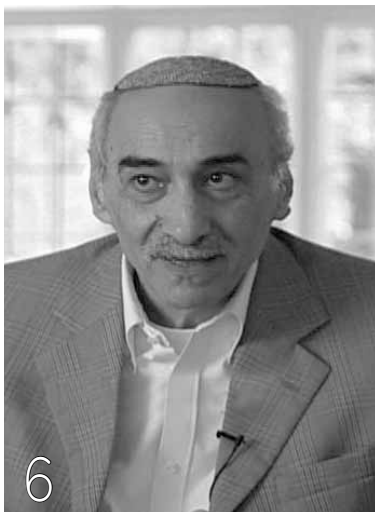


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THE REBBE RAYATZ IS “THEN”; MOSHIACH IS NOW

How is it possible for people in our times to laugh and rejoice?! Our Sages have stated, “It is forbidden for a person to fill his mouth with laughter in the present time [of exile], as it says, ‘Then (in the Era of Redemption) our mouths will be filled with laughter.’”

Translated by Boruch Merkur

LAUGHTER AND JOY IN THE 8TH GENERATION

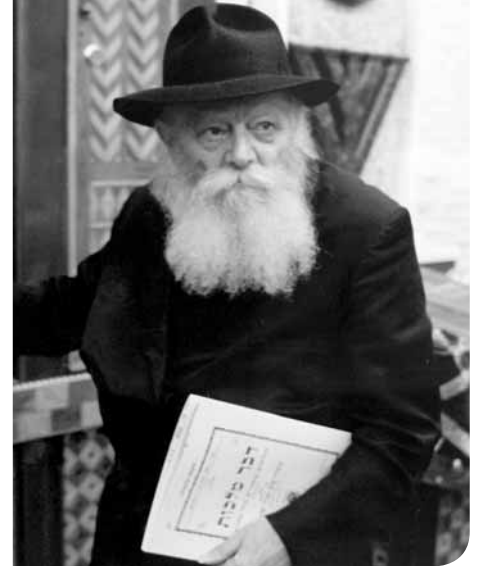
The name of the leader of our generation, the Rebbe Rayatz, is doubled, consisting of two names. But even his first name, Yosef, which means “increase,” alludes to a loftier concept than straightforward doubling, for it carries the connotation of an increase that exceeds limitations ...

The Rebbe’s second name, Yitzchok, has the following meaning:

Yitzchok is a name that suggests laughter and joy, including complete joy, as it is written, “Then our mouths will be filled with laughter.”

Of course, there are those who argue: How is it possible for people in our times to laugh and rejoice?! Our Sages have stated, “It is forbidden for a person to fill his mouth with laughter in the present time [of exile], as it says, ‘**Then** (in the Era of Redemption) our mouths will be filled with laughter.’”

The answer to this claim is that the leader of our generation, the eighth leader [counting from the Baal Shem Tov, who was the first to reveal the teachings of Chassidus to the world], is himself “**then**,” “**az**” in the Holy Tongue (which is numerically equivalent to eight), as he himself proclaimed, “immediately to redemption.” Indeed, the Rebbe said this repeatedly, and commanded to publicize, “Behold, this one comes [referring to Moshiach].” That is, not only, “Behold this one stands **behind** our wall,” and it is possible to see him through a crack in the wall, but “Behold, this one comes,” to the extent that “One (merely) points with his finger and says ‘this [is Moshiach],’” and that nothing remains except to add in our preparedness, the concept of “stand ready,” for even the buttons are already polished. Thus, in but an instant, all aspects of “Yitzchok” (in addition to many of the aspects of “Yosef”) are present, which is laughter and joy, in a manner of



“our mouths will be filled with laughter.”

The fact that “it is forbidden for one to fill his mouth with laughter in this world” – what scenario is this referring to? It is speaking of a period of time that is [even as much as] a moment before the revelation of Moshiach Tzidkeinu. However, in our case, since the leader of our generation was the Moshiach of our generation, and he was revealed in full force, not only has permission been granted for unrestricted laughter and joy but there is even an obligation to conduct oneself in a manner of “our mouths will be filled with laughter and our tongues with songs of praise.”

PASSING ON THE TORCH OF SIMCHA

On this basis we can also understand why the leader of our generation demanded of the Chassidim of his generation to maintain an approach of joy, a tremendous, unbounded joy notwithstanding his incarceration, indeed an imprisonment that was connected with the negation of life (may G-d have mercy upon us), insofar as there was initially a death sentence issued

against him, as is known. And he demanded this of his Chassidim even after the sentence was mitigated to one of exile, which itself is “virtually equated with the pain of death” (and at times it is even harsher than the departure of life), including suffering and tribulations, etc. And he continued to demand this of his Chassidim even after he was redeemed from exile, even when he arrived in Petersburg after his redemption, the day after the subsequent Shabbos Kodesh of his release, when the first opportunity arose, according to Torah law, for him to say the blessing *HaGomel* [thanking G-d] upon the release from incarceration.

In fact, the Rebbe continued

“Since the leader of our generation was the Moshiach of our generation, and he was revealed in full force, not only has permission been granted for unrestricted laughter and joy but there is even an obligation to conduct oneself in a manner of “our mouths will be filled with laughter and our tongues with songs of praise.”

the approach and concept of joy even through the next generation, this generation – men, women, and children, beginning with all those who are present here now, both in the women’s section and (how much more so) regarding those in the men’s section, as well as the little children present. And they take with them all the men, women,

and children of the entire world. For this is the generation of redemption, when the promise in the Torah will be fulfilled, “the L-rd will set His hand again, the second time, to recover the remnant of His people, etc.”

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LIVING A DIVINE REALITY



By Rabbi Akiva Wagner

Rosh Yeshivas Lubavitch, Toronto

The following story was related to me by Naftoli Schechter, who heard it directly from the baal ha'maaseh while in London, England. Although some parts are well-known, there are numerous details that were new to me (many thanks to Naftali, u'zechus ha'rabim tolui bo):

Refoel Nouriel lived in London, England with his family. They had a daughter, who, from the age of three, lost her ability of speech. Unable to speak or express herself, she was reduced to screaming and making unintelligible sounds. The distraught family visited doctor after doctor, but none could offer them any hope, and they gradually resigned themselves to their unfortunate situation.

After a few years, however, her condition led to a dangerous side-effect; her constant straining herself to scream took its toll on her general health, resulting in her getting a hernia. Once again she was examined by physicians, with the conclusion that she would have to undergo surgery. The doctors emphasized that the surgery was very risky, but unavoidable.

The Nouriel family had neighbors who were Lubavitcher Chassidim. Mrs. Nouriel approached

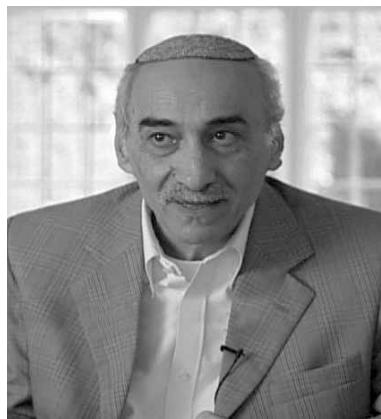
her neighbor – who had more experience with child-rearing – to ask how she would deal with such a situation. ‘Well, as Chassidim we would first write to the Rebbe for a bracha’, she was told, ‘then we would say T’hillim, and I would be sure to consult with a specialist’.

The girl’s mother, not being of a religious persuasion, expressed skepticism about the first point; to her Rebbe’s and brachos reeked of old-fashioned superstitions. Her husband, Refoel, however, was much more receptive and positive about the suggestion, and saw to it that his daughter’s name be given in to the Rebbe for his blessing. The night before the operation he was notified that the secretary had indeed entered the Rebbe’s room with his request and that the

Rebbe had looked up and said: “Nouriel hut a bracha!” [Nouriel has a bracha].

The surgery went without a hitch, as the parents sat tensely awaiting the results. As soon as the girl awakened, however, to everyone’s shock, she reached down to grab the *T’hillim* (that had been placed under her pillow for the duration of the surgery), opened it, and began singing “*Adon Olam*” in a tune she had learned in preschool! Before anyone could recover their senses – this was an open miracle, as she had been completely unable to speak for years – the girl jumped up and started jumping on the toys that were there. This was such an unusual recovery so soon after such a serious surgery, that the doctors began to fear for her health, and warned the parents that they could not be responsible for any ill-effects if she would not calm down immediately!

Needless to say, the girl retained her newly acquired good health and ability of speech, and Refoel had the good sense to recognize where the source of his good fortune came from; he had asked for a bracha for a successful surgery, and received much more than he’d dreamed of. The Rebbe’s bracha provided for a complete recovery.



Refoel Nouriel

Refoel felt an urgent need to express his thanks to the Rebbe; however, recognizing the enormity of what was done for him, he felt that merely saying thank you would be insufficient. Refoel was an accomplished artist, and he decided that the best way to express his overwhelming appreciation would be by way of his unique talents; through painting a portrait of the Rebbe. Having made the decision, he took the necessary steps, and commenced his project.

In order to draw his portrait he was using a photograph, however, over time, he came to the conclusion that in order to properly portray the Rebbe he needed to have a better feel for the Rebbe and the ‘world’ that he lived in. Thus he slowly began to increase his own involvement in Yiddishkait, kashrus, Shabbos etc., just for the sake of identifying fully with the Rebbe’s ‘world’ so that his painting will come out just right.

One day he was paid a visit by Rabbi Nachman Sudak, the Rebbe’s head shliach in England. Rabbi Sudak had apparently heard about the painting, and wanted to see it for himself. When he was shown it, he complimented Refoel, and urged him to do the finishing touches and begin marketing it. Refoel, however, had other ideas. “The picture will not be complete until I can personally bring it to the Rebbe and get his input,” he told him.

This was during the year 5744, and in Tammuz of that year he managed to make the trip to New York. Arriving at 770, he went into the office of the *mazkirus*, and told them he needed an appointment with the Rebbe to discuss his picture. They informed him that this was



“It is better than the original.”

“Watching the Chassidim saying L’chaim repeatedly to the Rebbe, he concluded that they would all become intoxicated, and the next morning, while everyone was ‘sleeping it off,’ there would be no one to prevent him from approaching the Rebbe...”

impossible (this was after private yechidus had ended, and before the time of dollars), – at best they could bring his picture into the Rebbe, and inform him of the Rebbe’s reaction. Disappointed, he tried to argue with them,

explaining that he came all the way from England solely to meet the Rebbe, but his words were to no avail. Despondently, he left the office, determined to find some way to reach his goal.

“This was such an unusual recovery so soon after such a serious surgery, that the doctors began to fear for her health, and warned the parents that they could not be responsible for any ill-effects if she would not calm down immediately!

That night he participated in the Yud Beis Tammuz farbrengen with the Rebbe. Watching the Chassidim saying L'chaim repeatedly to the Rebbe, he concluded that they would all become intoxicated, and the next morning, while everyone was 'sleeping it off', there would be no one to prevent him from approaching the Rebbe. He arrived eagerly the next morning in 770, only to have his hopes dashed again, as he realized that it was 'business as usual.' He was starting to give up, when he was informed by an acquaintance that all was not lost, and that by standing near the door to 770 in the morning when the Rebbe arrived from his house, he could have the chance to personally present his picture to the Rebbe. Refoel resolved to do this, and the next morning he was standing near the door of 770 with his family. His wife was holding the picture, covered by a tarp, and their plan was that as soon as the Rebbe would approach, she would remove the tarp, and he would immediately introduce himself to the Rebbe and ask about the picture.

When the Rebbe arrived, his wife in fact removed the tarp, but before Refoel could say anything, the Rebbe, on his own, approached the picture, looked at it, and pointed out that the hands would need to be changed, because they were painted with the fingers crossed, which is forbidden.

“Why is it forbidden?” asked Refoel. “Because it’s forbidden!” answered the Rebbe.

“How, then, should I draw them?” he asked.

The Rebbe showed him that he should paint the right hand over the left hand.

[Mr. Nouriel subsequently altered the picture in accordance with the Rebbe’s instructions. He noted that, although the Rebbe’s correction was from a Halachic basis, the new position in which the Rebbe told him to draw the hand improved the artistic quality of the picture as well.

Another point: Although the normal practice in such a circumstance would be to draw **over** the earlier painting, in this instance, because the Rebbe himself had negated the original position of the hands, Refoel chose to completely scratch out and erase the original paint, and only then to repaint the hands in their proper position!].

Refoel then said to the Rebbe: “You have only commented about the hands, what about the main part of the picture, the face?” To which the Rebbe responded “It is better than the original.”

Refoel was so overcome with excitement at those words, that he began patting the Rebbe on the back. In the middle of doing so his hand froze in mid-air, as he realized what he was doing, while simultaneously noticing the strange looks that everyone around was giving him. The

Rebbe noticed his discomfort, and quickly grabbed his hand, shook it, and continued on his way into 770.

Besides the beauty of the story in general, there are numerous specific lessons that are particularly noteworthy. Amongst them is the fact that Mr. Nouriel, in his quest to produce an authentic portrayal of the Rebbe, realized that to achieve this objective it was crucial – more than additional photographs, more even than visiting the Rebbe and seeing him in person – for him to be able to relate with the ‘world’ that the Rebbe resides in. To achieve this he knew he had to begin practicing those things that were so much a part of the Rebbe’s essence, i.e., Torah and Mitzvos.

Now, in Elul, when the King is in the field, we are all striving to take advantage of this unique opportunity to greet the King, to gaze at His smiling countenance. We want to better see the King!

It is a time, therefore, to reflect on how the only way to see Him better, to relate with Him and appreciate His shining countenance, is by becoming more a part of His world. A world that consists solely of matters of G-dliness. The world of Hashem, about which Chazal tell us: *“Ein lo L’HaKadosh Boruch Hu b’Olamו ella daled amos shel halacha bilvad”*, – Hashem’s world consists of no more and no less than four cubits of halacha.

It is a world of Torah and Mitzvos, and the more focused we become on them, the better image we have of the King.

• • •

For Chassidim, who are taught the supreme importance of *“Anochi omeid beineichem l’bein Elokeichem”* – of being connected to the Rebbe as the

memutza ha'mechaber between us and Hashem, the concept of *melech ba'sadeh* naturally has connotations as well with regards to the Rebbe's accessibility to us. And the description of the King greeting all with His shining countenance and beautiful smile re-awakens our longing and desire to see the Rebbe smile at us and greet us once again with his beautiful *sever panim yafos*.

In this respect it is important for us to bear in mind that, for now, what we can do to get a better glimpse of our Rebbe's appearance is to get ourselves more involved in **his world**. The Rebbe's world is one of Torah and Mitzvos and Moshiach; it is one where the transformation of the physical world into a dwelling place for Hashem takes precedence over all of the petty concerns and trivial pursuits that tend to preoccupy us.

It is the real world, the G-dly world, which the Rebbe, the Rebbeim, have, in their great kindness, shared with us and made accessible to us.

The first step towards strengthening our *hiskashrus*, towards improving our vision of the Rebbe, is the step that we take out of our world of falsehood, which will in turn be a step taken into the Rebbe's world.

It is all that we are able to do now, but it is incumbent upon us to grasp the opportunity and take full advantage of it. To greet the King, and to greet our king, and to look at, and be looked at, by smiling faces.

It is up to the Oibershter to finish it off, to enable us to see the Rebbe's smiling face in a literal – tangible – way. For that matter – to see the Oibershter's smiling face in a literal – tangible – way.

It's another story, but the point is the same: Let us take advantage of the special opportunity of Elul, to use each day to the fullest in an effort to be more a part of the Rebbe's world. Another step into learning, into davening, into ahavas Yisroel and hafatzas ha'maayanos chutza. Another step into the world in which we can see and relate with the Rebbe!

L'chaim! May we do our part to greet the King and see His smiling face, and may He reciprocate by granting each and every one of us a K'siva va'chasima Tova in all areas, in which we should be able to see His beautiful smile and bask in His countenance forever after, with the Geula HaAmitis v'ha'shleima Teikef U'miyad Mamash!!!

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MY MELAMED

The author Reb Yehoshua Dubrawski z”l wrote the memoirs of his childhood for the *Algemeiner Journal*, but did so only in his later years. More than once he wondered out loud whether people would find it interesting.

By Yehoshua Dubrawski

In this series of articles, clearly drawn from a deeply personal place in his soul, he succeeded in bringing to life the Chassidishe town of Krolevets, the glorious characters in whose shadow he grew up, and the mesirus nefesh that was the daily fare of the Chassidim who preserved Jewish tradition.

In his lifetime, he asked that these chapters be translated and published in Beis Moshiach. We are happy to fulfill his request and present this delightful series to you.

The chapters were written at different times and have been arranged chronologically. As the new school year begins, we begin with this chapter about his childhood melamdim.

CHAPTER I WHO KNOWS THREE?

In my childhood, I heard that in our town of Krolevets there had once been a cheider. The Soviet government closed the cheider many years before I was born, as well as the other chadarim throughout Russia. I

was left to use my imagination to conjure up in my mind what that cheider must have been like. As far as the many chadarim that I saw in later years, after I left that cursed country, they did not have the “flavor and scent” that I had visualized as a child.

In our town of Krolevets, I was not the only Jewish child who grew peios, learned Torah and davened three times a day, and did not go to *shkole* (the communist school that all children were required to attend). There were another two children, my cousins, Berel Shapiro – son of my aunt Chana, and Leibel Shapiro – son of my great-uncle R’ Nachum Shapiro. Where in all of Soviet Russia was there another town that had **three children** who had peios?!

As an aside, I would like to speak a bit in praise of my town. One could very well ask, “Ma Nishtana”— how was it that there were three Chassidishe, Yerei Shamayim children in one little town, when throughout the country, among the five million Jews and hundreds of cities and towns, you could barely find thirty children like that!

The chiddush becomes even greater when armed with the knowledge that practically all of those children adorned with peios were the children of the handful of Chassidim-T’mimim in Soviet Russia. Interestingly enough therein lays the answer to the riddle of “Ma Nishtana.” It was specifically because these children were born Chabadniks that they had implanted within them the extraordinary strength that the Chabad leaders invested in them.

I’d like to add another point that today, as then, is not well known. First, we Chassidishe children identified with our Jewish-Chassidic ways as a matter of course, with certainty and conviction. Such, that it never occurred to us to wonder why it was decreed that we were to be an isolated island in a stormy sea that threatened to drown us in its watery depths. On the contrary, we looked sadly and pityingly on the many Jewish children who wore the red neckerchiefs of the Young Pioneers (the communist youth group).

Another interesting thing: It



Rabbi Yehoshua (Heishke) Dubrawski a"h

“The more common form of punishment was far worse than a slap, even though this was not his intention. He would grasp my cheeks between his two strong fingers and pull my face close to his so that our noses touched and he would growl, “Du ferdasa einer” (you horse).



is possible that since we children rarely saw other religious young people aside from Chassidei Chabad, we considered being “shomrei Torah u’mitzvos” as synonymous with Chassidei Chabad. When my grandfather was appointed the rav in Krolevets, there were still some Chassidim of Kopust and other groups (which is why machlokes was prevalent), but in my time I knew that “frum Yidden” were Chabad Chassidim. When we left Russia and met Chassidishe bachurim from Hungary with long peios and Chassidic garb, I thought they had landed straight from heaven. But let me get back to my childhood in Krolevets.

CHEIDER IN THE BEDROOM

My grandfather’s bedroom, with curtains covering the windows, served as my cheider. My first melamed was my great-grandfather, my mother’s grandfather, R’ Chaim Bentzion, who I will tell you about in a separate chapter. After he learned with me for a few years, the time came for me to begin learning Gemara. My father then

decided to hire a “real” melamed for me, R’ Leib Nemtzov z”l (and probably “may Hashem avenge his blood,” because he apparently perished in the Holocaust).

My father was working as the chief bookkeeper in a shoe factory in our town. Although some of his “work” entailed covering up the thefts perpetrated by the government appointed managers of the factory, he made do with his legal salary that was about 350 rubles a month. In the event that there was something to buy in the stores, this amount sufficed for meager food for a week and a half. However, thanks to the constant shortages in the stores, it was possible to stretch that amount for another few days.

Nevertheless, a quarter of his pathetic salary was dedicated to paying his son’s melamed. As I recall, he paid about 75 rubles a month so that he would learn with me for two hours a day.

The melamed, R’ Leib, would very discreetly sneak over to my grandfather’s house. He was one of the few Jews who were religiously observant while his

son was already a communist, a member of the Komsomol (Communist Union of Youth). His son could absolutely not know that his father was involved in such “counter-revolutionary” activities as teaching Torah to a child. There were instances in which children informed on their parents to the NKVD, and this is why I continued learning in my grandfather’s house and not in the melamed’s house.

Looking out the window, I would see the melamed standing there about to enter the house to teach me. Sometimes I felt ready to burst out laughing, though most of the time I felt bad for him. He would limp slowly towards the house without casting a glance in our direction and then continue to limp down the sidewalk past the house. That’s when I realized that he had seen people near the house and was afraid to enter. It was both comical and sad when he found the right moment to enter the house. A few paces from the house he would hunch his head between his shoulders (as though nobody could see his face) and then with hilarity inducing speed

“Once, my little sister Tzivile was playing in the room we were learning in with the one rag doll we had in the house. She was so used to hearing the *trop* that she could repeat them in her sweet voice. When the melamed pointed out that my sister sang the notes ten times better than the squeaks and other noises that I made, it wounded me more than his pinching my cheeks.

would scramble through the fence while grasping his cane.

His physical appearance was tragic. He had a bad limp, because one leg was shorter than the other and damaged as well. He saw with only one eye. Over the other eye was a yellowish-gray cataract. His nose was very crooked and looked like a steep hill with just one nostril.

Much nachas was not forthcoming from his talmid, and when I deserved a *frashk* [the Neveler pronunciation of the Yiddish *frask*, meaning a slap – translator], he would honor me with one, albeit infrequently. The more common form of punishment was far worse than a slap, even though this was not his intention. He would grasp my cheeks between his two strong fingers and pull my face close to his so that our noses touched and he would growl, “*Du ferdasa einer*” (you **horse**). To this very day I don’t know how *ferdasa* expressed horsiness more so than an ordinary *ferd*.

I always sensed and saw that R’ Leib Nemtsov was a G-d fearing man, through and through. When I grew older and recalled him nostalgically, I would think to myself how this melamed, beset by injuries, symbolized the state of Torah and Jewry at that time in that cursed Soviet empire.

THE WATCH AND THE “KUF’NDIK”

When my melamed would be pleased by my understanding of a certain portion of Gemara, he would reward me in an unusual way (for I am highly doubtful that he ever had extra money, and candy was unheard of). Apparently he noticed how my eyes lit up as I examined his timepiece when he took it out to see whether we had learned for two hours.

It was indeed a rare item; a pocket watch made of silver (in the shape of an onion so that “onion” became synonymous with this watch. When people would ask, “What time is it?” the response would be, “Go look at the onion.”). He had received it from his father-in-law as a wedding gift. As large as the watch was, that’s how tiny and toy-like the two keys hanging from it were, with which he wound and set it with uncommon pleasure. When he discerned that his 9-10 year old student knew the material well, he deserved to play with the watch.

In any case, I could have no greater pleasure than to hold the watch in my trembling hands. I always saw how the melamed was nervous about his wedding present, and how carefully he detached it from his vest (which was probably as old as the watch).

I was terrified lest the watch slip from my hands. Even at my age, I figured that this big pocket watch was the most precious item in his paltry “treasury.”

There were occasions when he became furious with me and I was completely innocent. On Fridays, the melamed taught me the *trop* (cantillation notes) of the Chumash and the Haftara. He sang it with precision while I didn’t – *you* try differentiating between one note and another like the *t’lisha g’dola* and the *t’lisha k’tana*. My voice, as if to spite me, would become trapped somewhere inside my throat, and from my mouth would come forth what the melamed oft described as a “warbling *pazeir*” instead of a *gershayim*.

He would often grab my cheek with his strong fingers and squeeze and sing *ferdasa* into my face with the tune of a *shalshes* or some other note. Once, my little sister Tzivile was playing in the room we were learning in with the one rag doll we had in the house. She was so used to hearing the *trop* that she could repeat them in her sweet voice. When the melamed pointed out that my sister sang the notes ten times better than the squeaks and other noises that I made, it wounded me more than his pinching my cheeks.

There were times I wanted to take revenge on my melamed. Afterward, I would suffer pangs of conscience. My grandfather’s room was near the foyer and the door to the outside. When the melamed heard the doorknob turning he would hunch his head into his shoulders (I could never figure out how he did this and I couldn’t copy him) and would start to wink with his one good eye. He would grab his cane, close the Gemara, and whisper to

me, “Tell me, is it a kuf’ndik?”

He was so scared of the communist government that he never uttered the word “communist,” but referred to it by the first letter of the word, *Kuf*, so that “communist” became “kuf’ndik.” I was the “brave one” who left the room and upon my return I calmed him down, telling him it was only my grandmother.

VACATIONS

I don’t remember how long I learned with him but around the age of 11-12, the melamed stopped coming. My father contacted him and found out he could no longer come and teach me. Why? My father told me he could not know for sure. He assumed it was because of his communist son finding out about his activities. In fear lest his son inform on him, he stopped teaching me.

Even during our learning there were many involuntary vacations. These occurred on the Soviet holidays such as the anniversary of the October Revolution and May 1, International Workers’ Day. On those days, the melamed was afraid to leave the house, and sometimes, also on the days immediately following.

A particular incident is engraved in my mind. It was the day when “free elections” were held for the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union. That year, the government suddenly began publicizing the slogan, “We make way for youth, and we honor old age.”

The authorities in town also prepared for Election Day with a grand ceremony meant to highlight the great honor the government felt towards the elderly. A list of all the elderly in town was compiled; they



R' Yehoshua Dubrawski (sitting in the middle of the front row below) in his childhood in Krolevets. Above him, in the top row, sits his father R' Lipa

“We called a certain kind of tiny, salted, kosher fish by the name kamsa. They were so small that the jesters would say that someone with poor vision would barely be able to see them. There was a head and tail and a few centimeters in between . . . but as small as the fish was, the line to buy it was quite long.”

“Even in his old age, he was a strong man. Seventy years ago, even men in their forties used canes. Zeide, who was over eighty, certainly felt it was appropriate to use a cane. He would use one for his first steps, but then he would start thinking or murmuring Mishnayos by heart, and he would tuck his hands behind his back and the cane would dangle there, useless.

got three flatbed trucks from somewhere, on which they placed benches upon which the elderly men and women were seated. On each truck was a man with an accordion and off the seniors went, straight to the voting station.

My melamed's name was on the list of "esteemed seniors." When the truck stopped near his broken-down home and some young gentiles entered, grasped him on either side under his arms, dragging him to the vehicle, he nearly fainted in terror and he shouted Shma Yisroel!

He could not understand what they were prattling in their Russian-Ukrainian, but he knew enough to know that it had something to do with the kuf'ndik. It seemed that they were getting ready to ship him off to Siberia, to prison, and might put him up against the wall to be shot. Fortunately, his son showed up and calmed him down.

The melamed traveled with the other seniors to the elections where they first made a concert in their honor, though he had no idea what the concert was about. They even gave out salted crackers in honor of the holiday. Despite the positive atmosphere, my melamed did not stop trembling in fear until the end of the concert. He did not dare to leave before that. For the next week after the event, he was

afraid to leave his house.

GOOD TIMES

There were days that my melamed was more cheerful than usual. I tried to imagine what the reason could be. I hope that in heaven they did not consider my imaginings about my dear melamed as sinful. However, my speculations may well have been accurate if you took into account the very difficult lives we led in Soviet Russia.

And so:

In my childhood and youth, it was impossible to obtain salted fish (herring). It simply did not exist. With our meager diets, people, especially older people, would speak yearningly about a piece of herring.

However, we had a "malchus of chesed" (kingdom of kindness) and once every few months, the municipality would send a few barrels of kamsa to some empty stores. You surely do not know what kamsa is, and in the normal lands of plenty of today, it is an unknown product. We called a certain kind of tiny, salted, kosher fish by the name kamsa. They were so small that the jesters would say that someone with poor vision would barely be able to see them. There was a head and tail and a few centimeters in between. It was shorter than a child's pinkie, but

as small as the fish was, the line to buy it was quite long. Rumors that the fish were for sale got about, and within a few hours they were gone.

This was the secret behind my melamed's good mood. How did I know? In the middle of learning, he would ask me, while smacking his lips, to bring him a cup of cold water from the barrel, and he would say, don't be lazy and answer amen. He would say the bracha out loud and most of the time I would return the jug empty.

Before Yomim Tovim he would speak warmly about the holiness and beauty of the holiday and would teach me the laws of that holiday. He was afraid to speak in my presence about the joyousness of Yom Tov, something that was abolished in the Soviet Union in general and in his home in particular with a communist son of whom he was afraid. But it sometimes happened that he would say, "Ah, those were the days!"

CHAPTER II BUSINESSMAN, ASKAN AND MELAMED

My first melamed was my great-grandfather, (zeide) Chaim Bentzion Karasik z"l. He was the son of the gaon R' Dovber Karasik z"l.

R' Chaim Bentzion was a businessman in his youth and served as gabbai of the Beis Knesses HaYashan where my father davened. They said that Zeide was an ardent askan (someone active in public affairs) in the days before the Revolution. As in many other towns, our town also had its generous share of stormy disputes. Zeide would be involved in all the arguments. For example, in the

dispute between the Chassidim of Lubavitch and Kopust, he led the Lubavitchers. He would refer to all these involvements as *tu'echtzen* (doings).

All that pertained to days long since gone. Already in my childhood there was no shul and no k'hilla in my town, and none of my Zeide's askanus. However, if he had a willing listener, he would present all the town's quarrels and disputes and get all heated up about the opposing side – those boors, arrogant ones, fools, and other descriptive words he used while referring by name to balabatim who had long since passed on.

"Zeide," his older grandchildren would remonstrate with him, "they are in the World of Truth by now, and the government took the shul away from us!"

When he realized that his listeners barely knew what he was discussing, he closed his eyes and made a dismissive motion with his hand. Sometimes, he would say in an angry tone:

"What do you think – that I'm over the hill? That I lost my mind? That I no longer know about whom and what I speak? I know! Oy, how I know! The past weighs on my heart, and one needs to pour out one's heart even after a long time."

I make mention of this peculiar thing my Zeide said since I thought a lot about it in my attempts to understand what he meant, because I felt that he was communicating something meaningful.

My Zeide was a master of the sort of plays on words that may have come off sounding humorous, but were laden with meaning. For example, he would say, Hashem should protect and save us from *shpigenoten*

“Those moments of dusk always roused within me a feeling of melancholy, and as the sun set, I sank into a bleak mood. Zeide's heartwarming words as he reviewed Mishnayos with his hoarse voice and the pleasant tune in which he enunciated every word revived me. It was as if they came into my consciousness from some far off heavenly place, bringing down upon me the sweetness of Gan Eden.

[a combination of two Yiddish words, one meaning spies, the other meaning forced or entrapped – translator], by which he could be referring to Soviet hooligans, NKVD operatives, members of the roving militias, "red buttons" (policemen), wicked people in general, and even the gabbaim of the "new" shul.

As far as his self-assessment was concerned, my zeide was absolutely right. Even in his old age, he was a strong man, physically and spiritually. Seventy years ago, even men in their forties used canes. Zeide, who was over eighty, certainly felt it was appropriate to use a cane. He would use one for his first steps, but then he would start thinking or murmuring Mishnayos by heart, and he would tuck his hands behind his back and the cane would dangle there, useless.

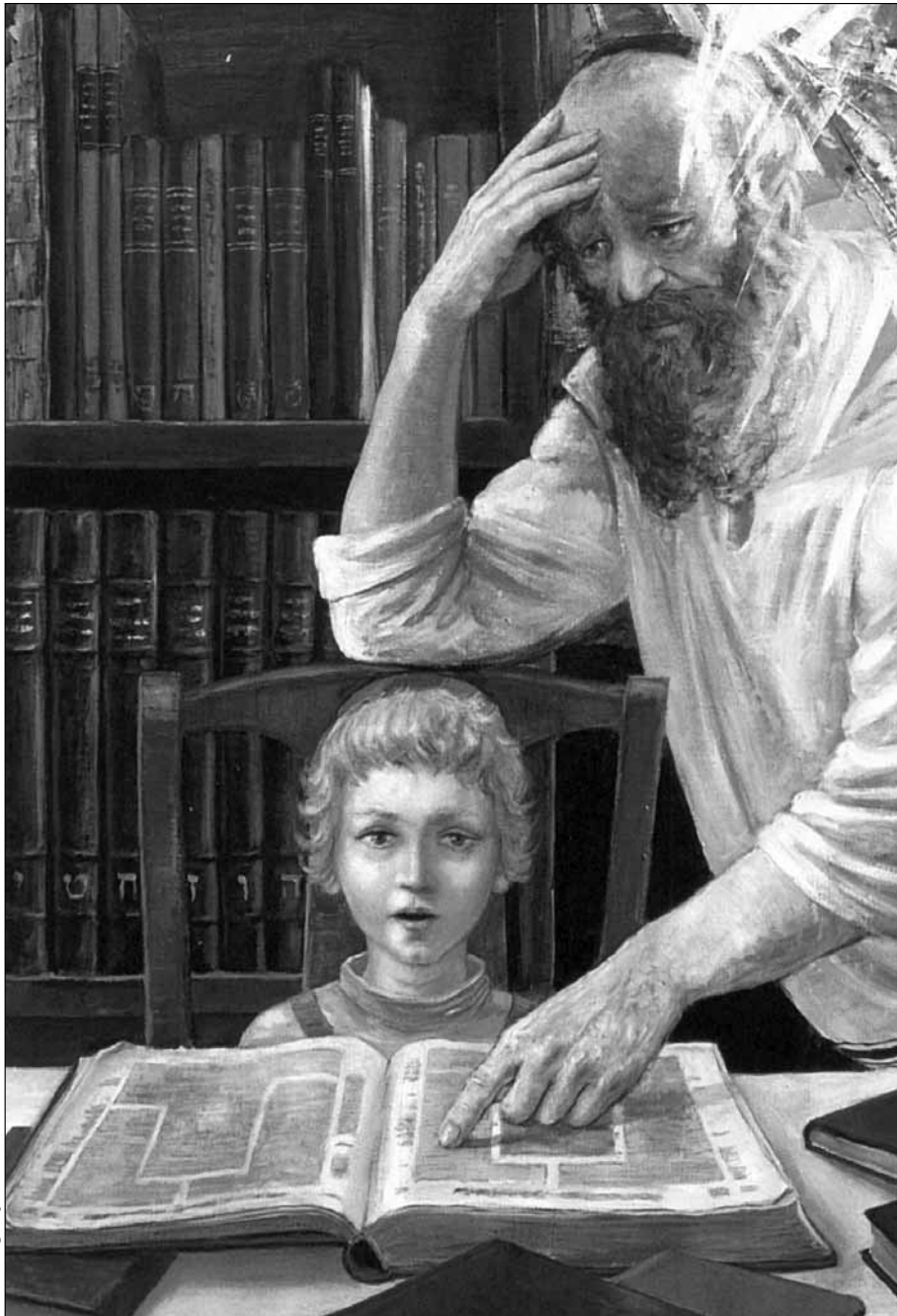
Zeide never used glasses and never suffered toothaches. At home they said he would wonder: How could a bone hurt? The only thing he suffered from was his nose which constantly ran. He needed two handkerchiefs a day. He would often say he needed a nose doctor. I remember that he had handkerchiefs in each pocket, much bigger than the usual handkerchiefs. He would often carry a small towel in his inner pocket.

ABOUT THE "GREAT MATHEMATICIAN"

Just as he had a unique way of doing askanus, so too he had his own approach to educating his children and grandchildren. I, my two sisters, and my nephew Berel – when he was living in my grandfather's house – did not go to school. By not going to school, we were utter mavericks. Ignoring the anti-Soviet aspect of this, Zeide Chaim Bentzion would teach Alef-Beis, reading, and Chumash to all the grandchildren, the boys and the girls.

My cousin Berel Shapiro was in charge of the "class." Berel's mother, Aunt Chana Shapiro, lived in Moscow. In order to enable her son to avoid public school, he was sent to live with our grandparents Zalman and Miriam Karasik in Krolevets, who were my mother's parents. That is where my great-grandfather Chaim Bentzion lived too.

Zeide was a G-d fearing man, and although he thought a child needed to learn some mathematics and know the multiplication tables, he did not want to use gentile textbooks. He tried teaching us addition and subtraction from Jewish textbooks, which I haven't seen the likes of till this day and I have no idea where he got them from.



Painting by Zalman Kleinman

“He had an original way of encouraging his young charges. He would take out butter mashed with sugar and cocoa from the drawer and would give a talmid a spoonful of this delicacy, which was an extraordinary luxury in our poor lives.

I remember that Zeide Chaim Bentzion, during lunch, explained to us that a Jewish boy has to know math and understand the logic behind it, so as not to be like that ignorant peasant in

the story. The story was that a peasant who considered himself the greatest mathematician in the village, tried to explain the depth of mathematics to another peasant, as follows:

“Look, when you say that two times three equals six, it’s understood and simple. But when you ask how much is three times two, the answer is also six, but that’s complicated and not at all simple.”

My Zeide did not have much success in his attempts to get addition and subtraction into our childish heads, but to some degree he did succeed in saving us from the ignominious ignorance of the aforementioned peasant. He had even less success when he tried teaching his great-grandchildren a little Hebrew grammar, the difference between masculine and feminine, and a few basic grammatical rules. We just didn’t get it, and this caused him much aggravation.

“That Jewish children shouldn’t have any idea of how to write a word in Lashon HaKodesh?!” he would moan and close the grammar books in despair.

Despite these hurdles, he was warm and loving towards his “wayward” grandchildren. His greatest pleasure was during the summer season when he was able to put aside a few rubles and buy tasty and juicy apples for us in the market.

He had an original way of encouraging his young charges. He would take out butter mashed with sugar and cocoa from the drawer and would give a talmid a spoonful of this delicacy, which was an extraordinary luxury in our poor lives. He would also promise that when Hashem would help, he would travel to the fair and bring us a present from

there (he had been a businessman before the Revolution and often traveled to fairs). Needless to say, there were no longer any fairs and free trade in Russia. Whoever even spoke about this anti-Revolutionary institution put his life in danger.

He sometimes tried another form of motivation when he let us play with his pocketknife, which had many nifty attachments such as a bottle opener, corkscrew and more. It even had a small bolt lock on it. Let it be noted that all these attempts had a minimal impact on his students.

REST AND MISHNAYOS

Zeide Chaim Bentzion got us started with Alef-Beis, reading and Chumash. I remember nothing of his grammar lessons, but one thing does remain etched in my memory. It is something that he did not put in effort to teach me; I refer to his constant learning of Mishnayos by heart.

He sometimes reviewed Mishnayos as he slowly paced the dining room, but he mostly reviewed Mishnayos by heart in the afternoon, when he lay down in bed to rest. "Resting in bed" for him did not mean lying down at full length, but rather leaning with his elbows on his pillow and his feet on a chair. He usually did this after a hot day when the sun no longer shone into the room.

Those moments of dusk always roused within me a feeling of melancholy, and as the sun set, I sank into a bleak mood. Zeide's heartwarming words as he reviewed Mishnayos with his hoarse voice and the pleasant tune in which he enunciated every word, revived me. It was as if they came into my consciousness from some far off heavenly place, bringing down upon me the sweetness of Gan

“When my mother had gotten herself upright with me in her hands, she looked at me with big, shining eyes and then burst into laughter. She laughed for a long time.

Eden. Often, as I sat there near the table, a deep sleep overcame me and I awoke to the hand of my grandfather patting my back as my grandmother lit the kerosene lamp.

In my childhood, I had very few good times. These few good moments took place on my visits to my Karasik grandparents, especially when my Zeide Chaim Bentzion was still there. Although, as soon as I arrived, he would take out a Siddur, Chumash, Nach and sometimes (to my dismay) even a grammar book.

My great-grandfather lived very long. After my Karasik grandparents passed, he moved in with his daughter and son-in-law in Novograd-Sevorsk. When World War II broke out and the Germans advanced on the city, they decided to escape. In the course of their travels, my great-grandfather Chaim Bentzion died. May his memory be for a blessing.

IN THE MUD

I remember little of the early years when my Zeide Chaim Bentzion taught me Alef-Beis, but what I do remember is that my mother would bring me from our house to my Karasik grandparents' house. The two apartments were not far from one another, but there was a long street full of puddles and mud that remained there long after the rainy season was over.

I had no galoshes in those days and my shoes were tattered,

so during and after the rainy season I could not walk to my grandparents and my mother had to carry me. I enjoyed that!

I remember one time when my mother carried me carefully, looking for "islands" in the mud where she could place her feet, and with one careless step she slipped on a rock. Her foot sank into the mud and she fell together with me. I saw a huge puddle and thought I would sink in it.

Only motherly strength (especially that of my mother) could have accomplished the following feat. Although she was nearly immersed in the muddy puddle, she held herself up with supernatural strength and with her free hand she held me above the mud while hugging me close to her. I remember that motherly embrace even though at the time I was very frightened.

When my mother had gotten herself upright with me in her hands, she looked at me with big, shining eyes and then burst into laughter. She laughed for a long time. Why? I didn't ask and till today, I don't know why.

Once her feet had been covered in mud, she no longer sought "islands" and freely and quickly walked through the mud, though we didn't head for home, as I had thought and certainly wanted. She continued to walk to her parents for my lessons.

At a later point, I walked by myself to my Zeide to learn — tramping along with both my feet through the mud.



THE VOICE OF ELUL

By M. E. Gordon

The Alter Rebbe illustrates the concept of how the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy shine in the month of Elul through a parable of the King in the Field:

משל למלך שקודם באו לעיר, יוצאין אנשי העיר לקראתו ומקבלין פניו בשדה, ואז רשאים כל מי שרוצה לצאת להקביל פניו, והוא מקבל את כולם בסבר פנים יפות, ומראה פנים שוחקות כולם, ובלכתו העירה הרי הם הולכים אחריו, ואח"כ בבואו להיכל מלכותו, אין נכנסים כי אם ברשות, ואף גם זאת המובחרים שבעם, ויחיד סגולה

It's comparable to a king, that before he comes to the city, the people of the city come out to greet him, and receive him in the field. Then anyone who wants to go out and greet him may do so, and he greets everyone with a positive countenance, and shows everyone a happy face. When he goes to the city they all follow him, and afterwards when he comes to his palace, one may not enter without permission, and even this is only for the chosen amongst the people, and special individuals.

THE PREDICAMENT

Yossi stared intently at the screen, his hand gripping the joystick tightly. He was at the trickiest part of this level, which

had tripped him up nearly every time. He was determined to make it this time... "Yossi!" he heard his mother's voice from afar, "It's time for Maariv – hurry or you'll miss the minyan." Yossi, afraid to lose his concentration, blocked out her voice, hoping that she'd assume that he'd left to shul. It wasn't that he didn't want to daven, chas v'shalom; he just couldn't stop the game at this point. He could daven in his room a bit later . . .

Chani was, as usual, glued to her iPod. She had just copied the latest album. The music was wild, really wild. She was glad her parents couldn't hear it, they surely wouldn't approve. It certainly wasn't seder niggunim!!

Chaim was definitely the best player on the team. The only problem was that he couldn't tolerate losing. He took his game seriously and woe to any team mate who fumbled a ball, or missed a goal. Chaim would chew them out, and sometimes punctuate the verbal abuse with a push or a punch. Today he was especially on edge. His team was playing their biggest game of the season. The scoreboard recorded an even tally. The next few minutes were their chance to score the tie-breaking points. Chaim threw the ball to the team

mate closest to the goal. As luck would have it, it turned out to be Moish, the biggest klutz on the team...

Chaya looked at the mobile phone screen. The number flashed again, but she hesitated. Should she answer? How did this person get her number – from one of her classmates, from her cousin? Would it be so terrible if she answered? Unlikely that anyone else would find out if she did....

Levi was lying in bed, staring at the ceiling. What a rotten day it had been. He had forgotten to set his alarm clock, and missed the first minyan. Then he was in such a rush that he had left his T'fillin at home and had to borrow someone else's. Of course, he came very late to Seder, and got in trouble. To top it all off, when he finally went to his seat, he somehow didn't notice Berke's new hat was on it. He felt like such a schlimazel. Now that he finally got to his room he didn't feel like ever getting out of bed again.

Tova looked at her new summertime friends, who spoke to her invitingly. "Come with us, we'll have a great time." She really wanted be part of the group, but she wasn't sure about the appropriateness of place they



were planning to go to. The bus was pulling up, and she had to make a quick decision. “Come on, Tova, are you in with us or not?”

Dovid hit the snooze button, and snuggled further under his blanket. So what if it was Slichos – he needed his sleep. He must’ve been crazy when he stood up at the last farbrengen and declared his hachlata to get up early and go to Mikva and Chassidus before Slichos. Totally unrealistic...

Shaindy looked at herself in the dressing room mirror. The outfit was sleek and attractive and the price was a bargain. True it was a bit short, in fact a bit skimpy all around, but that’s what everyone else was wearing...

Mendy loved learning. He was happy to be surrounded by s’farim, uninterrupted for hours. He didn’t get involved in what was going on around him. He was somewhat annoyed when a classmate walked in to the room, arms loaded with papers, singing “Rachamana” off-key. He was even more annoyed when the boy tripped and the papers went flying all over the room. “Oy vei, aneina” turned into “Oy vei, Mendy, you’ve got to help me!” Mendy did not budge. He

“The next few minutes were their chance to score the tie-breaking points. Chaim threw the ball to the team-mate closest to the goal. As luck would have it, it turned out to be Moish, the biggest klutz on the team...”

was in the middle of learning something, and didn’t want to lose the flow. “But I need to get these permission slips to each classroom before lunch is over, or we’ll have to cancel the big pre-Rosh HaShana excursion that the kids worked so hard to deserve.” Mendy shrugged and went back to learning.

THE RESOLUTION

Suddenly, the text that Mendy was reading started to swim in front of his eyes. The words seemed to melt and morph and merge together. It only took seconds until the letters crystallized and became clear. “The King is in the field, all who want can go out to greet Him. The field is this mundane world, and the neshama comes down to this material world because G-dliness can be grasped only through dealing with the physical.” Mendy jumped to attention. He bent down, picking up the fallen papers as quickly as he could. “Don’t worry,” he

told the astonished boy. “I’ll help you gather your papers, and we’ll distribute them together before the bell rings!”

Shaindy looked at the care label to see if the material was washable. “The King is in the field!” she read in astonishment. “How will you appear when you greet Him?” Shaindy returned the outfit to the sales rack.

Dovid was about to hit the snooze button again. His hand stopped in mid-air when the buzz changed tone and he could make out words coming from the clock. Could he have switched on the radio by mistake? No, he didn’t own a radio alarm. He pulled the blanket off of his head and perked his ears. “The King is in the field, and whoever wants can greet Him. He is available, but only if you make the effort to go to Him.” Dovid washed his hands, jumped out of bed, and was ready to go in record time.

Tova swept her misgivings under an imaginary carpet in her mind, and pulled out her bus

“The King is in the field, turning towards everyone with a happy face.” Chaim swallowed, blinked, and turned towards Moish with a smile. “Don’t feel bad, Moish, it’s only a game.”

pass. She glanced at it before following her friends onto the bus. Instead of her photo, she saw a royal figure with a crown! Somehow she understood the message –the King comes to the field – a place with potential for growth, but not to a spiritual desert. She stepped back, and watched with inner relief as the bus-driver closed the doors and sped off without her.

Levi felt totally hopeless and useless. “It’s not worth doing anything if whatever I do never works out, anyway.” He continued staring at the ceiling when suddenly he noticed a hazy pattern up there. The light and shadows seemed to portray a sequence of rural scenes. Farmers were ploughing, planting, weeding, and harvesting. In the furthest corner, was a crown. The King is in the field, a place where we do our part and He blesses our efforts. Levi felt a new confidence filling his whole being. “I’ll do the best I can,

tomorrow is another day!”

Chaya was about to answer the forbidden call, when suddenly, without warning, a message spelled itself across the screen. “The King is in the field, and He greets each one with a shining face.”

“Why did I say that no one will know? The King of kings is here with me. How can I ignore His Presence?” thought Chaya, as she turned her phone off.

Moish missed the ball, of course, and even worse, a player from the other team caught it instead, and ran past all the opposing players, scoring the winning point for his team. Chaim’s face turned red, as a volcano of fury bubbled up from inside, ready to burst forth. He opened his mouth, about to erupt in abuse, when he caught sight of the scoreboard. Instead of the names of the teams and their scores, the scoreboard was lit up with the following words: “The King is in the field, turning

towards everyone with a happy face.” Chaim swallowed, blinked, and turned towards Moish with a smile. “Don’t feel bad, Moish, it’s only a game.”

Chani felt a surge of untamed power as the music got wilder. The beat stopped in mid-stroke, and the next thing that Chani heard in her earphones was, “The King is in the field – straighten your work clothes (thought, speech, and action) before you greet Him.” Chani looked at her iPod, and with a sigh, deleted the last download.

Yossi had made it into the next level, and it was taking all of his concentration to stay in. “Yossi, are you still here, what about Maariv” his mother called from the kitchen. Yossi was too busy to answer. Suddenly, the screen changed. As the new image came into focus, Yossi could make out a figure with a crown beckoning to him. “The King is in the field. Those who greet Him now will find it easier to be admitted to the Palace later on.” Yossi gaped in astonishment, and then looked at the clock. “I’d better run to Maariv. I can still make it if I hurry.”

The King is in the field – don’t miss out!

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THE REBBEIM'S PREPARATION OF THE WORLD FOR MOSHIACH



In this new series, we will present some of the accomplishments of each of the Rebbeim and show how with these actions they were bringing the Sh'china "from heaven to heaven," thus ultimately preparing the world for the "Dor HaShvii" and the final Hisgalus of Moshiach. * Part I

By Rabbi Gershon Avtzon

Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivas Lubavitch Cincinnati

INTRODUCTION TO A NEW SERIES

Dear Reader Sh'yichyeh,

I was once standing on the streets of Manhattan doing Mivtzaim. It was Yud Aleph Nissan, and I was taking part of the annual "Tank Parade" in honor of the Rebbe's birthday. We were putting T'fillin on people and distributing Shabbos candles and Shmura Matza.

That day, I was approached by an elder Bobover Chassid. He was staring at the Mivtza Tank and his displeasure was obvious. I went over to him and engaged him in conversation. He started off with a statement that totally shocked me. He said, "The Lubavitcher Rebbe ruined Lubavitch"!

Obviously, his words upset me terribly, but I waited silently for him to continue. He went on to explain, "For many years I admired Lubavitch. The Tanya

and Maamarim are so deep and stimulating and the Frierdike Rebbe's Sichos so rich in warmth and historical information. I was so impressed with Chabad. But this Rebbe has turned the movement into a bunch of street missionaries"!

It was then that I realized the terrible misconception that is far too prevalent. People have a perspective that is very different from that of the Rebbe. In the Rebbe's eyes, our generation is the culmination of the goal and purpose of all the previous generations. All the Sichos and Maamarim were steps in a journey to reach the Avoda –

Mitzva Tanks and all – of our generation.

The Rebbe started off his leadership of this generation by quoting the following Midrash

(Shir HaShirim):

"Basi L'Gani": Before the Sin of the Tree of Knowledge in the Garden of Eden, the revelation of G-d's Essence was here in this material world. Then because of the Sin, that Revelation left this world and began its ascent up through the seven levels of Heaven. Each major sin, as recorded in the book of B'Reishis, sent it up one level, until it had completely distanced itself from our world.

Then came the seven tzaddikim (righteous ones), beginning with Avraham [Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov, Levi, Kehos, Amram, and Moshe]. Each of them brought G-d's Essence down one more level, until Moshe (at the giving of the Torah and the construction of the Aron) brought G-d's Essence back down into this physical world.

The Rebbe made it clear that the same applies to our generation. We are the seventh generation of Chassidus Chabad



That day, I was approached by an elder Bobover Chassid. He was staring at the Mivtza Tank and his displeasure was obvious. He started off with a statement that totally shocked me.

“All the Sichos and Maamarim were steps in a journey to reach the Avoda – Mitzva Tanks and all – of our generation.

and it is our job – like Moshe Rabbeinu – to bring down G-d's Essence (Ikar Sh'china) into this physical world.

From the above it is clear that just as Avraham, Yitzchak, and all the other tzaddikim brought down the Sh'china from a higher level to a lower level, thus enabling Moshe to finally bring it into this world, the same applies to all of our Rebbeim. They all made great efforts to bring the Sh'china “lower and lower”, each one in his own style, as appropriate for the generation that he lead.

In this current series, we will present some of the accomplishments of each of the Rebbeim and show how with these actions they were bringing the Sh'china “from heaven to heaven,” thus preparing the world for the “Dor HaShvii” and the final Hisgalus of Moshiach.

THE BAAL SHEM TOV

This series will be focusing on the seven Rebbeim of Chabad. They are the ones whom the Rebbe compares to the seven Tzaddikim that brought the Sh'china down from heaven to earth in the era of the Avos, the Shvatim, and the Galus and redemption from Egypt. But the Torah does not begin with Avraham Avinu. He may have been the father of the Jewish people, but the foundation for the revelation of G-dliness was set in place by the Tzaddikim, such as Adam and Noach, who lived before them. The same is true in regard to our Rebbeim. While the founder of Chabad

Chassidus was the Alter Rebbe, the foundations for the Chabad movement were set by the two Tzaddikim, Rabbi Yisroel “Baal Shem Tov” and Rabbi Dovber “The Mezritcher Maggid”. We will therefore introduce this topic by describing the foundation they built for the seven Chabad Rebbeim who came after them.

The Baal Shem was the first to introduce Chassidus to the masses. Historically, P'nimius HaTorah—the esoteric part of Torah—was taught by select individuals and learned in private. The holy Arizal declared that it is a Mitzvah to reveal the secrets of the Torah to all, but nevertheless it still remained a topic that very few dared approach to study. The Baal Shem Tov was the first to really make it available.

The Rebbe teaches us (Likkutei Sichos Vol. 15) that the reason that this revolution happened specifically in the later generations of galus was not only because we are on a lower spiritual level (so we need a stronger infusion of spiritual energy), but primarily because it is meant to give us a foretaste of the teachings of Moshiach. Just as there is a Halacha that on Erev Shabbos we are supposed to taste the foods of Shabbos, the same applies to our preparation for Moshiach, which is called “The time that is like Shabbos”. Right before the arrival of Moshiach, we must begin to taste and adjust to this new wondrous lifestyle.

This idea that the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov were a preparation for the time of Moshiach is evident in the famous

letter printed in Kesser Shem Tov, in which the Baal Shem Tov describes a fascinating encounter that he had with Moshiach:

“On Rosh Hashanah of the year 5507 I performed, by means of oath, an elevation of soul, as known to you, and saw wondrous things I had never seen before. That which I saw and learned there is impossible to convey in words, even face to face.

When I returned to the lower Garden of Eden, I saw innumerable souls, both living and dead, some whom I knew and others whom I did not. They were fleeting back and forth, going from one universe to another through the Column that is known to those who delve in mysteries. Their state of joy was so great that lips cannot express it, and the physical ear is too coarse to hear it.

There were also many wicked people who had repented; their sins were forgiven, since this was a special time of grace. Even to my eyes it was wondrous how many were accepted as penitents, many of whom you know. There was great joy among them too, and they also ascended in the above mentioned manner.

All of them beseeched and petitioned me unceasingly: “Because of the glory of your Torah, G-d granted you greater understanding to perceive and know these things. Ascend with us, so that you can be our help and support.”

Because of the great joy that I saw among them, I decided to ascend with them. Due to the great danger involved in ascending to the supernal universes, I asked my master to come with me, as I had never before ascended to such a high

level. I ascended from level to level until I entered the chamber of Moshiach, where Moshiach learns Torah with all the sages and *tzaddikim* and also with the seven Shepherds.

I saw great joy there, but I did not know the reason for it. At first I thought that the reason for this joy was because I had passed away from the physical world, Heaven forbid. Later, they told me that my time had not yet come to die, since they have great pleasure on high when I bring about unifications through the holy Torah down below. To this very day, I do not know the reason for that joy.

I asked Moshiach: "When will the Master come?". He answered: "By this you shall know:

"In the time when your teachings will become public and revealed in the world, and your wellsprings will burst forth to the farthest extremes, even that which I have taught you and you have comprehended, and they also shall be able to perform unifications and elevations as you do, then all of the *klipos* will cease to exist, and then shall be a time of good will and salvation."

Regarding the time of Moshiach it says (see final Halacha of Rambam) "The

world will be filled with the knowledge of Hashem – the only involvement of the world will be to know Hashem". This was the purpose of the revelation of Chassidus.

Yet the revelations of the Baal Shem Tov were only on a very general level. The Baal Shem Tov and Maggid taught short pearls of wisdom to the masses, while the deep Torah concepts were passed down to the "Chevraya Kadisha", a group of disciples who were Tzaddikim.

This laid the groundwork for the Avraham Avinu of Chabad Chassidus: Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi the founder of Chabad.



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



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DEFEATING THE MICRO-AMALEK

By Rabbi Tuvia Bolton,

Mashpia in Yeshiva Ohr T'mimim in Kfar Chabad



This week's Parsha ends with three commandments dealing with Amalek, a nation that hates the Jews and tries to destroy them whenever possible. The first is to remember Amalek. The second is not to forget Amalek and the last is to eliminate Amalek.

At first glance this is not understood:

Firstly, the reason Amalek hates the Jews is because he hates G-d. As is known, the Baal Shem Tov teaches that G-d creates the entire world constantly. So why would G-d constantly create people that hate Him?

Also, the last of these commandments seems to nullify the first two. If we eliminate Amalek so he doesn't exist, then why would we want to remember him?

Here is a story that answers our questions.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe did so many miracles that often they were taken for granted. However, here is one that can only be understood as miraculous.

Rabbi Moshe Finer was a member of a group of religious Jews that officially were not fond of the Rebbe and his ideas about Moshiach.

It disturbed them when the Rebbe insisted that we must love every Jew and draw them

to Torah – even the most blatant sinners.

Yet despite all his opinions and public statements, Rabbi Moshe was in a big dilemma. His wife was ill, and the doctors said there was simply no hope.

He and his wife had visited numerous countries and spent tens of thousands of dollars searching for doctors and treatments, praying that one of them would be the proper shliach to facilitate her recovery, but she just kept getting sicker. And now, just the other day, one of the biggest professors in Israel confirmed the worst. She had only days to live; only prayer could help.

Prayer! Rav Moshe had done nothing but pray since the first day they got the terrible news.

"You have no choice, Moshe," his wife pleaded from her sickbed. "Go see the Lubavitcher Rebbe. We've tried everything Moshe, everything. We have nothing to lose, and you know that you admire him anyway. So go Moshe, please."

So the next day Rav Moshe put on his best Shabbos garments, took a subway to the Crown Heights area of Brooklyn, entered the Rebbe's headquarters on 770 Eastern Parkway and made an appointment.

Fifteen hours later at two in

the morning he was standing nervously in front of the Rebbe's office door waiting for it to open. After over five hours of waiting since his scheduled appointment time at nine P.M., he finally reached the front of the line.

The door opened! The man that had just finished backed out of the Rebbe's office, with eyes red as though he had been crying. Rav Moshe entered.

The room was very brightly lit and very quiet; the walls were lined with books. The door closed behind him. The Rebbe was looking at a letter from a pile on his desk and occasionally the chair he was sitting on or the paper he was reading creaked or rustled like thunder in the silence.

The Rebbe looked up at him and said, "Sit," but Rav Moshe couldn't sit. Something very, very unusual was happening here. He had lived around Chassidic Jews his entire life but he had never seen anyone like this, no less to be alone with him. This man was royal, powerful, wise, simple, friendly, holy and worldly all at the same time.

"What do you want?" asked the Rebbe. Rav Moshe began to cry and tell his story. When he finished the Rebbe answered, "But what do you want from me? If all the doctors and professors can't help, what can I do?"

Despite the Rebbe's words,

Rav Moshe was becoming more and more positive that if anyone could do it, it was this man. "Rebbe, have mercy! My wife and I have been through so much, through the Holocaust and everything afterwards. Oy Rebbe, she is such a good woman. Please.... please help!"

"Aha!" said the Rebbe. "The Holocaust! So I have a solution for you!"

"The Nazis, yimach shemam (may their name be cursed) killed millions of Jews. Do you agree that I trade one Nazi woman for a Jewish woman... for your wife?"

Rav Moshe knew exactly what to say. "Yes!" he answered enthusiastically "Amen, Amen! It should only be so with all the Nazis, yimach shemam!!"

The Rebbe blessed him and his wife with long healthy lives and Rav Moshe backed out of the room, drying his eyes and thanking the Rebbe as he went.

Sure enough, the next day his wife began to feel better and in two week's time she felt well enough to take a walk outside.

The doctors couldn't understand the change in her x-rays and were even more amazed when a month later the disease completely disappeared!

Needless to say, Moshe, his family and his friends dropped their opposition to the Rebbe.

Let us return to our initial

“As the Rebbe often said regarding the situation in Israel today, ‘The Arabs aren’t our only enemies; the entire U.N. is like ‘Seventy wolves against one sheep.’ Yet, you should know that every Jew has a little gentile inside him, and when he defeats that gentile inside he will defeat the big gentile outside.’”

questions.

A basic principle of Judaism is that every Jew is a complete world, containing spiritually, in miniature, everything in creation and therefore has the power to affect the entire world around him.

As the Rebbe often said regarding the situation in Israel today, "The Arabs aren't our only enemies; the entire U.N. is like 'Seventy wolves against one sheep.' Yet, you should know that every Jew has a little gentile inside him, and when he defeats that gentile inside he will defeat the big gentile outside."

Every Jew has an 'Amalek,' within him; a cold, hard core of indifference and even hatred to G-d, Torah and the Jewish people.

The only way to totally defeat it is by being attached to the Rebbe.

In fact that is why G-d creates Amalek, in order to unite the Jews to the Moses of every generation in order to defeat that cursed nation.

Just as Mordechai in his generation united and saved all the Jews from Haman, and just as Moses in his generation united and defeated Amalek (in the end of our section), so too the job of the Jewish leaders of each generation, and especially the Rebbe in our generation (the generation of Moshiach), is to fight the 'little Amalek' within. We must overcome the coldness and indifference to living Judaism with which each of us struggles in order to transform each and every Jew into a warm, living, Holy Temple.

That is the goal of Judaism and it will be accomplished *only* by Moshiach. Only the Moshiach will totally defeat Amalek, build the Holy Temple and gather the Jews.

But until then we must do these three commandments: 'remember', 'do not forget' and try to 'destroy' the Amalek within us at every opportunity.

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REUVEN DUNIN ON SHIDDUCHIM

Beis Moshiach is pleased to present another excerpt from the seifer “So That The Rebbe Should Smile,” containing more than five hundred brief stories and recollections on the illustrious chassid, R’ Reuven Dunin of Haifa.

Collected and Arranged by Chanoch HaLevi Shachar

Translated by Michael Leib Dobry

R’ ZUSHE’S BRACHOS

One day, R’ Zushe Wilomovsky appeared at the Chabad House on Herzl Street. He went up to Reuven and started chatting with him. Later, he took out a small flask of mashke and began to extol its unique qualities. “This bottle contains mashke that I received from the Rebbe, along with mashke from the special farbrengen in Kfar Chabad and from the farbrengen...” At this point, Reuven cut R’ Zushe off and asked one of the bachurim to bring their own mashke bottle, a cheap bottle of vodka we called ‘horse vodka’, nicknamed for the horses appearing on the label.

Reuven accepted the bottle, then took R’ Zushe’s flask and added a little vodka from his bottle to R’ Zushe’s. “Now you have all the necessary qualities, as you now have vodka from this farbrengen as well.”

Reuven then indicated that the bachurim should leave the room because he had a certain

issue to discuss with R’ Zushe. We went out, but left the doors open a crack. We then heard Reuven quietly say, “Zushe, give Yosef Yitzchak a bracha that he should get married this year. He’s getting old already!” The conversation continued back and forth.

Zushe: What am I – a Rebbe?

Reuven: Zushe, I know you well. You can’t fool me!

Zushe (in a worried voice): Have you gone crazy?

Reuven: Zushe, you won’t get out of here alive.

Zushe: Leave me alone.

Reuven: Zushe, I know exactly who you are. Give him a bracha!

Zushe: What do you want from me? So he should get married!

Reuven got up and opened the door. Needless to say, Yosef Yitzchak found his shidduch shortly thereafter.

(Chanoch HaLevi Shachar)

THE WAY OF A MAN

Once someone whom Reuven was helping in his search for a shidduch came to the Herzl Street Chabad House in distress. “Why hasn’t the Rebbe given us an answer? It’s been a week, and the Rebbe usually does not delay with answers regarding a shidduch.”

Reuven asked, “How exactly was the letter written?” The young man said that the young lady in question sent a letter for both of them.

“It is stated that ‘it is the way of a man to go after a woman,’” Reuven immediately replied. “Thus, the Rebbe will not answer you until you write as well.”

The young man immediately sat down with Reuven and wrote a letter to the Rebbe. Reuven gave the letter to someone traveling to New York and who would present it to the Rebbe within a couple of days. A few days later, two separate letters arrived from the Rebbe – one for the chassan and one for the kalla – postmarked in New York on the day the young man had sent his letter. . .

(Chanoch HaLevi Shachar)

AVODA ACCORDING TO YOUR OWN STRENGTH

In 5719, the Rebbe instructed Reuven to return to Eretz Yisroel and look for a shidduch.

“Rebbe,” Reuven said, “I have neither the desire nor the strength to deal with such matters. Just tell me who it is and I won’t ask any questions.”

The Rebbe replied: “First inquire into suitable names, and when you have someone, send me [a letter] and I’ll tell you if it is a suitable match.”

(Rabbi Gurevitch)

THE RETURN OF BLACK SEPTEMBER

The Rebbe's analysis from decades ago is now being realized, as the government of Israel stands alone while the terrorist leaders receive legitimacy from most of the nations of the free world. The capitulation and subservience before the terrorists has brought us to a catastrophe, both in terms of national security and diplomacy. To change this situation, we must demand a complete cessation of all negotiations.

By Sholom Ber Crombie

Translated by Michael Leib Dobry

SPECULATIVE PROGNOSTICATIONS

In recent weeks, the political and national security 'authority' in Eretz Yisroel has been preoccupied with only one issue: September. This is when the 'Palestinian' Authority plans to present its request before the United Nations for the recognition of its independent state. The very name of this month is now synonymous with the upcoming diplomatic disaster hovering over the Holy Land.

Based on current UN trends, the PA proposal can expect to receive the automatic support of one hundred and sixteen member nations, known as "the unaligned bloc." Most of them are small countries in the free world, and their influence within the United Nations is not very significant. However, they are usually inclined to vote as one large bloc. On the Palestinian question, these nations traditionally tend to support the Arab position, and most of them have already officially declared that they will

support a Palestinian state. Yet, this support is considered more symbolic than influential.

Assuming that the United States will maintain its opposition to the Arabs' unilateral declaration, the big question is: How will the European Union vote? Israeli politicians are estimating that the EU nations will abstain, thus preventing an official United Nations decision supporting the recognition of a Palestinian state.

In any event, the real danger is not only what will happen in the United Nations General Assembly, but what will happen in Eretz Yisroel: Will the Arabs in Yehuda and Shomron come out with a third intifada and organize mass parades and demonstrations at the gates of Jewish settlements *ch"v*, or will the security forces manage to crush the anticipated rioting and restore order to the territories?

THE PROBLEM: LEGITIMATIZING TERROR

A heavy cloud of failure hangs over the issue of the proposed 'Palestinian' declaration. Naturally, the left-wingers claim

“The very name of this month is now synonymous with the upcoming diplomatic disaster hovering over the Holy Land.

that this entire catastrophe came upon us only because Netanyahu did not advance the peace talks with the Palestinians. They forget that it was specifically Bibi who agreed to do everything to renew negotiations. In fact, this was the whole purpose behind the ten-month settlement freeze, designed to appease the ‘Palestinian’ Authority chairman and bring him back to the negotiating table.

It is self evident that it wasn’t the suspension of the peace talks that brought this calamity upon us. The question is: what caused the Arabs to take this unilateral step of going to the United Nations to request recognition for their independent state? How did it happen that a terrorist organization, once known throughout the world as a symbol of bloodshed and slaughter, was transformed into an international diplomatic entity, busy garnering worldwide support for its cause?

There can only be one clear and obvious answer: Over the past twenty years, the Israeli government has turned the PLO band of murderers into “men of peace” and has helped them to win acceptance among the cultured people of the earth. These efforts paved the way for the murderer Arafat, may his name be erased, to win the Nobel Peace Prize, together with his patrons, Messrs. Rabin and Peres. In addition, the ‘Palestinian’ Authority became the leading “moderate” force in the Middle East for establishing peace and security in the region.

The journey that has brought

these murderers here from Tunis has been a long one, but it’s paid off for them. In the past, they had to live like fugitive war criminals, moving from country to country, running in fear from the Mosad agents determined to eliminate them. These terrorists were involved in the senseless slaughter of Jews, young and old. Even Jordan threw them out after they unleashed a series of terrorist attacks from its sovereign territory against Israeli cities. Then one morning, a group of Israelis decided to give legitimacy to these terrorist leaders and turn them into diplomats welcome throughout the world.

IGNORE AT YOUR OWN PERIL

In 1974, after failing in their armed struggle and their terrorist attacks against the residents of Eretz Yisroel, the PLO terror organization publicized their “Phased Plan for the Liberation of Palestine.” The plan appears in Wikipedia, exposed for all to see, including those left-wingers counted among the great friends of the PLO leadership. With regard to the underlying concept behind the plan, it states as follows: “The plan called for the establishment of a national authority ‘over every part of Palestinian territory that is liberated’ with the aim of ‘completing the liberation of all Palestinian territory’.” The program implies that the liberation of Palestine may be partial (at least, at some stage), and though it emphasizes armed struggle, it does not exclude

other means. This allows the PLO to engage in diplomatic channels, and provide validation for future compromises made by the Palestinian leadership.

There are many who did not want to understand the meaning of this plan, and they chose instead to live in an illusion. They believed that the terrorist leaders truly meant to lay down their weapons and accept our presence here. Many people preferred to think that the terrorist leaders came to the negotiation table out of a fervent desire to put an end to the use of war and to establish a path towards true peace.

However, as long as Israeli governments honor the Arabs, they respond by turning their backs and intensifying the armed struggle against the Jewish residents of Eretz HaKodesh. With every festive peace conference or summit on the issue of mutual compromise, the terrorists feel less and less compelled to make such compromises. Furthermore, each Israeli concession is greeted with a new wave of terror.


While the free world at-large understands that terrorism can be stopped only through the use of force, Israeli prime ministers and their governments have continued to adhere to an approach of capitulation and subservience. They have totally ignored the prevailing situation and proceed to act as if everything’s fine – no terrorism, no exploding buses, no murder in the streets, no fear, and no panic. They continue with their “peace” celebrations, while the PLO remains a “responsible and moderate” Arab organization with whom we must speak and reach understandings – and they seemingly have no connection whatsoever with the armed struggle against the Jews of the Holy Land.

ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS

None of the Israeli prime ministers has dared to tell the unvarnished truth to the United States and the world. No one has raised the subject of the extreme paradox between a diplomatic organization receiving world acceptance while simultaneously involved in terrorism. Instead of confronting the world on this issue, the Israeli government has consistently made concessions and recognized the PLO as a partner for peace. Shortly before the ratification of the Oslo Accords, legislation barring meetings with the PLO was repealed, thus paving the way to bring “the Tunisian Hooligans” to Eretz Yisroel and enable them to control Yehuda, Shomron, and Gaza.

After the Oslo Accords were shown to be nothing more than a piece of paper, everyone understood that there was no partner and the Nobel Peace Prize laureate was maintaining his longstanding occupation – planning murder. So the leftist media they came upon a new solution: “Arafat is not a partner”, **but** – there are obviously other partners such as Abu Mazen and Abu Ala (may their names be erased).

The Oslo leaders never took responsibility for the situation, and to avoid admitting their mistake, they kept playing the game of “Let’s Pretend.” They continued their imaginary search for some moderate Palestinian partner and gave unabashed legitimacy to PLO representatives. No one seemed to be bothered by the Palestinian Authority legislation imposing a death penalty upon any Arab who sold land to Jews and its subsequent implementation. No

 While the free world at-large understands that terrorism can be stopped only through the use of force, Israeli prime ministers have continued to adhere to an approach of capitulation and subservience.

one even dared to wave a warning flag when the “moderate” Abu Mazen renamed a public square in Ramallah after a suicide bomber who killed Jews in cold blood.

THEY WERE WARNED

It’s quite easy to understand those who initially believed the promises of “peace” from the other side. After years of brutal attacks and the seemingly never-ending suicide bombings, many people in Eretz Yisroel felt that there was simply no other way out and we must try to reach some understanding with these terrorist organizations. They supported Rabin and Peres, hoping for better days ahead.

Yet, anyone who was connected to the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach, never got confused by those bombastic promises. The Rebbe analyzed the reality of the situation in a very precise manner way back in the days of the Sinai withdrawal – the origin of the concept of autonomy. The Rebbe explained throughout the years that capitulation and submission would result in world pressure that would isolate Eretz Yisroel.

In various private audiences and discussions, the Rebbe spoke against succumbing to world pressure, taking both security and diplomatic considerations into account. The Rebbe explained that as long as we bow submissively to the terrorists, it causes America to respect us less,

a fact that has been proven time and time again.

As we witness Eretz HaKodesh being dragged into serious diplomatic complications, one can’t help but think about the very simple approach suggested by the Rebbe twenty years ago – a proud and firm stance on the most vital principles of Eretz Yisroel’s security. To our great regret, while successive Israeli prime ministers have caved in to every Arab dictate, the terrorist leaders have shown how to stand up for their principles, even the demand for their envisioned ‘Palestinian’ state run by murderous organizations.

AN EFFECTIVE SOLUTION

It’s easy to imagine what the Israeli government’s world status would be if its leaders knew how to stand proudly in defense of their basic demands and remove the terrorist leaders from the scene. It stands to reason that if it weren’t for the vigorous activities of the Oslo supporters, Abu Mazen and his cohorts would still be hiding in Tunisia or south Lebanon.

To change this untenable situation, we must demand that the prime minister put a halt to all talks and negotiations with all terrorists – PLO, Hamas, etc. Only a significant change in the Israeli government’s position in relation to the terrorist organizations can improve the situation and delegitimize these killers, once and for all.

THE 11TH AND 13TH OF ELUL

The Wedding Anniversaries of the Rebbe Rashab and the Previous Rebbe

Compiled by Rabbi Levi Stolik

Translated by Yaakov Paley

INTRODUCTION

On Motzaei Shabbos, the 11th of Elul 5635 (1875), the Rebbe Rashab (the fifth Chabad Rebbe) was married to Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah, a granddaughter of the Tzemach Tzedek (the third Chabad Rebbe).

Twenty-two years later, on the 13th of Elul 5657 (1897), the Rebbe Rashab's only son, the Previous Rebbe (the sixth Chabad Rebbe) was married to Rebbetzin Nechama Dinah, daughter of Reb Avraham Schneersohn.

On the anniversaries of their weddings, the spiritual joy and influence that were then initiated are again manifest. In fact, each year brings an added quality to this manifestation, for "We always ascend in holy matters."¹ Moreover, the marriage date of a leader of a generation is highly significant for all Jewish men, women and children.²

1) Parshas Ki Seitzei 5749; Hisvaaduyos p.264.

2) A marriage for all Jewry

"The marriage of the leader of a generation, viewed in light of our Sages' statement, "A leader of a generation is [equivalent to] the entire generation," is pertinent to each Jew in our generation – men, women and children." (Eve and night of 13th Elul 5749; Hisvaaduyos p.289)

CHASSIDIC WEDDING DISCOURSES

- We should study the Chassidic discourses from the Chabad Rebbes that explain the spiritual concept of a wedding. These discourses are known as Drushei Chasuna.

PREVIOUS REBBE'S WEDDING DISCOURSES

- We should especially study those discourses that were delivered in honor of the Previous Rebbe's wedding, beginning with the famous series Samach Tesamach.³

SAMACH TESAMACH - 8-DAY WEDDING GUIDE

- We should *certainly* study the series of discourses entitled Samach Tesamach. After all, they constitute the "Chassidic Laws of the Festival."⁴ Their study should be continued during the six days following the anniversary, which correspond to the customary seven-day celebratory period (Sheva Brachos) following a

3) Parshas Ki Savo 5749; Hisvaaduyos p.315.

4) Maamarim – the theme of each Yom Tov: See Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch, Orech Chayim 429:4.

wedding; it was during the days after the Previous Rebbe's wedding that these discourses were originally delivered. We should study them on the eighth day too,⁵ since that day carries great spiritual significance.⁶

HOLD WEDDINGS ON THIS DAY WITH IMMENSE JOY

- Those who are set to be married on the anniversary or newlyweds celebrating their Sheva Brachos should do so with increased rejoicing.⁷

PLAN FOOD FOR THE POOR

Those about to hold a wedding should prepare an extra number of place settings at the wedding feast for the poor. This is in keeping with ancient Jewish custom, whereby the choicest food would be laid out specifically for the poor.⁷

5) Parshas Ki Seitzei 5748; Hisvaaduyos p.272.

6) Six and seven – mundane and sacred

Hashem created the world with seven divine s'firos or "attributes" – six on the first six days of creation and the seventh on the holy day of Shabbos. In doing so, Hashem installed the natural order of the world, which includes the concept of "six" (the mundane) and "seven" (the holy).

For that reason, the number seven is used to express both natural and sacred cycles: we celebrate a wedding or mourn a relative for seven days (the natural cycle), and two of the major festivals, Pesach and Sukkos, are seven days long (the sacred cycle).

Eight – unlimited revelation

The number eight by contrast, represents a level entirely beyond and removed from the natural order – even its holier aspects ("seven"). Eight represents an unlimited manifestation of G-dliness. Being unlimited, however, nothing can prevent it from being elicited into all aspects of creation, as it did for example, when Hashem's unlimited Presence came to dwell within the Mishkan on the eighth day of its inauguration festival.

7) A wedding should include Tz'daka: "Every wedding included a meal that was reserved for the poor." (ibid, 5751)

SPREAD THE WORD

- We should publicize these two directives concerning weddings.⁸

The 14th of Elul – 30 Days before Sukkos

INTRODUCTION

We inquire about and expound upon the laws of the festival thirty days beforehand (P'sachim 6a).

We begin to expound the laws of the festival of Pesach from Purim and onward, the laws of Shavuot from the 5th of Iyar and onward, and the laws of Sukkos from the 14th of Elul and onward (Alter Rebbe, Orech Chaim, 429:1-3).

PREPARE FOR SUKKOS – THIRTY DAYS OF JOY

- We should begin familiarizing ourselves with the laws of Sukkos thirty days before its arrival. Now, since the quality that is unique to Sukkos⁹ is intense rejoicing,¹⁰ we should make sure to include rejoicing in our thirty-day preparatory

8) 13th of Elul 5751; Hisvaaduyos p.225.

9) Parshas Ki Seitzei 5748; Hisvaaduyos p.263.

10) **Why the fuss over Sukkos – aren't all festivals days of joy?**

"Now, although *all* the festivals are called "festivals for rejoicing" – due to the Torah's command V'Samachta beChagechah, "You shall rejoice on your festivals" – nevertheless, in the text of the Amida prayer and Kiddush that was established by the Anshei Knesset haGedolah ("Men of the Great Assembly"), Sukkos is uniquely given the title, Z'man Simachseinu, 'the time of our rejoicing'." (ibid, footnote 2)

"On the scriptural level too, the joy of Sukkos is given greater emphasis than that of all other festivals; as the Midrash (Yalkut Shimoni, Emor 654) states, "Three 'rejoicings' were written in the Torah concerning Sukkos," as opposed to just *one* mention regarding Shavuot and *no* explicit mention by Pesach." (ibid, footnote 6)



On this holy day, I founded the Yeshiva at the request of my saintly ancestors ... which will send forth into the world students capable of sacrificing their lives for the study of Torah and divine service, as they cleave faithfully to the path of Chabad Chassidus.

ACTIVELY SEEK JOY

- Moreover, the Sages chose the word "Dorshin" – "we expound the laws of the festival etc." Dorshin also means "we seek". Throughout the entire thirty days that stretch from the 14th of Elul until Sukkos, we should place extra emphasis on the theme unique to Sukkos and actively "seek" rejoicing.¹¹

ESPECIALLY AT THE BEGINNING

- We should be especially joyful at the onset of these thirty days, for "every beginning is difficult" and the way to nullify any hardship is through intense and bountiful joy that "breaches all restraining boundaries." On the other hand, the very fact that we are entering a new period makes it easier to feel cheerful, for a new matter naturally and easily arouses joy.

The 15th – 18th of Elul
Anniversary of the Founding of Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim

INTRODUCTION

On the 15th of Elul 5657 (1897), the Rebbe Rashab announced the founding of a Yeshiva that would combine the study of the Torah's revealed and

inner teachings. "For ten years I have dreamed of founding this Yeshiva and have paid many visits to the burial site of my father and grandfather ... The intention is not only a place to study Torah, but rather to radiate light..."

The students' studies commenced on the 18th of Elul of that year, whereupon the Rebbe Rashab announced, "Today, the 18th of Elul, is the date made luminous by the birth of the Alter Rebbe and the Baal Shem Tov. On this holy day, I founded the Yeshiva at the request of my saintly ancestors ... which will send forth into the world students capable of sacrificing their lives for the study of Torah and divine service, as they cleave faithfully to the path of Chabad Chassidus.

"I am hereby kindling the lights that we inherited from the Baal Shem Tov and the Rebbes of Chabad, so that the promise [that Moshiach made, to arrive when] "the wellsprings of your teachings will stream outwards" may be fulfilled, and that the arrival of Moshiach will be hastened."

TORAH AVODA U'GEMILAS CHASSADIM

- In connection with this auspicious day, it is extremely fitting that each of us increases our Divine service in the three fundamental areas of Torah, prayer and charitable acts.¹²

11) Ibid, 5748.

12) Parshas Ki Savo 5749; Hisvaaduyos

STUDY CHASSIDUS

Each of us should add in the study of Torah in general and Chabad Chassidus in particular, since it bears great significance to the current days (the 15th – 18th of Elul).¹²

FOCUS ON CERTAIN REBBEIM'S MAAMARIM

- Within our study of Chabad Chassidus, we should particularly increase our study of the works of the Baal Shem Tov, the Alter Rebbe, the Rebbe Rashab [see Intro.], and certainly the discourses of [the Previous Rebbe] the Leader of our generation.¹³

PUBLIC CHASSIDUS SESSIONS

In addition to increasing our personal study of Chassidus, we should also establish new study groups for the public study of Chassidus – wherever possible – as well as strengthen all existing sessions.¹³

ADD IN SERVICE OF PRAYER

- Since the Sages state that the month of Elul in general is conducive for additional prayer and supplication, we should add in our service of prayer. This is especially so during the anniversary of the founding of Tomchei T'mimim, a Yeshiva that lends special significance to the service of prayer.¹⁴

MORE TZ'DAKA

- It is customary to increase

p.315

13) Parshas Ki Savo 5749; Hisvaaduyos p.315.

14) Ibid.

in our giving Tz'daka throughout the month of Elul; we should further increase in Tz'daka on these auspicious dates.¹⁵

SPREAD TEACHINGS OF CHASSIDUS

We should simultaneously perform *spiritual* Tz'daka, whereby we become [in the words of the Rebbe Rashab] a "flame that illuminates" the world through disseminating Torah, Judaism, and particularly the teachings of Chassidus.¹⁵

FARBRENG WHEREVER THERE'S A TOMCHEI T'MIMIM

- In 5749 (1989)¹⁶ the Rebbe stated: in honor of the upcoming anniversaries of the Sheva Brachos from the Rebbe Rashab and the Previous Rebbe's weddings, along with the anniversary of the founding of Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim, it is fitting to hold celebratory farbrengens wherever a Tomchei T'mimim exists.¹⁷

ALL BRANCHES

- Naturally, we should hold such celebrations in the Central Tomchei T'mimim in Brooklyn, NY and likewise by every branch of the Yeshiva, both in the Land of Israel and worldwide, whether it is called Tomchei T'mimim or Achei T'mimim and the like.¹⁸

DRAW CROWDS, ALL ALUMNI

- We should arrange matters so that these celebratory gatherings will have high turnouts and that all alumni of every branch of Tomchei T'mimim will participate.¹⁹ This includes those who send or have sent their sons to the Yeshiva, those who were positively affected by the Yeshiva or its students, and certainly those studying there at present.²⁰

FOUR OR MORE DAYS OF FARBRENGEN

- We should maintain these farbrengens until and including the 18th of Elul; if local conditions permit, we should extend them even beyond the 18th.

HIGHLIGHT OF OUR EFFORTS

- These gatherings should be held with great fanfare, so that they become the principal focus and service of these days.

FOLLOW YESHIVA ADMINISTRATION

- Obviously, the farbrengens should be led by the heads of the Yeshiva, i.e., the central administration and the administrators of each branch, who have been officially appointed and have been executing their duties for many years²¹, just as it is their

19) **Once a Tamim, always a Tamim**

"For holiness does not depart from its location – if one entered the Yeshiva even once, then the influence it has on him will remain forever, throughout his lifetime, and in a steadily increasing and radiant manner."

20) Parshas Ki Savo 5749; Hisvaaduyos p.316.

21) Parshas Ki Savo 5749; Hisvaaduyos p.317.

responsibility to lead the Yeshiva in all other regards.²²

PLAY YOUR PART

- Whoever is suitable to aid the Yeshiva administration should certainly offer his assistance in arranging these gatherings under the administration's instruction.²³

PRINT CHASSIDUS

In honor of these celebrations, we should publish some of the teachings of Chassidus that pertain – and will add – to the study of Chassidus.²¹

MAAMER KOL HA'YOTZEI

- We should reprint the Sichas of the Rebbe Rashab entitled Kol HaYotzei LaMilchamas Beis

22) The Previous Rebbe is the Yeshiva's active head

This position of active head was held by the Previous Rebbe, who was himself appointed as its active head by his father, the Rebbe Rashab, a capacity in which he performed for many years; he even continued in this position after assuming the mantle of leadership as Rebbe, after the passing of his father in 5680.

Consulting with the Rebbe in the World of Truth

Moreover, since he declared that he would never waive the position, G-d forbid, he continues to be its active head in a fixed and eternal manner. It was only due to the requirement to devote body and soul to this position that the Previous Rebbe appointed his eldest son-in-law to act in his place (a son-in-law is like a son). The Previous Rebbe gave him the necessary powers to carry out his tasks, and he actually did so during his lifetime; his actions continue to have an effect even *following* his departure – in addition to the continuing effects of the active head, the Previous Rebbe himself.

[“Even after his son-in-law departed to the World of Truth, his affect on the Yeshiva continues, concerning all that was dependent on him. This is specifically so in the light of his current location in the World of Truth, where he has opportunity to consult with the active head, the Previous Rebbe himself” – *ibid*, 15th of Elul, p.301-302.]

23) Parshas Ki Savo 5749; Hisvaaduyos p.317.

David, “All who go forth in battle for the House of David,” which describes the goals of a student in Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim. This is in order that it may once again be studied, and in a manner that will lead to action.²⁴

OPEN NEW BRANCHES

- We should strive to open new branches of Tomchei T'mimim in every appropriate location. This could be accomplished – with the written permission of the heads of the Central Tomchei T'mimim – by either opening a new Yeshiva or

renaming a pre-existing Chabad Yeshiva as “Tomchei T'mimim”.

EVERY HOME A MINI-TOMCHEI T'MIMIM

- We should publicize the unique mission of Tomchei T'mimim in every location, for in addition to the requirement that every Jewish home become a house of Torah, prayer and charitable deeds, *every home should also become a mini-Tomchei T'mimim* – through its occupants studying Chassidus in addition to their general Torah study.²⁵



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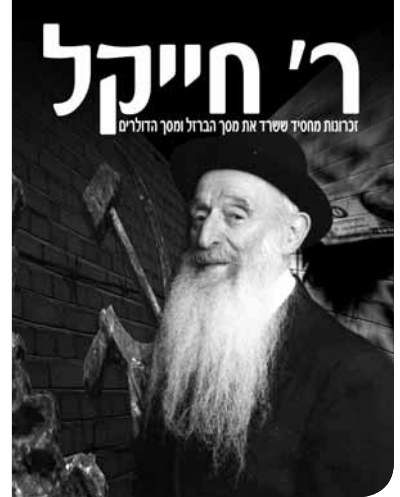
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There were directives that were either late, unclear, or passed from mouth to ear before finally reaching their destination in a corrupted version. There were also directives where it was unknown whether they originated with the Rebbe or a courier resolved to state them on his own. At times these directives confused R. Itche and left him in a quandary.



By: Rabbi Shneur Zalman Chanin

Translated by: Menachem Har Tzvi

WHO GAVE THE DIRECTIVE FOR ANASH TO REMAIN IN POLAND?

LETTER OF R. ITCHE

In the previous chapters I related the story of the Chassid R. Yitzchok Goldin, who remained in Krakow, Poland. He was the first to greet Anash who had fled from Russia. He received guidance from the Rebbe, second hand through telephone messages from other members of the network, regarding where to send the refugees. There were directives that were either late, unclear, or passed from ear to mouth before finally reaching their destination in a corrupted version. There were also directives regarding which it was unknown whether they originated with the Rebbe or with a courier who resolved to state them on his own. At times these directives confused R. Itche and left him in a quandary.

For example, at the end of Cheshvan 5707-1946, R. Itche received a directive from the Rebbe which passed through five people before it finally reached him. The Rebbe gave a directive to R. Binyomin Gorodetzky (probably not directly from the Rebbe, because the Rebbe was in the United States and R. Binyomin was in Paris). R. Binyomin related the directive to R. Sholom Mendel Kalmanson, who wrote a letter to R. Yitzchak Goldin. R. Sholom Mendel then handed the letter to R. Yaakov Greifel, who gave it to another messenger, who finally gave it to R. Itche.

In this letter, R. Sholom Mendel writes in the name of R. Binyomin Gorodetzky that the Rebbe Rayatz advised him to extend efforts in bringing the Chassidim from Austria to Paris.

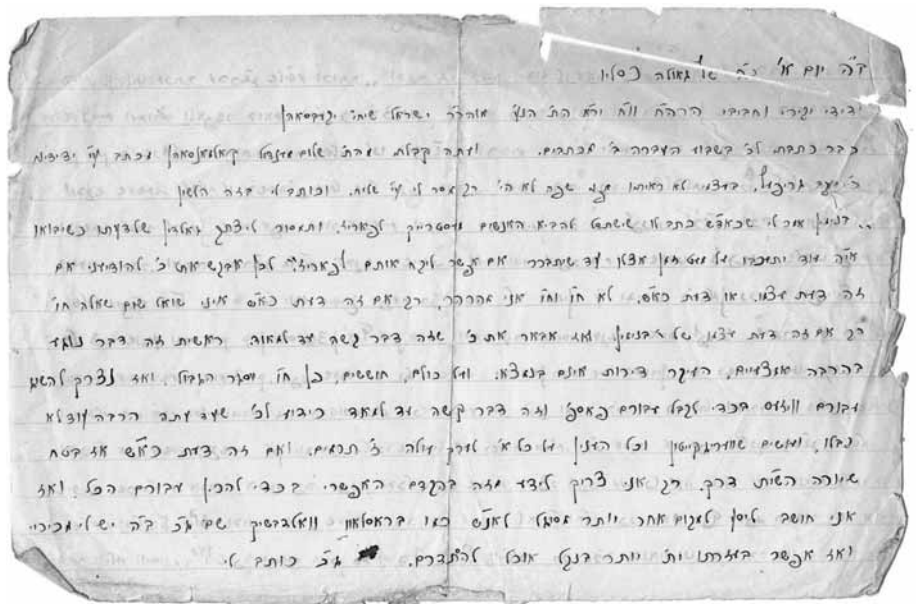
R. Sholom also writes that he should convey to R. Yitzchok that “in his opinion, when they [the refugees from Russia] arrive, G-d willing, they should remain in Krakow for a while until it becomes clear if it will be possible to bring them to Paris.”

R' Itche was unsure how to proceed. Firstly, how reliable was a message that was related and passed through so many hands? There was also a second question. The request to aid the Chassidim to leave Austria for Paris was understandable. The Jews in Austria lived under very difficult conditions; naturally, efforts should be extended to transfer them as soon as possible. However, it was very unclear to him why the Chassidim should remain in Poland. The directive seemingly conflicted with the previous directives.

R. Itche received an earlier directive that Anash who arrive in Poland from Russia should not remain there but should rather depart from there as soon as possible because, as he was told, Poland was a dangerous place. He also received instructions that he should guide the refugees in a manner that would eventually bring them to Paris. Subsequently there was a directive that Anash should travel to the American zone.

In another directive, they were to enlist the aid of the Zionist escape organization, Bricha, to travel westward into Europe, and yet another directive that they travel through Vienna or through the Russian zone, as I have written at length in previous chapters. In all the cases, the primary objective was to escape Poland as quickly and easily as possible. Suddenly, this directive appeared, stating that the refugees who arrived in Krakow from Russia should remain there. What should he do now? When R. Sholom Mendel wrote that “in his opinion they should remain (in Krakow) for a while,” whose opinion was he referring to – the Rebbe’s? Or perhaps this advice came from R. Binyomin himself.

He resolved to clarify the matter with R. Yisroel Jacobson. On Rosh Chodesh Kislev 5707-1946, R. Yitzchak Goldin wrote a letter to R. Yisroel Jacobson. “Therefore, I request his honor to notify me whether this is R’ Binyamin’s opinion or the opinion of the Rebbe. If the directive is from on high, then I will continue to lean on the broad shoulders of the Rebbe, and despite the fact that it seems illogical I will fulfill the request. However, if it is R. Binyamin’s opinion, then that is a different story, and I will do as I see fit.”



Rabbi Yitzchok Goldin.
Above: The first page of his letter

It is important to remember that R. Itche was in Krakow and that he could clearly see the situation growing increasingly more dangerous as time went on. Poland was slowly being transformed into a Communist country, and the Iron Curtain could soon shut on her too. If Anash did not leave immediately, with the Bricha perhaps, they would have to prepare passports and visas for them all, which was virtually impossible. In addition, if Anash remained in Poland, it would be necessary to rent

apartments. This would amount to a small fortune, and there was no money.

R. Itche writes regarding an additional problem. Where would he find the funds necessary to assist the refugees that arrived utterly destitute? He was told that he should turn directly to the Rebbe Rayatz. So that is what he did.

The Rashag answered, in the Rebbe’s name, to send a list of the refugees in order to receive support from the Joint. R. Yitzchak, who had already sent this type of list three times—to R. Sholom Mendel Kalmanson, R. Yehuda Chitrik, and R. Binyomin Gorodetzky—did not understand what additional list the Rashag wanted. Was it a list of the true names of the Chassidim or perhaps the fictitious names written in their documents? He begs in his letter that Rabbi Jacobson have the Rashag write to him directly because until he receives the answers and directives through R. Binyomin and R. Sholom Mendel, two or three weeks pass by and in the end, he is always left in a quandary. In the same

“During that period, there were thousands of Jewish children still in monasteries and homes of gentiles who had saved them during the war. The gentiles did not want to lose custody of the children for a number of reasons, among them being that they had forged strong emotional ties with them, they did not want the children to return to the Jewish faith, or desired monetary compensation.

letter, R. Itche asks the Rebbe's opinion regarding the following additional issue.

During that period, there were thousands of Jewish children still in monasteries and homes of gentiles who had saved them during the war. The gentiles did not want to lose custody of the children for a number of reasons, among them being that they had forged strong emotional ties with them, they did not want the children to return to the Jewish faith, or desired monetary compensation. They argued that during the years of the war they had spent an enormous amount of money to support the children in their care and that whoever desired to take custody of the children should pay a hefty sum. There were many organizations involved in the holy work of *pidyon shvuyim* (redeeming captives) who saved Jewish children from assimilation.

R. Yitzchak received a letter from R. Yaakov Greifel stating a request from Rabbi Yechezkel Halberstam Twersky to help save a granddaughter or great-granddaughter of the Sanzer Rebbe. All the expenses for her rescue were pre-assured in addition to payment for the endeavor.

R. Itche questioned: Is this my function? He writes that until now he had avoided this type of

activity due to “inferior fear” (fear of authorities). However, in this instance, he would earn a good sum of money which could help in the rescue of the Anash refugees. Therefore, he asks if it is appropriate for him to be active in this endeavor. “If this is the Rebbe's opinion, I do not ask any questions, Heaven forbid.”

B”H

Sunday, Rosh Chodesh of Redemption Kislev [5707]

My friend, my precious, my beloved HaRav HaChassid Vasik V’Chassid,

G-d fearing, the esteemed Tamim Moreinu HaRav R. Yisroel Jacobson,

I already wrote you two letters last week. Now I received a letter from the Tamim Sholom Mendel Kalmanson through our friend R. Yaakov Greifel. I myself did not see him because he was not here, and the letter was delivered by messenger. He wrote to me as follows:

“Binyomin told me that the Rebbe wrote to him to extend efforts to bring the people from Austria to Paris. Relate to Yitzchak Goldin that in his opinion when more arrive, G-d willing, they should remain with him until it becomes clear if it is possible to bring them to Paris.”

I request of His Honor to

notify me if this is his own opinion or the Rebbe's opinion. Not that I, Heaven forbid, have any thoughts. But if this is the Rebbe's opinion, then I do not ask any questions, Heaven forbid. However, if this is R. Binyamin's opinion, then I will explain to you that this is extremely difficult. Firstly, this involves enormous sums, primarily because apartments are not available. Above all, we are concerned that perhaps the border will close. Then we will have to obtain visas for them in order to obtain passports. This is extremely difficult. As is known to you, until now many have not been received. They make it difficult and each one costs approximately three sh'kalim. However, if this is the Rebbe's opinion, then surely Hashem will show a way. I must know this as soon as possible in order to prepare everything for them. Then I will consider traveling to a different place more appropriate for Anash such as Breslov or Valdsbeck. Blessed is G-d that I have acquaintances there, and with G-d's help it will be easier to arrange things.

He also wrote to me, “Today I received a letter from the Rashag and he writes: Surely you know of our efforts that the Joint provide funds for them to enable their arrival. Blessed is G-d that we were successful. Surely R. Binyomin notified you of all that has been accomplished. May G-d grant that we succeed in our work until we will be able to bring all of our friends, Anash, directly to a place of comfort. He requests that I send a detailed list of all Anash that are coming.”

My dear friend, I immediately called the above-mentioned Sholom Mendel

Meanwhile we do not know of these matters. May G-d have mercy for the future, because of the necessity of my work.

[illegible]

היה ויסקן ויבא תשד פרא
אכדור הכהן הנה' וכו' מהרה ישרא אקאדסן י'
שלום ודרכה
אמס פ' דרת ז' ס' י' ז'מך שא' דכס השדור דא
לכור קטנול א' אמר נכדא אקאסרקי ואמול.
אודות הקבד אמר, שדאן הימס ז'בינס אדאן קדצ'י
אדיר ש' ויחר, וקדא אדקאן שדכס הנמש ויארז דמנין
וקנ' י' יואא כלום.
אודות פ'סד'ם קאב אמר ד' שמי כ' יודד יוולא קאש
פאס פאדקאן וק' ויולס א' ה' יוולא אהיבד אדאן א' א' א'
א' א' חוסש הש שמי א' יאה אסכר זה, ואפסר
י'סר הדקן שדא כ' נסן דשמי (כ' כדד נמאדא
הנמאד) וא' ח' י' קדס אמאן כ'.
אמר השדס ז'יכ' אהיב' פ' האשט שטאנדק, א' א'
א' ז' תה' ונאמא אהמא י' ה' ז' דמני.
אדאג אין זכרן אמרת כ' ד' ז' ז'יכ' אהמא
אדאגנימ וז' ק'כ' שמי א' טו, ז'יכ' אהמא
זכור אדמק, ואח' דמק הנסן ז'יכ' אהמא
אדאגאן אקדס אמת. א' א' אהיבד א' א' י'

There are many cases like this which I avoid due to “inferior fear” [fear of government]. If the Rebbe agrees, notify the above-mentioned rabbi that he should give you or the Rebbe a significant sum, and then we

Secondly, he repeated the

question asked by Yitzchok Goldin after talking with him the day before regarding Anash traveling from Poland. If R. Yitzchok knew that he could obtain passports and visas in the very near future, then they could remain there for a period of time in accordance with the directive. However it was almost certain that he would not receive passports and that meanwhile, the escape opportunity with the Bricha would be lost.

As mentioned previously, the Bricha aided my father R. Chaikel Chanin and his family, R. Nissan Nemanov, and other members of the group who departed Russia with them. During that period, the Bricha slowed its activities in the area because the repatriation was completed and the number of refugees arriving from Russia diminished. If so, they would be caught in the middle.

R. Sholom Mendel Kalmanson was awaiting Mrs. Shternbuch's advice on the matter. In his opinion it was appropriate to immediately depart from the fire—to leave Poland and travel to Austria despite the difficult conditions there. From there they would help the Chassidim travel on to the American zone or to Paris. He requested that Rabbi Jacobson send the Rebbe's response via telegram.

R. Sholom Mendel added that he received letters that the situation of the yeshiva in Germany (Poking) was desperate and that Anash requested aid. Following this he made a personal request that they send an affidavit from the yeshiva so that he could organize the proper papers before it would be necessary to depart. "My name is Sholom Mendel Kalmanson. I was born in 1922 in the city of Lomza. My father's



R. Sholom Mendel Kalmanson

name is Zalman and mother's name is Menucha." He requested that when the matter would be organized they should send a telegram in English. R. Sholom Mendel inquired if affidavits were sent for the students and where they were sent.

B"H Erev Shabbos Kodesh VaYitztei Prague [4 Kislev]

His Honor HaRav HaChassid HaRav HaTamim ... Moreinu HaRav R. Yisroel Jacobson,

Greetings and blessings!

I spoke with the Tamim R. Yitzchok Goldin yesterday. This week Meir Zabrovski and his sister came to live in his neighborhood. Regarding the situation they said that with G-d's help approximately three hundred or more will be coming. In general they hope that the matter will be completed this month and that with G-d's help everyone will come.

R. Yitzchok said, regarding traveling forward, that if he knew that passports and visas could be obtained, then they could stay with him for a period of time. However, he is concerned that this will not

happen. Perhaps the route of R. Nissan will be closed (because travelers have diminished) and then, G-d forbid, they will be stuck in between.

Mrs. Shternbuch is scheduled to be here after Shabbos. She will also be at R. Yitzchok's. We will see what she says regarding this matter.

In my opinion there is no other way. They need to travel to the Zones [American in Vienna]. Although the situation there is not good we must extend efforts to help them. Afterwards, during the course of time, we must bring them to a place of peace. To remain with R. Y. is not wise for many obvious reasons. It is also not possible to remain here.

Please clarify the Rebbe's opinion as soon as possible via telegram. Should they remain with R. Y. and extend efforts there or travel to the Zones?

I received letters from Germany stating that the [financial] situation is extremely difficult. Anash also request that efforts be extended on their behalf.

Please send me the affidavit from the yeshiva as soon as possible. Without it I cannot receive writings, and it is currently very hard to be here this way. My name is Sholom Mendel Kalmanson, I was born in 1922 in the city of Lomza. My father's name is Zalman and my mother's name is Menucha. Send me the telegram in English.

You write that you sent affidavits for the students. Please notify how and where you sent them.

Please go again to the Rebbe and meet with the Rashag [the Rebbe's son-in-law] R. Shmaryahu Gurary

and respond immediately to everything written in this letter. Tell the Tamim Eliyahu Moshe Liss that Meir Zabrovsky, who just arrived, was together with his brother Fishel Liss. R. Y. conveyed his regards. Yesterday Avraham Eliyahu Meisels arrived here in Prague. He will write you a detailed letter.

I conclude by saying greetings [Sholom],

Sholom Mendel Kalmanson

AN URGENT LETTER ON MOTZAEI SHABBOS

Meanwhile on one of the weekdays between the 5th and the 10th of Kislev, a group of 250 Chassidim managed to flee Russia to Poland. Apparently during that week the sole escape route was through Austria. There, the situation in the refugee camps was grim.

R. Itche greeted the Chassidim. However, since he had not received a response to his letter and the Rebbe Rayatz's opinion was unclear, he was faced with a dilemma: should he have the refugees remain in Krakow, or perhaps should he help them cross the border into Austria?

On Motzaei Shabbos Kodesh Parshas VaYishlach, R. Sholom Mendel wrote an additional letter to Rabbi Jacobson, asking that he respond via telegram as to the proper course of action. At the end of the letter he repeats his request regarding the affidavit from the yeshiva, "because it is difficult to be here without it." In the margin of the letter R. Sholom Mendel adds that he spoke with Rabbi Greifel, whose opinion is that it is not logical for Anash to remain in Poland and that they must travel to Austria.

B"H

**Motzaei Shabbos Kodesh
VaYishlach 5707, Prague**

**His honor HaRav
HaChassid HaRav HaTamim
... Moreinu HaRav R. Yisroel
Jacobson**

Greetings and blessings!

During the last week, 250 Anash arrived to stay with Yitzchok. Your sister-in-law and her children also arrived [the Ceitlin family]. I notified you of this via telegram.

The Anash who have just arrived resolved to wait at Yitzchok's [Poland] for the Rebbe's answer as to whether to travel to Austria or not travel there and wait at Yitzchok's.

According to what we have heard, the situation there [in Austria] is very bad. Among those who have arrived, there are many small children, expectant women, and elderly people who cannot bear cold and hunger. They have suffered very much up until now.

Therefore I request that you notify immediately via telegram the Rebbe's opinion on this matter: should they travel to Austria or not? They are waiting to receive an answer.

Please notify if they have sent an affidavit for me from the yeshiva. If it was not sent, they should send it as soon as possible, because it is very difficult to be here without it.

I conclude by saying greetings.

I spoke with R. Yaakov Greifel. His opinion is that it is not logical for Anash to remain with R. Yitzchok; they must travel to Vienna.

R. YISROEL JACOBSON'S ROLE

R. Yisroel Jacobson was the

first emissary sent by the Rebbe Rayatz to Europe to establish contact with Anash in Russia and aid their escape to the other side of the Iron Curtain. He also had the role of locating individuals or small groups that had crossed the Iron Curtain and helping them settle temporarily in the Displaced Person (DP) camps throughout Europe. He extended efforts to bring them all under one roof in the Peking DP camp in Germany. Rabbi Jacobson remained in Europe for three months until he received a directive from the Rebbe to leave Europe and return to the United States.

While in the United States, Rabbi Jacobson continued to maintain contact with Anash, primarily with the activists, who remained in Russia, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Germany, Belgium, and other European countries. All the Rebbe's directives were delivered through him: What to do? Where to travel? How to travel? Which route to pick? I have described his involvement in these matters at length in previous chapters. However, communication was highly problematic. Instructions were delivered either late or corrupted.

On the 15th of Kislev the Rebbe Rayatz sent three letters—the first to R. Binyomin Gorodetzky in Paris; the second to R. Sholom Mendel Kalmanson in Prague; the third, a communal letter to all of Anash and T'mimim in Europe. The letters caused a shift in communications between the United States and Europe, and in the organization of the refugees that arrived from Russia. In the next issue, with G-d's help, I will provide details regarding these letters and the fascinating historic events which ensued.

A RECIPE FOR YIDDISHE NACHAS

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INTERTWINED OPPOSITES

This week's parsha discusses two intertwined commandments that are also as diametrically opposite to one another as they are connected.

One commandment deals with the Mitzvah to chase away the mother bird when one is interested in keeping the eggs or the small hatchlings. The Torah states that compliance with this commandment brings the promise of long life.

In the words of the Torah:

"If you shall chance upon a nest of birds that is before you, while on the road, on any tree or on the earth... send away the mother... In order that it shall be good for you and you shall live long."

The Midrash comments: "If you shall observe this commandment, you shall hasten the coming of Moshiach concerning whom the expression of "sending" is used . . . Alternatively, He shall hasten to send you Elijah the prophet, concerning whom the expression

of "sending" is employed and about whom it is said, 'He will restore the hearts of the fathers to the children.'"

In this citation, the Midrash connects the sending away of the mother bird with the restoration of the bond between children and their parents.

This Mitzvah is preceded by the rather unusual law concerning the rebellious son who violates the commandment to honor his father and mother—the only other Mitzvah for which the Torah promises long life—when this violation is in its most egregious form. The rebellious son's lack of respect for his parents, the Torah tells us, degenerates into gluttony and theft and has the distinct potential of declining further into mayhem and murder.

It is considered such a flagrant violation of the Torah's commandment of honoring of one's parents that the penalty for this recalcitrant child is the ultimate punishment of death, the harshest prescribed by the Torah. True, our Sages tell us,

this penalty was never meted out because the conditions necessary for a conviction are virtually impossible to obtain.

Nevertheless the Torah describes this hypothetical case because it wants us to appreciate the degree to which a child can degenerate if there is no proper upbringing and intervention when problems arise, even in the best of families.

Here we have the discussion of these two commandments for which long life is assured. In the example we cited, the Torah describes the way a person exhibits such sensitivity to one of G-d's creatures by not letting the mother bird see when and how its young are taken away (See Nachmanides and Chinuch #545). The observance of this Mitzvah, according to the Midrash cited above, leads to the most harmonious relationship between children and parents.

By contrast, in the part of the Torah discussing the rebellious son, the Torah describes the way in which a child grows into this self-destructive, uncaring, and basically sociopathic behavior, each of which ultimately leads to the abrupt termination of his life.

Many would read this discussion of the rebellious child as a prescient description of the problems confronting so many of our youth today, where rebelliousness degenerates into

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drug and alcohol abuse, crime, and anti-social behavior.

What we have here, on the most basic level, are the two extremes: on the one hand, we have one who demonstrates sensitivity to G-d's creatures, and on the other hand we see a child who has gone to the extreme of not respecting his parents and the rest of society. In the former, there is long life; in the latter, there is certain self-destruction.

THE SLIPPERY SLOPE

In making this contrast, the Torah wishes to impart an invaluable lesson about the education of a child. When a child begins the road down the slippery slope into a wasted life, the parent has to ask himself or herself from where this rebelliousness comes. And when a child develops such sensitivity to others it is also fair to search for the things the parent has done right to cultivate such an admirable trait.

(To be sure, there are children who stray from the path of decency despite the parents' best efforts to do everything right. And, conversely, we find some of the nicest people who never had proper parental guidance. These are the exceptions.)

When we examine the section of the parsha immediately preceding the one discussing the rebellious child and the sending away of the mother bird we discover a clue as to where the rebelliousness or the sensitivity originated.

Let's begin with the rebelliousness.

Immediately preceding the discussion of the rebellious child the Torah discusses the lack of harmony between a husband and his wife.

The first rule of raising a sensitive child is the importance of attention to the way his parents treat one another. When a child grows up in an environment where the parents do not get along, the children lose their respect for parental authority. If the husband doesn't respect the wife and vice versa, why should the child respect either of them? Indeed, he agrees with everything negative the wife says about the husband and everything the husband says about the wife. "A curse on both of your houses" is the subconscious—and often conscious—battle cry of the rebellious child.

The greatest obstacle to



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sensitivity is the lack of respect. Respect begins with respect for one's parents. If that is lacking so will all other forms of respect for any of G-d's creatures.

But where does this lack of mutual respect in a marriage originate?

To answer this question we have to go back to the Torah section immediately preceding the one about the person who hates his spouse. It discusses the person who is out fighting a battle and is tempted by an attractive female prisoner of war. Although the Torah makes a concession to his evil impulse and allows him to take her as a wife after complying with many onerous conditions, it nevertheless warns us that it will lead to no good. It will lead to a disruption of a harmonious family life which will, in turn,

lead to the rebellious child phenomenon.

In effect, it is the concessions we make to our impulses—indicating a lack of respect and reverence for G-d—that sow the seeds of our own domestic strife which can lead to lethal consequences.

This argument, based on the word of our Sages, we now refer to as the "slippery-slope" argument.

Conversely, when a child sees his parents' ability to resist the temptations and decline making any concessions to their weaker and baser instincts it imbues the child with the power to resist his or her own temptations,

particularly peer pressure.

When a child sees the love and harmony that exists between parents—that they speak with one voice—it removes the dichotomous split in the child's personality, not to speak of the feelings of love that the child will cultivate.

When a child is exposed to these positive influences: a) a parent who has values and sticks to them even in the face of pressure, b) a home in which love, respect, peace, and harmony are the rule, the probability is that the child will develop in ways that will bring *nachas* to the parents.

The foregoing is an analysis of the rebellious child as it is understood by our classical commentators on its most basic level.

RESPECTING DIFFERENCES

Let us now reflect on the Mitzvah that precedes the one of sending away the mother bird. In the preceding section the Torah prohibits men and women from cross dressing. The wider implication of this commandment is that men and women must appreciate their own G-d given gifts and not try to imitate the other gender. Women's liberation does not mean that women should emulate men. Rather it means that women should be allowed to express their own unique spiritual gifts of femininity. When a woman recognizes that raising a family is not a sign of weakness but a Divine treasure and opportunity, she will be truly liberated.

When a man or woman has a healthy sense of whom he or she is and what is his or her distinctive role, she or he can develop self-respect. When, however, a person is confused about his or her own role, s/he will always be plagued by self-doubt and lack of self-respect.

When a child grows up in a world where the parents understand each other's role and

complement one another, the child develops a sense of security and self-esteem. A person who has no identity crisis is free to express his or her own personality and talent and will therefore be able to show appreciation for all of G-d's creatures.

MESSIANIC CLARITY

Living on the cusp of the Messianic Age, these two commandments convey a unique message for us in these momentous times.

The prophet Daniel describes the Messianic Age as a time when everything will become clear. Everything will be out in the open. This is in stark contrast to the way all the lines of division have become blurred in our own day and age.

In other words, the era of Redemption is characterized by the way in which every one of us will understand his or her G-d given role and mission. Therefore all the strife that is brought on by the gender confusion that exists in society will cease to plague us.

This explains why our Sages stated that the Mitzvah to send

away the mother bird symbolizes the coming of Moshiach. The Midrash (Yalkut Shimoni) clearly connects this Mitzvah to the way the schism between children and parents will be removed.

Translating this thought into practical guidance we can say that when we develop a healthy sense of our role as parents (that engenders mutual respect and love for husband and wife) that is rooted in a healthy reverence for G-d (which enables us to resist making "concessions" to our impulses); we will raise healthy children who appreciate their own G-d given talents and individual roles. They, in turn, will use their natural, youthful exuberance and rebelliousness to rebel against the negative features of society even as they show sensitivity to all of G-d's creatures.

This is the surest way of hastening and preparing for the final Redemption when we will all experience the long life (i.e., eternal life) vouchsafed for the observance of these two commandments of sending away the mother bird and honoring our parents.

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