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## BEIS MOSHIACH

744 Eastern Parkway  
Brooklyn, NY 11213-3409

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

**EDITOR-IN-CHIEF:**  
M.M. Hendel

**HEBREW EDITOR:**  
Rabbi S.Y. Chazan  
editorH@beismoshiach.org

**ENGLISH EDITOR:**  
Boruch Merkur  
editor@beismoshiach.org

**ASSISTANT EDITOR:**  
Berel Goldberg

# WE CAN'T WAIT ANOTHER 1900 YEARS!

There has never been such a thing that a person should have the audacity to openly say that Jews could remain steeped in an exile such as this for another 1900 years!

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Translated by Boruch Merkur

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## THERE HAS NEVER BEEN SUCH A THING BEFORE

With regard to what has been spoken about of late – that a Jew must scream “*ad masai?!?*” when will this exile end and the redemption finally arrive? – the Evil Inclination brings “proof from the Torah” that it is not necessary to do so since this is not our approach and it is not a requirement outlined in the *Shulchan Aruch*, the *Code of Jewish Law*.

He goes on to argue that although Jews say “*achakeh lo b'chol yom sh'yavo*,” the meaning of this phrase is that “every day I await his arrival” – but who knows when that will be, when Moshiach will finally come?!

The redemption is so remote – he argues – that it is plausible that Moshiach could come in another 1900 years, may G-d have mercy upon us! Just as the exile lasted 1900 years until now, so it is possible – he reasons – that it could continue for another 1900 years, G-d spare us!

There has never been such a thing that a person should have the audacity to openly say that Jews could remain steeped in an exile such as this for another 1900 years!

Yet no one opens a mouth to respond...

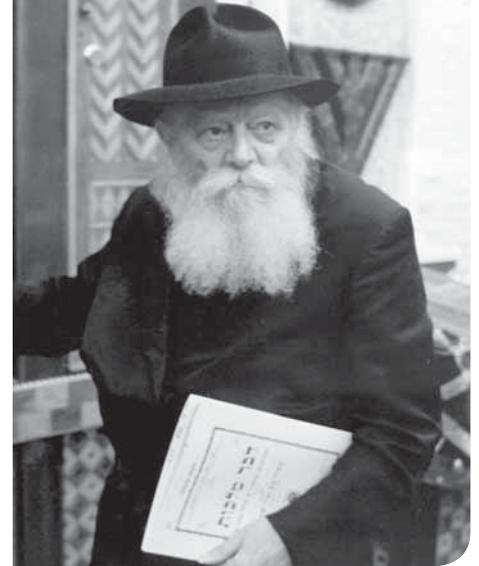
## WHY ARE YOU SPEECHLESS?!

The wonder is even greater:

When asking Chabadniks, who study Chassidus and are impassioned about doing those things that bring about the redemption, what is the source for the need to cry out “*ad masai?!?*” and to ask that Moshiach should come immediately – he is utterly confounded, unable to offer a response.

Why are you speechless? More than a hundred and one times we have spoken about the proofs for a Jew asking that Moshiach should come today – not in a few months, and certainly not in a few years, G-d have mercy, but that Moshiach should come at once!

In general terms, it is written, “I will hasten it [i.e., the redemption],” regarding which the Gemara states, “All the predicted dates [for the advent of Moshiach] have passed and the matter is only dependent upon *t'shuva*, repentance.” That being the case, do *t'shuva* and thereby bring the redemption!



But you say that you are too apathetic to do *t'shuva*? [There is hope for you to change, as the Sages teach] if you seek, you shall find (Megilla 6b, beg., paraphrased). Exert yourself until you do *t'shuva*, and in so doing, “immediately they are redeemed” (as Rambam rules in Laws of T'shuva 7:5)!

## WHEN THE MAIN PROOF IS ESTABLISHED, IT ALL FALLS INTO PLACE

But to respond directly to this question – that “*achakeh lo b'chol yom sh'yavo*” can be interpreted to mean that “every day I await his arrival,” which could be after much time has passed but not literally today – this is not a difficulty at all. The answer, however, requires the following preface.

It is not uncommon to find that several proofs are brought to explain concepts in Torah, but it is understood that first, the fundamental, primary proof is brought, whereas the subsequent proofs are supplementary, providing an alternate line of reasoning. These proofs are tangential to the main proof and are typically introduced by the well known expression, “*V'od yesh lomar*,”

“additionally we may posit,” or in the Mishnaic lexicon (found in several places in Pirkei Avos, regarding which, “there are those who are accustomed to study in this season, on the Shabbasos throughout the summer), “*v’omer*,” “and it (also) says.”

From this it is understood that at times, the additional proof on its own is not so compelling. After all, there is an alternative explanation (and thus it is not a veritable proof for the topic at hand). However, first citing the main proof reveals the correct meaning [and context] of the alternative proof, and then it is seen how it too can be used as a proof.

Similarly in our case:

On several occasions it has been asserted that the foundational and primary proof for the need to believe in, to hope for, and to pray for Moshiach to come literally today is not derived from “*achakeh lo b’chol yom sh’yavo*, (every day I await his arrival).” It is, rather, an alternative, supplementary proof, the main proof being another source (as will be discussed). “*Achakeh lo b’chol yom sh’yavo*” can indeed be interpreted in two ways: 1) “Every day I await his arrival” each day [i.e., every day I anticipate that Moshiach will come today]; 2) “Every day I await his arrival,” which could take place after a considerable duration of time has passed (may G-d have mercy). It is only after the main and primary proof for the matter is known that it is apparent that the correct interpretation of “*achakeh lo b’chol yom sh’yavo*” means anticipating that Moshiach should come literally today.

## THE PRIMARY PROOF

The main proof for this belief are the words of prayer that every Jew says daily in the Shmoneh Esrei, “Speedily cause the scion of Dovid, Your servant, to flourish, for we hope for Your salvation all day,” and “May our eyes behold Your return to Tziyon in mercy,” which is said also on Shabbos and Yom Tov.

That is, when we say, “for we hope for Your salvation all day,” during the Afternoon Prayer (for example) we don’t mean to ask for our salvation to arrive later on, after an indeterminate passage of time, certainly not in another 1900 years (may G-d spare us)! Rather, the intent is that our salvation should be literally today, this very moment – “**Speedily** cause the scion of Dovid, Your servant, to flourish,” “**May our eyes** (not the eyes of people from another generation) behold Your return to Tziyon in mercy”!

Were it the case that the intent is that the salvation should come after who knows how long, why is that once again we make this request in the Evening Prayer, which happens to be “voluntary”?! Certainly the intent then in the Afternoon Prayer is that our salvation should happen immediately, and when it is time for the Evening Prayer, and Moshiach has still been delayed, G-d forbid, we again pray, “we hope for Your salvation all day,” asking G-d for Moshiach to come now!

## WHEN IT COMES TO ONE’S PERSONAL HEALTH...

The truth of the matter is, though, that no explanations or reasons are required.

When you ask a Jew who is ill, may G-d preserve us, what

his wishes are regarding his health and his personal salvation, whether by “Every day I await his arrival” (and the like) he means that his healing and salvation should arrive in another 1900 years, it is readily understood and obvious what he would answer; no thought is needed to figure out that he wants to be healed from his illness immediately!

So too, it is obvious regarding the sickness of the Jewish people at large, the exile. That is, when we pray, “for we hope for Your salvation all day,” the intent is not for salvation after another 1900 years but right now, immediately!

Just as in the ruling of Rambam, “The Torah promises that in the end, the Jewish people will do *t’shuva* at the end of their exile and immediately they will be redeemed,” it is certain that “immediately” in Torah law means at least on that day. There is room to investigate as to whether “immediately” could mean the time it takes to walk the distance of a *mil* – be it 18 or 24 minutes – but certainly it means some time on that day.

This is in accordance with what was said above regarding the prayer, “Speedily cause the scion of Dovid, Your servant, to flourish,” the “speedily” certainly means on the same day, not after an indeterminate period of time.

And as said above, “All the predicted dates have passed and the matter is only dependent upon *t’shuva*,” meaning that the matter is in the hands of the Jewish people; if Jews do *t’shuva*, then “immediately they are redeemed,” and if we want, it can be in but an hour, in a single moment!

(From the address of Shabbos Parshas Eikev 5744, *bilti muga*)

# A SHIDDUCHIM PANEL

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A panel consisting of one mother who has married off twelve children and two shadchanits, who have married off children of their own as well, answer questions about the shidduch process. \* Dedicated to all the parents whose children have come of age, and presented for the 15<sup>th</sup> of Av, when “the daughters of Yerushalayim would go dance in the vineyards” and “whoever did not have a wife would go there” to find himself a bride.

By Molly Kupchik

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A mother once told me, “It was a spiritual process. With the first one, we thought we were the ones making the shidduch. However, we soon discovered that Hashem, the third partner in the creation of our child, is also very involved. With the second shidduch, we realized that Hashem did the work while we helped a little bit. With the third shidduch, we came to the conclusion that Hashem makes the shidduch and our job is not to interfere.”

Nevertheless, spirituality aside, the task of marrying off a child can be a daunting one to many parents. Since parents often have many questions about shidduchim, especially when they seek to marry off their oldest child and do not yet have experience, the guidance of experts and other parents who have already married off children is invaluable.

I spoke with Mrs. Slava Rainitz of Lud who married off twelve of her children, and with two shadchanits, Mrs. Malka Cohen and Mrs. Nitza Amitai of Kfar Chabad. They have not only made many shidduchim, but have married off children of their own.

**When should Lubavitcher parents begin looking into shidduchim?**

**Malka Cohen:** The norm for Israeli boys is a year after K’vutza, the year spent learning in 770 for Americans, or when they finish shlichus, which is usually around 21-22. Ultimately, there is no firm and fast rule, and it depends on the bachur. Some feel ready at 20, and some are not yet interested at 24. It all depends on the degree of emotional readiness, spiritual readiness, and interest.

As for girls, some continue

their studies after high school and find it challenging to deal with schoolwork and shidduchim simultaneously. On the other hand, there are certain girls to whom I would definitely give extra encouragement to get started. You have to take into consideration that there are more girls than there are boys, so when a good idea comes up, it is worth following up on it. Of course, these options are considered only if the girl is actually ready.

My daughter got married at 18, and I see that it was good for her. I recommend that girls who are not continuing on to seminary should be in some form of positive structure. In our case, marriage was the structure for her.

**Nitza Amitai:** You need to ask the boy or girl and see where they are holding.



For a bachur, it depends on whether he sincerely wants to continue learning, complete some serious projects or go on shlichus. If the reason for postponement is al taharas ha'kodesh, there is no reason to push him into a shidduch, but to all the worried parents I say: Do not worry! When the boy or girl is ready, they will let you know. Just let things follow their natural course.

**A Shadchan suggests a good shidduch. What should I ask, how much should I ask, and whom should I ask?**

**Malka Cohen:** The most important things to check are emotional stability, health, level of religious commitment, and family background. If the family has married off other children, who are their in-laws? Did they go through the system in the usual way?

“ It is very important to check Yiras Shamayim. Most of all, as a parent, you need to look for what is good for the child, not what YOU think YOU want as a spouse for your child.

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It is very important to check Yiras Shamayim. If it is lacking, it will be very hard to build a proper Chassidishe home. Most of all, as a parent, you need to look for what is good for the child, not what **you** think **you** want as a spouse for your child.

As far as how much a parent should research, personally, I do it differently than others. Some people make dozens of calls and spend months doing research. My husband and I have married off four children, and I never called more than three or four information sources for each. If the answers seem satisfactory,

I ask the Rebbe. If I open to a positive answer in the Igros Kodesh, we go ahead with the match.

It also depends on who is suggesting the shidduch. If the one who suggests the shidduch is a shadchan who provides a “shopping list” while she herself does not have information, then the parents’ research needs to be more serious. Obviously, if the one suggesting the shidduch knows both sides well, that is another story.

I make inquiries of the staff or principal of the school that

## SHIDDUCHIM STORIES

Mrs. Slava Rainitz relates:

Since my shidduch with my husband, I see how it is all from Shamayim. This is my perspective when it comes to shidduchim for my children.

I do not come from a Lubavitcher home, therefore, I did not want to marry someone with a beard. When my husband was suggested as a shidduch and I met him, I simply did not see the beard or the Yerushalmi coat he wore. It was only a few months after we got married that I remembered the things I did not want and I laughed, because I did not want a Lubavitcher either. Boruch Hashem, I am happily married.

Mrs. Nitza Amitai relates:

I worked with a boy for whom it was very important to marry a pretty girl. I looked for someone for him but he ended up marrying someone who is far from what anyone would describe as pretty. He once asked me, “Isn’t she pretty?” Until this day, he is sure he married a beauty.

\*\*\*

I met a very tall bachur, over six feet, and a petite girl who was barely five feet tall. I did not consider suggesting this shidduch. The end of the story is that someone who did not know either of them made the shidduch, and they are happily married. It often happens that our assumptions are wrong.

\*\*\*

I once made a shidduch between a couple where everything seemed right. The families were similar, the backgrounds were similar, and all was well. The couple was given an apartment and whatever else they needed. Unfortunately, though, they began quarreling during the Sheva Brachos and ended up divorcing despite being so well matched.

They each remarried. The girl married someone from a simple family and from a completely different ethnic background, and she is happily married. She would never have considered a shidduch like this if not for her being divorced.

Mrs. Malka Cohen relates:

I like to call the following story, “My Shidduch Dream.”

I usually disconnect the phone at eleven at night. One night, I forgot to unplug it. After I fell asleep, a rav from B’nei Brak called me to ask if I had a shidduch idea for a certain bachur.

I told him I was sleeping and he should call another time, but he insisted that I mention some names. So half asleep, I threw out some names. He asked me which one I thought was best. I told him my opinion and hung up, and promptly forgot the conversation.

Two weeks later, a girl asked me whether I had given her phone number to a rabbi in B’nei Brak. I asked her to which bachur she was referring. She said his name, but it did not mean anything to me.

She said they had met a few times and it was moving along nicely. In the end, they became engaged. I was invited to the vort as the shadchan on the kalla’s side. I wrote down the wrong date in my daily planner and missed the vort. I did not attend the wedding, because I had another wedding that same night. I did not manage to make it to their son’s bris either. With the pidyon ha’ben in just a few days, I decided that I absolutely had to attend in order to see the shidduch I had made!

I went, and I saw why the shidduch had to come about the way it did, because I never would have put the two of them together otherwise. They were from completely different backgrounds, countries and ethnic groups, and nevertheless, they were happily married and were on shlichus.

Until this day, I do not know who the rabbi from B’nei Brak was, but the story proved that this shidduch did not come about because of my brilliant idea, but because Hashem runs the show and made me the shliach.

Another story happened to me before I became a shadchan. An orphaned bachur asked me to store his piano in our large room because he was moving. My husband and I agreed. Every now and then, he would come and visit his piano.

One time, a baalas t’shuva came to me and asked whether I knew a vegetarian Lubavitcher that I could suggest for her. Just at that moment, the bachur knocked at the door. When he walked in, I said to her, “Here’s a fellow for you.” They dated and eventually married. It was a story of clear Hashgacha Pratis.

the girl attended. There are also neighbors and people in the community where the family lives that can give me reliable

information. I do not like asking the girl’s friends, because a girl’s perspective is not as mature as that of someone older.

**Nitza Amitai:** You need to get as much information as you can about a girl, her family and her schooling from her teachers and

friends. You also need to find out whether the extended family suits your child.

You need to remember that even within Chabad there are many types such as Ashkenazim and Sephardim, for example. Some parents want only one or the other. Within the Eidos HaMizrach there are Yemenites, Bucharim, Georgians, Moroccans, etc. Generally, each group marries their own kind. It is preferable to try and find someone whose background is similar to yours.

When you hear a shidduch suggestion, you should ask for references. However, do not feel compelled to make so many phone calls that you find yourself with too much information! Sometimes the wrong people are asked, such as people who have do not have a positive relationship with the family, and you will get skewed information. After making reasonable inquiries, allow the couple to meet to see whether they hit it off or not.

The bottom line is that a parent ought to keep in mind that it is all in the hands of Heaven. We are just shluchim, small cogs in the giant machine of Hashgachas Hashem. Therefore, we should have faith, write to the Rebbe, pray a lot, give tz'daka and ask Hashem for Siyata d'Shmaya.

**Slava Rainitz:** I do not check as far back as the preschool teacher, though some want to know what the suggested person

was like when he or she was little. I do not think that is appropriate. My husband, who is a madrich in a high school in Lud, says that sometimes a bachur at that age is very immature, but later on, he grows up and becomes a mature adult. Why check back to such an early age? A person's character and personality are generally formed by age 18 and older, and the inquiries should start from there.

Personally, I call two or three people or maybe more to inquire about good middos, Yiras Shamayim, Chassidishkait, humility and tznius. I ask who the person's friends are, and about the parents and family in general. I will also ask how the parents get along, which is important for me to know.

If I get two or three good reports, I do not continue making inquiries, because I believe that a person's true match is decreed in Heaven.

**How should a parent prepare her child for his or her first meeting?**

**Malka Cohen:** Explain that the purpose of the first meeting is merely to get acquainted, to discover if he or she finds the other person to be pleasant company. There is no need to disclose personal information that he or she would not want a stranger to know. After all, this may be the first and last time that the couple will meet.

The second meeting can include more meaningful topics,

and a third meeting would cover plans for the future, shlichus etc.

The purpose of the meetings is to see if there is easy communication and attraction between the boy and girl.

**Nitza Amitai:** I give the children books to read on the topic of shidduchim and marriage. Before the actual meeting, I give them some dating tips such as how to talk and listen, to know how to be a good listener for the member of the opposite gender. When a boy or girl has never been exposed to the world of the other, they need some background in order to be well prepared for the encounter.

The purpose of meeting is to become acquainted, to gather general information that will provide a basis for communication. It is nice to say a D'var Torah, something from the parsha or the HaYom Yom. It is important that each one let the other talk.

“ It is important that they understand that they are meeting for the purpose of marriage. It is not simply to have a good time. It is a meeting with a serious agenda, and their conversation should reflect this.



It is important that they understand that they are meeting for the purpose of marriage. It is not simply to have a good time. It is a meeting with a serious agenda, and their conversation should reflect this.

**Slava Rainitz:** I tell my children that before they go out on a date, they should have a good feeling about it. When the atmosphere is pleasant, even occasional silences are okay. The point is to check how you feel about the other person.

The focus should be that no matter what we do, Hashem is the one guiding us. We are just making the keili for Hashem's brachos in order to do our part. We should not approach the matter of shidduchim with the feeling that we run the world.

The first date is definitely about finding common ground. You talk about your family and people you know in common. After they meet, I try to guide the boy or girl by asking how he or she felt about it. If he or she doesn't know, then the couple should meet another time or two. If they still do not have a positive feeling about it, they should drop the shidduch. If it is the right shidduch, Hashem will give you the positive feeling for it.

When my husband was a bachur in shidduchim, he asked the Rebbe how he could know if a girl would be for him when he knew very well that for shidduch meetings, people present themselves in the nicest possible way. The Rebbe wrote him that hamshachas ha'lev (lit. attraction of the heart) plays a role. As to the question he raised, he should try to make an honest assessment and conduct himself according to that assessment. Therefore, we see that a feeling of attraction is very important.

On subsequent dates, I encourage them to find out the other person's vision of the home he or she wants to build, and his or her thoughts about chinuch and other important matters.

**My daughter meets a bachur several times and everything seems to fit our criteria. He is a yerei Shamayim, learned, and has all the qualities she wants. However, she is very hesitant about him personally and feels she does not know whether he is her zivug. Should I intervene and take the responsibility to finalize this shidduch?**

**Malka Cohen:** You first have to ascertain whether there was enough time in between dates and enough dates to make a decision. If necessary, they should meet again. If they met enough times, I would recommend taking a break for a while, as the Rebbe advises. The purpose of the break is to see how they feel about not seeing one another. If they find they are interested in seeing one another, they should meet again. I would not allow it to drag out much longer. It is not fair to the other party.

If the information sounds right and after the first meeting, yet they are not enthusiastic, I would push them to meet again. It is often the case that a couple will meet one time, and the match does not seem to be anything special. However, when they meet again, their feelings change. If we had not agreed to meet again, my husband and I would not be married today.

**Nitza Amitai:** You must give this serious thought and not rush anything. If the boy or girl wants to meet again, they should. They can also consider taking a break, in which case it is easier to see whether there is any interest in seeing one another again or if

they feel relieved that it is over. There should be no pressure.

Sometimes, if the doubts are due to the feeling of being in uncharted waters, you can and should encourage the couple. If things are just not progressing after several dates, consult with a rav and mashpia. In any case, there should never be any pressure!

**Slava Rainitz:** I have never pressured anyone to finalize a shidduch. I am well aware of situations in which the parties involved needed to be pushed. Remember, another person can often add a different perspective. Sometimes an older married sibling can provide that encouragement and gentle nudge.

If one of my children meets someone three or four times and is still hesitant, I advise that they drop that shidduch and move on.

**My son has had suggestions of excellent girls, but they are from families who are very different from ours. For example, one girl was educated in religious though not Lubavitch schools, another girl is from an irreligious home, a third girl's parents are not supportive enough of her lifestyle. The question is, how much weight should we give to the girl's qualities versus family issues that are not very positive?**

**Malka Cohen:** A family that is not supportive is a red light to me. This is very important, since it can affect the relationship with the couple, with the mechutanim, and later on, with the grandchildren. I consider this a more serious problem than many other things. Many divorces have taken place because of tensions arising from this kind of situation.

It is much easier and simpler

when the families have similar backgrounds and outlooks on life. Rashi says that one should check out the girl's brothers, because the children will generally be like them. On the other hand, we do see that Yitzchok married Rivka, despite her brother Lavan the Aramite. Many factors need to be considered.

**Nitza Amitai:** I consider both the girl and the family to be of serious concern. Some people say that they do not think the family is an important factor in their decision, because it is the boy or girl who really matters. That is not true. The family is very important, because they raised that boy or girl.

In many instances, when there are big differences between families, problems crop up later between the couple. For example, when a family is not religiously observant, if the parents mix in and their child is dependent and close with them, you can assume that you will hear, "Your parents ... my parents ...." It is not a good recipe for communication. However, if the child is a) not that close with his or her parents, b) the parents respect their child's choices, and c) the children set boundaries regarding how involved the parents will be, then that is a different story.

**Slava Rainitz:** The first order of priority is the boy or girl, but there is no question that the family is important too. If the boy or girl did not attend Chabad schools, we do not pursue that suggestion. It is very important to us that the family be Lubavitch through and through. As for baalei t'shuva, we have two sons-in-law who are baalei t'shuva, but they learned in Chabad institutions.

**My husband and I want the entire shidduch process to be**



“The recipe for success in shidduchim is to be mekushar to the Rebbe, to daven a lot, give tz'daka before every shidduch, and to focus on the truth.

**done according to the Rebbe's guidelines. My son/daughter is living elsewhere at the moment, and wants more freedom in making decisions in the dating process. How should we handle that?**

**Malka Cohen:** Distance is not an excuse. You can speak on the phone, you can fax, and there are other ways of communicating. The child has to know that he needs guidance from a parent and mashpia. If he or she does not get along with one of the parents, they should seek professional guidance before marriage and even before dating, because this can affect the couple's relationship. This applies to children who have a single or divorced parent. If the child does not want to include his parents, it shows that something is seriously amiss.

**Nitza Amitai:** If you want

to succeed in following through with a shidduch, you need to follow the Rebbe's instructions. If we are Lubavitchers and we follow the directives of the Rebbe, then we know that a shidduch is the step that must be completed before building a personal Beis HaMikdash where the Sh'china will dwell. That being the case, I will want it to proceed in the proper way.

If the boy or girl wants it both ways i.e. they want more freedom while still being a Lubavitcher, it just does not work. The parents need to say, "First decide who you are. Are you a Chassidische bachur or girl who follows the Rebbe's horaos? Then what you need to do is clear. If not, you are setting yourself up for doubts and problems."

Before meeting a potential spouse, the boy or girl needs to know him or herself! Where are

they holding? What kind of home does he or she want?

**Slava Rainitz:** Personally, I prefer that my children to meet in the house. I know that today this is not the accepted practice so I do not mix in. It is their life. If it is more comfortable for them outside the house, should I not allow them to meet? As long as it does not go against Halacha, I allow it, even if it is not to my liking.

**We have a number of shidduch suggestions, and they all sound interesting. Should I include my son/daughter in the decision as to which one to pursue, or should my husband and I make that decision and only present the suggestion that we chose?**

**Malka Cohen:** The parents should be the ones to sift through the possibilities. If there are two suggestions that both seem promising, you may want to present them to your child. The proper way to do so is to state all the facts about the various suggestions and ask which one he/she thinks is most worthwhile pursuing. Only after you have presented the facts should you say the names, because sometimes a person will be rejected just because of the name.

**Nitza Amitai:** The parents should go through the suggestions first. Do not consult with your son or daughter, because when they hear a bunch of suggestions, it just confuses them. Children appreciate clarity, and when the parents make the decision, the children are inclined to rely on them.

**Slava Rainitz:** I consult with my son or daughter. After all, it is my child's life! Maybe they know things we do not, and their input can be valuable.

I think that if the child is old

enough to get married, he or she is old enough to decide whom to meet! We are not talking about bad ideas, but about reasonable shidduch suggestions.

**What shidduch advice do you have for parents?**

**Malka Cohen:** The Alter Rebbe tells us the reason why "a heavenly voice announces the daughter of so-and-so for so-and-so, forty days before the conception of the child." Chazal teach us this to assure us that the shidduch of our child was already decreed in heaven, and we need to believe that the third Partner is taking care of the child much more than we are. We need to strengthen our belief in hashgacha pratis and then we will see it clearly.

In one of the Rebbe's sichos, that the source of bracha for all shidduchim is t'filla. This we see from Yitzchok Avinu.

**Nitza Amitai:** The recipe for success in shidduchim is to be mekushar to the Rebbe, to daven a lot, give tz'daka before every shidduch, and to focus on the truth.

Parents need to do their utmost, yet not pressure their children. There is absolutely no need for extra tension. This is especially true before the wedding. The children do not need to be involved in matters that ought to remain between the parents. Their parents should not weigh them down with all sorts of technical issues such as picking a hall and an apartment. Let them enjoy this special time and prepare properly for the wedding.

**Slava Rainitz:** My advice to every parent is to believe that it is all from Shamayim and the shidduch was already decreed up above.

Do not be excessively stressed about researching suggesting

shidduchim. Do what you must, and that's all. Shidduchim are not in our hands. You can inquire and hear excellent reports and after the wedding discover things that are less than excellent. You have to really believe that it's all from Shamayim, and even if the shidduch is somewhat delayed, not to feel concerned.

**From the perspective of a shadchan, what do you have to say to parents?**

**Malka Cohen:** Parents need to know that the only job of a shadchan is to make an introduction, i.e. to suggest a name and get the couple to meet, but nothing more than that.

In addition, it is very important to pay the shadchan. You have no idea how much physical, emotional and financial investment goes into a shidduch. It is not easy work and the hours are not convenient either.

**Nitza Amitai:** Before getting involved in a shidduch, parents should decide what it is they want. Everybody wants everything, but you have to order your priorities and know what you are willing to compromise on. The clearer the parents are, the easier it is to do a shidduch. When expectations are not clear, or if there are unrealistic demands, it is much harder.

Likewise, the first rule of shidduchim is to tell the whole truth, even if it is not that pleasant, such as in cases of physical/emotional/mental illness. The truth must be told, at least to the shadchan. You need to rely on her discretion, because it will come out later. Then, problems will ensue that might have been avoided. If you are straight, honest and have faith, the process will be much easier and you will be more successful.

# THE KEY TO THE GATES OF HEAVEN

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Do you want the gates of the Heavenly Chambers to open for you? The way to do it is simple: Help a Jew with *parnasa*. \* A compilation of stories about Shluchim helping Jews with *parnasa* challenges.

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By Rabbi Yaakov Shmuelevitz

Shliach, Beit Shaan

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The Tzemach Tzedek once told his son, “As a reward for helping another Jew with his livelihood, even to earn just 70 kopeks from selling a calf, all the gates of the Heavenly Chambers are open for him.”

The Tzemach Tzedek seems to have chosen the example of a calf not only because of a personal experience, but also because working with animals is considered a lowly profession. The Tzemach Tzedek was emphasizing that even helping someone in such an endeavor opens all the gates to the Heavenly Chambers.

Similarly, the work of shlichus is not just about shiurim and spiritual guidance. Chabad houses provide all sorts of material aid as well. The shluchim do this happily, no less than when providing spiritual assistance.

This week, I will present some stories about shluchim who take this lesson to heart.

## HELPING HUNDREDS OF FAMILIES

Rabbi Meir Kritzevsky, shliach in Beer Sheva, spends most of the day teaching and arranging shiurim not only at his Chabad house, but also at businesses, factories and in the homes of mekuravim. In addition, he helps hundreds of people support themselves with dignity.

At his shiurim, R' Kritzevsky meets factory owners and managers. Sometimes they talk about the many difficulties involved in running a business with hundreds of employees. As soon as the fellow starts complaining, R' Kritzevsky takes out the HaYom Yom and explains what a *z'chus* it is to employ and provide *parnasa* for hundreds of people.

R' Kritzevsky says that as soon as they see the quote from the Tzemach Tzedek, they return to work with a feeling that it

is a shlichus. They are more responsive to the needs of the workers, and they try to hire new employees and minimize layoffs. “After all, the rabbi showed us how helping with *parnasa* opens the gates to the Heavenly Chambers.”

“I was recently sitting at a wedding,” said R' Kritzevsky, “and the manager of a factory that employs 80 people sat down next to me. We began talking about his work, and he told me that his company is in a crisis. He already had to fire some workers and would have to fire some more just to stay afloat. I took out the HaYom Yom about helping someone earn a paltry sum on a calf. I then pointed out that his factory is a source of income for dozens of Jews. I explained to him what a tremendous *z'chus* he has to help these people with *parnasa*. He seemed to listen carefully to what I was saying, and then he commented, ‘You’re right. It is possible to take other steps to increase productivity without firing anyone. That’s what I’ll do.’”

## MY MOTHER SET AN EXAMPLE

R' Kritzevsky explained why he finds helping another Jew with *parnasa* especially meaningful and important:

“I am following in my

## EMULATING YOSEF

When the Rebbe met with the former chief rabbi of Eretz Yisroel, Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu z”l, he spoke about the importance of material aid for every Jew, especially that of parnasa.

“... The material good of the Jewish people must also (and mainly) be provided for because of their Jewish identity, which preceded even the Torah. Therefore, in Chabad we try to be involved in the welfare of the Jewish people and to supply them with all their needs, even material needs. This is not necessarily on condition that they learn Torah, but because these are B’nei and B’nos Yisroel, men, women, and children, whose existence preceded the existence of the entire world, even of Torah .... The aid is for men, women and children as it says by Yosef, ‘and Yosef sustained his father and his brothers and the entire household of his father, with bread according to the little ones,’ according to the needs of every household. Moreover, this is how Jews – who are referred to as Yosef as it says, ‘noheig ka’tzon Yosef’ (Yosef led them like sheep), ‘because he provided for them and sustained them’ – should conduct themselves.”

to write down the man’s name and his mother’s name in order to ask for a bracha for parnasa. When R’ Kurant arrived in 770, he gave the man’s name to the Rebbe’s secretaries. Within a short time, the man opened his own successful business in the same field he had worked in previously. His business was extremely successful. The man told all his friends that his success was in the merit of the Lubavitcher Rebbe’s bracha.

The man tells his customers and suppliers to join the Chabad house of Pardes Chana and Boruch Hashem the number of mekuravim and donors has grown, thanks to him. He himself graciously donates to dozens of families, and has become a key figure among the friends of the Chabad house of Pardes Chana.

## A UNIQUE APPROACH TO SUCCESS IN BUSINESS

Rabbi Rafael Solomon’s shlichus is in the Shomron settlements of Eli and the surrounding area. He helps Jews not only with spiritual guidance, but also with material aid. This is his story.

In one of the yishuvim in the area, there lives a Russian immigrant by the name of Yehuda Stupniker, who is renowned for his work in developing TRIZ, a specialized approach to problem solving in all areas of life. The basic idea of TRIZ is that instead of vanquishing one’s business competition, it is preferable to help one’s competition succeed, because then one’s own business is the most successful of all. Throughout the world, experts in this field are very successful, because the unique services they provide to corporations aid them in the development of their businesses.

“As soon as the fellow starts complaining, R’ Kritzevsky takes out the HaYom Yom and explains what a z’chus it is to employ and provide parnasa for hundreds of people.

mother’s footsteps. My mother a”h founded two employment agencies in Yerushalayim to help people find work. Over a period of ten years, she helped more than 1400 people gain employment. The agencies operated under the auspices of Shamir (Shomrei Mitzvos Yotzei Russia) and Merkaz Gutnick. This was after the Rebbe told Professor Branover in yechidus that the first way of being mekarev Russian Jews is to help them find decent work. My mother would go to work at eight o’clock every morning and work until 7-8 in the evening. I see my work as a continuation and perpetuation of her work.”

## A BRACHA FOR PARNASA

At Pardes Chana, the system is system. Whenever someone

asks Rabbi Yosef Kurant for help in finding a job, he advises him to attend a farbrengen at the Chabad house where a l’chaim will be said in his merit. It works! At Pardes Chana, they know that what a Chassidishe farbrengen can accomplish, even the Angel Michael and the Employment Office cannot accomplish.

R’ Kurant heard about someone experiencing financial difficulties. The man had been a partner in a big business. However, the partnership broke up, and the man had been sitting at home for a year, unemployed. R’ Kurant went to visit him. The man told him about his difficult situation and all his efforts to find a new job that had proven fruitless.

R’ Kurant told him that the next day he would be flying to the Rebbe, and that he had come

This Russian fellow, a mekurav of R' Solomon, is an expert in TRIZ, but he had not yet found a way to make money with it. He was successful when he lectured in all kinds of other sciences, but he had no clients in his own field.

R' Solomon proved to him from Jewish sources and letters from the Rebbe that if Hashem gave him the knowledge of a certain field, he needs to use it and allow others to benefit from it. The man listened attentively and felt encouraged. After additional effort, within a short time Yehuda was invited to give a series of lectures in a number of colleges (Machon Lev, Kfar Giladi, Ariel, and others), at high-tech companies, government offices, and more.

Not long ago, in the center of the country, a large business convention was held, focusing on the subject of TRIZ. Two friends who were also there recognized him from his lectures. They informed the organizers of the event and insisted that he be asked to speak.

Yehuda went up on the stage, told a little about himself as a Lubavitcher Chassid in Russia and Eretz Yisroel, and explained that interestingly, the Rebbe Maharash, who lived 120 years ago, applied the TRIZ method. He related how the Rebbe Maharash once saw his two young sons playing, and one of them tried to climb on his brother in order to be taller than him. The Rebbe called his son over and said, "In order to be taller it is not necessary to lower the other person. It would be better if you climbed up on a chair." That sums up the TRIZ method economically, morally and socially.



“Yehuda went up on the stage . . . and explained that interestingly, the Rebbe Maharash, who lived 120 years ago, applied the TRIZ method. . . “In order to be taller it is not necessary to lower the other person. It would be better if you climbed up on a chair.”

### **PARNASA FACILITATOR IN QUITO, ECUADOR**

Rabbi Tomer Rotem is a shliach in Ecuador. His Chabad house in Quito is a shul and Beis Midrash, as well as an office where employment contracts in a variety of fields are signed. For example, Yossi Shalev is a young Israeli who owns a security firm in the city of Guayaquil, a half hour flight from Quito. Yossi employs dozens of security guards and is always on the lookout for additional companies that need his services.

In a routine meeting with R' Rotem, Yossi heard about someone in Quito who had an oil manufacturing business and needed security guards. R' Rotem introduced them to one another

and negotiations ensued. A few days later, R' Rotem heard they had a difference of opinion and could not come to an agreement. R' Rotem invited both of them to his home. There, in the presence of the rabbi, they agreed on the details and a few dozen more Jews received jobs.

In another case where the rabbi was the go-between between a company and the security firm, there was an armed robbery at the company, which the security guards were unable to prevent. The owner of the business was furious with the security firm and wanted to cancel the contract. R' Rotem entered the picture and successfully made peace between the parties.

# INDEBTED TO REB LEVI YITZCHOK O.B.M.

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Visiting the gravesite of Rabbi Levi Yitzchok was a moving experience for me. First, we went to immerse ourselves in the mikva in the home Yosef, an elderly Lubavitcher. The whole day, we poured out our hearts in prayer at the grave of the Rebbe's father. \* R' Shlomo Aryeh Niasoff of Shikun Chabad in Lud relates his stirring memories, presented in honor of Chaf Av, the yahrtzait of Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Schneersohn.

By Nosson Avrohom

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## PRAYING AT THE GRAVESITE IN ALMA ATA

My connection with the Rebbe began in the middle of 5731/1971. I was living in Tashkent, together with many other Bukharian Jews. The tyrannical Communist regime did not allow people to leave the Soviet Union, certainly not to Eretz Yisroel. When Jews submitted requests to emigrate, in the best of cases, the government would make them jump through all sorts of bureaucratic hoops, and then finally reject their request.

I worked for the Chassid R' Mendel Garelik in a firm where we produced packaging logos for products that were manufactured in factories.

That year I submitted a request to emigrate to Eretz Yisroel. I prayed that those appointed in the emigration department would have pity on me and let me leave. There were



R' Shlomo Aryeh Niasoff

many other Jews who also asked to leave, including R' Garelik. He suggested to me a segula that would help me get an exit visa. He advised that I join him on a trip to Alma Ata to the tziyun of Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Schneersohn, the Rebbe's father. There, we would ask that he arouse mercy for us on High. I jumped at the opportunity, and we left shortly thereafter.

First, we went to immerse ourselves in the mikva in the home Yosef, an elderly Lubavitcher. The whole day, we poured out our hearts in prayer at the grave of the Rebbe's father.

The great neglect in the area of the tziyun saddened me. The grave was located near the graves of gentiles. It was sad to see that the tzaddik was still in galus among gentiles, even after his passing.

That evening I returned home to Tashkent, to my wife and four children, feeling optimistic about our future.



## RENOVATING THE TZIYUN

A mere two days after our visit to Alma Ata, I was shocked to see a letter from the emigration office in my mailbox. They had approved exit visas for my family and me! Many of my neighbors and friends had also asked for permission to leave, yet the government rejected their requests. I was the only one in my close community whose request had been approved.

We lost no time. We quickly packed the barest minimum of necessary belongings and prepared for the trip to the airport.

Meanwhile, the unfortunate situation at the tziyun had bothered other Chassidim like myself, as well as other people who had visited the gravesite. We made a decision to clean it up and to renovate the tziyun itself. First, the Chassidim looked for a Jew who knew how to engrave marble. Such an individual was

“ A mere two days after our visit to Alma Ata, I was shocked to see a letter from the emigration office in my mailbox. They had approved exit visas for my family and me!

not easy to find, because most of the Jews who worked in this profession had already left the country. Working together with the other Chassidim to work out the details of the plans, I remembered an old acquaintance in Tashkent who worked with marble. He was Bucharian, and his name was Rabbi Gavriel Ochunov. I went along with a group of Chassidim to discuss the matter with him, but he refused to do the work. He was sick in bed and suffering from a headache. I tried to convince him by explaining to him the importance of the matter. I also told him how, in the merit of praying at this tzaddik's grave, I had received my exist visa. He

finally agreed to accompany me to Alma Ata where he fixed whatever needed fixing.

Surprisingly, after his trip to Alma Ata and fixing the grave, he recovered. Not only that, a few days later he also received his exit visa! With incredible hashgacha pratis, we met at the airport. Snow covered the runway, which delayed our flight. Like a well-trained Chassid, I took out mashke and some food, and we had a farbrengen with the many people who had come along to see us off.

An interesting postscript is that our only son married one of Rabbi Ochunov's daughters, and we became mechutanim!

## **THE REBBE SAID AN APARTMENT SHOULD BE PREPARED FOR ME**

When I landed at the airport in Eretz Yisroel, I stayed in Tel Aviv. The Aliya and Absorption Office directed me to the south of the country, and from there, to a home in Dimona. When I realized that this city is located far from the center of the country and any Chabad community, I got my cousin involved. He had been living in Eretz Yisroel for several years and had connections at the right offices. He was able to get us back to the Tel Aviv area.

Rabbi Menachem Mendel Garelik was in 770 at the time, and he had an appointment for yechidus with the Rebbe. My friend R' Yosef Ladaiov asked Rabbi Garelik to mention my situation to the Rebbe.

In yechidus, R' Garelik told the Rebbe of our plight. The Rebbe took a paper out of his drawer, wrote something on it, and asked R' Garelik to give the note to R' Wolf upon his return to Eretz Yisroel, even before going home. After he carried out this shlichus, I heard that R' Wolf was urgently looking for me. I got messages from numerous people,

would give me 40,000 to help us as new immigrants to Eretz Yisroel.

I did as he advised. I had a note from the yeshiva, which was responsible for building the neighborhood in Lud. The director asked me how I was able to raise 20,000 liros in such a short time. I told him that I received it as gifts and loans from relatives and friends.

He looked at me compassionately, took out a checkbook, and gave me 40,000 liros. It was amazing. Within a few months of arriving in Eretz Yisroel, I owned a home.

The apartment actually cost 39,000 liros, so I had another 1000 liros, which I was able to use to buy my children toys, clothes and sweets. Few of my friends were able to get an apartment on a silver platter like that, but the home I live in is a gift from the Rebbe. Without the Rebbe's involvement, nothing would have happened.

I felt that the Rebbe was paying me back for renovating his father's grave in Alma Ata.

## **YECHIDUS WITH THE REBBE**

A few years later, in 5734/1974, I flew to the Rebbe. I wanted to see him and thank him for the great gift he had given me. The only obstacle was that I did not have money for the trip. In the end, R' Zushe Posner helped me to get on a flight to New York.

I will never forget the moment I saw the Rebbe. I am overcome by emotion whenever I think of that yechidus.

I traveled to 770 for Yud Shevat. At the farbrengen on Shabbos, the Rebbe gave out bottles of vodka. As someone

**“How surprised I was when the Rebbe called my name and gave me a large bottle. I went over to the platform and the Rebbe asked me in Russian, “Can you give a blessing?”**

The first six months were difficult for us. We were a young couple who did not know the language and were not familiar with the Israeli mentality. Eventually, we received help from a number of people, some from Tashkent, and mainly from Rabbi Mordechai Lasker of B'nei Brak, who let us live in his father's apartment in Yerushalayim. I wanted very much to live in a Chabad community. A friend of mine, Rabbi Shmuel Cholarov, who worked for the Chevra Kadisha, told me about a Chabad neighborhood in Lud that was then being built. He referred me to the one responsible for building the Shikun, Rabbi Efraim Wolf. He suggested that I write him a letter explaining who I was and describing my situation. A month or two went by, but I still had not received a response to my letter. I began to despair of ever leaving Dimona.

such as R' Simcha Gorodetzky, R' Yosef Blau, R' Zushe Posner, and others.

I was living in Yerushalayim at the time, in R' Lasker's apartment. Apparently, the Rebbe had written to arrange an apartment for me quickly, but my current difficult financial situation did not leave me any options. We had recently arrived in the country and had not yet acclimated. We had not found work, so how could we buy a home?

Well, if the Rebbe clearly writes what he wants, black on white, then even a “trivial problem” such as this one is resolved. A friend of mine advised me to go to the Jewish Agency office in Tel Aviv and to tell them that the apartment we wanted costs 60,000 liros and we already had 20,000. He promised me that if we did this, the Agency

from Eretz Yisroel who was involved in hafatzas ha'maayanos, I had given a small bottom of Smirnoff to the secretaries. How surprised I was when the Rebbe called my name and gave me a large bottle. I went over to the platform and the Rebbe asked me in Russian, "Can you give a blessing?"

I said, "Of course." The Rebbe smiled and said, "Give blessings and give some [mashke] out to the Chassidim, and keep some for the shul and for the family."

During yechidus, the Rebbe told me my shlichus in life and other personal things. My wife had requested that I ask the Rebbe whether it was permissible for her to learn to drive, because she wanted to do so very much for convenience. I had told her I would write it in my note to the Rebbe. When the Rebbe reached that question, he said I should tell her it was not worthwhile for her. She had four small children at home and driving entailed danger, since many drivers tend to drive at high speeds. He said



R' Shlomo Aryeh Niasoff receiving Kos shel Bracha from the Rebbe

“ Snow covered the runway, which delayed our flight. Like a well-trained Chassid, I took out mashke and some food, and we had a farbrengen with the many people who had come along to see us off.

that I should also repeat this to those she was close to, so they would convince her.

“The Rebbe does not remain in debt,” R' Niasoff had declared

at the beginning of the interview. Now that he had finished his story, I understood what he meant.



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# TWENTIETH OF AV

## Yahrtzait of the Rebbe's Father

HaMaaseh Hu Halkar was compiled by Rabbi Levi Stolik

Translated by Yaakov Paley

### INTRODUCTION

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Schneersohn, the Rebbe's father, was a famed scholar, Rav and Kabbalist.<sup>1</sup> He passed away on the twentieth of Av 5704 (1944), in the remote city of Alma Ata, Kazakhstan,<sup>2</sup> where he had been exiled by the Soviets for protecting and promoting the observance of Judaism.

He died after suffering greatly and was buried in Alma Ata. His wife, the Rebbe's mother, smuggled some of his handwritten Torah teachings out of the country at great risk to her life and they have since been published.

The 20<sup>th</sup> of Av is also significant for being forty days before Rosh Hashanah – a fact which bears similar conceptual meaning to the forty days that it

#### 1) From the house of King David

Additionally, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak is a descendant from the House of King David; he is a direct seventh generation descendant of the Alter Rebbe who in turn was a direct seventh generation descendant from the Maharal of Prague; the Maharal was himself a direct descendant of King David. [See *Seifer HaSichos Toras Shalom*, pp. 176 and 235. See there, fn. 68: G-d chose David and his offspring, just as He chose the tribe of Levi.]

An association between the twentieth of Av and the descendants of King David] is to be found in the *Gemara*, "On the twentieth of Av, a family from the descendants of David offered the wood offering in the *Beis HaMikdash*. (*Parshas Eikev* 5749; *Hisvaaduyos* p. 169)

2) Twentieth of Av, 5750, fn. 1 (*Hisvaaduyos* p. 146).

takes for the human fetus to form (*Adam HaRishon, the first man, was 'born' on Rosh Hashanah*).<sup>3</sup>

### SPREAD TORAH WITH SELF-SACRIFICE

• Reb Levi Yitzchak carried out his duty of disseminating Torah and Judaism with literal self-sacrifice. Especially on the anniversary of his passing, we should similarly<sup>4</sup> act to

3) *Parshas Eikev* 5750, p. 153, fn. 90 [with a reference to *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 19, p. 391, fn. 3].

#### Forty days of Rosh Hashanah

On the twentieth of Av, forty days before Rosh Hashanah, we begin preparations for Rosh Hashanah. Hence the custom observed by the ancient *Kel Yekabetz* congregation in Jerusalem, as recorded in the introduction to *Divrei Shalom* (see there for further sources), "On the twentieth of Av, we recite *Hataras Nedarim* (Annulment of Vows), for it is forty days before Rosh Hashanah.

Note that *Rosh Chodesh Elul* is the beginning of the forty days of repentance [i.e., the entire month of *Elul* plus the subsequent ten Days of Repentance] that conclude with *Yom Kippur* – for *Yom Kippur* is likewise referred to as *Rosh Hashanah*." (*Ibid.*)

#### 4) He watches and hopes that you spread Torah on his yahrtzait

All of this is further emphasized on the anniversary of Rabbi Levi Yitzchak's passing. From his place in heaven, he sees all those who learn of the unique quality of this day then utilizing it by accepting upon themselves the mission of spreading Torah and Judaism – in the manner of Rabbi Levi Yitzchak, who truly desired and yearned to spread Judaism among Jewish men, women, and children, within his own congregation

disseminate the observance of Judaism and the study of Torah, doing so with a spirit of self-sacrifice similar to that of Reb Levi Yitzchak.<sup>5</sup>

### EDUCATE CHILDREN IN SELF-SACRIFICE - BY EXAMPLE

• The main message of the yahrtzait concerns education: We should educate our children while they are extremely young in the spirit of *mesiras nefesh*, self-sacrifice for Torah and Judaism.

This we accomplish through displaying self-sacrifice for Torah and mitzvos in our own conduct at home. When our children see a live example of *mesiras nefesh* daily, performed energetically and with true enthusiasm, they will be deeply influenced.<sup>6</sup>

### LEVI AND YITZCHAK: SELF-GROWTH AND OUTREACH

There is a lesson for each of us in the name of Reb Levi Yitzchak:

• "Levi" alludes to the strengthening of one's personal service and attachment to G-d.<sup>7</sup>

and far beyond. In addition, they do so with similar self-sacrifice. (Wednesday, *Parshas Eikev*, 5751; *Hisvaaduyos* p. 155)

#### 5) Levi

[Rabbi Levi Yitzchak's name reflects on his dedication, for his self-sacrifice for Judaism was] similar to the tribe of *Levi*, who displayed self-sacrifice in their service in the *Mishkan*. (*Ibid.*, 5751)

#### 6) Seeing is believing

Even regarding verbal instruction, when one expresses matters that come from the heart, they enter the hearts of the listeners and achieve their desired effect. Certainly, then, we will succeed in imparting a positive education, when we offer more than mere words, but rather a living example. (*Ibid.*, pp. 155-156)

#### 7) Fulfilling G-d's will

...Including being scrupulous with minor commandments as with major ones.

This is reflected in the meaning given in the Torah for the name Levi: *yilaveh ishi eilai*, “My husband [also a reference to G-d] will attach himself to me.”

• “Yitzchak” alludes to our divine service of positively influencing our surroundings. This is reflected in the meaning that the Torah gives for the name Yitzchak: *kol hashome’ah yitzachak li*, “All who hear will rejoice for me.”<sup>8</sup>

### REB LEVIK’S NIGGUN HAKAFOS

• [During a chassidic gathering on the twentieth of Av 5750, the Rebbe addressed campers who had traveled from summer camps upstate? to be present:] The children from the summer camps along with their counselors, who are attending this gathering, should be honored with saying *l’chaim* and they should sing the *niggun hakafos* used by Reb Levi Yitzchak on *Simchas Torah*.<sup>9</sup>

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(*Parshas Eikev* 5749; *Hisvaaduyos* p. 170)

#### 8) A Jew is not a brick wall

We should also work to positively influence those who as of yet can only be considered “listening” as opposed to “seeing” [understanding], as alluded to by the name Yitzchak, from the phrase, “All who hear [will rejoice],” including even the category of listener who puts *no* effort into attempting to listen to what is being said – the words merely entering his ears by default. Even such a person will eventually be influenced by the “Yitzchak,” i.e., “rejoicing,” “gladness,” and even to an unlimited degree. (*Ibid.*, 5749)

#### 9) Alter Rebbe’s *hakafos*

This *niggun* (chassidic melody) is recorded in *Seifer HaNiggunim*, vol. 2, p. 185. (*Ibid.*, fn. 140; *Hisvaaduyos* p. 157)

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak testified that he had received a tradition that this very *niggun* was sung during the *hakafos* of the Alter Rebbe. (*Ibid.*, fn. 140; *Hisvaaduyos* p. 157)

### BLESSINGS FOR STUDYING HIS TEACHINGS AND WAYS

• [On each anniversary of its departure from this world, the soul of the deceased rises to greater spiritual realms.] The spiritual elevations of the holy soul of Reb Levi Yitzchak on his *yahrtzait* elicit blessings and success for those who have merited to study his teachings and to follow in his ways.<sup>10</sup>

### TRACKING HIS LOST TORAH NOTES

• [Reb Levi Yitzchak composed copious handwritten documents and hundreds of pamphlets containing innovative Torah teachings, most of which are somewhere in the former USSR and have not yet reached our hands. Concerning these writings, the Rebbe stated:]

It is certain that (eventually) the rest of his documents will also be brought to light and we will thus merit an additional bounty of innovative concepts from the mystical teachings of the Torah. Simply by resolving now to study these new teachings whenever they will reach our hands, we in fact hasten the time when we will be able to overtly seek these writings even within the former Soviet Union – and to discover their whereabouts.<sup>11</sup>

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#### 10) Extraordinary outreach

Following in the ways of Rabbi Levi Yitzchak also entails taking a lesson from his dissemination of Judaism; he continued his outreach even while in harsh exile. His efforts, all those many years ago, were so successful that they bore many fruits whose effects continue to this day. (*Leil Chaf Menachem-Av* 5740; *Hisvaaduyos* p. 179)

#### 11) His teachings are in exile

What a terrible waste, that the rest of his handwritten notes have not yet reached our hands! There were so many more manuscripts than the few books that my

### STUDY HIS TEACHINGS AND GIVE TZEDAKAH IN HIS MERIT

• [Regarding the twentieth of Av in the year 5744 (1984), the Rebbe wrote:<sup>12</sup>]

This twentieth of Av is the fortieth anniversary of the *yahrtzait* and *hilula* of my master, father, teacher and Rav, Reb Levi Yitzchak, son of the Rav, Reb Boruch Shneur. It is my obligation and great merit to propose and request that we study his Torah teachings during the *farbrengen*, and that *tz’daka* be given today in his memory.

---

mother [Reb Levi Yitzchak’s wife] brought to Moscow at the risk of her life. The latter writings were sent to America over the course of time, via embassies and the like. Until this day, it is not known what happened to tens, possibly hundreds, of marginal notes containing innovative Torah insights of [Reb Levi Yitzchak], which exist in exile in the former USSR.

#### Torah in exile

May G-d fulfill the prophecy, “Those who are lost in the land of Ashur and those who are oppressed in the land of Egypt will come” – with certainly includes innovative Torah insights, specifically those composed under terrible oppression, truly great oppression even in the physical sense.

#### Significance of the writings

These Torah insights embrace both the revealed and inner aspects of Torah. Moreover, they concern inner dimensions of Torah that are already prepared for dissemination – we can estimate the contents of the rest of these manuscripts (that remain in exile) by examining those that we have already received and published.

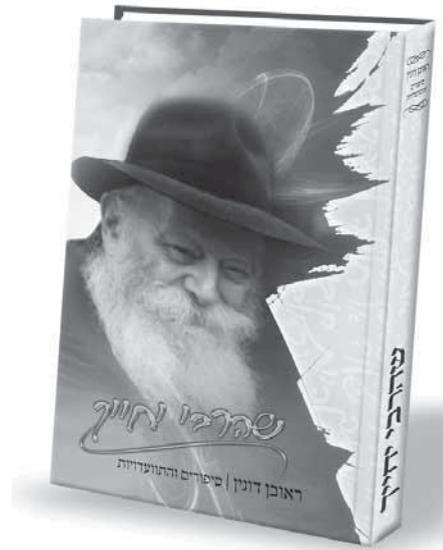
#### Oppression releases inner secrets of Torah

Regarding Torah insights, there is a superiority [to those composed under oppression], “One who observes the Torah amid (physical) poverty,” “From (physical) straits I call out to G-d.” This is particularly true of the *inner* dimensions of Torah. (The latter verse contains the name of G-d that is comprised of the letters *Yud* and *Hei*, which indicate an *inner* dimension.) (*Motzaei Vav Tishrei* 5750; *Hisvaaduyos* pp. 64-65)

12) Letter composed on the *Motzaei Tisha B’Av* 5744, printed in *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 39, p. 231.

# R' REUVEN'S RULES ON GOING TO THE MIKVEH

Beis Moshiach is pleased to present this second excerpt from the seifer “So That the Rebbe Should Smile,” containing more than five hundred brief stories and recollections of the illustrious Chassid, R’ Reuven Dunin of Haifa, as told and compiled by his many mekuravim.



Collected and Arranged by Chanoch HaLevi Shachar

Translated by Michoel Leib Dobry

*“I think in simple terms. If one is standing before the Rebbe, either literally or in his imagination and thoughts, he should make a personal cheshbon ha’nefesh: As the Rebbe gazes at me in this moment, is he smiling? Would he be satisfied with my conduct, or, G-d forbid, the opposite?”*

*“This is what must remain set in the minds of each and every one of us.”*

(Reuven Dunin)

For Reuven, mikveh was a matter of great importance. Due to the considerable distance between his house at 3 Borochoy Street and the mikveh located in another neighborhood, the whole process of visiting, dipping, and returning from the mikveh took over an hour. On the way there, Reuven would walk slowly and stop often to catch his breath. During this time, the gates of opportunity

were open. People would come to discuss their personal issues, doubts, questions, and requests with Reuven during this time. When someone spoke to Reuven about a personal issue, everyone else kept a distance and respected his privacy.

For me, the walk to the mikveh was a dream. The “unofficial” Reuven would come forth with chassidic modes of conduct, stories, and above all, Ahavas Yisroel.

## MIKVEH

At the entrance to the mikveh, a firm ritual began. Here were the general principles:

- After removing one’s clothes, one should arrange them in an orderly fashion. “Anyone who leaves his clothes scattered in a disorderly manner shows that he is disorderly in his soul,” Reuven would say.
- One should be stringent about immersing in the mikveh quickly and leaving the premises

without delaying unnecessarily for even a moment. Once, I asked Reuven, “How quickly?”

He replied, “As if he were compelled by an evil spirit.”

- Talking in the mikveh should be kept to the barest minimum, even in those matters pertaining to the mikveh itself. On one occasion Reuven said, “Among the Polisher Chassidim, it’s known that an evil spirit gathers up words that are spoken in the mikveh. Thus, these Chassidim remain quiet out of fear. In Lubavitch, it is simply a matter of *kabbalas ol*.”

- With regard to the order of immersing in the mikveh, when we were visiting Nachalat Har Chabad with Reuven in 5742, I brought to his attention an elderly Jew who immersed according to a certain order. The man immersed in three sets of three immersions, with the middle set done with outstretched hands and legs. Reuven nodded his head, and as we left the mikveh, he told us that this is exactly the way to immerse. He added that there are those who say that the Rebbe immerses in this way.

- One should be careful

to shower before going into the mikveh, and not after. There are two reasons for this:

Firstly, anyone who relies on the shower he takes after immersing in the mikveh, rather than showering properly beforehand, can be considered as “one who immersed while holding a ‘swarming insect in his hand’”. This is because his showering after the mikveh indicates that his body was not clean before immersing, and he thus dirtied the mikveh water. Furthermore, by showering after immersing he shows that he came to get clean, not to toivel.

In addition, Reuven once exclaimed, “What is this business of removing the holy mikveh waters from one’s body?”

(Chanoch HaLevi Shachar, Mendy Dunin)

**“HOW’S THE WATER?”**

One Shabbos morning, I went to the mikveh with Reuven, together with a group of bachurim. Several of the bachurim ran ahead of us and finished dipping before we arrived. When these bachurim



“Anyone who leaves his clothes scattered in a disorderly manner shows that he is disorderly in his soul.”

passed us on their way back, one of the boys escorting Reuven asked, “Nu, how’s the water?”

Reuven admonished him,

“What do you care how the water is? Were you thinking about possibly not going in?”

(Moshe Levy)

ב"ה

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# TOTAL METAMORPHOSIS



By Rabbi Tuvia Bolton,

Mashpia In Yeshiva Ohr T'mimim Of Kfar Chabad

In this week's parsha, Eikev, Moshe continues his instructions and words of rebuke to the Jews in the last days before his passing, before they enter the land of Israel.

One of his forceful admonitions is "And you should circumcise the foreskin of your hearts and don't stiffen your necks!" (D'varim 10:16).

How does this fit in with the general theme of Moshe's practical, down-to-earth advice? What – and where – exactly is the foreskin of the heart? Furthermore, since when is it forbidden to have a stiff neck?

Obviously, Moshe was speaking figuratively. Yet, why didn't he just admonish them not to be insensitive, and not to be stubborn? The use of poetic language just does not seem necessary.

To understand this, here is a story I heard from a Chassid in Kfar Chabad.

The second Rebbe of Chabad, Rabbi Dov Ber (called the Mittlerer Rebbe, 1773-1827) was a very intense and holy person. When he would pray, which was often for hours, he was completely in another world. The rest of the day, he concentrated on learning and teaching Torah, especially Chassidus. It was regarding this Rebbe that his Chassidim would say, "If his

flesh was cut it would bleed Chassidus!"

In fact, once he gave over a Chassidic discourse that lasted thirteen hours – no breaks!

Many of his Chassidim were so devoted to him, that upon his p'tira they found it impossible to accept his replacement, Rebbe Menachem Mendel, the Tzemach Tzedek (1789-1866).

One of these devoted Chassidim was Rabbi Moshe Marinov. He lived in the city of Chernigov, and although he refused to be the Chief Rabbi of the city for he feared it would disturb his learning, his sharp tongue and even sharper mind were the fear of all the scholars in the area.

He was fluent in all aspects of the Torah, both Nigleh and Nistar, and he had no patience for anyone who was not up to his level of learning. If such a person opened his mouth within Rabbi Moshe's presence, he was finished. Reb Moshe would assault him with a barrage of questions and problems he could not answer.

One of the followers of the Tzemach Tzedek was a young Chassid by the name of Rabbi Peretz Chein.

Rabbi Peretz was also quite a scholar, but certainly no match for Rabbi Moshe. Therefore, he was quite shocked when the

Tzemach Tzedek told him to try for the position of Chief Rabbi of Chernigov, Rabbi Moshe's home ground!

Of course, Reb Peretz, being a true Chassid, fulfilled the instructions of the Rebbe with joy. The Rebbe was always right, but in his heart, he was expecting either a big battle or a big miracle. Perhaps the Rebbe would suddenly make him into a genius, or Rabbi Moshe would only ask him questions he knew.

A similar occurrence actually happened to Reb Peretz a few years earlier when the Tzemach Tzedek sent him to a town called Beshankovitz, where many of the Tzemach Tzedek's opponents lived, and told him to learn thoroughly a certain obscure topic in Jewish law.

Rabbi Peretz was mystified, but did as he was told. To his pleasant surprise, upon his arrival the Rebbe's enemies tried to make him look foolish by bombarding him with questions on the exact topic that the Tzemach Tzedek had told him to learn! When they saw the ease with which he answered, they ceased their opposition.

Here too, sure enough when Reb Peretz arrived in Chernigov, what happened was more than a miracle. Everyone was amazed to see that the fierce Rabbi not only made no problems, he actually sat quietly and listened while Reb

Peretz spoke and even seemed to enjoy and agree with everything he said!

Reb Peretz was chosen to be the Chief Rabbi of the city, and Rabbi Moshe became a close confidant and helper. It was a complete metamorphosis! Reb Peretz had never seen anything like it in his life!

It was not long before his curiosity overpowered him, and he presented himself at the home of Rabbi Moshe to ask for an explanation.

Rabbi Moshe answered him with the following story:

“Years ago, when the Mittlerer Rebbe had already been ill for a while, and the Rebbe’s passing was imminent, his illness often caused him to be delirious with fever and say what seemed to be incoherent nonsense. Nevertheless, we Chassidim treasured every word. In fact, whenever possible, we would even write down or at least try to remember everything he uttered. One of the things he repeated was, ‘Peretz Smolianer is also a fine young man. Peretz Smolianer is also a fine young man.’

“No one understood what he was referring to, but we remembered it.

“Then, just a few months ago when I happened to be passing through Lubavitch, the Tzemach Tzedek sent one of his secretaries to call me to his room. I entered and he said, ‘Did you know that I have a Chassid called Peretz Chein and he once lived in the city Smolian?’

“The name Smolian struck a bell, but at first I could not remember from where. Then suddenly the Tzemach Tzedek said in the exact tone of the Mittlerer Rebbe, ‘Peretz Smolianer is also a fine man!’

**“Upon arrival, the Rebbe’s enemies tried to make him look foolish by bombarding him with questions on the exact obscure topic that the Tzemach Tzedek had told him to learn!”**

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Peretz Smolianer is also a fine man!’

“However, the most frightening thing was that his face transformed completely to look exactly like that of the Previous Rebbe’s as well! It moved me to the essence of my soul! That experience is what made me into a different person.” (*Heard from Rabbi Michel Vishedski, see also Migdal Oz Story #93 and Shmuos V’Sippurim pg. 49.*)

This story answers our questions.

Moshe had been leading the Jews and speaking to them for forty years.

However, each time that he finished speaking they were left to face reality. The world proved to be too real and deceptive. After all, the physical is more apparent than the spiritual.

So now, about to witness the Jews enter Israel without him, Moshe had to give them something that would change their very souls, something *physical*, just as the Tzemach Tzedek affected Reb Moshe in our story. That is why he brought examples from the heart and the neck.

Everyone has a heart and a neck, and is fully aware of their importance for life.

One’s very life and emotions depend on the heart, namely our life and emotions, but it has a foreskin that covers, suffocates and essentially inhibits its function. It is because of that foreskin that we do not love and

fear G-d with all our heart and soul.

Similarly, the neck is also vital. It holds and gives mobility to the head. However, a stiff neck makes it almost impossible to turn and look around. In our spiritual lives, we consistently stiffen our necks and inhibit our own outlook on life.

That is Moshe’s advice for the generation entering Israel: “If you want to *really* be alive and *truly* appreciate Hashem at all times, even when I am not physically with you, you must remove the covering from your hearts and stop stiffening your necks.”

A Jew must open his heart’s emotions to the Oneness of Hashem and stop viewing the world in a stiff and selfish one-dimensional way.

This message is clearly relevant to us today.

Our lack of love for the Torah, for other Jews, and for Hashem and all His creations, as well as our selfishness, has destroyed both Temples and thrown the Jewish people into two thousand years of suffering and confusion.

This is the message of the Baal Shem Tov and his pupils and will be the sole job of Moshiach: To open the door to true emotions and widen the viewpoint of the entire world.

Then *all* the Jews will be together in Israel and the world will be full of joy and the knowledge of the Oneness of G-d. We only need....

# ‘Do Not Daven with a Minyan on Rosh HaShana!’

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In continuation of previous installments of Rabbi Zalman Chanin’s memoirs, this chapter relates the drama that occurred in Lvov on Erev Rosh HaShana 5707 (1946) and how Anash escaped the clutches of the NKVD. The story is based on fascinating testimonies that I collected from Chassidim in that group.

By Rabbi Shneur Zalman Chanin

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Immediately after the departure of Rabbi Chitrik and Rabbi Chaikin from Prague to Belgium between Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur 5707, two young men were sent to replace them. The first was the Tamim Hillel Pewzner, o.b.m., who eventually became the rabbi of the Chabad community in France, head of the Lubavitcher Beis Din of France, member of the Board of European Rabbis, and founder of the Sinai Institutions in Paris. The second young man was the Tamim Shalom Mendel Kalmanson, who was a shochet and later went on to establish the Shneur Institutions in the suburbs of Paris.

The two young men had

recently escaped Russia in a miraculous manner. They fled through Poland and finally reached the American Zone in Germany. Before they had the chance to settle down and begin learning in Yeshiva Tomchei T’mimim of Poking, they received a directive from the Rebbe Rayatz to leave the safety of the American Zone and the thriving community of Anash in that place and to return to the lion’s den in Czechoslovakia.

Without considering the dangers of the Communists and anti-Semitism in their path, they gathered their few possessions and traveled to Prague. There, with trust in the Rebbe, they energetically set to

work. Their primary task was to renew communication with two important people: R. Yitzchok Goldin in Krakow, Poland, who remained in phone contact with Anash in Lvov, Russia, and with Rabbi Jacobson who was in contact with the Rebbe. They took the groups that arrived in Prague under their wing and arranged their travel westward. In addition, they devoted themselves to locating the Chassidim who arrived as individuals and helped them reach the American Zone in Germany.

## BEHIND THE BACKS OF THE NKVD

As mentioned earlier, a large group of Anash, originally due to arrive before Rosh HaShana, was stranded in Lvov indefinitely. The following is the content of a letter that was a continuation of the one written by R. Yehuda Chitrik on the 13th of Tishrei (published in the previous chapter). R. Yehuda Leib Mochkin, a leader in the network of the great escape, related to me the events in Lvov and the ruse to evade the NKVD.

“I was quite young at the time, yet energetic and decisive.

I arrived in Lemberg (Lvov) with the mission to help my Chassidic brothers cross over the border of the Iron Curtain. With G-d's help I succeeded in creating contacts with the police, members of the Communist party, key people in the Interior Ministry, and even with members of the USSR secret police, the NKVD."

"Some of my new 'friends' received handsome gifts from me to keep their ears open, be informed, and notify me if anything suspicious was about to happen. I requested that they provide me with firsthand information: Does the NKVD know about Anash in Lvov? Which names do they have? What do they know about those who successfully escaped? What is the NKVD planning?"

"I knew that my friendships posed great risks. Firstly, the danger that I would be caught was present at every turn, and secondly, a number of my 'friends' served as double agents. They received money from me to keep me informed of impending dangers yet simultaneously were supported by the secret police, who provided them with all sorts of benefits in addition to cash, to spy on the groups of Chassidim and to relate what was going on."

"Divine Providence protected me during those dangerous times. Over the course of my year-and-a-half stay in Lvov until my departure from Russia, hundreds of Chassidim escaped to freedom and only three Chassidim were imprisoned. I was unable to secure their release. In all other instances, either my 'friends' gave me advance warning and the Chassidim managed to flee in time, or even if a Chassid was imprisoned, I was able, with the help of G-d, to secure his release before a criminal file was



Shalom Mendel Kalmanson



Rabbi Hillel Pewzner a"h

opened."

"Prior to Rosh HaShana 5707, one of my informers told me that the NKVD planned on seizing the Chassidim on board the next train prior to its entry into Poland. I notified all of them not to appear at the train station, and to hide instead in their homes. I feared that the NKVD, failing to catch the Lubavitchers on the train, would conduct searches throughout the city in their anger. I did not even permit a minyan to take place on Rosh HaShana, rather everyone had to pray in his hideout."

"As the organizers, we faced a serious dilemma. On the one hand, it was dangerous to let Anash stay in the city, especially to wander about, without the proper papers. On the other hand, we could not tell anyone to return to Tashkent or Samarkand."

"An additional problem was one of money. We were financially unable to support the large group that had gathered in Lvov. We did not have enough money to feed everyone or to pay rent for the apartments. What were we to do now?"

"A gentile from the Polish Consulate in Lemberg who had become my friend conceived a new, alternative escape plan. He

proposed that since the city of Zlochov, located 80 miles east of Lvov, also had a station with trains traveling across the border, and since, being a smaller town, it had far fewer NKVD, it made sense to use that station and fill it with Polish citizens returning to their homeland, among them Anash. Although the train would have to pass through Lvov, we could safely assume that it would be full and therefore would not be stopped. The gentile promised to approve the papers prior to the train's departure and to travel along with the group until it crossed the border. In this way, the police would have no reason to search it. The train would slip out of the hands of the NKVD, directly over the Russian border."

"The idea was logical and plausible. We had no guarantee that it would succeed, but we also had no choice."

"The first to travel in this manner was the group of Yosef Rivkin and his family, who departed on Sukkos. Despite the difficulties of the journey, the group arrived safely in Poland. After this initial success, we continued to send groups of Chassidim on this route."

The following is the fascinating testimony of one of the travelers, Mrs. Freida Levin,

may she be well, the wife of R. Binyomin Levin. She related to me how G-d's eye watched and protected the group during the trip.

"We arrived in Lvov from Tashkent in Elul 5706 with the intention of departing with the next train to Poland a week before Rosh HaShana. Leibke Mochkin, the head organizer of the operation, explained that that situation was more difficult than expected because the NKVD had discovered the ruse of the Chassidim. Therefore, we could not travel as planned. The NKVD had planned on letting the Chassidim begin their journey and then catching them in the act with false Polish citizenship papers. Subsequently, they would all be arrested."

"Meanwhile, Leibke demanded that no one emerge from their homes until the danger ceased. We all sat in our hiding places and requested Divine Mercy, reciting the words of T'hillim with great emotion. The situation was so grave that the rabbis and community leaders issued an edict forbidding Chassidim to travel this route because it was tantamount to suicide. Any departure, even of an individual, would endanger all of Anash still in Russia."

"Leibke could not make peace with the new situation. Approximately eight hundred Anash were waiting in Lvov with their bags packed, unable to move. He was compelled to come up with an idea and plan something new!"

"Immediately after Yom Kippur, he appeared with a new plan. 'We will trick the NKVD! Since they are swarming in Lvov, we can board a different train in the small city of Zlochov, which has very few NKVD agents. The

full train will pass through Lvov without stopping. In the end the train will, G-d-willing, reach the border point and cross over safely.'"

"Leibke's plan was logical yet very dangerous. Yet we had no reason to wait in Lvov. We were in a state of limbo without papers permitting us to remain in Lvov. Our illegal presence there put us in danger of imprisonment. We had used all our money to buy passports and train tickets, and not a penny remained."

"The first to act was my father, R. Yosef Rivkin, one of the older Chassidim. What was there to lose? It was worth it to try his luck and accept the new plan. However, the words of the rabbis that no one dare flee rang in his ears. He went to them to request permission. After much deliberation, they permitted him to travel."

"Immediately, additional family members joined him. My husband R. Binyomin Feitels (Levin, the son of Feitel), myself, our two daughters, my first cousin R. Issur Brikman, his wife Doba and family, my first cousin R. Avrohom Feldman and his family, and my first cousins Zushe and Rosa Rivkin and their family all combined to make a large group of 32 people. After our hasty preparations, we began to travel."

"In 5707, the first day of Succoth was on Thursday. Thus, Shmini Atzeres was also on Thursday, and then Simchas Torah was on Friday. Before we departed, we received a directive from the rabbis permitting us to travel on the second day of Yom Tov, which Diaspora Jews keep because of doubt. However, they forbade us to travel on the first day of Yom Tov and on Shabbos."

"Leibke arranged the details,

and gave the list of travelers to the smuggler who would lead us out of the country. According to Leibke, the smuggler was the same gentile who worked at the Polish Consulate and conceived the plan to travel from Zlochov. Leibke arranged the trip so that each person would not have to present his or her passport for inspection at the border. Rather, the smuggler would present the list of travelers and the border guards, who were to be bribed with large sums of money and bottles of vodka, would casually glance at the list and let them travel."

## IN FLIGHT

"Fearful and trembling, with a prayer on our lips, we departed by train from Zlochov toward the border. According to plan, the train was not scheduled to stop anywhere. It was full and contained only Polish citizens returning home. However, suddenly without warning, the train halted."

"We saw those Angels of Destruction waiting to conduct a random search. This was the last thing we needed now! With a slight hint from the experienced smuggler, my husband and my first cousin flew off the train and sat down on two chairs in a nearby barbershop. My husband, who was young, tall, and broad-shouldered, feared that the police would seize him when they assumed he was a deserter. In their minds, a person like him should be in the army, and would undoubtedly question his presence on the train."

"During our three-week train trip from Tashkent to Lvov, we grew accustomed to the Russian method of train travel. Every so often, the train would stop to

give the passengers the chance to buy bread and water. After a half hour, the train would continue. However, this time was very different! Just as the NKVD officers emerged from the train, it began to move on quickly. Leaving Binyomin and Zushe sitting and supposedly waiting for a haircut, I remained on the train with my two young daughters, shocked and dismayed.”

“When Binyomin and Zushe saw the train flash by, they were devastated. The smuggler had their papers, and there were no Anash in the area. What should they do?”

“They did not have much time to think.”

“My husband did not have a penny. However, Zushe had a few rubles. They immediately hired a taxi to pursue the train. To their horror, each time they reached a station they missed the train by a few minutes. They continued the insane chase until they reached the last station before the border. The taxi driver told them that he would have to leave them there because it was illegal for him to travel further.”

“Thus, they remained stranded at the station. Then, someone passing by gave them an idea. Very soon, an express freight train carrying coal would depart for Poland. This train was scheduled to travel on the same route as the train carrying the families of Anash, and the railcars on the train were open platforms without sides. If they could somehow leap onto one of the open railcars and hold on tightly, then it was very likely that they could reach the passenger train and be united with their families close to the border.”

“There was obviously no alternative, so with all their might they leaped onto one of the cars.



Rabbi Yehuda Leib Mochkin



Rabbi Binyomin Levine



Zlochov Train station

Blessed is Hashem who watched over them and gave them the strength to hold on during the entire journey.”

### IN THE COMPANY OF THE SECRET POLICE

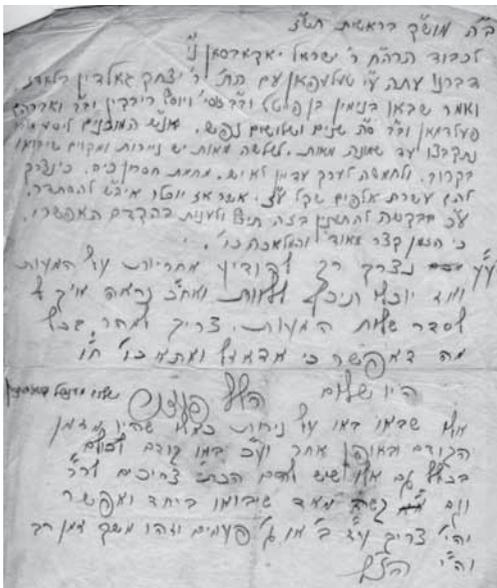
“When the freight train reached the border, it slowed its pace and the border guards noticed two suspicious passengers on one of the railcars. They halted the train and took the two men to the offices of the NKVD to interrogate them.”

“Binyomin and Zushe related the truth – that they were traveling with their families. However, at one of the stations, they descended from the train and were separated from their

families when the train left without them. They boarded the freight train to catch up with their families who were on the passenger train.”

“The story sounded like a joke to the NKVD officers. ‘You could not have thought of a better story. Come show us your family.’”

“Meanwhile, we descended from the train for the border inspection. During the entire course of the journey, only my father and I were worried. Even Zushe’s wife was not concerned about him, feeling sure that her husband had boarded a different railcar along with my husband and that very soon they would find each other. However, now at



The letter of the shluchim in Prague

the border when we all descended from the train, we realized that they were missing.”

“The entire group became uneasy, and I [Freida] was close to hysteria. Very soon, we would be crossing the border. What would happen to my husband and my first cousin? Would they manage to reach us in time? Perhaps they had been detained. Perhaps I should not leave Russia without them! Perhaps I should remain here with my two young daughters and wait for their father!”

“I stood, there, unable to make a decision. Suddenly I saw Binyomin and Zushe in the company of the NKVD. As we ran towards them with joy, the members of the NKVD who witnessed the spectacle, believed the story of the two men. They agreed to release them immediately. However, prior to the reunification with their families, they demanded that the documents be inspected.”

“Our papers were in the hands of the smuggler, and Heaven forbid that these evil people should see them.”

“Suddenly, Divine Providence intervened. Within seconds, the heavens opened and a huge downpour ensued, accompanied by thunder and lightning. All those standing under the open skies got drenched to the bone. The border police, themselves completely soaked, urged us to board the train immediately. Binyomin and Zushe took advantage of the moments of confusion and leaped onto the train, together with everybody else. The train began to move, and our hearts were full of joy.”

## THE ONE WHO INFORMED THEM

How the Anash activists in Lvov knew that the two Chassidim were missing and how they notified Rabbi Jacobson and the Rebbe I do not know. However, based on the following letter that I found in Rabbi Jacobson’s archives from the emissaries in Prague, Rabbi Jacobson apparently knew about it.

B”H

Motzaei Shabbos Kodesh  
B’Reishis, 5707

His honor HaRav  
HaChassid R. Yisroel Jacobson:

We just spoke with the Tamim R. Yitzchok Golden in Lodz via telephone. He says that Binyomin, the son of Feitel and family, Yosef Rivkin and family, and Avrohom Feldman and family have arrived, a total of thirty two souls. Eight hundred members of Anash that are ready to travel have gathered in Lvov. Three hundred have papers, and we hope they will arrive shortly. Approximately five [hundred] do not have papers due to lack of funds. They require 10,000 dollars for this purpose. Then we will be

able to organize this. Therefore, I request that you involve yourself in this matter and respond as soon as possible, because the time is short and the work etc. [is great].

Currently, it is only necessary to notify assurance for the loan; then we will immediately be able to borrow. Afterwards we will see how to arrange the sending of the funds. This must be done as quickly as possible because by the time he goes and returns, etc. ... G-d forbid.

Be well.

Hillel Pewzner Sholom  
Mendel Kalmanson

P.S. Those who have already arrived traveled with the papers from a previous time in a different manner have therefore arrived before everyone else. In general, even those who have manuscripts require abundant mercy. It is also difficult for all of them to travel together. Perhaps two or three times will be necessary. This will take a long time, and may G-d have mercy.

## POSTSCRIPT:

### WHY DID RABBI JACOBSON RETURN TO NEW YORK

In an earlier chapter entitled “Why did Rabbi Jacobson return home?” I wrote the following:

“On the 16th of September (20 Elul) Rabbi Jacobson received a directive from the Rebbe Rayatz stating that he should return to the United States for Rosh HaShana. On September 17<sup>th</sup>, the 21<sup>st</sup> of Elul, an additional telegram came from Rabbi Schneersohn, President of Agudas Chassidei Chabad, stating that Rabbi Jacobson was needed for the High Holidays. The request was in the name of all the institutions headed by

Rabbi Jacobson and in the name of Rabbi Gurary, executive vice chairman of Yeshiva Tomchei T'mimim that he was needed in the yeshiva, where he served as Rosh Yeshiva."

I added that I do not attempt to probe mysteries that are beyond me, but the directive appears quite mysterious and requires explanation.

Rabbi Jacobson left Europe in the middle of his work at a critical time. The network of connections he had built consisted of young Chassidim and the position in Prague was about to be filled with new people. To complicate matters further, a group of Chassidim was stranded in Lvov. Rabbi Jacobson left without even notifying R. Yitzchak Goldin in Prague of his upcoming absence. At first, he was unable to procure a seat on a plane, and special efforts were necessary to enable him to board before Rosh HaShana.

What suddenly happened? What was the rush?

After speaking with the Chassid R. Moshe Katzenelenbogen (son of the well-known "Muma Sarah"), I believe I have found a possible solution, which I will share with my readers.

R. Moshe remained in Russia together with his mother, "Muma Sarah." Together they attempted to flee from Russia with the Chassid R. Mendel Futerfas. However, as known, the plan failed, and the entire group was arrested and sentenced to years of imprisonment and exile.

R. Moshe and his mother, however, were not arrested immediately. They successfully hid for four years until 1951, when an informer turned them in. The NKVD found and imprisoned them. Rebbetzin

Sarah Katzenelenbogen died in prison of a heart attack after torture, may G-d avenge her blood. R. Moshe remained in prison and was subsequently exiled to a remote region. This is a story in itself, beyond the scope of our own.

R. Moshe related to me that during one of the first interrogations in prison in 1951 he was asked, "Who is Yisroel Jacobson? Who is the man that stood behind the international network and managed to evade state security five years ago?"

R. Moshe did not have an answer, because he had never

Many years later, the Russian government agreed to open the files of former prisoners. R. Moshe read his own files. Already in 1946, at the height of the great escape, the NKVD had written that he had personal contacts with Rabbi Yisroel Jacobson.

It was a miracle that none of the Chassidim who were arrested had ever heard of R. Yisroel Jacobson. They might have possibly heard of the name "R. Yisroel Zhuravitzer," as he was known in Lubavitch by his hometown, but the name Yisroel Jacobson did not mean anything to them.

 **"Suddenly, Divine Providence intervened. Within seconds, the heavens opened and a huge downpour ensued, accompanied by thunder and lightning. The border police, themselves completely soaked, urged us to board the train immediately. Binyomin and Zushe took advantage of the moments of confusion and leaped onto the train, together with everybody else."**

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heard of Rabbi Yisroel Jacobson, not from his mother or any other Chassidim. The interrogators did not believe him, and he was harshly tortured in the hope of revealing this information. R. Moshe told me, "It was a miracle that I truly did not know who he was, otherwise I do not know if I would've been able to endure the pain."

After serving his sentence and returning from exile, R. Moshe met other T'mimim who had survived imprisonment. As they exchanged experiences, it became apparent that the interrogators had asked them all the same question: "Who is Rabbi Yisroel Jacobson?"

It is possible that the Rebbe Rayatz received a report that the NKVD was tracking down Rabbi Jacobson. The arm of the NKVD reached over the breadth of Poland and Czechoslovakia, and the growing Russian influence in those two countries apparently made it too dangerous for him to remain in Europe. Consequently, the Rebbe Rayatz directed him to return to the United States.

I would like to stress again that this is an idea that I conceived of on my own. I would be happy if any of the readers would comment on, illuminate, or decipher the mystery in an enlightening manner.

# GOOD DISEASES?

By Rabbi Heschel Greenberg

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



## THE REWARDS

In this week's parsha, the Torah speaks of the blessings that follow from proper observance of the Torah and its commandments. The parsha commences with the words: "And it will come to pass that as a result of your listening to these laws, and your care in their observance, G-d will keep His promise to you..."

A few verses later, the Torah continues with further promise of reward:

"There will be no sterile... among you or among your animals... G-d will keep every sickness away from you. He will not give you any of the bad diseases of Egypt which you knew."

The question is asked: Why did Moses add the words "which you knew" when referring to the afflictions of the Egyptians. If Moses was addressing the people who still remembered the Ten Plagues and the drowning of the Egyptians in the Red Sea, they did not have to be told, "which you knew." And if they were too young to have a vivid recollection of the afflictions visited upon the Egyptians, then how could Moses add the words "which you knew." The term "knew" does not simply mean having some cursory knowledge of the experience. Rather it suggests an intimate knowledge of the event, as in the Biblical phrase "Adam knew Eve."

A second question can be raised. Why does the Torah add the word "bad" to the word "diseases"? Which disease is not bad?

A third question one can ask is why is the suffering brought about by the Ten Plagues characterized as a disease? A disease usually implies an illness that is brought on by some natural cause. The suffering of the Egyptians would be better described as "plagues" not diseases.

## A CRASH COURSE

To answer these questions we must reflect on the purpose of the Ten Plagues and how they represent a watershed moment in the development of the world.

The plagues in Egypt were not just intended to punish them for their evil behavior of enslaving and oppressing the Jews for hundreds of years. G-d could have punished them instantaneously if the goal was only punishment. The Torah states that the purpose of the incremental nature of the plagues was to instill within the Egyptians the knowledge of G-d's existence.

In addition, the plagues were intended to make the Jewish nation aware of the existence of G-d, His ability to control nature and His unique relationship with them. If they were to become the "Chosen People" to receive the

Torah from G-d and implement its dictates into their daily lives, it was imperative that they receive an introduction to G-d and His unity.

The entire process of the Exodus was, as the Torah itself states, a preparation for history's most momentous event, the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai. That revelation at Mount Sinai, in turn, was a prelude to the Jewish people conquering the Promised Land and transforming it into the model G-d had in mind for the whole world—a world that is permeated with an acute awareness of the unity of G-d. Finally, our existence in the Land of Israel—with its Holy Temple in Jerusalem—was a prelude to the ultimate Redemption, when the entire world will recognize the unity of G-d.

This entire process began in earnest with the Ten Plagues and the Splitting of the Red Sea with all of its attendant miracles. These were intended to expose the world to the reality of the one G-d.

In effect, one way of viewing the entire Ten Plague ordeal was to view it as an educational process. The Egyptians and the Israelites were both enrolled in a crash course in and through which they were to experience G-d in their lives.

This premise that the Ten Plagues was an educational

program is hinted in the promise that we will not be sterile or barren. The Talmud (*B'choros* 44b) applies that to a teacher who does not have students. It can also be extended to a teacher whose students do not internalize the lessons taught by the teacher.

The question we could ask now is how did all of the “graduates” of this unique program score? Did they pass or fail? And if they passed, did they make the dean’s list?

### MIXED RESULTS

In truth, the results were mixed.

This student may have been given the best education from the perspective of the “Teacher,” but from the vantage point of many of the students—the course was a failure.

The Egyptians clearly failed the course. While they temporarily pushed for the liberation of their slaves, they quickly reneged and pursued the Jews into the sea—the sea that brought about their own ultimate demise.

There was even a significant number of Jews, who our Sages state, died in the plague of darkness because they refused to be part of the Chosen People who would leave Egypt and embrace this revolutionarily way of life. They too failed the course.

Many others who did pass barely made it. In fact, their poor grades were reflected in the multiple rebellions such as the golden calf and the spies, Korach and the ones who complained about the lack of meat and water. And of course, there were those—such as the Levites and the women—who graduated with honors.

### LIVE ANIMALS

This then is what Moses was saying to the generation that was about to enter the Promised Land. If you will follow in G-d’s commandments—particularly, as Rashi states, those seemingly trivial ones—then you will not be barren. Your Torah lifestyle will successfully pass on from one generation to the next.

Moreover, even your animals will not be barren. This may be a reference to the animal soul within each one of us. Even our animal drives and interests will be so inspired by G-d’s presence that they will be channeled into positive territory. The animal within us will acquire the ability

exist, but cannot reach the elusive fiftieth level. That is illness in the spiritual sense of the word.

This state of illness is identified as *galus*, the exile that we have been through for close to 2,000 years. No matter how close we get to the ultimate in our understanding of G-d—the fiftieth level—that goal proves to be elusive. Exile is where we may get close to realizing our objectives, but we can never reach the goal. Exile to the enlightened Jew is the ultimate experience in frustration.

The Torah thus promises us that ultimately, in the “end of days”—the translation of the opening word of the parsha



**The question we could ask now is how did all of the “graduates” of this unique program score? Did they pass or fail? And if they passed, did they make the dean’s list?**

to reproduce because it will be truly alive and it will peacefully coexist with our G-dly soul. A materialistic lifestyle is not truly worthy of the title life because like everything physical it is subject to the law of nature that everything comes to an end. When the animal within us is elevated to the level of the G-dly soul, it assumes the status of a truly living organism that can perpetuate itself. It never dies.

### THE SICKNESS OF EXILE

The Torah continues that with the proper observance of the commandments, G-d will keep every sickness from us. The Hebrew word for illness *choleh* has the numerical value of 49. This relates to the person who is exposed to forty-nine out of the fifty gates of spiritual levels that

and its very name “*Eikev*”—the cumulative efforts of all the generations of Jewish dedication to the ideals of the Torah augmented with our own efforts, will ultimately bring the cure of the illness called exile.

The Torah then continues:

“He will not give you any of the bad diseases of Egypt which you knew.”

The “diseases,” one may suggest, refer not to the plagues themselves but to the Egyptian failure to extract the proper lessons from them. They were afflicted with the disease called exile. Only in their case it was a “**bad** disease” it was a terminal form of the disease. There was no remedy for this form. None of the miraculous plagues succeeded in changing the mindsets of the Egyptians or the Jews who chose

to remain—and did remain—in Egypt. These educational devices were rendered not only ineffective but they reverted to being no more than bad diseases. We can attach the word “good” to a disease if there is some silver lining to it. A disease can be “good”, relatively speaking, if it is curable; even more so if it prevents an even worse malady, or if it will teach the person how to lead a more healthful lifestyle. But the Egyptians just got the disease part of the plague and none of its “good.”

**WE ARE NOT BARREN**

If we avoid the threat of sterility or barrenness by perpetuating our values and learning the proper lessons from history—particularly recent events—we will also have the power to cut short the negative

parts of the disease associated with exile and be cured from its debilitating effects.

Thus, Moses tells the generation that is poised to enter into the Promised Land—and who symbolize, and whose actions portend, our generation, the last of exile, which eagerly anticipates the imminent arrival of Moshiach—that they/we should not suffer from the bad diseases of Egypt.

Moses also adds the words “which you knew.” Moses was alluding to the fact that this new generation did have the intimate knowledge and appreciation for the educational message of the Ten Plagues. They were unlike the Egyptians and the assimilated Jews who perished in Egypt who did not know—i.e., experience and internalize—the educational lessons of the miracles of the Ten Plagues.

As we stand on the threshold of the Promised Land, on the cusp of the final Redemption, we have to “open our eyes” and see that all that has happened in the past—the good things as well as the negative experiences—must serve to instill within us the need to get out of our own modern day version of Egyptian Bondage. There is no suggestion that we understand or justify the suffering in any way—that goes contrary to the Torah that tells us to “demand” of G-d to bring an end to all suffering, its “silver linings” notwithstanding. Rather, it means to look at the unusual events of the past—especially of the ones that have occurred in the most recent past—and let them inspire us to demand the revelation of Moshiach and the ushering in of the Age of Redemption!



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Upon this statement I affix my signature, Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> Tamuz 5766



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# FROM THE ENDS OF THE WORLD

Stories of miracle and Divine Providence that were told by visitors to Chabad houses in the Far East.

By Eliyah Sebbag

## L'CHAT'CHILLA ARIBBER

A farbrengen took place on Beis Iyar, the birthday of the Rebbe Maharash. The shliach of the Chabad house explained why the day was special and elaborated on the Rebbe Maharash's aphorism, "*l'chat'chilla aribber.*" The Rebbe Maharash taught that very often, when people encounter an obstacle, they try to go under or around it. Then, if they are unsuccessful, they go over it. "However, I say," taught the Rebbe Maharash, "to go over it from the outset!" The shliach translated this into practical terms, saying that when a person faces a challenge, he should not ascribe importance to it and should treat it as though it does not exist.

Among the participants at this farbrengen was an older couple. The husband got up and announced that he had a story to tell that would illustrate the idea of approaching life in a manner of "*l'chat'chilla aribber.*" This is what he said:

"It was during the Yom Kippur War, and the IDF

soldiers in the Sinai, surprised by the Egyptian attack, were in a precarious situation. The Egyptians crossed the Canal and encircled the Sinai outposts with tanks, armored vehicles and heavy artillery. From the Sinai front, as well as from many other fronts, cries of soldiers filled the air, begging for immediate reinforcements or extraction. At the same time, dozens of senior officers sat in the IDF Headquarters, feeling helpless. The general feeling among the troops was utter despondence.

"Ariel Sharon received an emergency appointment as the Southern Commander, and I was his radioman. While the senior officers sat at headquarters and wracked their brains for a plan, Sharon decided to take command of the situation. Within a few hours, an announcement was conveyed over the radio transmissions that there was no need to worry. 'Our forces are on the way to help you with the aid of tanks, armored vehicles and heavy artillery.' We all knew that these were empty words and within hours, our soldiers would

know the true state of affairs, but we had no other choice. We preferred to raise morale and thus hoped to save them from far heavier losses.

"The good news infused new strength into the exhausted soldiers. They stood valiantly against the Egyptians and impeded their forward progression. During these difficult moments, every possible weapon was put to use. The Egyptians, shocked by the Israeli



Ariel Sharon visiting the Rebbe

onslaught, began to retreat. As they did so, the order was given to evacuate the outposts of soldiers. The commanders took advantage of the situation and pulled many of their troops back to relative safety. Thank G-d we managed to save the lives of many soldiers.

“Until today I don’t know how in that uncertain situation and amidst the chaos, Ariel Sharon had the strength to make and take responsibility for those announcements. What I do know is that when you take action, playing by rules that defy logic, you can be successful and save the lives of thousands of soldiers.”

This man continued to relate another personal story.

“Let me tell you a personal story that happened to me with the Rebbe. Sharon would go to the Rebbe on occasion and would update him on the current situation in Israel. The Rebbe would listen and give his security assessments. During the yechidus, the Rebbe would give Sharon specific instructions as to how to proceed, and each time that he listened to the Rebbe’s advice, he was successful.

“At the end of each visit to the Rebbe, Ariel returned to his office and enthusiastically extolled the Rebbe’s great military wisdom. I myself was not very receptive to his expressions of admiration. I naively thought that here was just another bearded rabbi, who happened to enjoy the theoretical aspects of military strategy and who occasionally gave useful advice. I considered his opinion to be as worthwhile, and please forgive me, as those of the dozens of strategists who filled Sharon’s office.

“One time, Sharon suggested I join him on his visit to the

Rebbe. I was happy for this opportunity, when I would finally be able to check out the Lubavitcher Rebbe for myself. We took a flight to New York, and during the flight, Sharon regaled me with miracle stories of the Rebbe. However, all this was nothing compared to what I would soon see.

“I had pictured a royal rabbinic court, but when we entered the Rebbe’s room, I immediately noticed the stark simplicity. There was an old desk, a few chairs, and a vast Torah library. On the desk were many s’farim, and the Rebbe was looking into one of them. The moment we walked into the room, the Rebbe got up, closed the book and smiled. His face shone. He motioned to us to sit down.

“I sat down and was filled with an indescribable emotion that can only be inadequately defined as excitement. I was astonished by the infinite holiness that filled the modestly adorned room.

“Sharon presented the Rebbe with some war maps. He spread these huge maps out on the desk, and the Rebbe examined them for a few minutes. I cannot tell you exactly how long it took. There were some moments of absolute silence, and then the Rebbe began to speak. He analyzed the situation in an amazing way. That took several minutes. Then he went on to practical instructions as he pointed at the map. He took a pen and made marks on the map. The ideas I heard in that room were those of a seasoned strategist. I was stunned by his brilliant analysis. Professional strategists normally spend weeks over discussions like these. That is when I realized that this man was a unique personality, one

who is expert in all areas of life. I admired the Rebbe and saw how mistaken I had been about him.

“While I was still marveling at his genius, the Rebbe turned his attention to me. I was sure the Rebbe would tell me to start putting on t’fillin or to keep Shabbos. Yet to my amazement, as though reading my thoughts, he uttered one sentence. ‘You fill an important position. Continue to protect and defend the Jewish people.’

“I left that yechidus in wonder and admiration of the Rebbe’s astounding wisdom, but also for the Rebbe’s wise remark to me. I must tell you that in my position, I have sat with dozens of experts in the IDF, and I never met anyone like the Rebbe. He was a gift. Fortunate are those who follow his instructions and go in his ways.”

## THE REBBE’S SHIDDUCH

All tourists who go to India inevitably travel through Delhi. Akiva Sudari relates that in the half year that passed since he arrived on shlichus in Delhi, India, he has heard numerous miracle stories from the tourists who visit him. This is a story that that he and his wife heard on a recent Friday night from one of the girls who stayed at their Chabad house.

“I come from a Bucharian background. My parents made aliya about twenty years ago. They were not religiously observant, but because of the following miracle that took place at my birth, they started becoming religious.

“Before I was born, my parents had three children, one of whom had special needs. His therapy demanded great amounts of energy from my mother. Then

my mother became pregnant with me. In an ultrasound test in her seventh month, the doctors saw a serious problem with the fetus. When my mother heard the doctors' bleak pronouncements, she nearly collapsed. She could not think about another child that would present many challenges. Furthermore, in a situation where the family would need to arrange treatments for two children, parnasa would be a problem. The doctors recommended an abortion, but she refused. When she went into labor she was very apprehensive, but lo and behold, I was born healthy. This caused my parents to become more religious.

"My older brother had been trying to get married for a long time. Whenever he would get very close to finalizing the shidduch, something unexpected would come up which ruined the shidduch. This went on for years, and the repeated disappointments caused him to despair of ever getting married. Of course, my parents were very upset by this. They spoke to all kinds of rabbis and asked for advice and segulos, but nothing helped.

"Since I had been helped in the past by the Igros Kodesh and had seen miracles, I advised my brother to ask the Rebbe for a bracha. My older brothers learned in non-Chabad yeshivos, and when they heard my suggestion, they scoffed at it. My brother did not think much of the idea either, and he said, 'Why do you think the Rebbe can help? We have already gone to all the big rabbis. Besides, what is the source for this weird practice of opening s'farim? There's no way this kind of practice is going to help me.'

"I pleaded with him to try it. What did he have to lose? He



The shlichim and their children with mekuravim at the Chabad house

**“The sofer took the t’fillin, opened them in front of my brother, and showed him that they were pasul from the very beginning ... The t’fillin were repaired, and as my brother left the store his phone rang; it was a shadchan on the line with a new suggestion of a shidduch.”**

finally gave in to my incessant entreaties. He wrote to the Rebbe and put the letter into a volume of Igros Kodesh. The answer he opened said to check t’fillin and mezuzos right away. He laughed at this and said, ‘You see how the Rebbe’s answer has nothing to do with what I asked? We asked for a bracha for a shidduch and got an answer to check t’fillin and mezuzos ...’

“I explained to him that the vessel for receiving the bracha depended on listening to the Rebbe’s instructions, but he refused to listen.

“At home I would always prepare breakfast for my brothers. One morning, I told my brother that if he wanted me to make him breakfast, he had to

listen to the Rebbe. At first, he thought I was joking, but after a few days, when he saw that I was serious, he reluctantly took his t’fillin to a Judaica store. The sofer took the t’fillin, opened them in front of my brother, and showed him that they were pasul! When my brother saw this, he realized how the Rebbe sees what we do not see.

“The t’fillin were repaired, and as my brother left the store his phone rang; it was a shadchan on the line with a new suggestion of a shidduch. They arranged for the couple to meet the following week.

My brother returned from that shidduch meeting very happy. He said, ‘I feel that this is the one.’ Two months later, they married.”

# My Escape from Russia

## with Rebbetzin Chana

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The following is a translation of Mrs. Yocheved Zalmanov's (a"h) memoirs in which she recounts her escape from Russia together with the Rebbe's mother, Rebbetzin Chana. The memoirs were written soon after the events transpired. This is the third installment in a five part series. •  
**PART III**



## CHAPTER VII – STOPS ON OUR JOURNEY

Apparently, the camp in Czechoslovakia where we stopped over had been used during the war by German officers, may their names be erased. It had a number of conveniences, such as running water, a big yard, and a kosher kitchen where hundreds of survivors received warm, freshly cooked food. The UNRRA (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration) and the Joint (the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee) made great efforts to obtain strictly kosher food for the Lubavitchers, such as canned vegetables, containers of fish and fruit, lots of chocolates and more.

My dear sister Hadassah and Chatzkel, or Yechezkel Brod, were responsible for distributing the food. With great devotion and love, they allocated the designated portions for every person and family. Understandably, Hadassah made sure that the familiar noble woman received the best food first. Everyone else received regular equal portions.

After our stay in the camp, we continued on our way in animal-transport trucks through Czechoslovakia until we reached the Austrian border. Then we traveled in regular trucks across Austria.

In the evening, we arrived at the capital city Vienna. Although the Nazi destruction had already passed, the streets were lit up, old palaces graced the lanes, and nice storefronts lined the roads. However, their people were not as fine.

They were anti-Semites – and we felt it. Sitting around the main train station, their angry stares were focused on us. They were

full of hatred, not wanting to speak to us or even sit or stand near us. Their entire stance expressed one attitude: “You weak dirty Jews. You are still alive? You still exist? How is it that we didn’t destroy you yet?”

Their antagonism toward us tore at our hearts like a knife. It gave us no rest.

Thankfully, they did not keep us there for too long. Sitting on the trucks once again, we felt safe among our fellow Jews.

Suddenly, we stopped in middle of the road. From

electrically fenced camp, the Nazis, may their name be erased, tortured hundred and thousands of our innocent holy Jewish brothers. From here, they sent them to the gas chambers of Treblinka, Majdanek and others. They were burned and tormented for only one reason – because of their Jewish identity, for their Jewish ancestry, because they were G-d’s chosen nation! It seemed as if, from under the blinding darkness, one could hear the terrible screams of millions of innocent Jews.



**Lubavitchers were also considered survivors, but of a different sort. Everyone considered the Lubavitchers to be strong self-sacrificing Jews who escaped Communist Russia in order to spread Torah and Judaism.**

there, they instructed us to run to the barracks of a former concentration camp, which we could just make out in the distance, fenced off with what used to be electrically charged wires.

We had to hurry because it was almost nightfall. Everyone grabbed a broom and gathered some straw that was scattered around in the yard to use as beds for the night.

First, my sister and I managed to catch a room for the familiar noble woman who was not able to run as we did. Then we took a little straw to serve as her bed. Next, we took a room for my dear father and brother. Hadassah and I ended up sleeping near a little wall in a hallway.

Yet, the knowledge of what had happened in that very location pierced us like hot iron-rods. Right here, in this

The next day, they again packed us onto trucks, traveling further across the hateful German soil. We finally reached the huge Jewish camp in Poking, in the American Zone, under the command of the American Military Police.

In general, following the terrible war years, the broken, bombed out Europe busied itself with re-establishing its lands and citizens. They hardly thought about the tortured, half-alive, exhausted Jewish survivors. Only Jewish organizations from America and Eretz Yisroel cared for us.

Most of the support came from the Joint, which was established in 1914. The Joint was established when a number of charity organizations merged. Their goal was to provide assistance for European Jews, especially Russian immigrants,

“They instilled true love and respect for parents to the point where there was nothing more dear and holy than their word! This was because the children saw and knew that their parents were the embodiment of the Jewish spirit.

during the years of World War I. They provided help and support for many European Jews.

After World War II, the Joint supported and provided for the Jewish People who had survived the concentration camps, partisans from the forests, and those who were in hiding – the wandering, orphaned Jewish survivors seeking refuge from a corrupt world. They organized temporary relief camps to provide much needed food, clothing and other basic provisions. They focused on bringing the survivors to the protected camps.

Lubavitchers were also considered survivors, but of a different sort. Everyone considered the Lubavitchers to be strong self-sacrificing Jews who escaped Communist Russia in order to spread Torah and Judaism. We had spiritual goals – to build the spiritual splendor of the Jewish Nation, according to the direction and influence of the holy Frieddike Rebbe.

## CHAPTER VIII - POKING, GERMANY

Poking was one of the biggest refugee camps on German soil, approximately 120 kilometers from Munich, in the American Zone. During the war, it had been a German air force base. The camp was like a small town, with paved streets and long barracks. It was fully inhabited by Jewish refugees from different countries (Poland, Austria, Czechoslovakia,

Hungary and others), from different communities with different customs and languages.

When we arrived at the camp, it was already quite full. They set aside a few barracks for us Lubavitchers on a side street near a wooded area. Every family received their own room, and we were finally able to settle on firm ground, thank G-d.

The first priority for the wandering Lubavitchers was to open a Yeshiva “Tomchei T’minim” for older students, a Cheider for children, a Shul, and a Beis Midrash for adults. Then we established a special place to receive food supplies and clothing from the Joint and UNRRA. This was all accomplished with the influence of the Frieddike Rebbe, through his extraordinary efforts in America and through the Joint. Thus, the whole neighborhood of Lubavitcher blocks looked like an organized, separated “kingdom” – Poking-Lubavitch.

Despite our decent accommodations, the fact that we found ourselves on that abhorrent German soil, soaked and drenched with Jewish blood, sorrow, and suffering, the likes of which never occurred in the entire human history, caused us constant pain and endless grief.

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Since my first encounter with the respected righteous Rebbetzin Chana, royal mother of the Rebbe MH”M, the leader of our generation, our relationship

was like that of a mother and her child. This is despite the fact that I did not know her lofty roots. The Rebbetzin had nobility, splendor and dignity, coupled with a kind personality, goodness, wisdom, and devotion to every individual and to the community as a whole. This drew me close to her with a strong love, reminiscent of the love I had for my own mother of blessed memory, whose shining gaze could lighten every pain. The special connection I felt to her was also due to the memory of the Rebbetzin’s words upon deciding to leave Russia, “I will go with these young people,” and the responsibility that those words implied.

I never asked anyone who exactly this noble lonely woman was and what type of Rebbetzin she was. For me the word “Rebbetzin” was very abstract and unfamiliar. In Russia, we had to be very careful not to use the word, even when referring to my dear mother.

“Mrs. Chana” was close to me, beloved and inspiring with her lofty personality. She was an exceptional mentch to every one of us.

When I would visit her, she would be relaxed and happy. She would hug me dearly and say, “My child! When you come you bring joy to my heart.”

Our meetings would bring joy to both of us, and in those times, joy was a rarity.

At times, she would say achingly, “My heart gnaws with a great longing for my children!” Then she would modestly add, “I have a son in America,” and not another word. Then, her face would shine brightly with motherly love and holiness.

Often she would speak of the bitter dark period of her husband’s imprisonment, but

never talked of his greatness. She only told about the hardships and experiences of a Chassid and tzaddik.

About her personal difficulties and suffering, she spoke very little. She only spoke of how she worried about others and suffered with them in their hunger or pain. I never heard her express any bitterness or resentment towards others. It was as if everyone she ever encountered was holy and fine. Her own suffering and pain was hidden in the depths of her soul. She was genuinely a Tzidkanis in every sense!

Just being in her company was a great lesson in life. Her presence lit up the world and lifted it higher. She showed true friendship to young and old. She genuinely loved every Jew with all her soul.

I would always remember her request: "Don't forget me!" Those words would ring inside me and continue to ring until today. They are instilled and rooted in my heart forever!

Those years were different times than now, when even young children know many details about the Rebbe, the holy lineages of the Rebbeim, their Chassidic teachings, their conduct, influence and so on.

In those times, children knew very little about Judaism because of the Communist anti-Semitic decrees, pressure and fear. The government forced us to learn in Soviet-influenced government schools that were totally against religion, especially the Jewish religion. Religion was one of the greatest crimes, punishable by prison and even death.

Just speaking the Yiddish language caused embarrassment. Even listening to someone talking in Yiddish could be dangerous.



Rabbi Gershon Mendel Gorelik  
in his youth

The only exceptions were in some religious Jewish homes, especially those of Lubavitcher Chassidim, where there was an everlasting belief in G-d. There had to be belief in order to have the strength to teach Torah and uphold Jewish traditions with self-sacrifice. Boys learned in hidden cheiders and Yeshivas, or in private homes, in many cities and towns, under the leadership of the Rebbeim from generation to generation. However, there were no Jewish organized learning institutes for girls.

Often, the children from Chassidic homes led a double life; they were in two opposite worlds. Only the strong unchanging love and bond to their dear parents inspired the children to be true Jews in the depth of their hearts and souls and yet not show it on the outside. The bright faithful love of the home had the greatest influence on children.

In Chassidic homes, like mine for example, our parents taught and implanted within us that a Jew must be a true Jew at all times, in all places and in all circumstances. They instilled true love and respect for parents

to the point where there was nothing more dear and holy than their word! This was because the children saw and knew that their parents were the embodiment of the Jewish spirit. They ingrained within us a refinement and respect toward our every fellow man, whether young or old.

They infused within us the concept that the Creator is above all else and is found in all of creation. They taught that when a Jew does something, he should do it only for its own sake, not to make a show. When a Jew does a mitzvah, the reward is the mitzvah itself. We must act with all of our physical and spiritual abilities even when it is very difficult. To do something for another, that is G-d's command! They implanted within us self-sacrifice for Jewish truth. We acted in a Chassidic manner according to the ways of elder Chassidim, who received their guidance from the holy Rebbes and Rebbetzins of Lubavitch. An example is the righteous noble Rebbetzin Chana, may her merit protect all of Israel, Amen!

Her holy name Chana now shines and lives on in almost every Chabad Chassidic home in the world. In her memory, Chassidic girls bearing her name grow and flourish. May they live and may their numbers grow. They are raised upon the foundations of the Rebbe's Chassidic teachings and influence. The Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach, her dear son, is the leader of the generation and the light of spiritual Jewish illumination for our generation and all generations!

Possessing the power to ignite a light that will lead us through the darkness to the Redemption, the holy Rebbe Shlita instilled and implanted in the world an understanding of the Torah

that each of us can achieve. He showed us the Divine Providence in life so that every man can fulfill his G-dly mission on this earth with happiness, self-sacrifice, and heartfelt love. A Jew that lives with the Rebbe's view of life lives with certainty that the Creator controls the world and that He is the source of all assistance that a person receives to achieve success in everything he does.

## CHAPTER IX - THE AMERICAN MILITARY POLICE

Every member of the American Military Police, the MP, held a pistol and long leather whip. Thank G-d we were safe most of the time, except for one incident that happened on a Shabbos. The MP locked Reb Yisroel Kook in a small barrack for some kind of violation. So he spent his time alone, learning, davening and saying T'hillim.

The curious people of Poking, gathered around the barrack, could not rest either, until he was released. After Shabbos was over, Reb Yisroel ripped open the barrack with brilliance and strength. From then on, the MP did not disturb the Chabad people.

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My brother was then a bachur in yeshiva. (Today, he is known as HaRav HaGaon, HaRav HaChassid Reb Gershon Mendel

Garelik, the Rav of Milan and its surroundings.) He would often ask me to sit on a bench near the small wooded area by our block. I would act as the lookout in case any MP would be coming. In case they came by, I was to speak loudly to them and my brother in the woods would hear. In the meantime, he collected wood, twigs and branches in order to heat the Rebbetzin's oven that we built for her. Impatient and full of fear, I waited for him to finally return, happily loaded up with wood.

When winter descended, bringing rain, wind and cold, heating wood in Poking became very hard to find. One time, he came to me pained with worry. "There is nowhere to find even a twig. Everything is soaked through and through." Then my brother came up with a brilliant idea that was an excellent way to help the lonely woman receive her much needed wood. With a friend, he found a hut in the woods, either belonging to the MP or the Nazis, may their name be erased, and figured out the hours when no one was around. They planned to find and take some firewood from there. They asked me to guard the path to the hut and warn them of any MP passing by.

It was a very cold, wet early morning, but there was no alternative. I went along with them, and I noticed a room in the

hut with a wooden table, chairs and shelving. I then ran to guard the path. I could hear the sounds of breaking and shattering wood. Suddenly, all was still.

I could hear the sounds of an MP vehicle approaching. Apparently, my brother and his friends also heard the noise. Quickly, they hid away their treasure in the woods. Then, they ran over to me and took me under the arm, as they do in Russia, and calmly continued down the path in the direction of the camp.

When the vehicle of the American Military Police drew alongside us, they stopped and stared at us with murderous looks. With their whips waving on all sides, they angrily asked, "What are you doing here?"

My brother answered simply, "We are taking a stroll with a girl friend." They laughed hysterically like fools, babbled something in their English language, and drove off happily.

When we were out of their sight, the three of us ran and hid in the barracks. Everything ended well, understandably, in the merit of Rebbetzin Chana.

In the evening dusk hours, unnoticed by the MP, the bachurim brought back the smashed tables, chairs and shelves, which served to heat Rebbetzin Chana's oven for a long while.

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