitzchok arrived at the end of Nissan 1944, sick and weak. R’ Yaakov Yosef and his children were a great help to him and his wife, Rebbetzin Chana. They found an apartment for them and made sure doctors tended to him. The Raskins, including R’ Dovid, regularly visited the rav and rebbetzin to help them.

In the final weeks of his life, the Raskin children took turns putting t’fillin on R’ Levi Yitzchok and being there with him to be of assistance.

Parenthetically, R’ Dovid arrived in New York in the winter of 5710, and on 16 Av, days before the yahrtzait of Rabbi Levi Yitzchok, the Rebbe asked him to write down what he remembered of R’ Levi Yitzchok, especially if he remembered Divrei Torah that he said. The Rebbe asked him not to bring up those sorrowful days in conversation when he would visit Rebbetzin Chana, so as not to cause her pain.

R’ Dovid wrote down what he remembered, including Divrei Torah. After the Rebbe received it, he thanked and blessed him, and at the Chaf Av farbrengen he spoke about it.

TWO PRIVATE AUDIENCES WITH THE REBBE RAYATZ

At the end of the war, R’ Dovid and his family were able to leave the Soviet Union via Lvov and they arrived in the Peking DP camp, where he learned in yeshiva. His parents and some relatives went to Eretz Yisroel,

while R’ Dovid went to Paris and then to New York.

He arrived in New York on Thursday, 2 Teves, Zos Chanuka, 5710. The day he arrived he had yechidus with the Rebbe Rayatz. The gabbai, R’ Simpson went in with him. R’ Dovid was so overcome by emotion that he

could not remember anything the Rebbe said to him. He told the Rebbe’s son-in-law, Ramash (later to be the Rebbe) his plight, and the latter called R’ Simpson who said that the Rebbe Rayatz had inquired about his family, asked where his father was, and gave him a bracha.





Mivtza T'fillin

Rayatz said in yechidus, Ramash expressed his view saying that they should continue to do as they did in Paris. Then Ramash said that minutes of the yechidus should be written up, and if the opportunity arose he would bring it to the Rebbe Rayatz for him to review. R' Dovid Raskin prepared the hanacha and gave it to Ramash, but just a few days later, on Yud Shevat, the Rebbe Rayatz passed away without having looked over the hanacha.

BAAL KOREI FOR THE REBBE'S MINYAN

During the first year after the passing of the Rebbe Rayatz, when the Rebbe refused to accept the Chabad leadership, the Chassidim tried every means possible to get the Rebbe to farbreng. On 2 Nissan 1950, R' Dovid Raskin and his friend R' Gedalia Korf went to the Rebbe and asked him to farbreng with the T'mimim for Beis Nissan. At first the Rebbe said they should ask the mashpiim, R' Shmuel Levitin and R' Yisroel Jacobson, to farbreng with them, but they said the mashpiim had already farbrenged the day before and they wanted the Rebbe to farbreng.

The Rebbe took out a small calendar from his desk drawer, looked at it and said, in one more month, on 2 Iyar, there will be a farbrengen, *bli neder*. And indeed, the Rebbe farbrenged on 2 Iyar with the bachurim and Chassidim. This was the first farbrengen he held on a weekday after the histalkus.

R' Dovid was one of the bachurim selected to learn every day in the Rebbe Rayatz's room and he witnessed the Rebbe's conduct. He told his fellow T'mimim that the Rebbe often entered the room to stand near



At the yearly International Convention of Tzach, he is sitting second from the right

about their learning. The bachurim said they learned as they did in Paris. The secretary explained that in Paris they learned Chassidus for an hour and a half in the morning before davening, and then meditated on Chassidus followed by davening at length. The Rebbe said, "Learning is necessary, davening is a must, but learning is also necessary. From time to time each of you will enter alone and then we will talk."

The matter of learning Chassidus before davening engendered debate between the bachurim who had just come from France and the hanhala of the yeshiva. Prior to their arrival, only one hour of Chassidus was learned before davening in 770, while the bachurim from Europe wanted to learn as they did in Paris, for an hour and a half. The maggidei shiur in Nigleh said this interfered with their shiurim, so they made a fuss about it and were unwilling to make any changes.

In light of what the Rebbe

Perhaps because of his confusion and emotional state, just one month later he asked for another yechidus. It was when four T'mimim had come from Europe and wanted yechidus. R' Dovid asked for permission to join them and was told he could do so. This yechidus took place on 4 Shevat 5710 and included R' Dovid, R' Yitzchok Shlomo Pevsner, R' Sholom Morosov, R' Dovber Junik, and R' Gedalia Korf.

The Rebbe asked them how they were and then inquired

the desk of the Rebbe Rayatz (upon which were lit candles) and read *panim*. Sometimes, after reading them, he placed them under the writing pad, which was on the desk and left them there. A few hours later he would come back and take them.

During this period of time, the Rebbe refused to accept Chassidim for yechidus, but a few had yechidus anyway. One of them was R' Dovid who went to the Rebbe and said that in accordance with what the Rebbe Rayatz had said in their last yechidus on 4 Shevat, "from time to time each of you will enter alone and then we will talk," he was asking the Rebbe to accept him for yechidus. The Rebbe agreed and answered his questions.

R' Dovid accepted the appointment of Baal Korei for the Rebbe's minyan on Mondays and Thursdays. It came about as follows. One day there was no Baal Korei, and the Rebbe asked R' Dovid to read the Torah, saying: You know how to read. From then on, R' Dovid was the regular Baal Korei in the Rebbe's minyan on weekdays.

Since the Rebbe had not yet accepted the nesius, when R' Dovid called the Rebbe up for an aliya he loudly said, "Yaamod" and then, almost in a whisper he said, "Adoneinu Moreinu V'Rabbeinu," and concluded loudly, "Ben HaRav R' Levi Yitzchok." This is how he did it all summer until Simchas Torah 5711 when one of the senior Chassidim read the "M'Reshus" for Chassan B'Reishis and when he got to the words, "V'Ata Kum" he cried, and loudly announced, "Yaamod Adoneinu Moreinu v'Rabbeinu HaRav ..." and he said the Rebbe's name.



R' Dovid Raskin next to the Rebbe during Krias HaTorah on Chol HaMoed



R' Dovid Raskin next to the Rebbe during Krias HaTorah on a weekday

“He made efforts to fulfill any request of a bachur, and was unable to refuse anyone. He was a sensitive person to whom the bachurim were his entire world, and he was always able to say the right thing at the right time.

“He spoke for hours just about this, how the pleasures of this world are foolishness... He would laugh at bachurim who could not drink plain water and had to slake their thirst with “jumping water” as he referred to carbonated soda.

MEMBER OF THE YESHIVA'S HANHALA

When he had yechidus before his wedding (he married Chava Elka (nee Feder) who passed away 24 years ago), the Rebbe told him that during the chuppa he should think of the Rebbe [Rayatz]. When he asked about what the invitation should say, the Rebbe said, “*b’lashon HaRav*,” (lit. in the words of the teacher). Apparently, R’ Dovid Raskin’s invitation was the first one written using the wording of the Rebbe’s invitation to his wedding in 5689.

In 5714, R’ Dovid joined the yeshiva’s staff as a maggid shiur at the branch of the yeshiva on Bedford. A few years later, he joined the yeshiva’s administration. In his position in the hanhala, he cared greatly for the personal needs of the bachurim while simultaneously insisting that they follow the yeshiva’s s’darim. He made efforts to fulfill any request of a bachur, and was unable to refuse anyone. He was a sensitive person to whom the bachurim were his entire world, and he was always able to say the right thing at the right time.

His easy-going manner was also apparent in his interactions with the other members of the hanhala. Although his position required that he point out when someone wasn’t doing his job properly, he was particular never to utter a word to any staff

member in the presence of other staff members, and certainly not during administrative meetings. When there were things he wanted to point out or criticize, he made sure to approach the particular staff member personally and discuss it discreetly. Even when he wanted to express his opinion or criticism, he never imposed it on anyone; he merely presented it as a suggestion and did so in an exceedingly pleasant fashion.

He was very friendly with the Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Mordechai Mentlick. They thought alike. At every meeting, when R’ Dovid would say something, R’ Mentlick would immediately agree and try to ensure that his view be accepted; and vice versa. In general, R’ Dovid tried his utmost not to allow any arguments in the yeshiva between the members of the hanhala or among the bachurim.

Over the years he was appointed to key posts in Chabad but despite his many involvements, what he cared about the most was that the bachurim stick to the yeshiva s’darim. Every two or three days he would ask the mashgiach, R’ Kuti Rapp, for the list of attendance and then he would call bachurim over and “give it to them.”

Yet, he was forgiving and would say that a bachur cannot be expelled from Tomchei T’mimim since that would only

push him away forever.

Following the murder of R’ Dovid Okunov, Hy”d (1979) in Crown Heights, Meir Kahane, Hy”d of Kach came to the community, and there was a gathering to encourage Jews to carry weapons. The Rebbe asked R’ Dovid to bring him a list of all those who attended. Since R’ Dovid assumed that bachurim would want to attend the gathering and he did not want them to get into trouble, he asked his nephew to run over and warn the bachurim there that R’ Dovid was going to get a list of all those who were present.

Although R’ Mentlick headed the yeshiva, the Rebbe considered R’ Dovid the yeshiva’s representative in all matters. When the Rebbe had complaints about something having to do with the yeshiva, R’ Dovid was the person he turned to, mainly because he was a soldier who could absorb any dressing down (and you only “dish it out” to those who can take it) and he knew how to take care of matters right away.

For example, the night of Tisha B’Av 5731, following the Rebbe’s heartrending cries about “Who Is a Jew” at all the farbrengens that summer, the bachurim spontaneously began singing, “Tziyon B’Mishpat Tipadeh” after maariv. The Rebbe pointed out in a sicha that it wasn’t proper, according to Shulchan Aruch, to sing on Tisha B’Av and the Rebbe looked towards R’ Dovid Raskin and said, “Especially when we have the menahel of the yeshiva here!”

Following the Rebbe’s urging of Hakhel gatherings, R’ Dovid came up with the idea of having Hakhel gatherings occasionally for the hanhala of the yeshiva together with the talmidim

in order to foster achdus and dialogue between them. These gatherings continued even after the Hakhel year was over and he called it, “Kinus Hakhel” since the Rebbe had said that the chayus of Hakhel continues until the next Hakhel.

R’ Dovid’s farbrengens always focused on one point: to get the talmidim to despise matters of this world. He spoke for hours just about this, how the pleasures of this world are foolishness. He would also make fun of material pleasures, for example, he would laugh at bachurim who could not drink plain water and had to slake their thirst with “jumping water” as he referred to carbonated soda.

Pesach night, R’ Dovid and the other members of the hanhala accompanied the Rebbe when he visited the yeshiva dining room, and when the bachurim’s seder was over, he would farbreng with them until morning. On Shvii shel Pesach night, R’ Dovid farbrenged with the bachurim from the middle of the night until dawn. Rabbi Chadakov regularly attended this farbrengen, standing in his usual spot under the clock in the small zal, and listening to the entire thing.

DIRECTOR OF TZACH (LYO) IN NEW YORK

The Rebbe founded Tzeirei Agudas Chabad in New York in Nissan 5715/1955, and R’ Dovid was appointed as the chairman. In this position he did a great deal to spread the wellsprings of Chassidus in general and the Rebbe’s teachings in particular.

When the Rebbe issued new instructions to the Chassidim at farbrengens, R’ Dovid would call shluchim all over the world to update them. With his Chassidishe chayus,



With R’ Zushe the Partisan at the Kosel, 5744

he would urge them to make a “commotion” about the Rebbe’s latest orders. He would do the same for Anash in Eretz Yisroel by calling R’ Efraim Wolf and asking him to spread the word.

As director of Tzach, he received hundreds of answers and instructions from the Rebbe about spreading the wellsprings of Chassidus. He received one of these answers a year after the founding of Tzach. R’ Dovid had asked the Rebbe what to talk about at the Tzach meeting and the Rebbe answered (Erev Shabbos kodesh Parshas Shlach 5716):

1 – You should review the original plans for each department, and with each one, make an accounting as to what was actually done. 2 – Timely matter; how to utilize the days of 12-13 Tammuz A – hafatzas ha’maayanos in connection with this, B – contact with guests who come and through them, with other places, 3 – preparations for activities on campus.

SHLICHUS TO ERETZ YISROEL

In the summer of 5733/1973, R’ Dovid went to Eretz Yisroel for family matters. When he told the Rebbe he had to go, the Rebbe decided to utilize his trip to strengthen Jewish chinuch in Eretz Yisroel and told him:

Speak about the activities around the world and how to conquer the youth of the world etc. starting with Eretz Yisroel, and that young people are waiting for this. It’s an incomparably auspicious time, it is a mitzva of pikuach nefesh that the time calls for, and as I emphasized all this several times. Additionally, it was recently stressed that it all starts with the youngest children, and as it says, from the mouths of babes etc.

On the Shabbos before his trip, the Rebbe gave him a bottle of mashke and told him to make a “commotion” in Eretz Yisroel. On Motzaei Shabbos, R’ Dovid asked the Rebbe in what areas he



On another visit to Eretz Yisroel, while the 770 replica was being built in Kfar Chabad. L'chaim with R' Zushe the Partisan, R' Menachem Lerer – director of the Vaad of Kfar Chabad, members of the Vaad, Rabbi Yochanan Gurary, R' Manny Wolf



Visiting a camp in Krayot

should make a commotion, and he mentioned MiHu Yehudi which the Rebbe had spoken about.

In the answer he received dated 29 Tammuz, the Rebbe clarified:

I was referring to chinuch, while [amending MiHu Yehudi] pertains to the Vaad there and the Igud here [the “Igud L'Maan Kiyum Ha'Yahadus” in the United States which works to annul the law of MiHu Yehudi] – and not Tzeirei Agudas Chabad

(as Tzach – because that will strengthen the complaint that only Lubavitch etc.).

In the diaries of R' Efraim Wolf it says that on 2 Av 5733, in the daily phone call that took place with R' Chadakov, R' Chadakov informed him of the arrival of R' Dovid Raskin for the purpose of encouraging activities with young children, and to emphasize that they could save the entire world. (A few months later, when the Yom Kippur War broke out, everybody realized why the Rebbe had been insistent about this).

R' Wolf was asked to ensure media coverage of the visit, so it would make a big impact in Eretz Yisroel and the diaspora. R' Chadakov told him to arrange for photographers, radio, television, etc. and told him to make a big splash.

R' Dovid used his visit as the Rebbe asked him to, and afterward he wrote a detailed

report to the Rebbe about his activities in Eretz Yisroel. In response the Rebbe wrote, **“It was received and many thanks, may you have good news about a positive continuation from all this.”**

Later, he was called in by R' Chadakov, who questioned him about the results of some of his visits and activities. Later on, 19 Av, R' Dovid sent a letter to R' Yisroel Leibov, the director of Tzach in Eretz Yisroel, which summarized the main points he made in his report to the Rebbe. From the letter we see what he accomplished on his trip all over the country, in the course of which he spurred on Anash and the activists among Anash to many different activities – with immigrants, new and old, youth and adults, amongst Anash and those on the outside.

In the winter of 5740, R' Dovid went back to Eretz Yisroel on the Rebbe's shlichus. The Rebbe told him to visit a number of places and to hold farbrengens.

VAAD OF MASHPIIM AND HANHALA OF AGUCH

In 5737 the Rebbe began making a big commotion about the topic of mashpiim and their role. The Rebbe spoke about the obligation for every community to have mashpiim. R' Dovid got involved and together with R' Peretz Feigenson, held meetings with mashpiim in which he spoke about their role.

In reports that he wrote to the Rebbe, he said that mashpiim urged Anash to see to it that at every simcha of Anash, the one making the simcha should ensure that someone reviewed the Rebbe's sichos on current matters. The mashpiim also promoted having set times to

learn Torah and the strengthening of the Rebbe's mitzvaim and other matters requiring improvement and renewed commitment.

On Rosh Chodesh Tammuz 5745, after the theft of s'farim from the library of the Rebbe Rayatz, the Rebbe called upon seven distinguished and senior Chassidim, including R' Dovid Raskin, and spoke to them about activities that needed to be done regarding the matter, under the auspices of Agudas Chassidei Chabad.

Due to the fact that since the appointment of Agudas Chassidei Chabad some members had died, and in light of the need for complete and official documentation

and representation before the court case, the Rebbe said they should add new members. When the Rebbe received the list of members along with a list of Chassidim who were suggested as additions, the Rebbe chose four of them including R' Dovid Raskin. Next to each of the names that he chose, the Rebbe wrote why he picked them and next to R' Dovid's name he wrote, "quick to take action."

On the Shabbos following the Shiva for his father, R' Dovid went to 770 and the Rebbe said the maamer, "L'Havin Inyan T'chiyas HaMeisim." After the maamer, he told R' Dovid to say l'chaim and said, "Your father is in Gan Eden already."

We will conclude this article

with a special answer he received from the Rebbe on 17 Shevat 5751:

And great is the merit of Tomchei T'mimim etc. as the Geula approaches, it continues to grow ever larger etc.

R' Dovid Raskin's children were Baila Devora Raskin a"h, Shterna Sara Klein a"h (who passed away shortly before he did), Rivka Raskin – Crown Heights, Chaya Mushka Pearson a"h, R' Yitzchak Raskin – Crown Heights and Devonya Rubin – Crown Heights.

He is survived by his sister Mrs. Tzivia Bravman of Kfar Chabad, Israel, and brother R' Sholom Ber Raskin of London, England.



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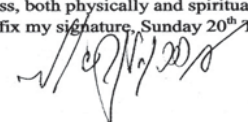

APPROBATION

Rabbi Jacob Schwei
Member of the Rabbinical
Court of Crown Heights

I strongly recommend the esteemed project of Radio Moshiah, which operates here in our neighborhood of Crown Heights, "Here has Hashem commanded His blessing," as well as in other surrounding neighborhoods. Radio Moshiah enables countless individuals to listen to the Rebbe's Farbrengens, to divrei Torah in the concepts of Geulah and Moshiah, to niggunei Chabad and more, which generates a holy, uplifted atmosphere in the homes of all listeners.

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

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OUR CHILDREN WILL BE OUR GUARANTORS

How do you strengthen the **hiskashrus** of children? Is it harder to educate children these days? * The Midrash says that at the time of the giving of the Torah, Hashem said to the Jewish people: Give me a guarantor. They offered their ancestors and prophets, but Hashem rejected that. When they finally said, “our children will be our guarantors,” Hashem accepted this. As it says in T’hilim 8:3 “Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings you have established strength [i.e. Torah]. * We spoke with a veteran mechanech, Rabbi Yosef Hartman and heard about his years of chinuch experience and his answers from the Rebbe, particularly on the topic of chinuch.

By Shneur Zalman Berger

Rabbi Hartman in
Yerushalayim with
campers from the CIS



There are mechanchim who, just by looking at them, just by hearing one sentence, you realize are the “real deal.” That is what Rabbi Yosef Hartman of Nachalat Har Chabad is like. He has been in chinuch for decades and you can still see him standing in front of a classroom. When he addresses children, he is focused completely on them. Every lecture, every lesson or activity is fully prepared, and only then does he present it.

He is a third generation educator. His father, R’ Nachman Hartman was one of the first teachers in the government-religious educational system, and later became an educational supervisor. He was awarded the title, *Yakir HaChinuch HaDati*. His grandfather, R’ Moshe Shmuel Hartman, who learned in yeshivas Toras Emes in Chevron under the Rebbe Rashab’s leadership, was an outstanding teacher in Yerushalayim.

R’ Yosef Hartman began his involvement in chinuch 55 years ago, in 5716 when he was 14 and was a *madrish* (counselor) in a Shabbos program for boys. Later on, when he learned in Yeshivas Kfar HaRoeh, he continued to work with children as part of the Mesibos Shabbos program, during the period when great battles were waged over the souls of Jewish children between the religious organizations and the youth movements of HaShomer HaTzair (virulently anti-religious) and HaNoar HaOved.

What was going on back then?

“Counselors of kibbutz youth movements would make every effort to attract the children of Yemenite immigrants to heretical activities that were done while desecrating Shabbos. The rosh



Rabbi Hartman receiving a dollar from the Rebbe

“One day I entered the classroom after recess and couldn’t believe my eyes. One of the boys had thrown a Tanya on the floor, and with his face red with anger he was stomping on it! ... I had a talk with him... He now runs a Chabad House...”

yeshiva of Kfar HaRoeh, Rabbi Moshe Tzvi Neria z”l, got us, his students, involved in saving the children.

“We went to moshavim in the Chefer Valley and would talk to kids and encourage them to continue the traditions of Torah and mitzvot that they saw in their homes.”

After young Yosef went to learn in Yeshivas Tomchei T’mimim in Lud, he threw himself into the learning of Nigleh and Chassidus and acclimated well to the Chabad atmosphere. There too, chinuch was still of interest to him. During intersession,

he would arrange activities for children wherever possible. For Pesach, he was greatly involved in Mivtza Matza, and during the summer he organized Gan Yisroel camps in Kfar Chabad, which were attended by hundreds of children from the religious sector. He would sometimes go home for Shabbos to Ramat Gan, and there too, he would gather children for Mesibos Shabbos in the Chabad shul Uziel in the Ramat Yitzchok neighborhood.

The results of his work? Many children off the streets or the children of people who davened in the shul, became

CHINUCH IN CHABAD SCHOOLS

Rabbi Yosef Hartman is unhappy about the phenomenon of Lubavitcher parents sending their children to non-Chabad schools while claiming that they will fill in with a Chassidishe chinuch at home.

“The Rebbe often demanded that we send our children to Lubavitcher schools under the leadership of the Rebbe Rayatz. The Rebbe put it this way, “[better] the manure of Yitzchok’s mules and not the silver and gold of Avimelech.” In a letter he wrote as follows, **“Based on what we heard several times from the Rebbe, my father-in-law, Nasi Yisroel, obviously the education of Lubavitcher boys and girls needs to be in Lubavitcher schools at all stages and ages. Of course, I’ve heard of some of Anash who do otherwise. Not only that, but they present it in a guise of yiras Shamayim. I feel bad for them and even more so, for their children, for what did they do wrong? May a spirit from Above inspire even these weak ones.”**”

R’ Hartman explains it from an educational perspective: Chinuch in Chabad mosdos provides an authentic Chassidishe chinuch with hiskashrus to the Rebbe. I’d like to say to the parents that chinuch in our schools can be relied upon since it rests on the “broad shoulders” of our Rebbeim and the Rebbe MH”M, Nasi Doreinu. Of course this doesn’t absolve parents of the chinuch they are supposed to provide their children at home. They should not rely solely on the routine of school but should develop a good relationship with the teachers. There must be cooperation between the parents and the school. There aren’t two competing sides here; just one side.

more involved in Jewish life and Chabad. R’ Hartman knows of many key figures in the religious establishment who were former charges of his.

It was first in 5724 that he started teaching formally in the Vocational School in Kfar Chabad under Rabbi Yeshaya Gopin *a”h*. He was sent to take a course for teachers in Bar Ilan University where he became an accredited teacher. At the end of 5730, he was sent by the Rebbe to found a vocational school in Nachalat Har Chabad in Kiryat Malachi.

To R’ Hartman, the key words in chinuch are: patience, forbearance, kindness. The following story will illustrate this:

“It was when I was starting out as a teacher at the Vocational School in Kfar Chabad. One day I entered the classroom after

recess and couldn’t believe my eyes. One of the boys had thrown a Tanya on the floor, and with his face red with anger he was stomping on it!”

I assumed the boy was expelled, but R’ Hartman shook his head:

“Lecturing him or punishing him would not be effective. I realized that something was seriously troubling him. I had a talk with him and asked him what was wrong. He was having a hard time handling the religious atmosphere of the school and at some point he cracked and expended his fury on the Tanya, which represented to him the sum total of Chassidus.

“He later established a Chassidic family and today he runs a Chabad house in the south of the country.”

R’ Hartman’s perspective on

chinuch is clear:

“A mechanech is Hashem’s shliach and the Rebbe’s shliach, to raise and educate Jewish children in the ways of Torah and Chassidus. A mechanech is involved in work that is life and death, in that he impacts the spiritual life of the ‘young sapling’ for years to come.”

R’ Hartman’s students feel his love for them and they reciprocate it:

“I was once the emcee at a Yud-Tes Kislev farbrengen in Beer Sheva. Towards the end of the evening there was an auction to raise money for the Chabad house and a picture of the Rebbe was one of the items. The bidding began and I noticed two people, one older and one a young man, who together raised the price time and again.

“When their bid won the picture they came up to the stage. The young man whispered in my ear, ‘I bought the picture just to be able to come up here and meet you. I am your former student, Michoel Dery from Moshav Brosh.’ At this point, he burst into tears. I too was moved and I planted a kiss on his forehead. He brought me up to date on his life since he left school. He had strayed from religious observance but, he said, the ‘kasha’ of Chabad burned in my kishkes and gave me no rest.

“After a story like that, in front of everyone, I took the microphone and told the audience what had happened and I concluded that this is the great power of Chabad and the Rebbe.”

You’ve been a teacher for decades. Is teaching a harder vocation than it used to be?

When I first started out, it was completely different. The era of open communication and technology has brought along

challenges that teachers never had to deal with before. As far as the influence of the street, the permissiveness, violence, chutzpa and immorality are out there in force, and we have to contend with it.

What about within Chassidishe chinuch?

After everything is said and done, we don't live in a bubble. As the world plummets, we are affected. There is no question that it is harder to preserve the level of pure, kosher Chassidishe chinuch. Every teacher has the task of coming up with ways of dealing with the issues of the day generated by the corrupt society we live in. Thirty-forty years ago, there was more discipline and politeness while today, you have to work hard on it. And yet, today's generation is sharper and more astute, and that's an advantage. Of course, this must be used for good purposes, to learn abstract ideas in Chassidus.

What options do teachers have to strengthen their students' level of hiskashrus to the Rebbe?

I remember that every year, after Tishrei, we – the principal of the school in Nachalat Har Chabad and I – would arrange a reception for one of Anash who returned from 770. The guest would tell all the students stories from 770 and describe in vivid detail what it was like during Tishrei. This had a tremendous effect on their hiskashrus.

Today it's much harder. We believe that this situation will pass and we will immediately see our Rebbe. For now, we have to talk about hiskashrus and the hisgalus of the Rebbe at every opportunity. We need to show videos of the Rebbe in school so the children live with the Rebbe. *Lirot et Malkein* is a wonderful



On Mivtza T'fillin with IDF orphans, Tammuz 5733

“We each must make a spiritual accounting about how much we are investing in chinuch, and every mechanech has to know that the more devoted he is to his students, the more they will love him and he will see positive results.

initiative that produces videos every week with short excerpts from sichos and hanhagos of the Rebbe.

To get students involved in hiskashrus, schools need to hold contests and projects to strengthen this inyan.

Can you give an example from your own experience?

After Chaf-Zayin Adar I 5752, I started a “Mishnayos and Tanya Bank” in the Chabad school for girls in Nachalat Har Chabad in which the girls learned thousands of Mishnayos and hundreds of chapters of Tanya by heart for the Rebbe's refua. Today, they learn to hasten the Geula and for the hisgalus of the Rebbe.

We also arranged a weekly

Mivtza Sippurim, in which teachers and I told stories about the Rebbe. To strengthen hiskashrus, it is recommended that you tell as many stories as possible about the Rebbeim in general and the Rebbe in particular. Rabbi Chadakov suggested this to me in a personal conversation. He himself was an outstanding educator.

Teachers should get the students to write to the Rebbe, a letter of pidyon nefesh, with good resolutions, with the knowledge that the Rebbe is with us and knows what we do and showers his brachos on us.

R' Hartman, you clearly love your work in chinuch, but it tends to be quite exhausting.



Rabbi Hartman on the right, Mivtza Matza



Welcoming students at the entrance to Kfar Chabad, Nissan 5726

Were there times that you felt you could not continue?

Yes, there were moments like that. The hardest period for me was at the end of the 5746 school year. I had a difficult school year that wore me down, physically and emotionally, and I

felt I could not go on. I asked the Rebbe to “release” me from this work, but did not get a response.

Right before school began again, I was torn. After twenty years of devoting myself to chinuch, I didn’t know whether to leave or continue. Just one day

before the first day of school, I received a letter from the Rebbe. Surprisingly, it was dated the first day of Rosh Chodesh Adar II 5746, half a year earlier. At the end of the letter, the Rebbe added these words by hand: With blessing and success in the holy work and in good health and joy and gladness of heart.

These words revived me. The next day I stood in the classroom facing my students, filled with a renewed energy. That one line gave me strength to go on in chinuch for many years.

Over the years, R’ Hartman wrote two s’farim on the topic of chinuch, with the encouragement of R’ Moshe Slonim a”h who was director of the Reshet. It was an anthology taken from s’farim of the Rebbeim on the topic of chinuch. The first book deals with *Chinuch B’Mishnas Chabad* and the second, *Hadracha L’Imahos b’Chinuch HaGil HaRach* and they were published by the Reshet Oholei Yosef Yitzchok. R’ Hartman received the Rebbe’s bracha for the first book which said: The letter ... and the book and booklets [on concepts in Judaism] were received and many thanks. Of course every book and the like on chinuch al taharas ha’kodesh is timely.

R’ Hartman is not surprised by this warm response and the many other answers he received from the Rebbe. “The Rebbe considers chinuch al taharas ha’kodesh to be the mission of our generation, and that which will bring Moshiach and the Geula,” he says.

Among the dozens of letters and responses from the Rebbe that he received were the following: “Success in avodas ha’kodesh,” “Good news in general and in particular.” For

reports that he sent about his work in chinuch he received an answer to continue.

“In 5726 I was at a crossroads and deliberating between continuing in chinuch or getting involved in something else. One day I received the following answer, ‘For the upcoming year, it is worth looking into avodas ha’kodesh, in chinuch al taharas ha’kodesh in Chabad schools.’

When he was a counselor, he once got a response from the Rebbe, “Fortunate is your lot and the lot of the counselors.” The month before his wedding, which took place in Elul 5724, he asked the Rebbe whether he should organize a camp as before, despite the many things he had to take care of. The Rebbe told him to be involved with the camp.

As a veteran mechanech, what message do you have for young teachers?

Chinuch is a complicated and demanding field and you usually don’t see immediate results. A person naturally likes to invest and see results in a short time, while a teacher plows and plants and the harvest is much later, but he should know that there definitely will be fruits from the efforts he invested. The Alter Rebbe said, a person may not despair and one must not despair of any Jew.

Today, R’ Hartman holds a number of vital and prestigious posts in Chassidic and religious



With friends in Kfar Chabad in 5721.
From right to left: Boruch Nachshon, Yosef Hartman, Dovid Kratz, Yekusiel Schneersohn, Avrohom Sossonkin, Elimelech Zweibel, Nachum Kaplan

education. He concludes the interview with the primary goals that he thinks every teacher ought to work on:

The first topic – Moshiach and Geula. We all have to get involved in Mivtza Moshiach and as the Rebbe said, in the sicha of Chaf-Ches Nissan 5751, “Do all that you can ...” We need to work day and night to hasten the hisgalus of the Rebbe.

The second topic – shleimus ha’aretz, because danger to life supersedes everything. With Eretz Yisroel in danger, with plans to give our land to our enemies, this is pikuach nefesh. The Rebbe told us to publicize the halacha in Shulchan Aruch Siman 329 and we need to do this.

To counteract this disastrous decree by drawing on the special

power of young Torah students, we should say chapter 20 and 150 of T’hillim with them after davening every day as the Vaad Rabbanei Chabad in Eretz Yisroel said to do. Through our t’fillos, Hashem will save us from this impending danger. We should also make rallies with the children with Torah-T’filla-Tz’daka, which eliminates the evil decree.

The third topic – deepening our commitment to education. We need to emphasize that only through authentic Jewish chinuch can we save the younger generation. We each must make a spiritual accounting about how much we are investing in chinuch, and every mechanech has to know that the more devoted he is to his students, the more they will love him and he will see positive results.

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OUT OF THE ASHES

The wailing of fire engine sirens could be heard in the middle of the night. The fire trucks rushed towards a two-story structure in a narrow alleyway on the Ben Yehuda Midrachov. They worked hard to extinguish the fire that consumed the Merkaz Moshiaich V'Geula that operates in Nachalat Shiva. The fire chief who met with the stunned shliach and founder of the center, Rabbi Doron Oren, told him that the fire began on the roof and quickly spread and destroyed everything.

"It was a miracle that nobody was hurt. The Chabad house also serves as a yeshiva for baalei t'shuva and some bachurim are usually sleeping there in the guest room. That night there were only two bachurim, one of whom was awake. He discovered the fire and saved his friend, the Sefer Torah, and some s'farim," reported R' Doron.

The fire occurred Erev Pesach and all the people who were invited for the seder went to his house instead. He is now busy fundraising for a new, more spacious, center nearby.

I went to the Midrachov and was saddened to see the charred remains, but happy to see the new place that is taking shape.

"I want to mention that the Shabbos before the fire I was with my family in a vacation spot outside Yerushalayim that belongs

to the knitted yarmulke sector. Over Shabbos, I was surprised to find one of ATa" H's booklets for the bachurim to prepare them for traveling to the Rebbe. I opened it in the middle and read page after page about the hiskashrus required of a Chassid towards the Rebbe. I felt that the Rebbe was preparing me for something big. It wasn't possible that in a place like this I would find this booklet and would read so much about hiskashrus, without it being some sort of divine message for me. I thought that it had to do with my signing a contract for a new center, and believed that the Rebbe wanted to prepare me and encourage me for this.

"On Motzaei Shabbos, the Moshiaich Center got busy. We brought a cook and two assistants, who helped her prepare the food for the seder. We had about fifty people registered for the first night and a few dozen for the lunch meal. At two in the morning we finished the cooking. I headed for home to rest, as did the two yeshiva bachurim who helped her and set up the Chabad house. At six in the morning the phone rang, and it was a neighbor informing me that the Chabad house had burned down.

"When I recovered from the initial shock, I wrote to the Rebbe and opened to an answer that was addressed to someone who

had experienced a tragedy and the Rebbe told him to consult with a lawyer but not to spend a lot of money in doing so. After going to the mikva and davening shacharis I went to the Center, and that's when I realized what miracles took place.

"The biggest miracle was that nobody was hurt. One of the two bachurim is usually sleeping by that time of the night, but that night he was awake long after the cooking was finished. While his friend slept, he walked towards the kitchen and saw smoke. He quickly woke up his friend and both of them called the fire department. The fire consumed the s'chach for the sukkah and other flammable materials in the attic, and within minutes had spread.

"The firemen say that the heat from the cooking ignited a fire in the chimney. The roof is made of shingles that lie on wooden slats and no wonder the entire roof caught on fire within minutes. The big miracle is that the bachur went to the kitchen and saw the fire. The firemen came ten minutes later and took everyone out of the building. Even the firemen did not dare to enter, because they were afraid the ceiling would cave in, which occurred within minutes. It all happened so fast. The lives of the two bachurim and the Sefer Torah were miraculously spared."



A fire broke out at three in the morning at the Moshiach Center on the Midrachov in Yerushalayim and within minutes, the place that welcomed thousands of people was consumed. The hundreds of people who would walk in every day to put on t'fillin, learn something, write to the Rebbe or just hang out, don't know where to go.

By Nossan Avrohom



“Since we opened, thousands of people have written to the Rebbe. I see how they, on their own, realize that the Rebbe is Moshiach and they commit to good hachlatos.

BUILDING A CENTER

Whoever visited the Midrachov Ben Yehuda the past decade has seen the Moshiach Center. It's hard to miss it, as it's decorated with big Moshiach flags and has a stand manned from morning to night where passersby are asked to put on t'fillin and offered material on Moshiach. The place is always hopping with young people who are “searching,” alongside tourists and locals. Every day, numerous people write to the Rebbe using the Igros Kodesh, and are exposed to the Besuras Ha'Geula.

How did it all begin? We asked R' Doron to give us a synopsis and to tell us what makes his place special. For three years, R' Doron was actively involved with the Chabad house in the Gonen neighborhood; then he moved on to the Chabad house in the Kiryat Menachem neighborhood. One day, as he was learning the sicha in which the Rebbe says that we are in the Yemos HaMoshiach and all that remains is for us to open our eyes, he asked himself why we don't open our eyes.

“We started fifteen shiurim on inyanei Moshiach and Geula all over the city. People were excited to hear the Besuras Ha'Geula. We regularly hung signs in religious neighborhoods with excerpts from the Rebbe's sichos about inyanei Geula. We organized a convoy of cars decorated with Moshiach signs, and once a month we

drove around Yerushalayim. We even had a Moshiach learning program for fathers and sons to learn together. We printed a booklet that said on it, “Abba, come and learn inyanei Moshiach and Geula!” We also distributed thousands of sichos on the topic and did large Kiddush Levana events.

“I felt that I had to start something to coordinate all these activities in Yerushalayim, a place that people could visit for anything having to do with Moshiach – material, brochures, stickers and D'var Malchus. I envisioned this place having constant farbrengens and being a warm center for everything related to Moshiach. Women had workshops and lectures, but what about the men? Why didn't they have a place? I decided the time had come and I began looking for a location.

“After a few months, we decided on the Midrachov in the center of Yerushalayim. I knew this was the best place as a center from which to publicize Moshiach.”

One of the first things R' Doron began with was writing to the Rebbe:

“Since we opened, thousands of people have written to the Rebbe. I see how they, on their own, realize that the Rebbe is Moshiach and they commit to good hachlatos.

“The situation today is such that, believe it or not, we are not the only ones manning t'fillin stands. There are at least

three others, not Lubavitch, and so we weren't going to be yet another one on the street. We have the uniqueness of being the Moshiach stand where you can write to the Rebbe. Inside the Center, we have shiurim and farbrengens on the topic of Moshiach, a yeshiva for baalei t'shuva that opened three years ago, minyanim, and more.”

PEOPLE CHANGING THEIR LIVES

Their target crowd are the many young people who frequent the Midrachov every night.

“Young people from all over the country and many foreigners hang out here on a daily basis. In the center of Yerushalayim there is a place called Kikar HaChatulot, where every Erev Shabbos lots of bored kids gather and lots of unsavory things go on there. We are there in order to bring some light. We set up a table that is manned by bachurim from the yeshiva so the kids can hear Kiddush. One of the guys who used to be a ‘dropout’ hanging out there got involved with us, and ended up becoming the one who mans the stand and today he is learning in 770.

“Every Thursday night we have a farbrengen in the yeshiva which is attended by numerous young people. Since the yeshiva started, the work with these youth has really taken off and we are seeing them make real progress. There is a fellow that frequented the Midrachov who fell into a serious depression. His inactivity and unemployment led him to consider suicide. One day he walked into the Center and asked to talk to me privately. He said he had just come from the hospital after recovering from hurting himself and said he saw no reason to go on living.

“He told me that he had impulsively married someone like himself and they were about to have a baby. Not having a job and lacking responsibility for his actions and his life, he didn’t know how he would raise a child.

“I listened, calmed him down and tried to give him some hope. I meet people like him all the time, unfortunately. I asked him to wash his hands and write to the Rebbe. I was surprised and moved by the answer he opened to, ‘Besuros tovos on the birth of your son,’ and he also received brachos for his wife. I told him to stop worrying, the Rebbe had blessed him. He had to stop thinking negatively and focus on the positive. After a while I heard that he had a son, and he and his wife married according to halacha. I later heard that he had a job managing an exclusive store.

“One day, someone came to the t’fillin stand who collects money on the street to support himself. He was weak and thin. He said that his family had abandoned him five years ago and he lived on the street. Each day, he approached Yitzchok who manned the stand and talked to him. When he heard about being able to write to the Rebbe through the Igros Kodesh, he wanted to do so. The answer he opened to said, ‘I was pleased to hear about her move to a new apartment.’ He was surprised and said that he had actually presented a request to Amidar for an apartment. Not much time elapsed before his request was approved and he stopped sleeping on the street.

“A fellow once came to us who was addicted to drugs. Today he lives up north and is off drugs and has a good job. Months went by and then we started seeing



“If you stand here for one day, from morning till night, you can write an entire book with amazing stories about people and hashgacha pratis,”... but the main thing is to connect people to the Rebbe and this is done through writing to him by way of the Igros Kodesh.

him again at the Center, with his brother who wanted to talk to us. The brother was only 14 years old and he looked like skin and bones. He was anorexic but refused medical treatment. We wrote to the Rebbe with him. The answer he opened to had to do with the obligation to listen to the doctor who received permission to heal. On the spot, he promised not to go against what the Rebbe had written and said he would go to a doctor. What months of talking couldn’t do, a letter from

the Rebbe did.

“The doctor immediately sent him to be hospitalized and his life was saved. Once he was on his feet again, he married a girl he knew but years went by and they did not have children. Once again he came to the Moshiach Center to write to the Rebbe, and the answer he opened to had to do with children being born. Nine months later he came back and announced, ‘My wife had a baby boy thanks to the Rebbe’s bracha nine months ago!’”

SAVING AN AGUNA

As it said in the body of the article, writing to the Rebbe through the Igros Kodesh is a mainstay of the Center. People from near and far come and ask for the Rebbe's bracha and advice.

We asked R' Oren to choose a special story for us. This is what he picked:

I decided to go to the Kinus HaShluchim and since I made a last-minute decision, the only tickets available to New York had a three-day stopover in London on the way back. A Chassid knows that everything is by Divine Providence, and I felt I had a shlichus in London.

My wife has a friend who was an aguna for several years. Her husband was in London. I asked my wife what was happening with her and heard that not only was she still an aguna, he wasn't paying any child support and had left her and the children back in Eretz Yisroel. When she heard that I was stopping over in London, she was happy that I had the opportunity to help her friend obtain her *get*. When I wrote to the Rebbe asking whether I should get involved, I opened to an answer that was written to Lubavitchers in Yerushalayim regarding documents in London, that despite the difficulties there was a Lubavitcher on location who could help ... I was flabbergasted by the answer and understood that the Rebbe wanted me to get involved.

I also figured I would try to raise some money for the Moshiach Center while I was in London. When I told one of the people who work at the Center, he told me that he knew an accountant who had clients in London and he made the connection between us. I thought that through him I would be able to get a list of potential donors but when I spoke to him, I realized that he could not help me with this. And yet, he was a big help with the aguna situation and he gave me an important address.

The Kinus HaShluchim was wonderful. On my return home I stopped in London, where I stayed

with someone who had prepared for my arrival. One of the dayanim on the Beis Din in Yerushalayim who was helping the aguna, arranged for me to stay with him. I called the address I had been given, and within a few hours I was able to locate where the recalcitrant husband was living.

I knew it wouldn't be easy. This was someone who had refused to give a *get* for years, but I was confident with the Rebbe's bracha. The person I was staying with heard the address and smiled. It was just a few minute walk away from his house. We went together and were disappointed when the man was not at home. We were afraid we had lost the element of surprise and feared he would try to avoid us.

The next day we went to his place of employment at a shipping company, and it turned out he had just left. However, we asked the boss to tell him over the radio that we were waiting for him until he returned. When he came back an hour later, we entered the garage of the shop together, a place that was dark and dripping water. We thought he might try to attack us but the Rebbe's clear answers reassured me.

At first, he approached us menacingly for our chutzpa in chasing after him, but after some sweet talk on my part, he calmed down and said that for five years already he wanted a *get* but only if certain conditions were met. His conditions were unacceptable. At this point we despaired and I was sure I would go back home without the *get*, but amazingly, he suddenly said, "You know what? No conditions! I will give the *get*."

I was taken aback. Rabbanim, friends and acquaintances had chased after this fellow and all tried to convince him, to no avail until he fled to England and now, after just meeting him, he was willing to give it! All that day we went with him to battei din in London; the fax machine at my host's house spewed forth letters from the Beis Din in Yerushalayim until we got the final version. We were under pressure to get it done and when I had one foot in the taxi that would take me to the airport, the final certification arrived and the woman was released from her state of being an aguna. She knows that she owes this to the Rebbe.

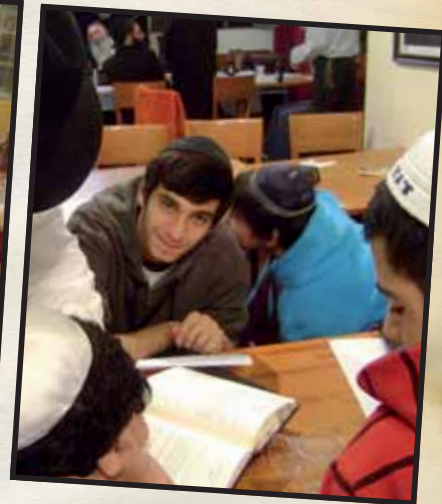
WORKING AROUND THE CLOCK

The Center is open 24 hours a day. People from all walks of life and all ages can walk in and ask for a bracha, help and advice.

"If you stand here for one day, from morning till night, you

can write an entire book with amazing stories about people and hashgacha pratis," said one of the bachurim in the yeshiva. People find the Center a relaxing place but the main thing is to connect people to the Rebbe and this is done through writing to him by way of the Igros Kodesh.

"Not long ago, a man walked in who looked to be in his fifties. He told us that three years ago he visited the Center. At the time he was agitated. His wife was very sick and the doctors saw no option other than a complicated operation. The date for the operation was scheduled for after



Pesach of that year. On Erev Pesach, he went to the Center knowing that if someone could help her it would be the Rebbe. He poured out his heart in a letter and in the answer he opened to the Rebbe wrote about the advantage of handmade shmura matza. He understood from this that his wife should eat only this kind of matza on Pesach. The Rebbe mentioned that this matza is called 'food of healing.'

"That same day he bought shmura matza for himself and his wife, which they ate over Pesach. After Yom Tov, they went for a final checkup before the surgery. He waited outside as his wife was delayed for a long time, which started to worry him. Then the doctor came out and excitedly announced, 'There is no need for an operation. The tumor disappeared.'

"The man went on to say that three years had passed since then and all was well and he had come to give thanks for the miracle."

R' Oren has many other stories and he shares this one, hot off the press:

"A woman came into the

Center in tears. She said she had not heard from her husband in half a year. He had gotten entangled in debt in the gray market and could not support his family. He decided he could not bear the shame and disappeared. Nobody knew where he was. She had moved in with her parents in Yerushalayim, along with her three children.

"After making the proper preparations and making a good hachlata, she wrote to the Rebbe and the Rebbe's answer said she needed to strengthen Family Purity. The woman made some commitments in this regard and left. Two weeks later, she returned with the following news: That same day her husband had called and they spoke for the first time in six months! He did not say where he was but reported that he was fine.

"Another two weeks went by and he did not call again. She wanted to write to the Rebbe again. She wrote on Thursday, and on Sunday she came to say that her husband had suddenly showed up on Shabbos but was still afraid of his creditors. A

short while later he returned for good, and began supporting his family again."

A YESHIVA LIKE TOMCHEI T'MIMIM

"Make no mistake about it, the yeshiva is run like a Tomchei T'mimim in every respect. We have shiurim in Chassidus and Gemara and any of the mekuravim and visitors can join them. Since we opened the yeshiva, we have seen the number of participants in the shiurim grow significantly. Young bachurim full of Chassidishe chayus are having a tremendous impact just with their presence."

Another project of the Moshiah Center is "Yerushalayim Shel Maala" which Mrs. Oren runs.

"We thought about how to reach more people in addition to those who drop in on the Midrachov. My wife came up with an idea – guided tours of Yerushalayim. We arrange tours in the old and new city of Yerushalayim. Thousands of people join us every year



Rabbi Doron Oren (center) farbrenging with visitors to the Moshiach Center

including company outings, families, and tourists who come from the United States and Europe. They hear not only dry historical facts about Yerushalayim, but get a Chassidic view of Yerushalayim as well as the topic of the Beis HaMikdash, the City of Malchus, etc.”

How are you running all these activities now without a building?

Well, it’s hard! I am spending more time at home, which has become the headquarters for fundraising for our new place. We haven’t gotten that many donations and we hope that this

article will bring the Center and its activities to people’s attention. My children are happy that I’m around more, but we have a shlichus to prepare the world for the coming of Moshiach and there are many people who need spiritual assistance.

We are renting a new place and all the things that were salvaged from the fire are there, but we still can’t go in and work from there. We are hoping to get a guarantor for the sum of 30,000 shekels so we can enter.

You don’t sound despondent. Isn’t it hard for you?

I won’t say it’s not hard. A

lot of money and equipment that we amassed over the years turned to ashes. The place gave a lot of chayus to a lot of people and when it’s closed, they are at a loss. I’m talking about people who visited us every day. They told me that at the Center they feel the chayus of 770. The place was open to all, young and old, rich and poor alike, religious and otherwise. And miracles upon miracles took place. So you ask if it’s hard – of course it’s hard, but we are looking forward.

What are you asking of Anash?

Since “Chassidim ein mishpacha” and we look out for one another, there are Chassidim here in need of help. I personally owe a lot of money for the place. We did not have fire insurance. But we are not broken; we believe that Chassidim and good people will contribute towards covering the outstanding debts of the old place and opening a new place. The Center is a stronghold for thousands of people who fortify their Judaism, their neshamos, and connect to the Rebbe. This is our shlichus as it is the shlichus of every Chassid.”

We wish R’ Doron Oren, as well as his loyal cadre of helpers, tremendous success. And may they see the fulfillment of the adage, “after a fire one becomes wealthy.”

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some third being or causal force, external to and more powerful than them, which determines their form or mode of behavior.

For the scientist, the question ‘why’ is a journey from effect to cause and getting there is half the fun. The other half

is knowing that regardless of what we discover, the original questions somehow remain while new questions abound. For the sincerely religious also, the question ‘why’ is an exploration, but one that ends not with some infinite regress, nor endless stream of questions, but rather with an ultimate answer: That

there is a First Cause that seeded the world, planted the ‘why chromosome’ in our psyches, and gave us the logical prowess to infer back to the source, the ultimate Because before which there is no why. And why would He do a thing like that? Well, why not?

ABRAHAM PRINCIPLE

Faith and reason are not really like trains in collision – they are more like trains in series: One picks up where the other leaves off. Part 11.

By Dr. Aryeh Gotfryd, PhD



The scientist's faith in cause and effect is so intense that he will accept as undisputed fact the existence of an activating force, even if it plainly contradicts rationality.

--The Rebbe, *Mind Over Matter*, pg. 3.

THE "WHY" CHROMOSOME

Kids are weird. All the stuff that we clever, worldly grown-ups so sensibly take for granted, children question. Which parent has not fielded such curve – ball queries as:

"Why is the sky blue?"

"Why does daddy have a moustache and you don't?"

"Why do people die?"

You stop and think. You wonder at her wondering, take pride in her cleverness, and dig deep into the recesses of your mind to dredge up some long – forgotten explanation. Thinking how best to say it, you repackage the idea, trim off some details, choose easy words, and tell it like it is expecting (naively) that your kid will be satisfied and the matter happily laid to rest.

"The sky is blue because the air scatters around the other colors but lets the blue through."

"Daddy has a moustache because men have a chemical in their blood called testosterone that makes facial hair grow."



"People die because their bodies wear out."

So the kid soaks it up, ponders a bit, rolls his toy car, pats her doll, runs a bit around the room and off you go back to your things, thinking the case is closed until one or two hours or days later when you face the next round of reality checking.

"But why doesn't the air scatter the blue light?"

"Why don't you have testosterone?"

"Why do bodies wear out?"

Usually not, but sometimes the questioning turns into a game called Let's-Keep-Mommy-Talking-as-Long-as – Possible-by-Asking-an-Endless-Series-of-Why's. But even then, a sincere childish curiosity underlies the game, a need to know the explanation of things.

Of course the game is not restricted to children. The fact that most of us outgrow our inherent curiosity about the world is not so much because we know the answers but more because as life grinds on, we become dulled to the wondrous workings of the world around us. By the time we hit our age, the only "why" most of us ask is "why me?" Most of us except scientists of course.

Maybe scientists are more sensitive. Maybe they just never grew up. Or maybe it's an overactive Why Chromosome on their DNA. Whatever it is, the question remains: Why the Why?

Answering this turns out to be more important than it looks at first, because the uniquely human habit of seeking explanations drives two of the most powerful social forces at work today: science and religion. And since the two seem all too often at loggerheads, it may be worth the effort to investigate how one little question can generate two such radically different answers.

As with many other questions, we can use the Abraham Principle to resolve this too. The Abraham Principle states that when two or more entities have a correlated structure or behavior, this itself is evidence for the existence of

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WHO SENT THE CONTRACTOR?

I heard the sound of someone pounding on my front door... Daybreak had only just begun and I suddenly heard the Arab building contractor yelling, 'Shimon, open the door, I'm begging you. Open up!' Now I was really confused.

By Nossan Avrohom

R' Eliezer Shmuel, and his wife, Limor, Chabad residents of the Ibikur neighborhood of Tzfas, are familiar with numerous stories that occurred from writing to the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach, via "Igros Kodesh". They speak about many miracles that they have seen with their own eyes in recent years.

"The Rebbe wrote many times to my husband that his shlichus in life is to spread the wellsprings of chassidus and to bring Jewish men and women back to their Father in Heaven. Material success is closely tied to spiritual investment, and at every opportunity he has had since, he actually suggests to Jews that they should write to the Rebbe and connect with the Tree of Life."

WHY IS SHIMON IN SUCH A MOOD?

The following story took in Adar 5756. The Ben-Shmuels were not long married, just

getting started in managing their new lives together. Limor began working as a sixth-grade teacher in the Ohr Menachem Chabad girls' school in Tzfas, while her husband, R' Eliezer, began working for Chabad in Kiryat Shmuel. Despite the difficulties they endured in making a living back in those days, they looked for a shlichus related to the spreading of the wellsprings of chassidus and preparing more Jews for the True and Complete Redemption. "When we received a telephone call from Vicky Rubenstein of Kiryat Shmona, asking us to join the instructional staff at the local community center on behalf of the 'Yad L'Achim' organization, we immediately agreed.

"Over a period of two years, we gave over Torah classes. We would come to the community center for one hour. During the first half-hour, my husband would teach a shiur on the weekly Torah portion, and during the second half-hour, I would speak to the women about the

Laws of Family Purity. In those days, I was very active with the 'Efrat' pro-life organization, and during the classes, I would speak often about the importance of the subject of preventing abortions and encouraging childbirth.

"We didn't have a car back then, and a regular driver from Chatzor HaGlilit named Shimon would take us each week, along with the other teaching staff members, most of whom were not counted among the Chabad community. Some of them were Litvaks associated with the 'Arachim' organization, while others were Sephardim from the outreach activities wing of the Shas Party.

"We took this project most seriously. We prepared the classes in advance, and we had a regular babysitter each Sunday. We really connected with the women who came to the shiur. My husband's class would start at eight o'clock and finish about half an hour later, while I would continue until nine. At the conclusion of the official part of the class, the



women would ask virtually on a weekly basis to write to the Rebbe via 'Igros Kodesh', and we bore witness to numerous miracles and wonders as a result.

"The driver who would take us was a very pleasant and friendly Jew, always happy, cheerful, and with a good sense of humor.

"That's the way it was until the week of 6th of Adar, 5756.

"He usually greeted us with a smiling '*Shalom Aleichem*'. Normally, the car's tape recorder would play Middle Eastern tunes, Shabbos hymns, or Torah songs. When he was in a happy mood, he would often join in and sing along with the music. However, on this particular occasion, he was not in his usual mood. He greeted us with uncharacteristic apathy. His normal expression of optimism had completely vanished. This was not the Shimon with whom we were familiar. His face was masked by deep sadness, and all our pleas for him to tell us what was

troubling his heart – 'If there is concern in a man's heart, let him put it out' – were met with deafening silence on his part.

"The weather outside was quite befitting his mood. The forecasts called for heavy snow the following day. Thick fog covered the highway, traveling went very slow, and it just made him depressed. There were moments when he suggested that maybe it would be better to pass up on the trip and head back to Tzfas. 'No one will be waiting for you there in such cold,' he said, but we stubbornly pressed on. This was a most difficult dilemma, particularly since our babysitter had informed us several hours earlier that she would be unable to watch our two children, Menachem Mendel and Chaya Rina. Naively, I already thought then that we would have to cancel the trip due to inclement weather, but my husband declared that all these delays and obstacles are the very reason why we should go.

THE BUILDING CONTRACTOR, THE MONEY, AND THE NERVOUS BREAKDOWN

"As a result, we took our children with us. We dressed them from head to foot, and they got into the car with us as we made our way to the class. The highway was slippery and dangerous, the journey was slow, and we thought that we would surely arrive late and anyone who was already there would return home by the time we got there. The driver had a thousand and one reasons why it would be appropriate for us to go back, while in contrast, my husband tried throughout the entire journey to get the driver to unload his emotional burden and tell us what was troubling him.

"We finally arrived at the shiur. Many women were already inside waiting for us, and they greatly appreciated that we had come despite the harsh weather conditions.

“Eventually, we even wrote a letter to the Rebbe with one of the women via ‘Igros Kodesh’. Her daughter had reached the age of thirty and she still hadn’t found a suitable match. The Rebbe’s answer contained a clear bracha (and within a month, she found her *bashert*, and just a few months afterwards, they were married according to the law of Moshe and Yisroel).

“My husband, who had already finished his class on the weekly Torah portion, went outside to wait for me with the children in the car, where he continued to urge the driver to tell him what the problem was. ‘There’s a Rebbe in Israel for every affliction or distress,’ he told him. ‘Whatever problem lays heavy upon your heart, write about it to the Rebbe, make a good resolution, and you’ll see how things improve.’ My husband decided that he would not relent.

“I agree that the Rebbe is a great tzaddik,” the driver claimed, “but I’m Sephardic and a follower of Rabbi Ovadia Yosef. It would be an insult to write to an Ashkenazic rabbi,” he stated openly.

“My husband patiently explained to him that the Rebbe is not just the rabbi of Ashkenazi Jews, but of the entire Jewish People, and the nasi is everything. When we left Kiryat Shmona to head back to Tzfas, the driver suggested that my husband write a letter to the Rebbe on his behalf, but my husband would not agree. ‘You write and you’ll merit to receive a bracha. Writing to the Rebbe is not some ordinary event. When people would go in for ‘yechidus’, they would fast that entire day and recite T’hillim. This is a most holy and lofty matter.’

“When we finally returned to

Tzfas, the driver consented to our request and agreed to come to our house. He broke into sobs as he began to reveal what he had gone through over the past six months, and especially in the last few days.

“He told us that he lived in a small apartment together with his wife and his seven children. Six months earlier, they were informed that they had been given permission to expand the rear portion of their apartment, and they jumped at the opportunity as if they had found a buried treasure. They took the appropriate loans from the bank, inquired about a good and inexpensive building contractor, and made contact with an Arab ‘kablan’ from one of the nearby villages. The contractor arrived with his workers, took the measurements, and as soon as they received good recommendations on this contractor, the construction work commenced. In the meantime, the family moved into the home of Shimon’s parents, who had set aside two rooms for them.

“After all the progress in the construction stages, the contractor asked to receive some of his wages. Good progress had indeed been made, as the contractor came with his builders every day at seven in the morning and worked diligently and meticulously until five in the afternoon.

“Then one day, the contractor came to Shimon and asked for an advance of forty thousand shekels. ‘My workers want their money, and I have to buy building materials and equipment. I need the money urgently.’ Without hesitating for a moment, Shimon took out the loan money that he had received from the bank and handed it to the contractor – in cash.

“The following morning, Shimon saw neither hide nor hair of the contractor or his workers. He waited a day and then another day, but to no avail. The Arab swindler had simply vanished without a trace. At first, he answered his telephone and made all sorts of promises, but eventually he changed his number and could not be reached anywhere.

“The family was still living with Shimon’s parents, and there was no way for them to get more money for a different contractor. The bank would not agree to give Shimon more credit, and he felt totally helpless.

“As a result of this complicated problem, the situation at home, particularly the *shalom bayis*, became seriously affected. Each one blamed the other for the crisis, and on the day that he drove us to Kiryat Shmona, his wife suffered a nervous breakdown and was hospitalized in the Rebecca Sieff Medical Center in Tzfas.

“Now the situation became extremely complex and even more difficult. The burden of maintaining the household fell entirely upon his shoulders. He was constantly occupied between his job, his children, and visiting his wife in the hospital. But the most difficult thing of all was that he saw no light at the end of the tunnel. The financial situation stemming from this crisis continued to deteriorate.

“Shimon made all the preparations for writing the letter. Tears streamed down his cheeks as he took one of the volumes of ‘Igros Kodesh’ and pleaded with a profound expression of emunas tzaddikim, ‘Rebbe, you have to get me out of this mess! You must save me and my family from this terrible suffering!’

“He opened the volume, and there was a letter dated Zayin Adar, the birthday and hilula of Moshe Rabbeinu. The Rebbe wrote that just as the person writing the letter had turned to him, he would also be the one to give him good news – and speedily.

“My husband read the answer and proceeded to jump for joy. ‘You see why you had to be the one to write the Rebbe!’ He tried to infect him with his enthusiasm, and he told him, ‘With such a clear answer, you have nothing to worry about!’

AND SO IT WAS AT MIDNIGHT...

“Shimon didn’t share my husband’s optimism. He had spent far too long in a state of constant sorrow for him to see how he would manage to extricate himself from all this.

“After leaving our house, he went to visit his wife and then headed for his parents’ home in Chatzor, where his children were already sound asleep. There can be no doubt that his strength, both in body and spirit, had been stretched to the limit.

“The next day at six o’clock in the morning, the annoying ring of the telephone echoed throughout the house and woke up my husband. Who would be calling us so early in the morning? My husband rushed to do *neggelvasser*, and groggily picked up the receiver to hear a voice of sheer joy on the other end.

“Eliezer!” shouted Shimon the driver, “you have no idea what an incredible miracle just happened to me!”

“What happened?” asked my husband, as his eyes opened inquisitively.

“Shimon’s voice was very excited and emotional, as if he were speaking with me in the middle of the afternoon. ‘About half an hour ago,’ he said, ‘I heard the sound of someone pounding on my front door. ‘Who could that possibly be?’ I thought to myself with a tinge of fear in my heart, concerned that something terrible may have happened. Daylight had only just begun to break through, when I suddenly heard the Arab building contractor yelling, ‘Shimon, please open the door, I’m begging you. Open up!’ Now I was really confused. What does this swindler want from me!? In any case, I opened the door and immediately started pouring all my wrath upon his head: ‘Why did you run away? Where have you been hiding for the last six months?’

“For his part, he was literally shaking like a leaf and he asked me to forgive him. ‘Before I explain to you what happened,’ said the contractor, ‘take this check for forty thousand shekels. It’s a good check that you can cash today; I promise you.’ The Arab then proceeded to tell his story: ‘I ran away after I had gone bankrupt. My wife claimed that it was all because I had worked with Jews, and she wouldn’t let me to go back to work for you.’

“So what brought you back here now to pay your debt? And why so early in the morning?” Shimon asked the Arab disbelievingly.

“The previous night, I dreamt that the rabbi of the Jews, the one you claim is the Moshiach, came to me and warned that I must quickly go to you the following morning and return the money that I had deceitfully taken from you... I woke up with a start in the middle of the night and I told

my wife about the dream, but she refused to believe me, claiming that it was just my imagination and it was all nonsense. I lay down again and went back to sleep, but once again the rabbi of the Jews came to me in a dream. He didn’t say a word to me this time, but when I saw his stern expression, I realized that if I didn’t come this morning to return the money, I would face bitter and dire consequences!...’

“I didn’t waste any time thinking about it, and I took my car and came to you right away. I ask you to forgive me; I don’t want any further dealings with you,” the Arab contractor concluded with trembling hands.

“The first phone call Shimon made was to his wife, still hospitalized in the Sieff Medical Center, and the good news brought about an immediate improvement in her condition.

* * *

“The next call was to us,” said Mrs. Ben-Shmuel as she finished her story. “At this point, we simply couldn’t go back to sleep. We immediately got up and took another look at the answer that Shimon had received in ‘Igros Kodesh’ just a few hours earlier. Every word was precise. The salvation and good news came speedily. The Rebbe has his ways to bring ‘good news’ to Jews; the Rebbe is the ‘nasi’ and the nasi is everything.

“The thing that made us the most happy was a week later, when he came to pick us up. Shimon was once again happy, cheerful, and singing joyous melodies. He was also pleased to tell us that his wife had been released from the hospital, and he had already found a new building contractor to conclude the final work on the apartment expansion.”

COMING IN SECOND

By Rabbi Heschel Greenberg

Founder and Director of the Jewish Discovery Center of Buffalo, NY

NACHSHON ON FIRST

This week's parsha, Naso, records in detail the twelve dedicatory offerings brought by the N'siim, the princes or leaders, of each of the twelve tribes. These offerings commenced on the first of Nissan—the day of the inauguration of the Mishkan, the portable Sanctuary the Jews built in the desert—and continued for twelve days.

The first to bring the offering was Nachshon ben Aminadav representing the tribe of Yehudah. Its prince and leader, Nachshon's claim to fame was his jumping into the Red Sea before it parted. Our Sages tell us that only after he made the plunge into the sea and the waters reached his nostrils did the waters part, enabling everyone else to cross on dry land.

The tribe of Yehudah and its Nasi thus exemplified leadership in its most self-sacrificing and noble form. It is no surprise that King David and his descendent Moshiach are scions of the tribe of Yehudah. Moshiach, like his ancestor Nachshon, is a leader *par excellence* who takes the initiative even when the entire world insists that it is impossible. Moshiach plunges into the turbulent waters of exile and ultimately causes these threatening waters to recede and be transformed into secure dry land.

Nachshon, as the first leader to bring his dedicatory offering, alludes to the ultimate goal of

building and dedicating the future Sanctuary, which the entire world will eventually resemble in the days of Moshiach, whose illustrious ancestor was Nachshon.

Yisachar on Second

If Nachshon and the tribe of Yehudah came first because they represented the ideal of leadership that leads to Geula-Redemption, what role does the follow up leader and tribe of Yisachar play?

To answer this question we must address a question raised by many of the commentators concerning Hashem's choice of Yisachar to go second instead of one of the more senior tribes. One would have thought that this honor would have gone to the tribe that descended from the oldest son of Jacob, Reuven. Indeed, the tribe of Reuven did protest that it was overlooked and relegated to a lower level of importance, as Rashi informs us. It is therefore surprising that it was the junior tribe of Yisachar that was accorded the honor of bringing the prestigious second offering.

There is also another difficulty in the Biblical text concerning Yisachar, as noted by Rashi. Why does the Torah repeat the words "brought his sacrifice" when discussing Yisachar's offering?

Rashi answers both questions by stating that Yisachar's selection to bring its offering ahead of all the other tribes (except Yehudah) can be attributed to **two** factors:



First, the Yisacharites were known for their extraordinary knowledge of Torah.

Second, this tribe was the one to propose to the other tribes the idea of making these offerings. All of the other offerings were inspired and instigated by the members of the tribe of Yisachar, primarily by their leader, Nesanel ben Tzuar.

The Torah therefore repeats the fact that the tribe of Yisachar brought its offering to underscore that its privilege to bring an offering ahead of the other ten tribes was based on these two considerations: their devotion to Torah study and, secondly, to their role as the inspiration and impetus for the other tribes to bring their own offerings.

PROPELLED OUT OF THE MARKETPLACE

A question may be raised: Why did they need **two** merits to be accorded the distinction of bringing their offering before the other ten tribes? Why wouldn't Torah study itself suffice? Alternatively, why wasn't their role in inspiring others sufficient to merit the honor of bringing their offering before the others?

Upon reflection, we will see that the need for both merits provides us with a twofold lesson about our ability to follow the offering of Nachshon, which was "a tough act to follow."

On the one hand, it exposes us to the preeminent role of Torah study. Notwithstanding their originally low ranking vis-a-vis the other tribes, the devotion to Torah study by the Yisacharites catapulted them to the penultimate level of significance. This mirrors the Talmudic statement (Horiyos 13a) that even an illegitimate person who is a Torah scholar takes precedence over the High Priest who is an ignoramus.

Rav Yoseph, one of the great Talmudic Sages, stated in regard to Torah study and the holiday of Shavuot, the anniversary of the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai: "If not for this day, there would have been many Josephs in the marketplace." (P'sachim 68b) Rashi, in his commentary to the Talmud there add, "And I have been uplifted." Thus we see that proper Torah study has the capacity to raise us to a higher level. Torah study can transform us from mere non-descript "Joes" that inhabit, and identify with, the fragmented and tumultuous "marketplace" into elevated "Josephs" within the Jewish community.

The name Joseph, the Rebbe writes (Likkutei Sichot vol. 16), possesses the connotation of increased spirituality. But there are two types of increases. The first occurs when the increase is incremental and is not capable of propelling us out of the confining atmosphere of the galut-defined "Marketplace." However, through Torah study one is empowered to leave this stifling atmosphere and travel into an environment of spiritual "weightlessness," where we are not impressed by the gravity of the materialistic attractions.

Conversely, Torah study in and of itself does not suffice.

Although Torah elevates us and puts us on a pedestal, we cannot be detached from the rest of the community even if it is for the purposes of unhampered Torah study. Simultaneously one must also be involved with others, helping to inspire them to bring their offerings to the Temple.

This second message is also echoed in the Talmudic statement: "Whoever says, 'I have Torah exclusively, does not even have Torah.'" (Yevamot 109b)

In order for Torah to be able to lift us off the marketplace it must not be weighted down by our own egos. The extra weight we carry, i.e., our swollen egos and self-centered obsessions, will prevent the Torah study from getting us "off the ground."

APPLICATION TO MOSHIACH

As was noted at the beginning of this article, the first offering of Nachshon of the tribe of Yehudah alludes to the Messianic Redemption. It stands to reason that the second offering, that of Yisachar—with its dual message of Torah study and the focus on others—provides us with the methodology to make Moshiach a reality. In our preparation for Moshiach, there are also two focuses that correspond to the two aforementioned virtues of Yisachar.

On the one hand, the Rebbe told us that "the straightforward path to bringing the Geula/Redemption is the study of Torah, specifically the teachings of the Torah that concern Moshiach and Geula." (Seifer HaSichos 5751, Parshas Balak). This Torah exercise empowers us to rise above the galut/exile tainted perspectives we have. Rav Yosef realized that without Torah he would have been part of the

"marketplace" galut mentality. Torah is what transports us into a higher spiritual sphere where we see the world from an elevated perch. Instead of the confusion that occurs when we are in the "marketplace" with its multiplicity of ideas, ideologies and influences, we develop a G-dly and therefore a unified view of the world. We are no longer torn asunder by the competing influences that disturb our peace. Torah, when approached properly, is therefore the most tranquil and liberating of experiences.

However, Torah alone does not suffice to prepare us for the Geula. The purpose of Torah study is to alter our way of thinking so that we begin to live in a spiritually liberated fashion. Living in a Moshiach oriented way means that we don't view everything and everyone from our narrow and self-centered vantage point. Divisions among people ought to break down as a consequence of the paradigm shift we experience when we study Torah with humility. Equipped with the right view of the world and of others, we then share with others our own excitement at our liberated and elevated status that we achieved through proper Torah study. If we don't "get out of our own cocoon," we must question the integrity of our Torah study.

Our efforts at dedicating the third Temple must follow the model we read in this week's parsha. We first recognize the centrality of Moshiach and Redemption—the Nachshon offering. This is followed by the two-pronged approach of Yisachar: Torah study coupled with the sense of responsibility to, in the Rebbe's words, "prepare ourselves and the entire world for the coming of Moshiach."

Chabad Rally In Washington

By Raanan Isseroff, Crown Heights Committee for Shleimus HaAretz

On Tuesday, *malchus sh'b'hod*, the Twentieth of Iyar, The Crown Heights Committee for Shleimus HaAretz in conjunction with SOS-Israel sponsored a protest rally in Washington DC at the Capitol building where Israel's Prime Minister Mr. Binyamin Netanyahu would be speaking.

At 5:00 am, a busload of Chabadniks set out for the "Ir HaBira", America's capitol. It was anticipated based on previous days' activities, that hundreds of supporters and detractors for Eretz Yisroel would be present. Mr. Netanyahu's being in Washington was only feeding the anti-Israel hate groups as being a "reward" for their terrorist efforts. It was obvious from all reports that the PM came to bargain about what to give. Or else why come at all? If you have nothing to give, so stay home!

The previous Friday, the Prime Minister had surprised America's President Obama and instilled false hope into Jews around the world by vigorously protesting US efforts to return Israel to the 1948 borders. The press was electrified. Little Israel standing up to the mighty US? They loved it! Finally, Israel is starting to do something normal... Just like in the "Days

of the Bible"!

Alas, that hope was not to be.

By Tuesday, at exactly the time that the Chabad rally took place, Mr. Netanyahu had not only retracted on his words eager to begin anew, but was offering to give away additional settlements. Offering more Land for a false Peace.

As Reuters reported: (*Reuters Washington*) – "*Israel is prepared to make "painful compromises" for peace with the Palestinians, including the handover of land they seek for a state, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told Congress on Tuesday*". (May 24, 2011)¹

While discussing how Israel is prepared to support the idea of a Palestinian state, the PM told congress: "*We stand together to support Peace*".²

The Congress cheered as the Prime Minister gave a hearty "*Congratulations Mr. Obama, you got Bin Laden*"! Neatly sidestepping Israel's own lack of responsibility in not getting rid of it's own "Bin Laden". Instead giving a dangerous enemy legitimacy and statehood with which to make more terror against the Jewish people. With which Mr. Netanyahu even said a hearty: "*Good Riddance!*" as if

to applaud the US for it's heroic war on terror.

The Chabad rally took place in front of the Congressional office building next to the Capitol Building. There, AIPAC delegates and visitors from all over the United States, many of them Orthodox Jews, were being ushered in to meet US Congressmen. Outside next to the line of delegates, a menagerie of Anti-Israel hate groups had set up "shop". Most prominent were the chevreh from Netura Karta who partnered with a radical group called: "Code Pink" which promotes Israel Apartheid week across the US and Canada. "Code Pink" features a Holocaust Survivor Hedy Epstein who was brought to England early in the war with the famous Kinder-transport.

This Hedy Goldstein grew up in England completely ignorant of her heritage, oblivious to the fact that her parents were murdered because of the kind of anti-Semitism she supports. In 1941, Hedy's father was sent to his death at Camp les Milles in France. Her mother was sent to her death in Auschwitz in 1942.

In spite of knowing this, Hedy is today an ardent anti-Israel protester viewing Jews and Israel as "oppressors". Truly believing

and equating the genocidal cause she espouses with the Jewish demonization and suffering her parents died for.

Does Hedy know that the Arab and Palestinian nationalist movements began in the 1930's at Hitler's request? Does she know that Hitler anticipated conquering all of the Middle East and had sent emissaries of Nazi theology to foment their philosophy in the countries of the Middle East?

Hedy probably is also not knowledgeable about Arafat's real name: "Husseini" and that he is a relative of the famous Mufti of Jerusalem, and in fact looked up to him as a mentor. The Mufti spent the war years in Germany helping Hitler to recruit and train Muslim troops. These same troops were later used against Israel in 1948 and became the basis for the various emerging military governments of the Middle East whose military was further trained and polished by Hitler's officers escaping justice after World War II.

With them came not only their goose-stepping, but also their fanatic genocidal hatred of Jews. This has culminated today in the deceitful agreements Israel was tricked into accepting by its weak leadership who insist on honoring these unfulfillable agreements.

Fulfillable yes, as long as the Jews in the Land of Israel would kindly cease to exist. This is evidenced by the emblems of each of the various Arab terror groups which each portray an image of the whole land of Eretz Yisroel under their dominion, and not just the little parts Israel imagines its Arab brothers will be satisfied with.

This Jew hating group, which Hedy credentials, pickets



“Passing AIPAC delegates assumed that the Chabadniks were “anti-Israel” until they saw the Moshiah flag waving and read the protest signs saying “The Land of Israel Belongs to the Jews” and “Land Concessions only bring more Terror!”

stores selling Israeli products and promotes Israel apartheid week. Each picket destroys more Israeli business and lambastes Jews. Hedy's group even hosted the famous anti-Semitic former White House Press corps person Helen Thomas to speak Sunday night at the AIPAC protest.

At the Congressional office building, AIPAC delegates streamed past Chabad protesters to meet US Congressmen. Most religious Jews are quite unaware that AIPAC is actually “Pro-Peace” having adopted this position in 2005 and actively promotes disengagement and the formation of an Arab terror state as a legitimate means to leverage aid for Israel.

On the other side of the line were Hedy Epstein's protesters dressed in Pink. Next to them were Netura Karta wearing Palestinian flags on their lapels. Both groups were chanting

similar messages. In fact at one point the leaders of the two groups met and with cameras going had a discussion of similar interests. It was unfortunate to see where a group of Jews so far from teachings of the Baal Shem Tov could go. Sinking to a point where they call for the destruction of Jews.

A visitor from Baltimore, Rabbi Yeshia Friedman of the “Ari Shul” of Baltimore was passing by and started a Chassidic dance. Soon all the Chabad protestors were dancing and everyone stopped yelling and sign shaking to see what “shtick” the Chabadniks were doing. The cameras came to take pictures and from that came various interviews on Chinese and Turkish TV. Even CBS had a camera there.

Rabbi Yehuda Friedman of Chabad of Mill Basin asked a man who approached him to



put on T'fillin. After this there were more "customers". Soon, a Chinese TV crew found Rabbi Noach Bernstein of Iggud HaRabbanim and they were curious to know why Chassidic Jews would call for Israel's destruction. Explaining that we are not the Netura Crazies, (who the protesters were forced to stand near) Rabbi Bernstein explained the Rebbe's take on what Israel should be doing. The same happened next with the Turkish TV cameramen.

Passing AIPAC delegates assumed that the Chabadniks were "anti-Israel" until they saw the Moshiah flag waving and read the protest signs saying "The Land of Israel Belongs to the Jews" and "Land Concessions only bring more Terror!" and similar messages. Slowly the bachurim started putting T'fillin on passing delegates and explaining the Rebbe's "Peace Plan".

Even various of the Neturei Karta were seen to be quietly leaning over to listen attentively to an explanation of Chassidus that Rabbi Bernstein was giving to a man putting on T'fillin. It is generally taken for granted that because a person dresses like a Chassid so it must be that he learns Chassidus too! This is not at all the case with most Chassidic groups. In fact most of them are quite eager for a word of divrei ha Baal Shem Tov.

The AIPAC delegates were anxious to find a voice of reason amongst all the hatred. Groups of delegates soon surrounded Chabadniks discussing Israel's current crisis and listening to the Rebbe's opinion. Most did not disagree with the Rebbe's premise that Jewish safety must come first and that the "Land for Peace" plan only brings more terror.

They simply disagreed that Israel could dare be considered the "culprit" and responsible party.

As the Rebbe explains³, that if a Jewish border town in a non-Jewish country is attacked on Shabbos, Jewish law demands that one break every law of Shabbos to save Jewish lives. Even if there is only a doubt of what they came for.

How much more so for the Land of Israel, which is a Jewish Land and the enemy, is well known. Most delegates were there because they feel the crisis and seek leadership. Most truly feel that even though Israel is walking its own people down a dangerous path and perhaps into the sea, but still one must not speak against the organized institution of the State of Israel.

Many of the AIPAC delegates were Orthodox, which only added to the confusion. Seemingly they put their faith in the government of Israel instead of in their Rabbis.

Unfortunately there were even some (nebach) Chabadnik's amongst them obviously unaware that AIPAC's position since May 22, 2005 has been to support the U.S. Government's backing of Israel's initiative to disengage from the Gaza Strip and parts of the West Bank / Samaria and to ensure that the United States and the international community provide the necessary support for that initiative to succeed.

As "Peace Now" reports on its website: 4(May 23, 2005) Washington, D.C.

Americans for Peace Now (APN) today welcomed a new policy position in favor of Israel's disengagement plan that was formally adopted this morning as part of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee's (AIPAC) 2005 Action Agenda.

The language states that one of AIPAC's priorities in the coming year is "supporting the U.S. Government's backing of Israel's initiative to disengage from the Gaza Strip and parts of the West Bank/Samaria [sic] and ensuring that the United States and the international community provide the necessary support for that initiative to succeed." APN is a Jewish, Zionist organization that works to enhance Israel's security through peace and to support the Israeli Peace Now movement.³

Going to AIPAC's website, one wonders if today, they are still "Pro-Peace"? After all, so much has happened since 2005 to prove that "Peace for Land" is not a viable option. We find for 2010, an interesting document: **"Key Principles of the Peace Process"**⁵. In this document, AIPAC encourages the United States to continue in the quest for Arab Israeli Peace. Basically, nothing seems to have changed as one of the Key Principles states: **"The issues to be resolved—borders, settlements, Jerusalem, refugees and security—are difficult and will require sustained effort and compromise."**⁴

Why is Israel with so little Land, always asked by its own government to compromise? Why does "Peace" require compromise? Even if there is compromise why must it be with concessions of strategic land and resources? What sort of leadership is this that could even conceive of compromising Israel's security and Jewish safety as a viable option?

One can be upset at misguided Neturei Karta, but one is left to wonder: "What is Israel's own government doing that is any better?"

Israel appears to be stuck with

a leadership that feels national suicide is a justifiable and viable option, good for national policy.

Perhaps Chassidus provides the answer as our Parsha says,; "Raise up the Head of the B'nei Yisroel". This "Nesias Rosh" then raises the body. Chassidus explains that this happens in the spiritual realms just as it happens in the physical. By picking up our "spiritual head" our "Chabad", so this affects that the physical body of "B'nei Yisroel", the Jewish people is picked up as well.

Everyone today is looking for a leader. Everyone knows something can be done and must be done, but what?

On one side is the sea. On the other, the enemy. There are those who say: "Lets fight". There are those who say: "Lets pray". Others say: "Lets return to being slaves". "Back to Galus..."

We have a prophet, a Navi, a Moshe Rabbeinu who says: "Yidden forward! On to Mount Sinai! We are on the way to receive the Torah". Is it logical that we should jump into the sea, expecting it to split? But this is what happens. And why? Because we were on the way to Mattan Torah. Something beyond logic.

Here the case is stronger, not only faith but logic too are on our side. Logically, one can see that walking away from negotiations about "Land for Peace" is the

right thing to do. Instead people are asked by AIPAC and Israel to go beyond logic and believe in a false dream that has no basis in Torah and no basis in logic. This is something not only our Torah would never ask of a person, but indeed warns us against.

How can we for a moment think this is any form of Jewish leadership?

Instead, we each have to be the ones who proclaim G-d to be king and our Rabbanim to be the true purveyors of what Eretz Yisroel's destiny should be. Not to leave it in the hands and whims of people who could care less if Jews lived or died and who feel that the Land of Israel is a land like any other.

This will only happen with the active involvement of Orthodox Jewry protesting, demanding and advocating for a Safe Israel with all of her borders. More specifically it is our "Princes of Torah" the Rabbis who now have the ability to guide the Jewish people out of the mess created by 63 years of confused leadership and to bring a true peace for Jews of the Holy Land.

This is why the Torah puts on each of us: "Se'u es Rosh B'nei Yisroel", raise up the head! Not just personally to crown G-d to be our king each day as we do Rosh Hashanah, but to crown our princes of Torah, our

Rabbanim Shlita and empower them to guide us into the era of a religious Land of Israel where "Peace" comes from the one who is Heitev Lanu, Meitev Lanu, and Yeitev Lanu. He is good, He makes good and He will be good.

As it says: "Ein Tov Ela Torah" There is no other "good" than the Torah! Therefore the Torah is called "Torat Shalom" a "Torah of Peace", not just for Jews but for all nations. May we see this soon with Moshiach Tzidkeinu. Ken Yehi Ratzon.

raanan@chabad4israel.org; see website: www.chabad4israel.org

Crown Hts CSH will be starting an Orthodox Eretz Yisroel Advocacy Training Series. Anyone interested to participate please email shevi@chabad4israel.org

NOTES:

- 1) <http://www.rawstory.com/rs/2011/05/24/netanyahu-israel-willing-to-make-painful-land-concessions-for-peace/>
- 2) telegraph.co.uk/video <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zVLo1tL11Q4>
- 3) Shulchan Aruch Hilchos Shabbos (Laws of Shabbos) chapter 329 – 6&7
- 4) <http://peacenow.org/entries/archive778>
- 5) "Annapolis and Beyond: Key Peace Process Principles – AIPAC" http://www.aipac.org/Publications/AIPACAnalysesIssueBriefs/13-Issue_Brief-Annapolis.pdf (use quick view to open)

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MOSHIACH NOW: MAKING IT REAL

Part 8 – Mivtza Ahavas Yisroel

Rabbi Gershon Avtzon, Dean of the Lubavitcher Yeshiva in Cincinnati

Dear Reader sh'yichyeh:

This week's topic is Mivtza Ahavas Yisroel. It is most appropriate to learn about it at this time of the year, as a preparation for Shavuot. The Torah teaches us that a Jew readies himself for receiving the Torah anew, each year, with happiness and in a personal way, through Jewish unity. We see this from the generation who received the Torah on Har Sinai, about whom the Torah states that they gathered there as one – “Va'yichan” – literally, he camped there, in the singular. Thus, the Jewish nation prepared to receive the Torah by focusing on cultivating genuine Ahavas Yisroel between themselves.

The source for the mitzvah in the Torah is in the verse “Love your fellow Jew as yourself” (Leviticus 19:18). Rabbi Akiva taught that this is the most fundamental principle of the Torah (Yerushalmi, Nedarim 9).

Historically, the Rebbe initiated this special Mivtza on the 18th of Elul, 1976. The Rebbe announced that the 18th of Elul is the birthday of the Baal Shem Tov, who was the founder of Chassidism, and of the Alter Rebbe, who founded the movement of Chabad-Lubavitch. They both sacrificed themselves beyond the letter of the law for the sake of their fellow Jews. We must learn from them and campaign about Ahavas Yisroel.

The Friediker Rebbe writes (HaYom Yom 24 Teves), “My grandfather (R. Shmuel) asked the Tzemach Tzedek: What did Grandfather (the Alter Rebbe) intend with the words “ways of Chassidus” and what did he intend by the term “Chassidus”?

The Tzemach Tzedek answered: The “ways of Chassidus” **are that all Chassidim are to be like one family**, with affection, as Torah teaches. Chassidus is vitality. Chassidus is to bring life and illumination into everything, to shed light even on the undesirable, to become aware of one's own evil exactly as it is, in order to correct it.

The Mitzvah of Ahavas Yisroel is a great segula for the Jewish nation. It is the foundation of the entire Torah. This is evident from the following story related on the Talmud (Shabbos 33a). On one occasion it happened that a certain heathen came before Shammai and said to him, “Make me a proselyte, on the condition that you teach me the whole Torah while I stand on one foot.” At that point, Shammai chased him away with the measuring stick that was in his hand. When he came before Hillel, he also asked Hillel to teach him the entire Torah while standing on one foot. Hillel replied, “What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor. That is the whole Torah, while the rest is

commentary; go and learn it.”

When Jews show love for each other, Hashem is proud and gives the Jewish people new channels of blessing. There is a famous Chassidic story, regarding the power of a Farbrengen, a Chassidic gathering where those who attend give warm blessings to each other. After the Mezritcher Maggid passed away, the Alter Rebbe became a Chassid of R' Menachem Mendel of Horodok. On one occasion, the disciples of R' Menachem Mendel were sitting in Horodok *farbrenging*, and the Alter Rebbe was present. After speaking words of Torah, they began discussing various holy matters, while drinking spirits. In the middle of the *farbrengen*, one of the Chassidim stood up. This individual, *lo aleinu*, suffered a great deal from bad health, and the doctors could not help him. He began to cry, requesting of the other Chassidim to bless him with a complete recovery.

One of the Chassidim began to jest, “As if we have the power to give such blessings! How could you suggest such a stupid idea?” Others complained that he was placing too much faith in simple people, for blessings can only be given by individuals of unique stature, by the righteous of the generation.

But this did not quiet the Chassid. He continued to beg the Chassidim to bless him, pleading



from his heart, with tears flowing from his eyes. Seeing this, the Chassidim started to sing a *niggun*, hoping that this would calm him.

“Quiet!” shouted the Alter Rebbe, stopping the *niggun* abruptly. Even the weeping Chassid stopped sobbing.

“Brothers and friends,” announced the Alter Rebbe, “have you forgotten the teaching that the decrees of holy angels can be annulled by the students of our holy Rebbe? *Dos vos es ken oiftaun a Chassidishe farbrengen ken malach Michael nit oiftaun* – what a Chassidic *farbrengen* can accomplish cannot even be accomplished by the Angel Michael!”

As all those present were reminded of the teaching, they became inflamed with a fire of brotherly love, and they blessed their fellow Chassid with a complete recovery.

On that occasion, the Alter Rebbe explained the concept with an analogy. Children are naturally possessive of their own belongings, and they defend their own property from other children, in a display of selfish character traits. They do not care about others and worry only about their own possessions. This is a source of distress to their father. Therefore, the father hires an educator to train the children with good traits. After a period of time, the father watches his children again and sees them caring for each other, which gives him tremendous pleasure. Now he is much more likely to grant any requests that the children may have.

Chassidus also teaches that an act of goodness or kindness may be the single reason your soul descended into this world. For seventy eight years, the Baal

“Quiet!” shouted the Alter Rebbe, stopping the *niggun* abruptly. Even the weeping Chassid stopped sobbing.

Shem Tov says, a *neshamo*, a soul, may descend to this world solely to do a Jew a material favor and certainly a spiritual one.

Ahavas Yisroel also shows your love of Hashem. The Alter Rebbe repeated what the Mezritcher Maggid said, quoting the Baal Shem Tov: ‘Love your fellow like yourself’ is an interpretation of and commentary on ‘Love Hashem your G-d’. He who loves his fellow-Jew loves G-d, because the Jew has within himself ‘a part of G-d Above’. Therefore, when one loves a fellow Jew – i.e., his inner essence – he is loving G-d. (HaYom Yom 12 Av)

Our Chachomim have spelled out the details of the fulfillment of this fundamental mitzvah. Chazal say (Sukka 49b) that Gemilut Chesed (loving-kindness) is greater than charity in three ways. Charity is done with one’s money, while loving-kindness may be done with one’s money or with one’s person (e.g., spending time with a sick person). Charity is given only to the poor, while loving-kindness may be given both to the poor and to the rich (e.g., consoling one who is in mourning or depressed). Charity is given only to the living, while loving-kindness may be shown to both the living and the dead (e.g., by arranging a proper burial for a person who died impoverished).

The Rambam writes in Hilchos Deios, “It is a commandment, incumbent upon every Jew, to love every single Jew as he loves himself, as the Torah says, ‘And you will love your fellow Jew as yourself’

(Leviticus 19:18). Therefore, each person must speak in praise of the other, and have concern about the property or money of the other, just as he has concern about his own property or money and wants honor for himself. One who takes honor by the humiliation of another Jew has no portion in the World to Come.”

Finally, the mitzvah of Ahavas Yisroel is directly related to Moshiach.

The mitzvah of Ahavas Yisroel is the mitzvah that hastens the coming of Moshiach. The first *Beis HaMikdash* lasted for 410 years and was destroyed because of idol worship. The Jews were expelled from Israel and experienced a relatively short exile in Babylonia. 72 years later, Ezra returned with them to Israel and built the Second *Beis HaMikdash*, which lasted 420 years, but was consequently destroyed by the sin of causeless hatred (Talmud Yoma 96b). This second destruction has left us in the present exile for over two thousand years. Idol worship was the cause of an exile that lasted for 70 years, yet the sin of hating other Jews for no reason has caused an exile that is still in continuation for over two thousand years! Clearly, therefore, the sin of hating a fellow Jew is, in a sense, greater than that of idol worship. The Rebbe has explained that Moshiach will be brought by the opposite of this sin, unconditional love, which is the true fulfillment of the mitzvah of ahavas Yisroel.

The Rebbe added to the

above (Shabbos Matos-Massei 5751): "As mentioned, this directive of Ahavas Yisroel is particularly relevant at present, for we now need to accustom ourselves to the spirit of the Redemption. Previously it had been explained that an emphasis on Ahavas Yisroel was necessary as a preparation for the Era of Redemption. Since the exile came about because of unwarranted hatred, we would nullify the reason for the exile by spreading love among our people. This in turn would cause the exile itself to cease.

"Since, however, to borrow an expression used by the Previous Rebbe, we have already completed all the spiritual service necessary to bring Moshiach, to the point that "we have even polished the buttons," we can assume that the reason for the exile has also been eradicated already. **At present, therefore, the emphasis on Ahavas Yisroel comes primarily as a foretaste of the Era of the Redemption.**"

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