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MOSHIACH FLOURISHES IN OUR FAITH

Translated by Boruch Merkur

Regarding the meaning of the name “Tzemach Tzedek” – it is an allusion to Moshiach Tzidkeinu:

The first part of the name, Tzemach, is the name of Moshiach, as said in the liturgy of Hoshana Rabba, “*Ish Tzemach shmo* – A man, whose name is Tzemach” (Zecharia 6:12, see Targum; Talmud Yerushalmi Meseches Brachos 4:4; also see Zecharia 3:8). Similarly, the second part of the name, Tzedek, is one of the identifying signs of Moshiach, which is referred to in the prophecy of Yeshayahu (beginning with the words, “A shoot shall spring forth from the stem of Yishai, and a twig shall sprout from his roots” (Yeshaya 11:1)). There it describes Moshiach’s distinction of rendering honest judgment: “He shall judge with *tzedek*, justly, etc., and *tzedek*, righteousness, shall be the girdle of his loins” (ibid 11:4-5).

The message here is that the name Tzemach Tzedek expresses the faith of chassidim, the perfect faith of every chassid, that their Rebbe – for example, the leader of this generation [see the commentary of Even Ezra on Zecharia 3:8, “Tzemach is Moshiach...for ‘Tzemach’ is numerically equivalent to ‘Menachem’] – is in fact Moshiach, and if we had merited, the matter would have been fulfilled and manifest outwardly; Moshiach would be visible to the human eye.

(From the address of the fifth night of Sukkos 5747, bilti muga)

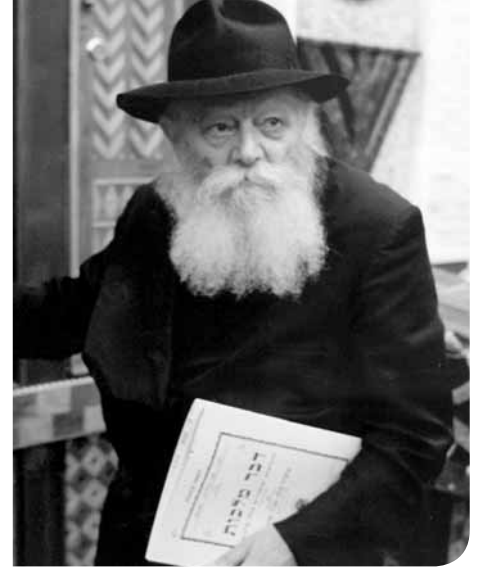
NO RESENTMENT IN IDENTIFYING MOSHIACH

Every person in this generation was born as the Rebbe’s *shliach*, the emissary of the leader of our generation, and the Rebbe is the leader of all the people of the generation.

And when the *shliach* utilizes his 10 soul-powers, “*kav shelo*” (his measure; i.e., his faculties), in the practical fulfillment of the mission the leader sent him on (as discussed above), the concept of Moshiach is revealed (for “Moshiach” is the numerical equivalent of “*shliach*” along with (the) 10 (soul-power)). In so doing, he also reveals how he reflects the *meshaleiach*, the one who sent him (“just as you are members of the covenant, so are your emissaries, etc.”). Indeed, he even becomes one with the *meshaleiach* (for a person’s emissary is like himself), one with the leader of our generation, who is Moshiach, with all the connotations of “Moshiach”: 1) *mashuach*, anointed; 2) chosen; 3) guide and shepherd of the Jewish people – including the simple interpretation of “Moshiach”: leader or ruler.

There shouldn’t be any resentment sparked in concluding that the leader of our generation is Moshiach Tzidkeinu in the literal sense, for this is the fact: the leader of our generation is the Moshiach of the generation!

(From the address of the night of Simchas Torah, prior to Hakafos, 5746, bilti muga)



TZEMACH, TZEMACH, TZEMACH

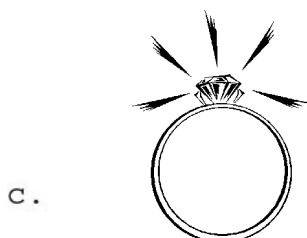
May it be G-d’s will – and this is the main thing – that calling out the name “Tzemach,” the name of Moshiach Tzidkeinu, causes Moshiach to come in actuality.

In simple terms – by calling and crying out the name “Tzemach,” with the intent that by calling out his name certainly he will answer those who call him – they effect the actual advent of Moshiach Tzidkeinu. (The notion that Moshiach will answer those who call is deduced from the effect that results from calling out the name of a living human being, “as the *tzaddik*, the righteous individual lives upon the earth...within a [corporeal] vessel and garment [the body]... within the dimensions of physical space.” For the results of appealing to a *tzaddik* who lives in this world is constrained by limitations in the degree of revelation and the capacity of its reach [yet calling out to him is still powerfully efficacious]. How much more is this so after these limitations are negated!)

Thus, when they now proclaim “Tzemach” three times – Tzemach, Tzemach, Tzemach – Moshiach Tzidkeinu will literally come now!

(From the address of the fifth night of Sukkos 5750, bilti muga)

QUIZ



Which of these is your greatest asset? —

Which of these is currently uninsured? —

Your ability to earn an income is by far your greatest asset.

If that income stream is interrupted...even for a brief period...what would happen to the rest of your lifestyle? Even if you are young and careful, the odds of becoming too sick or injured to work are greater than you might think. Research shows that men have a 43% chance of becoming seriously disabled during their working years, while women have a 54% chance¹.

To learn more about flexible, high quality disability income protection² to protect your greatest asset, please contact:

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¹ "Why Disability" booklet, published by National Underwriter.

² Disability income products underwritten and issued by Berkshire Life Insurance Company of America, Pittsfield, MA, a wholly owned stock subsidiary of The Guardian Life Insurance Company of America, New York, NY, or The Guardian Life Insurance Company of America, New York, NY.

LIGHTING UP THE LAND OF THE RISING SUN

Over a decade ago, Rabbi Binyamin Edery and his wife Efrat went as newlyweds on shlichus to Tokyo, Japan. They knew next to nothing about the city, and upon going to pay for their first night in a hotel, they discovered just how unprepared they were. * Since then, thousands of Jews, Israelis, businessmen, and tourists, as well as Japanese, have enjoyed their hospitality and programs. * The story of a fascinating shlichus under difficult conditions.

Interview by Nosson Avrohom

Tokyo is definitely one of the most beautiful capitals in the Far East. It's a modern city of skyscrapers, malls, busy highways and huge traffic interchanges, and yet, it manages to preserve its traditional Japanese culture. That's Tokyo, a city of opposites, old and new.

Tokyo is one of the business capitals of the world. This has also made it one of the most expensive cities in the world. The cost of living is extremely high. A day's stay at a plain hotel will cost the equivalent of a month or two months in a similar hotel elsewhere.

Tokyo does not have a large

Jewish community aside from the businessmen and tourists who visit throughout the year. This is the challenge that the Ederys took on nearly twelve years ago. From the very start, R' Edery decided that although he would work primarily with Jews, he would also promote the Sheva Mitzvos B'nei Noach. In addition to Shabbos meals, Mivtza Chanuka and Purim, a kosher restaurant, minyanim, shiurim, and weekly visits to Jewish prison inmates, he also lectures to students in the local university on the topics of Jewish history and the Besuras Ha'Geula.

On his most recent visit to Eretz Yisroel, R' Edery was the guest of honor at the wedding of

a relative of one of the religious bachurim imprisoned in Japan whom he visits every week.

JAPAN IS NOT INDIA

R' Edery heard the name Tokyo many times from businessmen and tourists he encountered in India, while there on shlichus at the end of the 90's.

"I spent nine months in Delhi and nearly every week I heard the line – what a pity that there is no Chabad house in Tokyo. At that point, I didn't even know where Tokyo was on the map. However, I had already decided that after I got married, people would no longer bemoan the lack of a Chabad house in Tokyo, because





I would open one.

“Half a year after we married, we were living in Kfar Chabad. I learned in Kollel and we would occasionally travel to the Chabad house in Bat Yam for Shabbos. R’ Zimroni Tzik told me that he had a dream of the Rebbe, who told him that a Chabad house needed to be opened in Japan. Of course, this encouraged me to follow through with my plan.”

R’ Edery quickly learned that Japan is not India, although both are located in the East. He wrote to the Rebbe and the answer he opened to in the Igros Kodesh (volume 23, p. 368) said, “During Chanuka, travel to spread the wellsprings in a place where darkness covers the land.”

“We went to Tokyo on shlichus in Kislev 5760/December 1999, the day before Chanuka. We encountered our first Jew in the airport. We asked her about neighborhoods where Jews live and she directed us to the Shinjuku neighborhood. We spent the night in a hotel and when it came time to pay we discovered, to our dismay, that we didn’t have enough money for even one night. That’s when we realized how expensive this city is.

“The first night of Chanuka was on a Friday night. On Motzaei Shabbos we met an Israeli on the street. That encounter ended up being the starting point of our entire

shlichus. He introduced us to other Jewish businessmen, one of whom paid for our first week at the hotel.”

Three weeks later, the couple moved to a residential hotel where the rent is about \$3000 a month, an astronomical amount even in the West. Before Purim, they brought ten bachurim from 770. They threw a big Purim party and led Pesach s’darim attended by hundreds of local Jews and businessmen.

DAILY MIRACLES

Hashem’s hashgacha has been manifest from the very start of their shlichus.

“One day, we met a group

of Japanese men who said they identified with the Jewish people. I told them that I had come to Tokyo in order to open a Chabad house, a Jewish center, and they were very excited. They took our bank account information and promised to help.

“One day passed, and then another, and I forgot about them. After a month’s stay in our apartment, we saw that we had less than even half the amount for the rent. The clerk had started pressuring us.

“We spoke to whomever we thought could help, but still did not have the requisite amount. We promised the clerk that after Shabbos we would pay the full amount, although we had no idea how we would be able to do that.

“Shabbos afternoon, one of the building’s employees told us that a package had come for us and we needed to sign for it. We explained that we couldn’t sign on Shabbos and he signed for us. After Shabbos, when we opened it, we saw 500,000 Japanese yen (about \$5000), a contribution from that Japanese group that admires Jews. This sum enabled us to stay another few weeks and its arrival was simply miraculous. Without that donation, the management would have put us out on the street.”

After Pesach, the young couple decided that although this living arrangement was fine as a start, if they wanted to settle in Tokyo, they had to find a nice, spacious apartment. Ayal, an

Israeli acquaintance, told them about a real estate agent by the name of Muto. R’ Edery and the agent arranged to meet at the subway.

“We waited and waited, but he didn’t show up. This is very uncharacteristic of the Japanese. I called him and he apologized, saying he missed the train and would meet with me the following day.

“The next day we met at a local hotel and after some friendly chit-chat, he told us that he had actually shown up to our meeting the day before, but after seeing us from a distance was scared off by our appearance. Today, this non-Jew is our right hand man, and he is the first to help us, no matter what the need.”

The meeting with the real estate agent had a dual purpose. R’ Edery explained about Sheva Mitzvos B’nei Noach and when he spoke about the prohibition of stealing, the man asked him, “What is wrong with stealing from a bad person?” R’ Edery responded, “Hashem knows who is who, but we don’t have the authority to decide who is bad and who is good.” The man was quite surprised by this approach.

The real estate agent not only suggested a nice apartment, he even lent the couple a significant percentage of the down payment...

“To this very day, he refuses to accept the money back,” laughs R’ Edery. “Muto, the Japanese,

wears a Moshiach flag pin on his lapel and doesn’t make a move without consulting the Rebbe.”

The landlady of the house told them that the entire area had been bombed during World War II except for this building, and she had always been sure the house would some day find its way into Jewish hands.

ELIYAHU HANAVI IN THE GUISE OF A DRIVER

This did not bring an end to their apartment difficulties. Neighbors complained about the noise and the landlady went to court to get them out. R’ Edery’s mashpia advised him to reach a compromise and the landlady agreed. She even forwent half a year’s rent and agreed to help pay the costs of moving to another building. The Ederys began looking for a new place to live.

“This time too, our loyal friend Muto conducted the search. We saw a large building that appealed to us, but he nixed it. He said it was too commercial and not nice enough. When we left, Muto said, ‘What’s going to be? We’ve been looking for a long time.’ I told him not to worry, there is a G-d, and someone who does His work is successful even if things don’t always go smoothly. Not a minute later, as we walked from the building to the car, a car service vehicle stopped near us and the Japanese driver said, ‘Shalom’ in Hebrew. I asked Muto whether he knew the driver and he said he did not. ‘What are you looking for?’ he asked. ‘A building for our activities,’ I answered.

“‘Come, get into the car,’ he said. I was nervous about doing so but Muto reassured me that the man looked normal. We drove together until we arrived



We explained that we couldn’t sign on Shabbos and so he signed for us. After Shabbos, when we opened it, we saw 500,000 Japanese yen (about \$5000), a contribution from that Japanese group that admires Jews.

at a local hotel, which apparently was owned by the driver. He told us that he loved authentic Jewish music and when he saw my Jewish face, he stopped to talk to me.

“At eleven that night, after a long conversation covering many topics including the Sheva Mitzvos B’nei Noach, the man took us to a building he owned in the center of the city whose rent is a small fortune. He showed us the building and then unexpectedly took out a key. Without asking for a single yen, he signed a contract with us for a year. After all the papers were signed, I asked him what motivated him to do this. He himself couldn’t explain it. He merely said that when he spoke to me, he sensed truth and this is what won him over. If that wasn’t enough, for several months we did not receive electric or water bills. We called him to find out what was going on and he said, ‘I’ll pay for it.’”

KNOCKS AT THE DOOR AT 5:30 IN THE MORNING

Visitors to the Chabad house say that R’ Ederly is always in motion. In addition to the everyday Jewish outreach activities of every Chabad house, he actively works to combat assimilation. There are quite a few Israelis who have met Japanese women and married them. R’ Ederly’s modus operandi is not to ignore the problem. “Truth is truth,” he says, insisting that this is the only way to be successful.

“We know an Israeli who became friendly with a non-Jewish Japanese woman. This did not stop him from coming to the Chabad house and participating in all the activities, including having Shabbos meals with



A seudas mitzva at the Chabad house of Tokyo

“He showed us the building and then unexpectedly took out a key. Without asking for a single yen, he signed a contract with us for a year. He said that when he spoke to me, he sensed truth and this is what won him over. If that wasn’t enough, for several months we did not receive electric or water bills. We called him to find out what was going on and he said, ‘I’ll pay for it.’”

us. Our approach is to speak forthrightly about this sensitive matter. One Shabbos, I brought up the topic at the table and spoke positively about marrying a Jewish woman and negatively about marrying a gentile. Well, this was too much for him. There were 50-60 people at the table and he felt I was speaking to him. When I finished speaking he came over to me and said, ‘I’m not comfortable staying here any longer when you talk that way. I’m leaving.’

“I said goodbye and hoped that I had done the right thing. By 11:30 that night, everybody had left. I was thinking of going

to sleep when there were knocks at the door. It was that Israeli who had earlier left in a huff. He said that he had gone back to his gentile girlfriend and told her what happened at the Shabbos meal and why he had left. He had thought she would empathize with him.

“Instead, she began to curse him for going out without her. He left the house in a rage and came to us. He spent the night with us and was the tenth man in our minyan the next day. On Motzaei Shabbos we spoke for hours about his situation. This time, he was more receptive, but it still wasn’t easy for him

to accept. We decided to write to the Rebbe and the answer he opened to in the Igros was to go to Eretz Yisroel. He said he had thought of doing that, in light of his mother's repeated request. The following day he bought a ticket and was on the next plane back home.

"He had to have been very inspired. Otherwise, what would have possessed him to put on a yarmulke when he landed there? He stayed with a Lubavitcher family that first Shabbos and told them how he had spent the previous nine years with a Japanese woman. Leaving her was very hard for him. They convinced him to call her and let her know that he had chosen the path of Torah. He became a baal t'shuva and has a beautiful Lubavitcher family. His mother is especially grateful as he is her only child."

R' Edery has numerous stories like this. Before he told me his next story, he explained why his work with non-Jews is so important.

"It's much easier to explain to a Jew what a mistake it is to marry a non-Jew when he sees that you respect non-Jews. He can't complain that you are racist, because he sees that you respect every human being in G-d's world. Despite this respect, this is what G-d wants, that Jews marry Jews, since every nation has its own purpose in the world. I opened to many answers from the Rebbe in which he writes about the importance of 'you were chosen from all the nations.' When gentiles understand this, the work becomes much easier as the following story illustrates.

"In Tokyo there was an Israeli bachur *chozer b'sheila* (formerly religious) who had learned in Yeshivas Itri in Yerushalayim. He

went to Japan, met a non-Jewish woman and didn't come to the Chabad house much because he knew he would 'get it' from me. One night, he was sitting in a bar. One of the employees at the Chabad house, Kobishi Maskazo, the sushi chef in our restaurant, was sitting there and they got into a conversation. The Israeli told him he was Jewish and Kobishi immediately asked him whether he knew R' Edery. He said he did, but he didn't go to the Chabad house often since he lived with a non-Jewish woman and R' Edery didn't approve.

"Kubishi looked at him and said, 'If I was a Jew, I wouldn't marry a non-Jew.' He said this so matter-of-factly that it gave the Israeli much food for thought.

"At 5:30 in the morning there were knocks at the door. I rushed to the door in my pajamas and there was the former yeshiva bachur. 'I want to write to the Rebbe,' he said. It turned out that his mother, from a staunch Litvishe family, had been urging him to write to the Rebbe, not because she believed in this, but because she wanted him to go to the Chabad house.

"He opened volume 14 of the Igros Kodesh and immediately noticed the first three words on the page, 'Regarding your question about a shidduch.' On that page, the Rebbe also wrote, 'at this time in general, and regarding the man who learned in yeshiva in particular.' The bachur was stunned. How did the Rebbe know he had learned in yeshiva? The Rebbe said he needed to break off the relationship, and Hashem who makes matches, would help him find his proper match.

"I'm leaving her,' he suddenly said. 'But how should I do it?'

"I suggested that he write her

a letter and that my wife would translate it into English. He sat down to write her a letter telling her what had transpired since the previous night, and how this had led to his decision to return to his roots. He spent three weeks with us and then returned to Eretz Yisroel, went to a Chabad yeshiva, and became a Chassid."

EARTHQUAKE!

At two in the afternoon, on Friday March 11th of this year, an earthquake struck Japan. Although Japan is used to earthquakes, everybody knew that this time it was more serious. It would be many hours before reports came in about the devastation in the cities on the coast. Even today, tens of thousands of people are living in makeshift camps.

"I was walking down the street when the earthquake struck. The street began to move and the tops of buildings began to shake like lulavim on Hoshana Rabba. We wrote to the Rebbe and then we took the entire family away from the densely built up areas, as per the instructions of the authorities.

"Everyone was afraid of a follow-up earthquake which, indeed, came. People were enormously frightened, and this was before the news about the chaos reigning in other cities and the damaged nuclear plants. Right before Shabbos, we wrote to the Rebbe again. The answer was about the mind ruling the heart and to continue doing Purim activities. It was, in fact, right before Purim, and we felt the Rebbe was pushing and encouraging us not to flee and not to be afraid, but to do Mitzva Purim as always.

"On Shabbos, we invited some Jews who had left their hotels, to stay with us. They

felt safer at the Chabad house. On Motzaei Shabbos, Muto the Japanese, called us. He said that in the hardest hit area his father had factories and he had ties with many people there. I told him that we had to help them and I was willing to leave that evening. 'To go there?!' he exclaimed. 'Why should you go to a place from which people are running away? It's dangerous!' To be honest, at that time, we had not yet gotten any real information regarding the extent of the destruction there.

"A few days later, when we heard that the people there had nothing to eat, I called Muto. We loaded up the car with food and headed for the disaster zone. On the way there, I got a call from the Israeli ambassador in Japan. He had figured I would be going there and he told me about an Israeli in need of help. He asked that I look him up. The phone lines to the area had gone down and there was no way of reaching him. We made our way back to Tokyo by hitching rides, since we ran out of gas and the gas stations were empty.

"On Monday I went to the supermarket where I know the owners. It's a store that is frequented by the diplomatic staff of countries from all over the world and we had done a kosher expo there on Chanuka. I asked them to put boxes outside their stores in which customers could put donations of food. I said that we would bring the food to families who needed it.

"At first, they did not understand what I wanted. The concept of chesed so familiar to Jews (and Americans) is foreign to the Japanese. I finally got through to them, and within a day they called me to say that they had already collected four



Their first Purim in Tokyo

“To date, seven years later, we have not paid him any rent and he doesn't ask for any. He simply considers it important that there be a kosher restaurant in Japan so that the Japanese people can become more refined.

tons of food and were willing to supply us with a truck. Muto and I went to the disaster zone, to the sports field that housed the refugees. The Japanese are very particular about order, and despite the crisis they stood in orderly long lines. When each one had their turn, they chose the food products they needed and left the line. We made this trip several times.

"When the city government and other national agencies realized we were for real, they began to cooperate with us and helped direct our efforts to meet people's specific needs. Just last Sunday, there was an awards ceremony held by the city government leadership. We attended the event and received certificates of appreciation in front of 1500 Japanese, for our aid to the refugees. We are the only ones to have received these

certificates. This is what is called '*l'sakein olam b'malchus Shaddai*.' I am often asked by Japanese why I bothered helping others who were not my fellow Jews. My answer is that this is something that is ingrained in us from our ancestors, from Avrohom Avinu.

"Word got out and many Jews, with no overt connection to religion, called us. It made a big Kiddush Hashem. When you help non-Jews in this way, it's easier to explain to Jews why intermarriage is unacceptable. It's not that you hate goyim since you recognize that they were also created by G-d. It is because they have a different mission in this world."

KOSHER RESTAURANT IN TOKYO

As mentioned earlier, R' Edery lectures on the topic of

the Jewish people to the Japanese students in one of the respected universities in Tokyo. He recently gave his tenth lecture there. He shared with us the story about how he came to lecture there:

“The daughter of the dean took an interest in Judaism. She convinced her father to bring me for a lecture. Up until then, the students had heard about all kinds of Jewish heroes. I told them about the Rebbe!

“In my most recent speech, I spoke about the role of the Jew in the world, about the Sheva Mitzvos B’nei Noach, and about believing in the Creator of the world. As in the previous times, after the hour and a half allotted to me, the students wanted to hear more, especially in wake of the devastation Japan had endured. Many had questions about faith. After the lecture, I responded to questions on the topic of, if the Creator is the ultimate good, why is there so much suffering in the world? These students listen and absorb what I say and then become ambassadors for the Jewish people wherever they go.”

• • •

The Chabad house operates a kosher restaurant which R’ Edery got from his Japanese friend, Muto.

“Seven years ago, Muto told me he had two restaurants, one of which was not far from the Chabad house, and he wanted to give it to us for our use. Over the course of a year, we purchased machinery and everything required in a professional kitchen. Our goal is to provide kosher, high quality Japanese food. To date, seven years later, we have not paid him any rent and he doesn’t ask for any. He simply considers it important that there be a kosher restaurant in

Japan so that the Japanese people can become more refined.

“In addition to providing quality kosher food, visitors to the restaurant also put on t’fillin. The restaurant is located opposite a large university which has Jewish students from all over the world. Many of them eat kosher thanks to this restaurant. We also give a hechsher to many products produced in Japan which are then sold in areas with larger Jewish populations. We recently gave a hechsher to the Japanese beverage called sake, a form of rice wine. At the promotional event in Beverly Hills, we spoke more about Chabad and the Besuras Ha’Geula than about sake!

“There was a time that no slaughterhouse would allow us to shecht and kasher chickens according to halachic requirements. Muto used his connections and finally found a slaughterhouse that met our criteria. The shochet who comes periodically from New York, Rabbi Yehuda Ben Simchon, makes a tremendous impression on the workers in the slaughterhouse with his professionalism and a great Kiddush Hashem with the supervisors from the Ministry of Health.

“Muto has visited 770 several times already, along with another gentile Sakomato. They were so moved by the experience that they have tripled their help to the Chabad house, which was already quite significant.

“Another Japanese by the name of Hagami has started visiting us in recent weeks. He is a supporter of Israel and has strong views about shleimus ha’aretz. In the middle of a Shabbos meal with many guests, he got up and said: G-d gave you

the land and you need to protect it!

EVEN AS I GO IN THE VALLEY OF DEATH

The Jewish religious world has been in an uproar ever since three yeshiva bachurim were arrested for smuggling drugs. They were offered a generous fee for transporting antiques to an antiques festival in Tokyo. Unbeknownst to them, drugs were secreted in their luggage. They were pronounced guilty by the tough Japanese legal system, and although one bachur has already been extradited to Israel, two remain in Japanese prison.

Rabbi Abba Dunner a”h, longtime executive director of the Conference of European Rabbis, was interviewed for *Mishpacha* magazine about this case. “The conditions are very difficult. They are in a room with no furniture with a small hole in the center. Once a day they are taken out to walk in the yard. Each one goes separately and may not encounter the others. They have s’farim provided by Rabbi Binyamin Edery, shliach of the Lubavitcher Rebbe. *Kol ha’kavod* to him. He goes every day to the prison and helps as much as he can. He serves as an interpreter in discussions with the lawyer. He gives them s’farim and sometimes he learns with them.”

• • •

“I will never forget the day they were arrested. That is because our son, Levi Yitzchok, was born that day. I received a call from the central command of the local police. They said there were three Jewish bachurim from Eretz Yisroel who wanted to meet with me.

“I immediately realized how complicated this story was. I

looked for them in three police stations until I found them, terribly frightened, in a detention center. The police allowed me to talk to them prior to the interrogation. This is something they normally do not even allow a lawyer to do. I gave each one a Chitas, and have been helping them ever since. The relatives who come to visit them stay with us, as do various people working on their release. Every week, our children go by train, an hour and a half each way, to visit them in jail and cheer them up.

“Gentile prisoners have started asking the prison administration for us to come and visit them too. We did that a few times and spoke to them about the Sheva Mitzvos B’nei Noach. This is also a form of mitzvaim and has opened many doors to us. When I was visiting in India, I took the names of Japanese prisoners sitting in jail there and I visited them. The Japanese authorities greatly appreciate this consideration for inmates that are not Jewish. This past year, we hosted the Kinus HaShluchim of Asia and all of us shluchim went to visit the bachurim, who were thrilled to see us.”

LIFESAVING WORK

R’ Edery’s rule is, if he has nobody to take over for him, he will not leave Tokyo, even for the weddings of relatives, including brothers.

“A few years ago, my brother got married in France. My father offered to pay for tickets for our entire family. However, just as a soldier does not leave the front lines in the middle of a war, we shluchim could not leave our post. It wasn’t pleasant, but we decided to stay put.

“The day of the wedding, we hosted a young man by the



Mitzva Tank of the Chabad house of Tokyo with Mt Fuji in the background

“He was born in Germany and his father was chief rabbi of East Prussia. He was not a Chassid. He was educated in Litvishe yeshivos and kept two days Shabbos because of the International Dateline (as per the ruling of a well-known Litvishe rav of the previous generation), but that didn’t stop him from dancing Yechi energetically with our children.

name of Daniel Moscovitz. He spent the evening with us and towards morning, he left to do some mountain climbing. He promised to call us to report that all was well as soon as he finished his climb. We knew the climb was dangerous, and so we arranged to call him at 3:00 in the afternoon if we did not hear from him. He did not call and we tried reaching him, but he did not answer the phone. After trying him for half an hour, he answered and in a weak voice he said, ‘I’m not going to make it. I fell about 150 meters and I can’t move.’

“He told me precisely where

he was, between the seventh and eighth section of Mt. Fuji. The mountain is covered with snow and it’s freezing cold there. Although he took the equipment he needed, he was unable to use it. We were very frightened for him and we knew that time was running out. We tried calling him again but he did not answer.

“Daniel is a British citizen so we called the British embassy, but they preferred to deal with it the next morning. I knew that if we waited that long, it would be over. Muto helped us contact a company that deals with climbers of Mt. Fuji. The company said it was a miracle that we called



Rabbi Chaim Yosef Dovid Weiss, an activist working on behalf of the Jewish prisoners, visits the Chabad house



Rabbi Dunner a" (seated left), executive director of the Conference of European Rabbis, hearing Havdala in the Chabad house

when we did, because in another half an hour the sun would set and they would not send out their people when it was dark.

"They left immediately, along with medics, with the goal of extricating him and taking him to the local hospital. When I heard that he was located, I headed for the hospital, about 200 kilometers from Tokyo. At the hospital I signed that I was a family member so that any life saving measures he might need would be signed for by me. The doctors were grim, saying that he was very seriously injured and that they were waiting for results of all the lab work.

"I called his parents and his mother came to Japan within 24 hours. He was in critical condition for a few months.

"Despite the enormous injuries he sustained, after months of treatment and rehabilitation, he left the hospital in reasonably good health. This was a miracle! When we met,

I looked at him and had two thoughts. First, who knows where he would be if we would have waited for the British embassy to go and look for him the next day. Second, what would have happened if I had been away that night at my brother's wedding in France? There will be those who say that we acted with mesirus nefesh, but I say, no, we did what the Rebbe wanted us to do.

• • •

"A few years ago, a woman called us from New York. She said that she had a relative from California who had been in a terrible accident with a truck, a few hundred kilometers from Tokyo. She asked whether we could help. Of course, we did not consider the high costs of such a trip and immediately got involved. The woman called at three in the morning Tokyo time. We happened to be awake, because we were on our way to supervise the milking of cows. We changed our itinerary then

and there.

"I arrived at the hospital at ten in the morning and found him in a coma. As I always do, I signed that I am a relative (all Jews are brothers) so that I could approve any life saving procedures. The doctor suspected that I wasn't the patient's brother as we had different surnames. However, I managed to put on a good show and was finally allowed to go in and find out how he was doing. I had a top doctor from the medical university in Tokyo take a direct flight so he could ascertain whether he was being treated properly. I stayed there for a few days. I put a dollar from the Rebbe under his head and we asked for a bracha as we waited for his mother to arrive.

"I said T'hilim and waited for a miracle. The doctors were pessimistic and told me and the mother that even if he came out of the coma, he would not be able to function properly. Several nerve-wracking weeks

passed and the young man suddenly awoke. He opened his eyes and began relating to his surroundings. After months of rehabilitation, he was able to walk. He then flew home to California where his family held a thanksgiving Meal. They sent me an invitation, but we were unable to leave our place of shlichus at the time.

“This story faded from my memory, as I became caught up in new shlichus situations which required my full attention. Less than a year ago, we decided to have a mikva built and I flew to California for a day to fundraise. I went into a bank to perform a certain transaction, but the teller told me I could only do it at the bank where I opened the account. I left, feeling rather upset.

“On my way out, the young man who had recovered stopped me. I immediately recognized him and saw that he was functioning normally. This was very exciting for me. He took out the dollar I had given him back then and we gave one another a warm Chassidishe hug.

“He said that he had gone into the bank to close an account, but the teller had told him too, that he had to go to the bank where he had opened the account. This was impossible for him since he studied in Washington and was on vacation for only one day in California.

“I told him about the mikva that we are building and without saying a word, and although he is a student, he took out his checkbook and wrote me a \$10,000 check. He also told me that since his miraculous recovery, he puts on t’fillin every day.”

• • •

Not every visitor to their Chabad house is involved in such



Rabbi Edery giving a lecture about the Sheva Mitzvos B'nei Noach to Japanese students

“I told him about the mikva that we are building and without a word, he took out his checkbook and wrote me a \$10,000 check. He also told me that since his miraculous recovery, he puts on t’fillin every day.”

dramatic events, but they all tend to forge a deep connection with the shliach and his wife. Even after they move on, the Ederys maintain this connection via their website: www.chabadjapan.org

LIVING MOSHIACH

The key component of life at the Chabad house in Tokyo, which you can’t miss, is that everything revolves around the Besuras HaGeula and the Rebbe as Moshiach.

“Japan is full of idol worship and therefore, a Jew who comes to the Chabad house, doesn’t want to hear half-truths or prettified truth. He wants the whole truth! When you say things seriously, and people see what sacrifices we make to realize this objective, they respect what we have to say.

“When you live with Moshiach, it permeates everything you do. The children behave Moshiachdik, they help and clean up; they don’t raise their voices and they respect one another. After all, the Rebbe can appear at any moment.

“People sense whether you are speaking the truth to them or are trying to avoid it. When you are matter of fact about Moshiach and really live it, the publicity and flags are not merely superficial but an expression of something deep and internal that cries out. The Chabad house is full of Moshiach stickers and flags. We have rabbis coming here from a variety of backgrounds including Satmar dayanim, and it doesn’t bother any of them. On the contrary, they respect it.

“R’ Dunner, who recently

passed away, stayed with us whenever he came to Japan to work on behalf of the imprisoned bachurim. He was born in Germany and his father was chief rabbi of East Prussia. He was *not* a Chassid. He received his education in Litvishe yeshivos, revered their leaders, and kept two days Shabbos because of the International Dateline (as per the ruling of a well-known Litvishe Gadol of the previous generation), but that didn't stop him from dancing Yechi energetically with our children.

"The first time he came to us, he asked why we had to publicize our faith in the Rebbe as Moshiach. I told him that I'm a Chassid and as a Chassid, I am *battel* to the Rebbe.

"He was quiet, then he looked at me and said that he had visited the Rebbe in yechidus and had been in 770 for farbrengens, and that was the feeling that he had too."

• • •

As to how the Ederys are

raising Chassidishe children in this spiritual wasteland, R' Edery said:

"When you're on shlichus, there is a chinuch advantage in that they have role models and the children themselves have an impact on others. Their Chassidic depth is far greater than that of a child growing up in Kfar Chabad or Crown Heights. I'll go even further and say that the kids can do things that we can't do. I'll give you an example. There is a beauty parlor on our street. One time, my daughter approached the hairdresser and spoke to her about tznus. Since then, all the employees come dressed modestly. Our children are an integral part of our shlichus. They help bake challos and come to the milking so we have chalav Yisroel.

"The children sense what is and isn't befitting a Chassid. Our daughter Mushka saw a brochure with the 12 P'sukim that had a picture of a girl with long hair. She innocently asked, 'How

come they put a picture of a non-Jewish girl in this booklet of the P'sukim?' We had never said anything to her about long hair.

"It's definitely thanks to the Rebbe and thanks to shlichus. As the Halacha states, a vessel that emits is not simultaneously absorbing, and we see this with the children. They are impacting positively on their environment. Consequently, they remain pure and have an effect on our mekuravim no less than we do!"

• • •

The Chabad house has become too small for their needs and so, the Ederys have made a down payment for a spacious, four story building in a prime location.

"We need supporters so we can move in. Our plans are to build a mikva and to house a preschool, a large shul, a kosher restaurant and a hall for Shabbos meals and special events. There will also be activities for B'nei Noach."

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ב"ה

WHO TRUMPS AWESOMENESS?

By Rabbi Yisroel Harpaz



The final part of the Torah extols the praises of Moses. Indeed, one would be hard pressed to find a greater individual in all of human history – a man who spoke face to face with G-d, brought freedom and justice to humanity, and performed countless miracles. As one would expect, the Torah lists his greatest qualities and achievements. But the last word is a little disconcerting: The Torah culminates by praising Moses for shattering the Tablets containing the Ten Commandments. What kind of compliment is that?

Whether we read it in the Torah or saw it in the movie, we all know the story: The Israelites set up camp at Mount Sinai with great fanfare in order to receive the Torah. They hear G-d speak the first of the Ten Commandments, and then Moses ascends the mountain to receive the Tablets and the rest of the Torah. He comes down (hair suddenly white in the movie) with the Tablets in hand to the unbelievable spectacle of the Israelites partying with the Golden Calf. Moses reacts by smashing the Tablets at the base of the mountain.

What is so praiseworthy about Moses' actions? On the surface, it seems that he simply lost it, and

in a fit of rage shattered these precious, mystical, holy Tablets written by G-d Himself. Is this the finest moment of the greatest man in human history?

Like all righteous people, Moses was an elevated person, much different than you and I. Righteous people are not prone to fits of rage. Their emotions never get the best of them. They are always focused, always in tune with the moment, always aware of the divine intent. When Moses descended from the mountain, a great, cosmic crisis was looming. On the one hand, Moses was holding a precious document meant to bring freedom and meaning to all humanity. On the other hand, before him was an Israelite nation that was openly violating the fundamental precept of this document. The two could not coexist. Something had to give. Either the Tablets had to go, or Israel would suffer certain calamity in its presence.

This was the crisis that confronted Moses at that moment: Smash the Tablets, or allow the Israel to undergo cataclysmic suffering. Moses did not hesitate for a moment, because the holistic totality of the Torah is the overarching dedication to unity and love among Jews. This is what Torah

and Jewish life are all about. Some would rather hold on to their ideological convictions at all costs, even if it means insulting and abandoning their fellows. It definitely makes life easier to let other people's issues fall by the wayside as you make your way through life. But from a Jewish perspective, this reckless abandonment of humanity makes your ideology – as holy or spiritual or meaningful as it may feel – a complete farce. It misses the point. Like Moses, we would be wise to shatter even our deepest convictions, attachments and hang-ups if they hinder our ability to open our hearts to those around us. Anything that is an obstacle to love is not worth preserving – no matter how important it may seem.

On Simchas Torah we read this very passage extolling Moses for shattering the Tablets, and we have a feast and a joyous celebration marking this occasion. In essence, we are celebrating the idea that the Torah is awesome, but that the preciousness of the Jewish people trumps even that awesomeness. In a sense, we are celebrating the smashing of the Tablets.

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MY TISHREI

WITH

THE KING

In 5725, R' Meir Freiman a"h spent Tishrei with the Rebbe. He recorded his impressions in letters that he sent to his family who were not Chabad Chassidim. * In simple though emotional words, he describes the Yomim Nora'im and the days of rejoicing in Lubavitch. * This is presented l'ilui nishmaso in honor of his yahrtzait on 12 Tishrei (5756). * Many thanks to his son R' Yosef Yitzchok Freiman for granting permission to publish these memorable accounts.



I AM STILL IN SHOCK AFTER SEEING THE REBBE

B"H

Chai Elul 5724/1964

To Mother and the Family,
hello!

Thank G-d I lived to see the holy face of our leader, the Rebbe shlita. All the expenses and bother were certainly worthwhile in order to see the Rebbe just one time, and especially when I will be staying here for all the Yomim Tovim.

We arrived in New York at 8:00 in the evening, and some yeshiva bachurim came in a car to welcome us. We left Paris on Tuesday at 5:10 in the afternoon,

and the trip was great. We saw nearly all of Paris and the snow-capped mountains. We also saw London and some other countries whose names I don't know.

We sent two telegrams, one from Marseilles and one from New York, and I hope you received them both. Please let me know if you received them.

I will write details about the trip by ship, train and plane in future letters. I am still in shock (not from the trip and not from material things, but) from seeing the holy face of the Rebbe.

I have no other news. Be well and k'siva va'chasima tova.

Meir

HIS HOLY FACE SHONE AND I COULD NOT LOOK AT HIM

B"H

25 Elul 5724

To Mother and the Family,
hello!

Last night at 9:20 I entered the Rebbe's room. I don't remember precisely what brachos he blessed me with; his holy face shone and I could not look at him at all. I trembled and it was something exceedingly uplifting; you can't imagine. All day yesterday, I was excited and nervous about this moment that the Chassidim call "yeichidus," which means seeing the Rebbe



Simchas Torah farbrengen 5728/1967. Photographed by a non-Jew from The New York Times

privately and pouring out your heart to him. Some come with their problems and ask for a bracha; of course, I don't have any problems, so I went in order to receive a bracha for the coming year. Boruch Hashem, the Rebbe blessed me with success in learning and that I should be a Chassid, Yerei Shamayim and a lamdan, and a k'siva va'chasima tova. I mentioned the names of the family members, and the Rebbe said he would mention them at the gravesite of the Previous Rebbe. By the way, the Rebbe went there today. I also posed some questions that a few friends requested me to ask. I was there in the Rebbe's room for two minutes. You can enter the

Rebbe's room for a birthday or marriage or other simchas; those from abroad can enter at other times. The interesting thing is that for those people who are in and out of the Rebbe's room such as the gabbaim and secretaries, whenever they enter it's as if it's for the first time, with the same awe and respect and with the same submission and bittul.

Over here [770, Crown Heights] I feel at home and in certain respects, even more than there, because whoever you meet is like a brother. What brotherly love, what respect, you can't imagine.

I will end with a bracha for a k'siva va'chasima tova to the

entire family and see you soon in Eretz Yisroel.

Meir

HIS FACE SHONE

B"H

Erev Rosh Hashanah 5725

To Mother and the Family, hello!

I received your letter on Motzaei Shabbos Nitzavim and was very happy that you are all well, Boruch Hashem.

Here, we feel that Rosh Hashanah is approaching; as the Rebbe said yesterday at a farbrengen: if the preparations for something are done right, then in the preparations themselves



There is a lot to say but I don't have the time. I will conclude with a bracha from the Rebbe yesterday at the farbrengen: May you have a good and sweet year with children, life and an ample livelihood, k'siva va'chasima tova, with kindness and mercy, in our time, with visible and revealed goodness.

Meir

HE BEGAN SAYING "LA'M'NATZEIACH" IN A LOW, HEARTBREAKING TONE

B"H

4 Tishrei 5725

To Mother and the Family,
hello!

I hope that you accomplished with your t'fillos to merit a good and sweet year and a k'siva va'chasima tova for you and for Klal Yisroel.

We are in the midst of the holy days as each day we rise higher and higher. The beginning of the avoda was on the first day of Rosh Hashanah when I davened with the Rebbe, *es davent zich andresh*. The Rebbe had the aliya for Maftir, and he cried at the words "and Chana had no children." Tension rose as the Rebbe covered the three bundles with his tallis. They contained all the requests of thousands of Jews for a good year. He was under the tallis for a few minutes and then again, we heard him crying. Then the Rebbe got up, checked the shofars (there are three, and each year he blows one of them), and began reciting La'm'natzeiach in a quiet and heartbroken tone. The congregation followed. Then he continued with the p'sukim Min HaMeitzar etc., verse by verse, with the congregation responding, in a somewhat

“The Rebbe had the aliya for Maftir, and he cried at the words “and Chana had no children.” Tension rose as the Rebbe covered the three bundles with his tallis. They contained all the requests of thousands of Jews for a good year. He was under the tallis for a few minutes and then again, we heard him crying.

you sense that very thing. So too here, we have been feeling Rosh Hashanah the past few days.

As for your apology about Ima's Hebrew, I can read Yiddish, especially when the Rebbe speaks only Yiddish. All the books and booklets are published in Yiddish so you can write to me in Yiddish.

I wrote a letter to Eliezer last week and I hope there will be results.

Yesterday, on Shabbos, there was a farbrengen for three hours and it was very joyous, especially because there was a chassan and Sheva Brachos too. In the middle of a niggun, the Rebbe motioned that they should sing louder. You cannot picture it; the entire shul danced nonstop, every person in

his place because you can't move.

You asked about my experiences, material and spiritual. I still haven't left the building, except for eating and sleeping of course, because it's not necessary. There is enough here in 770.

Today we heard Hataras Nedarim (the release from vows) from the Rebbe. Obviously, all the things that the Rebbe says are not for him but for others. It is known that tzaddikim are concerned for Klal Yisroel. Ten elder Chassidim sat there and the Rebbe said it. It was really nice. The Rebbe wore tallis and t'fillin, and his face shone.

Today we went to the Ohel of the Rebbe Rayatz. There was a big crowd there.

sweeter tune.

Then we reached the acme, the actual t'kios. The crowd (about 2000 people) stood tensely. Then we heard a sound, simple, straight; it was as if a spirit of life entered each one of us. It continued until the end of the t'kios meyushav (the order of blasts before Musaf) which the Rebbe blows himself.

Now for a physical description: there are tables piled on tables with benches and crates on them, all full of people, almost to the ceiling (which is quite high). It's unnatural how a small area contains so many people.

In the afternoon, we got ready to walk to Tashlich, children in the front, followed by bachurim, then men and older people, all arranged in rows of threes, until everyone is ready to start walking. One minute – we don't go alone. The Rebbe came out of his room with the secretary and passed through all the people as he waved his hand as a signal to start singing. They all began to sing "Hoshia es Amecha."

The Rebbe reached the head of the crowd, and we began walking as we continued to sing. The police department put policemen on all the roads that we had to pass so they could stop traffic as we crossed the street (nobody asked them to do this; they did it on their own).

After half an hour of walking, we arrived at the park that has a lake. During the time that we needed to be there, the police closed the entrance to other people. The Rebbe walked in, and we all followed. We began saying the Tashlich prayer even as many people were still at a distance from the park because we were a large group of people.

I was one of the first there so I was able to stand not far from the

Rebbe. When the Rebbe finished saying Tashlich, he waved his hand and they began singing Napoleon's March as a sign of victory, that we successfully overcame the Satan. We sang this the entire way back until we reached the Rebbe's room. The Rebbe walked inside and the crowd stayed outside and began dancing which lasted two hours.

A large crowd gathered and in the middle, someone got up on a table and began reading a letter that the Rebbe wrote for the new year, in English. Then the dancing continued until it was time for Maariv.

The next day was a repeat of the day before and in the



Rabbi Meir Freiman, author of these letters

“The Rebbe spoke about what it says in the parsha, that Moshe Rabbeinu said, “I am 120 years old today,” and the Rebbe began to sob and could not continue speaking. He began a few words and was stopped by tears. This happened several times.

afternoon there was a farbrengen. It was very joyous. When they began singing the song that the Rebbe taught the previous year to the words “Hu Elokeinu,” the Rebbe got up and everyone there, without exception, danced about half a meter in the air above his place. The simcha was tremendous. The Rebbe spoke a lot about simcha and blessed us with a good year with children and grandchildren and the main thing – simcha.

After Havdala, the Rebbe distributed Kos shel Bracha. The crowd formed a line and each person received wine for himself and his family from the Rebbe's cup. Each person asked for a

bracha or for success and the Rebbe blessed everyone.

May we be vessels to receive all of the Rebbe's brachos and of course, then we would have a good year in every respect.

Meir

THE PASSING AND FUNERAL OF REBBETZIN CHANA A”H

B”H

8 Tishrei 5725

To Mother and the Family, hello!

I hope you are all well. Although I received only one letter from you in response to all of my letters, since I have what to say, I will make concessions for your lack of response.



The Rebbe at his mother's funeral

You surely heard about the passing of the tzadeikes, the Rebbe's mother. It created an atmosphere of great mourning here since all the s'darim and all the gatherings were cancelled. However, since Yom Kippur cancels the Shiva, and Chol HaMoed Sukkos cancels the Shloshim, there is some small consolation.

Here is a brief description of what happened. On Shabbos before the davening, the Rebbe went to visit his mother after hearing that she had a stroke. Obviously, they sent for a number of doctors. However, the Rebbe came and davened as usual. In the middle of the davening he sent some people to find out what was happening. After the davening, there was a farbrengen as there is every Shabbos Shuva, but we strongly felt the absence of simcha that we had at the previous farbrengens. In retrospect, we witnessed something amazing. The Rebbe spoke about what it says in the parsha, that Moshe Rabbeinu

said, "I am 120 years old today," and the Rebbe began to sob and could not continue speaking. He began a few words and was stopped by tears. This happened several times.

The crowd did not understand what the crying was about since they did not know what was going on. At about 5:00 in the afternoon, they took her to the hospital on the instructions of three doctors and one professor. The Rebbe also went to the hospital where his mother passed away two hours later. It's interesting to note that while she was still alive, the Rebbe cried so much, but as soon as she died, you did not see any sadness on his face because it was still Shabbos. As soon as Shabbos was over, the Rebbe began to cry until everyone with him cried too.

On Motzaei Shabbos they brought her to her home and throughout the night, a minyan of men said T'hilim. They did not allow the bachurim to enter until 2:30 in the morning, and then they had shifts of minyanim until the funeral.

The funeral left on Sunday at 11:00. There were no eulogies as per Chabad custom. The procession passed the building of the yeshiva and then continued driving until the cemetery, about 45 minutes away. From what I could see, there were twenty buses full of people at the funeral and about 1000 private cars of rabbanim, roshei yeshivos, other important people, Anash, and people from all over the United States.

I cannot give you details about the burial since they did not allow bachurim in. The Rebbe said

Kaddish after they closed the grave, in a voice choked with tears. Each word was very drawn out due to his crying, and the people standing around burst into tears.

The Rebbe is sitting Shiva at home. For the davening, they held a lottery among Anash to see who would daven with the Rebbe during the Shiva. 11 bachurim and 11 men can participate in each t'filla. I can go in several times since I am a guest who is returning immediately after Yom Tov.

The Rebbe's Kibud Eim was exemplary. He visited her every day, and he would ask her to tell him to do something so he could fulfill Kibud Eim. When he went to see her, he had to stand because she didn't want to sit in his presence and of course, the Rebbe did not want to sit either. Every Shabbos after davening he would walk her home and he would tell her stories which she greatly enjoyed. When she was in the Ezras Nashim of the shul, the Rebbe would refrain from crying so as not to cause her anguish. There are many more examples that, considering the Rebbe's own greatness, are out of the ordinary.

May we not know of any more sorrow and may Hashem soon comfort us with the coming of Moshiach speedily in our days.

With blessings for a g'mar chasima tova

Meir

HOW GREAT WAS THE SIMCHA WHEN THE REBBE LED THE MARCH

B"H

Erev Shabbos Parshas Haazinu, 12 Tishrei 5725

To Mother and the Family,

“One did not feel at all like one was fasting. Each niggun was like a meal.

hello!

How are you? How was the fast? Did Ima fast? I hope all is well.

It is 5:45 in the afternoon and of course, I don't have time to write at length because it will be Shabbos in another hour and a quarter. So I will write briefly.

The fast was overall uplifting. One did not feel at all like one was fasting. Each niggun was like a meal. The peak was at the conclusion of N'ila when Napoleon's March is sung. When the Rebbe motioned to begin singing, he was still facing the wall. The singing really became much more intense when he turned around and indicated that we should sing faster. How great were the joy and the dancing and pleasure when the Rebbe got up on a chair and sang the March himself, while motioning with his hands that we should rejoice even more. The very walls shook and the entire shul was elevated. We danced and sang in a way that cannot be described in words. Before the niggun began, it was extremely crowded since everyone wanted to stand closer to the Rebbe in order to be able to watch his every move. Yet, when the niggun was at its height, we did not feel the crowding or the heat or the fasting. At the beginning of the niggun I was standing in a certain place and by the end, I found myself standing somewhere else entirely and I hadn't even realized it.

The Rebbe got up from Shiva before Yom Tov, and according to Halacha the holy day cancels the Shiva.

Only those who keep all the yeshiva's s'darim and learn all day were allowed to daven in the Rebbe's minyan on weekdays,



and a lottery is held for every t'filla amongst the young men.

Be well and blessed with all good things

G'mar tov

Meir

THE SUKKA HERE IS VERY LARGE

B"H

Erev Sukkos 5725

To Mother and the Family, hello!

You surely made it through all the preparations for Yom Tov. The sukka no doubt is up – who built it? This year I did not work on the sukka because “one who merits, his work is done by others.” The sukka here is very large because the farbrengens on Yom Tov and Shabbos Chol HaMoed and Shmini Atzeres are held here.

My writing this letter is to let you know that on Chol HaMoed I will only write that all is well. According to Halacha, it is forbidden to write

on Chol HaMoed. There is a heter (leniency) from one of the Acharonim to write a letter of greeting from one country to another. So I don't want you to be dismayed when I write briefly.

By the way, I will tell you a little of what happened on Shabbos (yesterday), which was the yahrtzeit of one of the Chabad Rebbeim, the Maharash. A lot of his teachings, maamarim and sichos were said over, and they sang some of his niggunim. The farbrengen lasted for two and a half hours. I will not write what the Rebbe said for two reasons: 1) For those who are not involved and who do not read these inyanim, in general, it has to be delivered orally, and 2) It's all from memory since it was all said when we could not use tape recorders. Although there is someone here with a fantastic memory, remembering what the Rebbe said almost verbatim, he has not yet repeated what the Rebbe said and I myself do not remember enough to be able to write it to you. Here are just a



Rabbi Meir Freiman

few short things that were said at the end of the farbrengen which I remember, more or less. They are: the inyan of Yom Kippur – it says in the Mishna at the end of Meseches Taanis, that it's an inyan of simcha as it says in the Mishna, "B'yom simchas libo – zeh Yom HaKippurim." And it also says, "There weren't Yomim Tovim for the Jewish people like 15 Av and Yom Kippur, when the Jewish girls would go out in white clothes." The inyan of white clothes on Yom Kippur is that if, G-d forbid, there are sins, they will be whitened like snow, and this simcha should continue throughout the entire year, especially when we are in the time right before Sukkos, the time of our rejoicing.

I have no time to elaborate.

With blessings for a happy Yom Tov

Meir

CHAG HA'SUKKOS, Z'MAN SIMCHASEINU, WITH THE REBBE

B"H

24 Tishrei 5725

After a break in my letter writing and it seems that you didn't write to me during Chol HaMoed either, I wonder how you are and hope that all is well.

Sukkos was a tremendously uplifting time. The simcha was endless, and I will write briefly about the days that I have not yet described to you.

On the first day of Sukkos (as well as the rest of the days), the Rebbe gave his lulav and esrog to the crowd so they could say a bracha on it. There was a very long line (I cannot estimate the number of people since right after I said the bracha I went to learn), and this went on for two and a half hours every day.

In the afternoon, groups went out to enable Jews to say the bracha on the lulav. There were several hundred groups and I was included. We went to hospitals, old age homes, etc. This also took place every day of Sukkos.

On the second day of Sukkos there was a farbrengen in the big sukka, and here you actually see the statement of Chazal, "The tzaddik takes on a form and removes a form." The Rebbe's face on Sukkos looked completely different than on the Yomim Nora'im. On the Yomim Nora'im, he was so serious that you hardly saw a smile, especially after the passing of his mother. During Sukkos we already saw smiling, especially at the farbrengen when the Rebbe really made the crowd joyous. It wasn't just that then there was seriousness and now there was simcha, but the very form of his face looked completely different.

After the farbrengen, the Rebbe made Havdala and then gave out Kos shel Bracha to all those at the farbrengen.

On the first day of Chol HaMoed there was a gathering for Tzeirei Agudas Chabad. It was attended by guests who came from various places where they are on shlichus for the Rebbe, as well as the locals. The Kinus is for each person to give a report about his activities so that people can learn from one another.

Their activities are great and diverse and the results are really not commensurate with the work they put in. For example, one built a Talmud Torah and yeshiva; one built a mikva; one has a shiur every night with several dozen people, etc.

In order to write all the details, I'd have to write what was said over a period of hours, so I will just mention some interesting highlights. One of the men [R' Nissan Pinson], who is a shliach in Tunisia, said that everything done by a religious Jew is under the purview of the police and every package or letter that arrives at a religious Jew's house, especially a foreign citizen, is examined over and over again. Naturally, much care must be taken. Despite all this, he started a yeshiva where they study Limudei Kodesh every day. A certain rabbi met a 13 year old who learned in the Chabad yeshiva there and asked him whether he knows how to learn. The boy said that he knows three Tractates of Gemara by heart with Tosafos. The rabbi tested him and the boy did well.

Another little anecdote: At the World's Fair, Chabad has a booth where they display all kinds of Judaica. It is decorated and laid out very nicely in order to attract more people. On

numerous occasions, many of the visitors expressed interest in knowing more about who was responsible for that booth and thus were connected to Tzeirei Agudas Chabad. The latter were mekarev them and explained to them things they did not understand about Judaism. Many of them became religious as a result.

The conclusion of the Kinus takes place every year with the Rebbe, but this year the Rebbe did not attend because of aveilus.

On the second day of Chol HaMoed, several hundred groups went to various small cities to bring the word of Hashem and His Torah and to bring the joy of the holiday. I also went to one of the places; over here, there are no exceptions. Everyone goes, everyone works together.

On Shabbos Chol HaMoed there was a farbrengen in the sukka. It was tremendously crowded but during the farbrengen you didn't feel it. It was only after the farbrengen that we realized we were soaked from head to toe due to the crush.

We were up the whole night of Hoshana Rabba. The Rebbe only came in for T'hilim, and he said Kaddish after every book.

On Hoshana Rabba by day, right after davening, the Rebbe gave out lekach. Every year, the distribution of lekach takes place on two days, Erev Yom Kippur and Hoshana Rabba, but this year the Rebbe did not give out lekach Erev Yom Kippur because of aveilus. Therefore, the distribution on Hoshana Rabba was double the amount.

The difference between the Rebbe's giving of Kos shel Bracha and of lekach is that Kos shel Bracha is only for those who



Kos shel Bracha 5724

“One of the p'sukim, that was said l'ilui nishmas the Rebbe's mother, went for about \$10,000.

attended the farbrengen, whereas lekach is for all of Anash, even from distant places. Of course, the crowd is larger and the Rebbe stands in the entrance to the sukka and people pass by, each with his request, for health, success, etc. and the Rebbe blessed each one with “shana tova u'mesuka.” The distribution of lekach took three hours.

I can't write about Shmini Atzeres and Simchas Torah in such a small space, even in brief. It will have to wait for the next letter. I'll sum it up by saying that whoever did not see the simcha on Simchas Torah never saw simcha in his life.

I forgot to write you that a shliach of the Rebbe in Brazil came here, and I spoke to him and gave him the address of Eliezer. He promised me he would go to him and speak to him about Judaism, and that he

would write letters. Let's hope that this helps.

I left this empty space for gashmius matters. I will be leaving for Paris on the Queen Elizabeth ocean liner, one of the biggest in the world, next Wednesday. I will be in Paris for a few days since I have to travel to Eretz Yisroel on an Israeli ship, and on Shabbos one cannot travel on an Israeli ship. In order to be able to leave and not travel on Shabbos, I will have to stay in Paris for a while.

I will be staying in the Chabad yeshiva there. One of the bachurim in the yeshiva in Paris, who was here and already returned to Paris, will come pick me up. On the ship I will be in a room with two beds, for me and another Lubavitcher who is going to London. As for food, we have canned meat, sardines, potatoes, pears, etc.

You shouldn't write me here anymore since letters will have to be sent back.

With blessings for everything good, and see you soon,
Meir

HOW WONDERFUL TO SEE THE REBBE, WITH HIS FACE SHINING LIKE A KING

B"H

26 Tishrei 5725

To Mother and the Family
hello,

(In my previous letter, I think I forgot to write who I was addressing, but I hope you figured it out.)

To continue my previous letter about what happened here: I was up to Shmini Atzeres. That night all of Anash, young and old, walked to shuls. Older people went to closer locations and younger people walked to further locations. We went in order to bring simcha to the people there, the Simcha of the Torah.

When we came back here, it was already in the middle of Ata Horeisa. The way it works is, the first time the Rebbe says all the p'sukim, and the second and third times only the first and last pasuk. The bidding on the first pasuk of Ata Horeisa for the first round, ended at \$4000 because everyone wants to honor the Rebbe with this pasuk. The night of Simchas Torah the first pasuk was \$5000, and each of the other p'sukim was bought in partnership, one giving 20 times Chai dollars and another 10 or 15 times Chai, etc.

One of the p'sukim, that was said l'ilui nishmas the Rebbe's mother, went for about \$10,000.

Many people attended the hakafos, such as the Deputy Chairman of the Knesset, Mr.

Yeshaya and the Israeli Consul Zohar. They came here Simchas Torah night [when the holiday is over for Israelis – ed.] and they all participated in buying one of the p'sukim. Then they honored the Rebbe with the recitation of the pasuk and with the hakafa. Likewise, the Rebbe was honored on both nights by the Talmidei HaYeshivos with the pasuk, "VaYehi Binso'a."

At the beginning and end of Ata Horeisa, the Rebbe began the niggun himself. The first time, he sang the niggun that his father had shown a special fondness for and the second time, "Hoshia es Amecha," and the third time, "U'faratzta." Here's a brief description of what the hakafos looked like. The Rebbe stood on a small platform in the southeast corner and on every side were piles of tables and benches that people stood on in order to see the Rebbe. In the middle of the shul they left an empty space of three square meters where the Rebbe danced during the hakafos.

The Rebbe turned around to face the crowd and began a niggun and of course, the crowd joined in as he clapped.

How wonderful to see the Rebbe with his face shining like a king, altogether in a different world. The crowd sang louder, and the Rebbe raised his hands as a sign to increase the joy, and the crowd began dancing in a way I cannot describe. With normal abilities it's impossible to dance like this. The dancing follows the Rebbe's hands like it says, "When Moshe raised his hands, and the Jewish people were stronger."

This repeated itself with every niggun, and then the simcha was that much greater. It's impossible to describe in words. The hakafos lasted until about 11:30.

The night of Simchas Torah we went to shuls again to bring simcha, and when we returned it was already in the middle of the farbrengen. By the way, the Rebbe is not pleased with those who choose nearby shuls to go to so that they can make it to the beginning of the farbrengen, so there were people who came two and three hours after the farbrengen started.

The Rebbe said a special sicha for those who walked in order to bring simcha to the shuls. The farbrengen ended at 12:00 and they started with Ata Horeisa fifteen minutes later. The hakafos lasted until 4:30 in the morning.

The next morning it was like the night before (I wrote that in just a few words, but it was an entire world). On Simchas Torah afternoon there was another farbrengen that lasted until 2:00 in the morning. It was very joyous. The Rebbe spoke a lot about the special quality of Simchas Torah over other Yomim Tovim and how there needs to be simcha and many other inyanim.

After the farbrengen the Rebbe gave out Kos shel Bracha as well as mashke to representatives from various countries so they could give it to Anash in their location. I asked the Rebbe for Kos shel Bracha for the family, and he gave it to me. I will bring it with me on my return to Eretz Yisroel.

The distribution of Kos shel Bracha lasted until 4:00 in the morning, and then the Rebbe said, "We announce 'and Yaakov went on his way,' as each person goes off to his private concerns. You need to take the simcha from Simchas Torah and have it all year in the fulfillment of Torah and mitzvos." The Rebbe began to sing, "Ki B'simcha Seitzei'u" and went to his room. Thus, the

long avoda of Tishrei was over.

Before Yom Tov there were several nights of yechidus, but they were very short due to the holy days in which the Rebbe is more involved in general matters. There was a regular yechidus the night after Simchas Torah. It began at 8:00 and ended the next morning at 8:00, and this was after four days and nights that we saw the Rebbe awake; the night of Hoshana Rabba and the day, the night of Shmini Atzeres and the day, the night of Simchas Torah and the day. I don't know what the Rebbe does at night year-round; though I am sure he does not sleep. I'm just telling you what I saw with my own eyes.

Something interesting happened the night of yechidus. R' Avrohom Parshan (who was originally an activist in Poalei Agudas Yisroel from Yerushalayim) had yechidus, and they discussed a certain matter. The Rebbe said it would be a good idea if his wife was present when they discussed it. His wife has never come here even though she has been in the United States for two years. How astounded R' Avrohom was when he went outside to call his wife and there she was, coming in! He couldn't get over it, especially considering that it was two in the morning.

Things like this happen every day, but as I said in my previous letter, I write to you what I saw myself. Yechidus takes place



Kos shel Bracha 5724

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three nights a week on Sunday, Tuesday, and Thursday and that is aside from the hundreds of letters and dozens of express mail letters and telegrams that come every day.

It was well worth coming here just for Simchas Torah.

Once again I will remind you that there is no point in responding to this letter since by the time it arrives I will be on board ship.

I will end with “Good Shabbos” and see you later.

Meir

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MAKING YOUR GUESTS **FEEL AT HOME**

In Tishrei, one holiday follows another, and many of us are busy hosting guests. We spoke with four women who have many guests throughout the year, and heard from them how guests impact their home and families. • Insights and advice for successful hosting from veteran hostesses.

By C. Ben Dovid



A house full of guests – how does this affect your family? What does hosting provide for the host family?

Ilana, whose house is always open to numerous guests, sees hosting as having a positive influence on her children.

“When I became a baalas t’shuva, I saw religious families around me in which the children were used to giving and sharing, and I really liked it. Boruch Hashem, I have a family of my own now and my children are involved in doing, hosting and giving, and this has a very good effect on them.

“Sometimes, it is really hard. All kinds of people come to us, and they aren’t necessarily the kind who project good feelings to those around them. Sometimes, it’s hard for the children to accept these people. Then I talk to my children and explain the importance of the mitzva of hachnasas orchim. We do not do a mitzva for our enjoyment. It’s no feat to host only nice people, the kind who will always find themselves a place where people will be happy to have them. The challenge lies in opening your heart to those who need attention, a listening ear, and a warm home.

“When my children complained about feeling uncomfortable with a very old lady who comes to us occasionally, I asked them – if she was your grandmother, wouldn’t you happily welcome her?

“They get a hands-on lesson in real Ahavas Yisroel and implement what they learn when guests come to our house.”

Mrs. Nitzan Ron:

“There is a big difference between Shabbos with guests and Shabbos without guests. The

word *orach* (guest) has the word *ohr* (light) in it and the word for fragrance, *rei’ach*, and I feel that guests bring light, flavor, and a special fragrance. I once thought there are guests who are harder to host, people who aren’t religious, guests who entail extra inconvenience, etc. However, time and again I discover that on these occasions I am given special strength from above, a certain *siyata d’Shmaya* in the cooking, preparing, and actual hosting. It is this kind of hosting that gives me a greater sense of personal elevation.

“There are occasions when I feel that it is necessary to devote time to the family, but in most cases, a Shabbos with guests gives everyone in the

guests are coming for Shabbos, I try to finish my preparations earlier so I can sit and talk with them. In my experience as a guest, I wasn’t comfortable when my hosts were preoccupied.”

Ilana takes a different approach:

“My guests quickly get into the atmosphere and routine of my home. My entire family participates in hosting. If I am busy, the children immediately serve drinks and welcome the guests. When my children are involved, it doesn’t only make it easier for me, it also helps the guests feel more comfortable. The children take the initiative to talk to the guests, and it immediately creates a comfortable atmosphere.



“In general, when you let guests help you, it gives them the feeling that they are at home.”

family so much. The children learn to love and accept people who are different than they are. They meet people from different backgrounds and see how we treat everyone in a positive way. I also discovered that on a Shabbos without guests, the children fight more – apparently when they are in giving mode they are more likely to be tolerant of each other.”

What helps make hosting successful? How do you give your guests a good feeling?

Rochel:

“I make sure to prepare the guest rooms ahead of time, with everything guests might need. I also try to give them as much attention as possible, to talk to them, especially when they are strangers, people who are getting involved in Judaism, or those who really need a listening ear. When

“I don’t find it necessary to constantly hover over the guests. They see me and my home in its natural state, even when I haven’t managed to change from a robe to festive clothes. I serve very plain food. I try to make sure there is enough for all. I also allow myself to occasionally use store-bought food. I never urge guests to eat but enable each one to eat as he wishes. If the guests’ children are not behaving properly, I feel free to point this out to them. I would not be able to go on hosting if the children continued jumping on the couch and scattered food all over the house. Since our guests keep coming back and sometimes find it hard to leave, I have to conclude that they feel comfortable.”

Nitzan thinks that guests feel good when they feel that their hosts are happy to have them. When hosts are genuinely happy

to have guests, this is felt by the guests. She adds:

“In order to give guests a good feeling, it helps to give them free rein in the house. If a guest asks me whether she can take something out of the refrigerator, I tell her with a smile that she may, and that the next time she doesn’t need to ask. She will quickly catch on that I mean it seriously. You need to prepare cereal for your baby? Please go ahead, and maybe you will prepare some for my baby while you’re at it.

“I let the guests pick which room they will sleep in and leave them clean sheets and towels for them to arrange themselves. In general, when you let guests help you, it gives them the feeling that they are at home.”

Yael emphasizes the role of children in hosting:

“We host many people, including tourists and new immigrants with whom we don’t always have a common language. I think it’s thanks to the children that we are able to communicate. When people come for the first time to a strange place and don’t understand the language, they feel uncomfortable at first. Children contribute a lot towards a lighter atmosphere.

“If the guests themselves have children, the children of both host and guest bridge the gap between the adults. Even when the guests don’t have children, my children are used to helping dispel any tension in their natural way. You

don’t need a rich vocabulary in order to play with little children, and in general, people feel more comfortable in the company of children.”

How do you include children in hosting? How do you make them feel part of the action? What do you do when children find it hard to accept the guests?

Yael puts the emphasis on personal example:

“The children see their mother interacting with the guests and serving them, and they want to join in. I see my children naturally offering cookies and drinks to guests when they come in, without my telling them to do so. It’s something they absorbed by seeing me do it.”

Ilana also thinks the children learn by personal example although she thinks it’s important to discuss it too:

“I explain to the children that it’s important for us to treat the guests nicely, especially those guests who are harder to host. My children have complained about messes left behind by guests, about bad odors, or about other things that make them feel uncomfortable. They know not to say anything in the presence of the guests. But after the guests leave, I hear the complaints.

“In these situations, my personal example is not enough. I make sure to listen to them and understand them, and I talk to them and explain, again and again, what a privilege it is for us to have guests and to truly fulfill

this mitzva – not just to have guests for our enjoyment. They get the message. It’s also a matter of habit. I see, for example, how children from small families have a hard time, at first, getting used to the idea of large families while a child from a large family is used to it and enjoys it. The same is true for guests; the children are used to giving up their rooms on many Shabbosos and forgoing their comfort to some degree, and they do so happily.”

How do you prepare for guests? What are the most important things to do before guests arrive?

In **Yael’s** opinion, when you host often, the preparations are not that many:

“When you are accustomed to hosting, you have your routine. The cooking goes quickly when you need to cook in larger quantities. In the past, these preparations took me a lot of time. Once I got used to having many guests, I manage to do what needs to be done in less time and with less bother.”

Nitzan thinks the cleanliness of the house is very important:

“It’s very unpleasant when guests come and the house is not clean and orderly, though you shouldn’t get carried away with cleaning either. I make sure the house looks presentable, but I never take this to an extreme. With the cooking too, I cook in honor of Shabbos and not in honor of the guests. I have no interest in impressing the guests

with special dishes. My goal is to honor the Shabbos with tasty, simple food. I think this also contributes to the guests' feeling of comfort, because they don't feel that I went too much out of my way for them. The hosting is a pleasure and not a burden."

Rochel refers to a different kind of preparation:

"When guests come, especially strangers, it's a good idea to think ahead of time of topics for discussion. Although we don't always know many details about the guests ahead of time, I use the information I have to help me find topics of mutual interest, to think of a book that I have in the house that might interest them.

"It also pays to think ahead of time about any difficulties that might arise and to come up with solutions. You don't need to devote much time to these preparations, and you can definitely leave room for spontaneity. While cooking and organizing you can give this some thought. It can be very helpful."

Ilana thinks that the most important preparation is gathering your strength:

"Of course you must be sure there are cold drinks in the fridge, enough food, and an orderly house, but it's very important that you rest. You need to be relaxed so that you have enough patience to welcome your guests properly."

Many of us feel that hosting, especially strangers, is too hard for us because we don't have enough room in the house or enough patience for people we don't know. Sometimes there is the fear of being judged negatively, and sometimes it seems that cooking in such large quantities is too complicated. Would you say that hosting is for everyone?

"When guests come, especially strangers, it's a good idea to think ahead of time of topics for discussion."

Yael:

"I also thought that way initially; I was sure that hosting was not for me. Then, it worked out that we had occasion to host people, time after time. At first it really wasn't easy. The preparations, the forgoing of our family's privacy at the Shabbos table, and my desire to appear perfect were all uncomfortable challenges. I think the solution in overcoming these difficulties is simply to face them head on. Do not be afraid of hosting. Don't demand too much of yourself; prepare simply and remember that if you feel somewhat uncomfortable with guests at first, they certainly feel that way since they are in an unfamiliar place. When your focus is on how you can make them feel better, you will forget your own

discomfort.

"Over time, I learned that I am really not under scrutiny and so I was liberated from those feelings I had at first. When I saw how having guests had a good effect on my children, I decided that hosting is for me after all."

Rochel:

"Someone who is afraid of hosting is usually imagining a

house full of guests who feel as though they are in their own homes, staying for long periods of time, and expecting to be catered to in every way. There are homes like that and women who can handle that, but many of us don't find this realistic. Most homes cannot turn into hostels for the unfortunate, and most women cannot serve as social workers in their spare time. However, every home can host a few guests occasionally.

"For those who are afraid of having guests, it's best to do it gradually. Have only a few people and not on a regular basis. With time and experience your capabilities will expand, and when you get used to it you can increase the number of people or have guests more often. Everyone can be a host; just do it in a way that works for you."

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REVELATIONS IN THE SUKKA

Prior to his nesius, the Rebbe was instructed by the Rebbe Rayatz to farbreng during Sukkos. During the early years of his nesius, the Rebbe continued this custom and would hold farbrengens in honor of Simchas Beis HaShoeiva. These farbrengens took place in the sukka of 770. • A retrospective on those joyous gatherings branded into the memories of all who took part.

By Dovid HaLevi

Chassidim would say that a farbrengen with the Rebbe is the happiest time in the life of a Chassid. This is true for a so-called ordinary farbrengen and all the more so



for the Simchas Beis HaShoeiva farbrengens. For many years, the Rebbe would hold farbrengens in honor of Simchas Beis HaShoeiva in the sukka.

All who attended these farbrengens hold fond memories of those special moments, both because the Rebbe would demonstrate incredible joy and also due to the sichos with a special *geshmak* with which the Rebbe expounded on the quality of simcha.

The simcha began the moment the Rebbe entered the sukka as he strongly encouraged the singing. During the farbrengen, the Rebbe would dance in his place with tremendous joy. It is well known that the Rebbe's leadership mirrored in many ways that of the Tzemach Tzedek, and Chassidim would say that the Tzemach Tzedek would also hold Simchas Beis HaShoeiva farbrengens with song and dance. The Tzemach Tzedek danced so intensely that even the young men would not be able to keep up with him (this was much less prominent by the other Rebbeim).

Not only did the Rebbe display great simcha, but he also demanded that the crowd be happy. In 5712/1951 on the second day of Sukkos, the Rebbe reminded everyone that they could still grab from the Simchas Yom Tov that is accessible to all. This is in contrast to the days after Yom Tov, when the Simchas Beis HaShoeiva pertains primarily to the elders and men of great deeds.

Sometimes, at a farbrengen, the Rebbe drank mashke, said many l'chaims, and told Chassidim to say l'chaim as well, sometimes several times. No Chassid is likely to forget the simcha on the Rebbe's face during these farbrengens.



At the Sukkos farbrengen in 5714, the Rebbe said, “The crowd probably suspects . . . so, instead of suspecting me (although it is forbidden to suspect a Jew) and remaining suspect, I will say it openly: Listen Jews, You need to learn Chassidus!”

These joyous farbrengens consisted of many songs and niggunim. At some of these farbrengens, the Rebbe explained niggunei Chabad such as “Eilu V'Eilu Omrim.” In 5720/1959, after Maariv the second night of Yom Tov, the Rebbe asked R' Abba Levin and R' Chanoch Glitzenstein to sing a happy niggun since for them, being Israeli, it was already Chol HaMoed and Simchas Beis HaShoeiva. They started singing “U'faratzta,” at first without words and then with the words.

The next day, during the farbrengen, the Rebbe said, “It has been heard that there is an Eretz Yisroel Nusach for ‘U'faratzta.’ Where are those from Eretz Yisroel? Where is Glitzenstein?”

THE EARLY YEARS

There were Simchas Beis HaShoeiva farbrengens with the Rebbe even before the Rebbe's nesius began, just like the Rebbe Rayatz and the Rebbe Rashab farbrenged on these night even before they became Rebbe (in the case of the Rebbe Rashab, it was before 5654 when he officially accepted the nesius, at which point the order of farbrengens changed).

The first time we know of when the Rebbe farbrenged with Anash on Sukkos was in 5690/1929 in Riga. R' Eliyahu Chaim Altheus describes it in a letter to the Rebbe Rayatz:

One night of Simchas Beis

HaShoeiva we gathered in the sukka of the Rebbe [Rayatz] and R' Menachem Mendel sat with us and we heard many pleasant things from him. We all found it a great delight. Each time, we drank l'chaim to the Rebbe and at the end, we sent a l'chaim telegram to the Rebbe [who was in New York], which we are sure was received and enjoyed.

In 5691/1930, the Rebbe (then known as “Ramash”) farbrenged with a large crowd of Tzeirei Agudas Yisroel (in Riga), as R' Meir Blizinsky describes in his letter:

The Rebbe was very quiet and introverted. Since his wedding, Anash and the T'mimim longed to hear him farbreng, as they discerned that he was something special. One night of Sukkos, word got out that the Rebbe's son-in-law Ramash would farbreng for Simchas Beis HaShoeiva. The news spread quickly, and people were very excited. It was very cold outside, but the Rebbe sat for hours and farbrenged in enjoyable fashion, and everybody saw that he had pearls of wisdom to say. Among other things, he explained his father-in-law's maamer that was said on Motzaei Yom Kippur which begins with the verse, “V'yaged Lecha Taalumos Chochma, Kiflayim L'Tushiya.”

The following year, the Rebbe was in Otvotsk with the Rebbe Rayatz. The Rebbe told his son-in-law to farbreng with the Anash and T'mimim who had come to the city. The Rebbe farbrenged with them for hours that night

R' YISROEL'S SUKKA IS KOSHER

R' Mendel Futerfas related:

The first year I was able to spend Tishrei with the Rebbe was 5725, right after I left Russia. On the 6th of Tishrei of that year, the Rebbe's mother passed away, and the Rebbe davened for the amud on every weekday. As is known, the Rebbe did not daven at length. For me, having come from Russia where I remembered the lengthy davening of the elder Chassidim, this was somewhat surprising to me. The Rebbe Rayatz had davened for much longer. Of course, I immediately banished that thought for "whomever questions his teacher is like questioning the Sh'china."

At the farbrengen on the second day of Sukkos, towards the end of the farbrengen, the Rebbe spoke about the Baal Shem Tov's sukkah which was kosher bediavad (by halachically minimalist standards) and had quite a few questionable aspects to it so that the great geniuses of Mezhibuzh had a hard time coming up with the necessary justifications to pronounce it kosher. Then the Baal Shem Tov showed them a note from Heaven upon which was written "The sukkah of R' Yisroel is kosher."

The Rebbe asked, "Why did the Baal Shem Tov suffice with a sukkah that was so questionable when he was typically very particular about mitzva observance? Why didn't he make a perfectly good sukkah that would satisfy all opinions?"

"The reason is," said the Rebbe, "that by doing so he removed a sukkah like this from the realm of klipa to the realm of mitzva. Through the p'sak he received from Heaven, the Baal Shem Tov elevated this sukkah to the level of a Divine commandment."

The Rebbe concluded with a lesson that even if sometimes it seems hard to do a mitzva, we should still try to do it (obviously, it is not for us to be involved in elevations such as these which pertain only to great tzaddikim).

And then I understood the answer, concluded R' Mendel. By doing this, the Baal Shem Tov elevated thousands of sukkos of less pious Jews to the realm of mitzva. Now I understood why the Rebbe davened so quickly and why it was not something for people like us to do.

and wrote a summary of the farbrengen.

In the years that followed, the Rebbe continued to farbreng on Sukkos. This provided the rare opportunity for people to get to know, at least in a small way, someone who was a very private person. The future Rebbe's greatness in Nigleh and Nistar and all parts of Torah were revealed at these farbrengens. The farbrengens, which were held in religious neighborhoods, caused many from other groups to come close to the great light of Chassidus. The actual intended audience for these farbrengens,

though, was the yeshiva bachurim.

At one of these farbrengens there was a huge crowd of about 400 people. The Rebbe asked each of the people present for his name and his mother's name. When a person said his name, the Rebbe repeated it and asked him to say l'chaim. The following year the same scene repeated itself though in reverse. The Rebbe addressed each person by name and his mother's name and told him to say l'chaim. The crowd was astonished by this amazing feat.

One year when the Rebbe farbrenged in Poland, he asked the mashpia of the yeshiva, R' Boruch Poilisher, to say l'chaim. The mashpia was quite older than the Rebbe, and he did not react. The Rebbe continued farbrenging and then asked him once again, "R' Boruch, say l'chaim!" When once again R' Boruch did not comply, the Rebbe said to him, "I am who I am, but you should say l'chaim," and only then did he say l'chaim.

In later years, after he had already come to the United States, the Rebbe farbrenged on Simchas Beis HaShoeiva for the B'nei HaYeshivos of all groups. One of the most famous of these farbrengens that took place in the sukkah was the farbrengen on Shmini Atzeres 5704/1943, during which the Rebbe explained all the p'sukim of Ata Horeisa. This special sicha was later printed in *Kuntres Hakafos* which was published in 5754 and more recently in a volume of pre-nisus Sichos Kodesh.

YESHIVA FARBRENGEN

As mentioned earlier, by instruction of the Rebbe Rayatz the Rebbe's farbrengens were meant for the B'nei HaYeshivos. Actually, many years earlier, at the Rebbe Rashab's first farbrengen after he officially accepted the nisus, he said that mashke should be given to the bachurim. This was very unusual for that time, before the founding of the yeshiva. He said that the bachurim are "our mekablaim (vessels to receive), and we need to make them mekablaim. Through the mashke of Simchas Beis HaShoeiva they will become mekablaim."

Later, in the United States, Merkos L'Inyanei Chinuch was put in charge of arranging

and publicizing the Rebbe's farbrengens. They would put advertisements in the newspapers of these upcoming events. This practice continued even after the Rebbe assumed the mantle of Chabad leadership.

On Sukkos 5717/1956 the Rebbe explained the connection between the Talmidei HaYeshivos and Simchas Beis HaShoeiva: "This farbrengen is especially connected with the Talmidei HaYeshiva. By way of introduction, although the original Simchas Beis HaShoeiva took place when they drew water outside of Yerushalayim ... still, the purpose of drawing the water was in order to pour it in the Beis HaMikdash. In our days, the inyan of Beis HaMikdash is associated with Talmidei HaYeshivos, as Chazal say, 'from the day the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed, Hashem has nothing in His world other than the four cubits of halacha.'"

At many of the farbrengens the Rebbe would offer an explanation in Nigleh. The secretary, R' Eliyahu Quint, about whom the Rebbe said he was expert in Shas, once said to R' Groner in amazement after one of these farbrengens, "Today in his sicha, the Rebbe encompassed all of Shas from Brachos till Nidda (i.e. from beginning to end)."

The farbrengens were not designated specifically for the talmidim of Tomchei T'mimim. On the contrary, many who were not affiliated with Chassidus attended the farbrengens and enjoyed them. At that time, Crown Heights was almost entirely Jewish and many residents, who were not Lubavitchers, attended too. The Rebbe often took the opportunity to call upon people to increase their learning of Chassidus.



The Rebbe farbrenging in the sukkah in 5715

“At that very moment, a ray of sun shone through the window in the s’chach. It was unbelievable. Until that minute heavy, black clouds had covered the sky! At the end of the farbrengen, after the bracha acharona, the Rebbe got up, put on his coat, and turned to leave the sukkah. A moment after he put on his coat, the heavens opened up again and it poured.”

THE REBBE'S HEALTH DEPENDS ON US!

During the years that the Rebbe farbrenged in the sukkah, one of the people present gave a bottle of mashke and told the Rebbe it was from Prime Minister Shazar. He added that Shazar wished the Rebbe good health.

The Rebbe told the shliach, "You can also give me some good health."

The man was taken aback, and the Rebbe said, "If you ensure that more Jews fulfill mitzvos, that will add to my health."

For many yeshiva bachurim, this was their first opportunity to see the Rebbe farbreng and for some of them, this is what brought them into Lubavitch. For example, R' Shmuel Lew of London says that the Simchas Beis HaShoeiva farbrengen of 5716 was the first time he attended the Rebbe's farbrengen and it's what sealed his decision to become a Lubavitcher Chassid.

It is said that the mashpia R' Shaul Brook finalized his hiskashrus to the Rebbe when he saw him farbreng on Simchas Beis HaShoeiva.

At the Sukkos farbrengen in 5714, the Rebbe said, "The crowd probably suspects that as I speak more and more, I will snatch a few moments before the conclusion and say you need to learn Chassidus. And so, instead

A FEW ANECDOTES FROM FARBRENGENS

At the farbrengens that took place in the sukka, the Rebbe sometimes scolded a number of Chassidim. In the year before the passing of the Rebbe Rayatz, the Rebbe chastised R' Yisroel Jacobson and said, "When Moshiach comes, he will have to look for you. He will go to Tomchei T'mimim and they will tell him you are in Beis Rivka. He will go there and they will tell him that you are busy with esrogim. When he goes to the esrogim, they will tell him you are at the Chevra Kadisha ..."

On another occasion, the Rebbe rebuked one of the participants for not doing a certain thing the Rebbe wanted. When the person justified himself by asking how could he know the Rebbe's ratzon, the Rebbe said, "But why should you think the opposite? In order to think the opposite, you first have to know what someone wants and then say the opposite."

At the Simchas Beis HaShoeiva farbrengen of 5718, the crowd grabbed *shirayim* (the Rebbe's leftovers). The Rebbe said, "Let them grab, but they should know that shirayim don't just refine; they obligate!"

of suspecting me (although it is forbidden to suspect a Jew) and remaining suspect, with the matter remaining quiet, I will say it openly: **Listen Yidden, You need to learn Chassidus!**"

The Rebbe also used these farbrengens for more general proclamations affecting all of the Jewish people. For example, the sicha about founding of Irgun Talmidei HaYeshivos (ATA) was said during Simchas Beis HaShoeiva 5713, and the famous sicha about an "offensive war" was said at Simchas Beis HaShoeiva 5717.

The Rebbe also expressed concern for those yeshiva students not present at the farbrengens. One year, the Rebbe looked for R' Shmuel Halperin, the rosh yeshiva of Toras Emes, and told him to say l'chaim for all the bachurim in his yeshiva.

The farbrengen on Sukkos 5711 was somewhat out of the ordinary, as the Rebbe farbrenged with a number of balabatim (working men) and explained the lesson in avodas Hashem from each one's line of work. This was more common at farbrengens before the Rebbe accepted the

Chabad leadership.

THE TZACH GATHERING

The Rebbe used these farbrengens, which were more directed towards young people, for matters of hafatza. The Rebbe would often address himself to Tzeirei Agudas Chabad, an organization founded in the early years of the Rebbe's leadership, at these farbrengens. In fact, to this very day, as per the Rebbe's instructions, there is a Kinus (gathering) of Tzach on one of the days of Chol HaMoed Sukkos. One year, the Rebbe described the farbrengen as "part two of the Tzach gathering."

At the end of the first Kinus, the Rebbe said, "Since we are presently conducting the Kinus of Tzeirei Agudas Chabad, being that it's the first Kinus, everybody should say l'chaim together and sing a niggun to demonstrate their skill in niggunim. Then they can go on to assess their skill in activities." In response to this announcement, the chairman of Tzach gave a report on the gathering in front of the Rebbe, and this became a regular occurrence in the years to come.

At the Sukkos farbrengen in 5721/1960, the Rebbe said, "Surely there is someone there who sits at the head, the chairman, who will give a report." R' Tzvi Hirsh Gansburg got up and began giving a report. He said that R' Moshe Pesach Goldman, secretary of Tzach, began the meeting by reading a letter of the Rebbe and then he called upon the chairman Gansburg (referring to himself, of course). The Rebbe corrected him, "HaRav" and R' Gansburg had to repeat what he said with that correction.

Among other things, he reported about how each one got up and told about his activities, and he said that R' Dovber Baumgarten had returned from the countries he had visited. The Rebbe asked, "Which ones – all 70 nations?" He had to delineate which countries R' Baumgarten had been in.

In 5725/1964, the Rebbe spoke sadly about those who become old and stop participating in the activities [of Chabad Youth]. Consequently, said the Rebbe, a child younger than bar mitzva should get up and sing. The Rebbe then blessed all those who stopped being active to remain young.

WEATHERING THE WEATHER

It has been said on the verse, "*BeVeis Elokim Nehalech B'Regesh*" (To the house of G-d we will go with trembling) that the word "B'Regesh" is an acronym for: barad, ruach, geshem, sheleg (hail, wind, rain, snow). During the years that the Rebbe farbrenged in the sukka, the Chassidim experienced all four: hail, rain, wind and snow. Needless to say, the inclement weather did not deter the Rebbe

or the Chassidim.

It happened more than once that a farbrengen took place in the pouring rain, in freezing cold, wind, or snow. Even though when it rained the Rebbe arrived wearing a raincoat, he would take it off at the beginning of the farbrengen and put it back on only at the end. The Rebbe exchanged his sopping wet sirtuk only later, for Maariv, on those days that the farbrengen took place on the second day of Yom Tov. The Rebbe sometimes motioned to people, like to R' Yisroel Leibov in 5727/1966, to take off his raincoat. During that rainy Sukkos, the Rebbe said a sicha on the topic of "Drawing Water in Joy." The Rebbe did not say a bracha acharona (after-blessing) from a Siddur (perhaps the only time in history) because the Siddur was drenched.

R' Zushe Gross relates that before the farbrengen that took place in the sukka in 5727, the heavens opened and it began to pour. Within a few short minutes, the rain began penetrating the sukka and fell on the heads of the hundreds of Chassidim who were waiting for the Rebbe.

"The Rebbe came in and I remember that his face was shining. You could see the joy of the Yom Tov on his face. He was wearing a coat. The Rebbe sat down and began the farbrengen while the rain continued to fall. There was thunder and lightening and at a certain point a window opened in the s'chach and a strong stream of water began to fall on me, getting under my collar. I wondered whether the farbrengen would continue and if it did, for how long.

"As I thought about this, the Rebbe said, 'Nu, maybe if they take off their coats, the rain will

stop.' And the Rebbe stood up and took off his raincoat, folded it up and put it on the table. Of course, everybody else did the same. I couldn't take my coat off because of the tremendous crowding. Though, in any case, the coat did not help.

"At that very moment, a ray of sun shone through the window in the s'chach. It was unbelievable. Until that minute heavy, black clouds had covered the sky! The Rebbe continued to farbreng with great simcha. They sang niggunim and said l'chaim.

"At the end of the farbrengen, after the bracha acharona, the Rebbe got up, put on his coat, and turned to leave the sukka. A moment after he put on his coat,

Rebbe clapped in the usual way, not the way some people do with a change on Shabbos. Then the Rebbe suddenly stopped and said that the Munkatcher (author of *Minchas Elozor*) writes about clapping on Shabbos and paskens that while singing, it is permissible to clap in the usual way.

The Rebbe commented as to why he decided to suddenly discuss this, "It is the response to a thought!"

Apparently what happened was, someone in the crowd wondered why the Rebbe was clapping in the usual way on Shabbos, and the Rebbe responded to his thought. There are numerous stories about



There are numerous stories about how the Rebbe read people's thoughts, but this was one of the rare times that the Rebbe publicly acknowledged it.

the heavens opened up again and it poured."

One of the big chiddushim that the Rebbe said in the name of the Rebbe Rayatz and which he himself practiced was to say the bracha "Leisheiv BaSukka" even in cases of awful weather. Despite the torrential rains, which would grant someone sitting in a sukka the status of *mitztaer* (one for whom being in the sukka is a source of suffering, and is thus freed from the obligation to remain there), the Rebbe said the bracha.

One year, during the farbrengen which took place on Shabbos Chol HaMoed Sukkos, it rained heavily. The Rebbe walked in wearing a raincoat, and immediately took it off, said the "Leisheiv BaSukka," and started clapping joyously. The

how the Rebbe read people's thoughts, but this was one of the rare times that the Rebbe publicly acknowledged it.

When a certain farbrengen took place in the freezing cold, the Rebbe said they should take off their coats. Someone who was not a Lubavitcher was present and he did not remove his coat. He was the only one who came down with a cold. When he wrote to the Rebbe about it, the Rebbe said it happened because there was a *chatzitza* (a barrier) between his body and the warmth of the farbrengen.

CROWDED CONDITIONS

A major problem at these farbrengens was lack of space. As opposed to the beis midrash, which was large enough to contain the crowd, the sukka

ANGELS FALLING FROM HEAVEN

The Simchas Beis HaShoeiva farbrengens had a special charm which attracted people from various groups and also brought many Jews who later came close to Lubavitch.

One such person who was drawn to see the Rebbe's farbrengen was from a family who belonged to a group called the Melachim (a breakaway group from Chabad). Because of this family connection, he did not feel comfortable participating in the farbrengen but instead lay on the s'chach and listened closely to what the Rebbe said. He enjoyed it tremendously and felt that he had found a true man of G-d.

Although in Lubavitch it is customary to use a lot of s'chach, there is a limit to how long the s'chach can bear a man's weight. The s'chach fell, and the man landed in the center of the farbrengen! Fortunately for him, due to the crowding and the pyramids, he did not fall on the floor and so this saved him from serious injury. The Rebbe didn't even glance at the spot when he commented, "A malach (angel) fell from heaven."

The man saw this as clear ruach ha'kodesh, for how could the Rebbe know his family background?

Today, he, his children, and his grandchildren are Lubavitcher Chassidim.

was much smaller. The Rebbe accepted the rain, but he refused to accept the chaos and pushing and referred sharply to it several times. His sharpness grew over the years as the pushing grew.

In 5711 it was with half a smile, when the Rebbe saw R' Mordechai Mentlik (one of the roshei yeshiva of Tomchei T'mimim-770) crushed amongst the crowd of people. The Rebbe said with a smile, "If they were his talmidim, we could understand it, but ..."

At the Simchas Beis HaShoeiva of 5712 there was a large crowd. When the Rebbe began giving out mashke, he asked that people come forward in an orderly manner and not with pushing, and then "everyone will be able to see and hear and he too will be able to see everyone and there will probably be enough mashke for all."

On Sukkos 5724, when the Rebbe saw the terrible pushing he did not think he would farbreng that day, but when he considered who would benefit, he decided to

farbreng. The only thing left for him to do though, was to shorten the farbrengen, and he did not want to go on at length about matters that were saddening and shocking. The Rebbe then farbrenged briefly and ended the farbrengen relatively quickly.

The year before too, the Rebbe shortened the farbrengen because of the pushing that caused a bench to break, though he did not make an announcement about it.

There was pushing at Kos shel Bracha too. One year, the Rebbe said, "There shouldn't be any resentment on the part of those who did not get any since it's as though they got."

The crowding and pushing was the main reason the Rebbe stopped farbrenging in the sukka. Another problem they had to contend with was that the electricity did not always work properly. At least one of the farbrengens was held in the dark and it was hard to see the Rebbe. However, these inconveniences did not stop the Chassidim from attending the farbrengens.

THE FARBRENGENS CEASE

In 5725, the farbrengens on Chol HaMoed stopped. That year, the year of mourning for the Rebbe's mother, Rebbetzin Chana, the Rebbe said not to advertise in the papers about his farbrenging. The Rebbe even said that one of the guests should farbreng. When R' Chadakov tried to say that it was Yom Tov after all, the Rebbe said curtly, "It's Chol HaMoed."

During the years that the Rebbe ate his Yom Tov meals on the second floor of 770 with the elder Chassidim, people would pose interesting questions to Rashag, the Rebbe's brother-in-law, for him to bring up at the meals.

On Sukkos 5730, R' Yehuda Kalman Marlow (later the *Mara D'Asra* of Crown Heights) asked Rashag why in Chabad they don't sleep in a sukka even though the halacha says to sleep in a sukka. This is especially surprising given the fact that Lubavitchers are very particular not to eat and drink anything out of the sukka, even when the Halacha says you may.

Rashag passed the question along to the Rebbe and at the farbrengen that was held in the sukka on the second day of Yom Tov, the Rebbe explained the reason at length. After he finished, the Rebbe smilingly said that since "whoever studies the topic of sleep in Torah, it is as if he slept," they should sing a joyful niggun. The Rebbe strongly encouraged the singing and the crowd danced in place with great enthusiasm.

Suddenly, one of the pyramids of benches collapsed and crushed R' Marlow's foot. Despite the enormous pain, R' Marlow did not utter a sound since he did not want to disturb

the farbrengen. Members of the “steering committee” who hurried to the spot began to clear everyone away from the area. They also attempted to move R’ Marlow who, in the meantime, had lain down on the ground. It was only then that they saw that his foot was crushed under the boards. The singing stopped and the Rebbe’s face grew very serious as he kept on looking at the site of the disturbance.

After much effort, they managed to extricate the rav and he was taken to the hospital where he was given emergency treatment. His foot was in a cast for six months, and it is told that the Rebbe was involved in every stage of his treatment.

Parenthetically, R’ Marlow was particular to immerse in a mikva every day even though this entailed great difficulty.

R’ Aharon Chitrik, who was next to R’ Marlow when the pyramid collapsed on his foot, said that on Motzaei Simchas Torah of that year, two of R’ Marlow’s friends went to the hospital and brought him on crutches to the Rebbe’s farbrengen. When they walked in, the Rebbe was in the middle of a sicha, and R’ Marlow wanted to stand on the side so as not to attract undue attention. When the sicha was completed, the Rebbe looked in his direction and said that R’ Marlow should be brought up to the farbrengen table and given l’chaim.

After the break between sichos was over, the Rebbe said it was time to continue discussing the topic raised on Sukkos, about the Chabad practice of not sleeping in a sukka.

After that sicha, R’ Marlow said that he saw that the Rebbe knew just who had raised the question and he also felt that the



The Rebbe washing his hands for a meal during the special farbrengen for children on Sukkos 5737

“Someone who was not a Lubavitcher was present and he did not remove his coat. He was the only one who came down with a cold. When he wrote to the Rebbe about it, the Rebbe said it happened because there was a chatzitzta (a barrier) between his body and the warmth of the farbrengen.”

Rebbe was telling him, “*boruch bo’acha.*”

The following year, the Rebbe said he would no longer farbreng in the sukka. When the members of the “steering committee” waited near the Rebbe’s room and asked him why, he responded firmly that it was because of the pushing.

SPECIAL FARBRENGEN FOR CHILDREN

Although the Rebbe stopped farbrenging in the sukka, there was one exception. On Sukkos 5737/1976, the Rebbe suddenly announced that he wanted to farbreng in the sukka with the children of Shaloh (Release Time

program for religious instruction of public school students). This was a surprise conclusion to the Shnas HaChinuch (Year of Jewish Education).

Throughout the year 5736, 1976/77, Lubavitchers worked diligently on getting Jewish children out of public school and into Jewish schools. These efforts were carried out by way of the contacts with Jewish students made through the Release Time program.

The Rebbe particularly cherished the children of Shaloh. These were Jewish neshamos who, through no fault of their

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TO SEE THE REBBE'S BRACHA

By Menachem Savyon

Translated by Michael Leib Dobry



Among the many tourists that pass through the Chabad House in New Delhi, there is a sizable number of business people who are involved in the fields of hi-tech, medicine, textiles, and the like.

One of these businesspeople is a woman named Mrs. F., who has a business dealing with art design. Her area of expertise is designing unique items that are custom ordered. When the orders accumulate, she travels to New Delhi in order to supervise the manufacturing process from close up.

Despite her many business pursuits, Mrs. F. conscientiously and consistently comes to the city's Chabad House.

During her last visit, she participated in the Tanya class at the Chabad House. At the conclusion of the class, she shared with the other participants a special miracle story that she had personally experienced the previous year:

"This story took place during my previous visit to New Delhi. One morning, I awoke with a very strange sensation. As I opened my eyes, I immediately noticed that I was seeing double. At first, I thought that I was hallucinating, and I ran to the faucet to wash my face, thinking that maybe I hadn't woken up completely.

"Yet, when I finished washing my face, I became even more alarmed, as the double vision became stronger than before.

"I went down to the hotel lobby, and there too I saw how my eyes were failing me. Every oil painting hanging in the lobby appeared twice.

"As the day wore on, my vision became more blurry. Naturally, this was a most unpleasant feeling.

"In the beginning, I was really worried. I started to think that I might, ch"v, be slowly losing my sight. After I had relaxed a bit, I made my way to one of the local hospitals.

"There were many people waiting in line for the ophthalmologist, and I quickly realized that, at this rate, I wouldn't be examined until the evening... I went up to the reception desk and pleaded with them, explaining that I needed to see the doctor very urgently.

"The clerk tried to calm me down. 'Everyone needs to see him urgently,' she said. But then she promised, 'I'll do what I can to get you in as soon as possible.'

"When my turn finally came, I began a series of lengthy tests. The doctor first applied eye drops to enlarge my pupils. After ten minutes, I went into the examining room. The doctor shined a powerful and concentrated light into my eyes as he tried to find the source of the problem.

"The doctor examined me for over an hour, but the test results were inconclusive. I went in for a more comprehensive battery of tests, but the results of these tests also showed nothing specific.

"I left the hospital dejected and disappointed. The situation was completely uncertain, and I didn't know what to do. How could I just leave all my business affairs up in the air so suddenly? And what would I do if the doctors couldn't find an answer?

"I decided to return to Eretz Yisroel the following evening, and after ordering the ticket, I went over to the Chabad House.

"The local shliach, Rabbi Shmuel Sharf, saw my crestfallen appearance and asked to know what had happened.

"I broke into sobs and told him the whole story. Rabbi Sharf immediately calmed me down and said, 'It's forbidden for a Jew to be sad, even for a moment. We'll write a letter to the Rebbe, and with G-d's help, everything will work out.'

"I sat down with Rebbetzin Sharf to write to the Rebbe. Brokenhearted and deeply distressed, I wrote about the tremendous sorrow that had befallen me, and asked for a bracha for a speedy and complete recovery. I placed the letter in a volume of *Igros Kodesh* and proclaimed 'Yechi' three times.

"In the Rebbe's answer, he explained the great quality of the Mincha prayer. The Rebbe brought the saying of our Sages, of blessed memory: 'A person should always be careful with the

stop what one is doing and turn one's mind over to Hashem has a unique significance over the other prayers.

"I left the Chabad House after resolving that from that day forward, I would be careful about davening Mincha.

"When I returned to my hotel room, I was already much more relaxed. As I prepared to daven Mincha, I had already begun to feel that I would soon 'see' (in every sense of the word) the fulfillment of the Rebbe's bracha.

"The following morning, I flew back to Eretz HaKodesh. That same day, I went to Tel HaShomer Hospital, where I went in for a routine x-ray, and of course, the results were negative. At the end of the examination, the doctors informed me that they found nothing unusual and



"I broke into sobs and told him the whole story. Rabbi Sharf immediately calmed me down and said, 'It's forbidden for a Jew to be sad, even for a moment. We'll write a letter to the Rebbe, and with G-d's help, everything will work out.'"

Mincha prayer,' as the Gemara explains that in the case of Eliyahu HaNavi with the prophets of Baal, Eliyahu was answered only at the Mincha prayer. Therefore, every Jew should be stringent about davening Mincha.

"At the end of the letter, the Rebbe gave a bracha – 'that you will merit bringing good news.'

Rebbetzin Sharf also proceeded to explain about the importance of the Mincha prayer over all other t'fillos: The time for Shacharis is in the morning, and the time for Maariv is at night. But Mincha is davened in the middle of the day, in the midst of a person's important pursuits. To

all eye functions appeared to be normal. They checked the retina and cornea five times, but they saw no problem whatsoever.

"We'll try the more comprehensive MRI examination,' they said. 'Maybe this will reveal the source of the problem.'

"After waiting for about an hour, the doctors came back with the same disappointing answer. This time, however, they added: 'You apparently strained an inner nerve in your eye, and this is the reason why you have blurry double vision. There isn't much

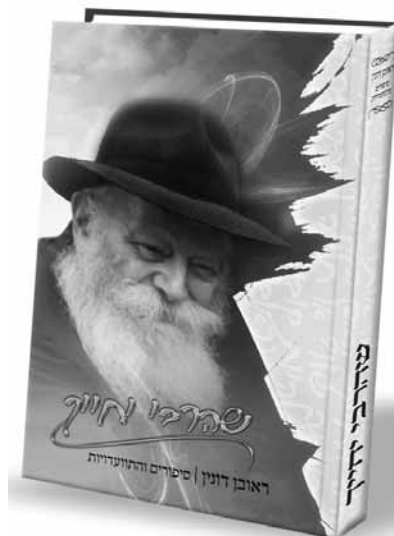
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REUVEN DUNIN ON FARBRENGENS

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



A farbrengen with Reuven was not just another “event.” There were farbrengens that lasted more than eight hours. . .

Reuven loved to farbreng with the T’mimim. He would go to the yeshivos and sit for hours with the bachurim. In his years of better health, he would drink a sizable quantity of mashke, and his sensitivity to alcohol was quickly apparent. When the doctors forbade him to drink alcohol, he continued to farbreng as usual, and he saw the Divine Providence in this. He felt that this was the time to raise the standard on Ahavas Yisroel, say what needed to be said, but without hiding behind the mashke.

DANCING AS A FARBRENGEN INTERMISSION

During a lengthy farbrengen at a yeshiva, the participants sang a niggun and then broke out into a lively and spirited dance. At the end of the dance, long after midnight, Reuven said, “In the days of the mashpia R’ Shlomo Chaim, *Nishmaso Eden*, when they started dancing, it usually

marked the end of the farbrengen. In our times, however, this is not absolutely necessary, and we can and should sit down and keep farbrenging even after the dancing.”

(Chanoch HaLevi Shachar)

SEDER IS SEDER (1)

Once at a farbrengen with the T’mimim, they asked Reuven to stay until after one in the morning. Reuven requested a written commitment that all the T’mimim would come on time for Chassidus Seder the following morning. He would continue to farbreng only after receiving a list of names. After a few minutes, he received a list of all those bachurim who were prepared to accept Reuven’s condition. Reuven later sent the list to the Rebbe, adding his own name at the bottom. Then, after the list had been prepared, Reuven told the following story. “When I was a bachur in 770, I saw the workers coming at night to replace the plastic linoleum floor downstairs. They said that they were pressed for time, because the Rebbe’s secretaries insisted that they finish everything by

the morning. I immediately volunteered my services and worked all night long, until we successfully completed the job. I went to wash my hands and say brachos, and then I got ready to go to my room and rest. As I was leaving 770, the Rebbe saw me and asked where I was going. I started to explain to the Rebbe that I had been working all night, and I was going to rest for a while. ‘What you do at night is *your* problem,’ the Rebbe replied. ‘The Yeshiva Seder is about to start, and a Tamim has to be on time and keep the yeshiva schedule.’ Thus, I learned from this that it doesn’t matter what you do at night. Even if you’re doing the most important thing in the world, even if you are working to save humanity – in the morning, seder is seder in every sense of the word.”

(Chanoch HaLevi Shachar)

SEDER IS SEDER (2)

On Shavuos 5744, after farbrenging the whole night until five o’clock in the morning, we decided to take a break. (“A Jew doesn’t go to sleep,” Reuven would say. “He has enough time

after one hundred and twenty years to sleep. In the meantime, you take a break.”) I was afraid that if I went to sleep right then, I wouldn’t be able to get up in time to daven Shacharis. So I went to my room and got organized, and a short while later, I headed for 770. When I arrived at the small zal, I saw Reuven standing in the corner with tears in his eyes and a Tikkun Leil Shavuot in his hand. When I went up to him and asked what he was doing, he said that one is supposed to say Tikkun. “But we were farbrenging last night,” I told him. “We weren’t fooling around, and we also saw good results.” “That may be so,” Reuven replied, “but Seder is Seder.”

(Chanoch HaLevi Shachar)

I HAVE ONE CHASSID

Reuven made the following remark during a farbrengen in Yerushalayim. “There was once a farbrengen with the Rebbe that lasted until very late in the evening, yet the Rebbe asked that everyone appear in Chassidus Seder the next day. The following morning, when the Rebbe arrived, he found only one bachur who had come to Seder. The bachur had placed his knee up, and every time his head dropped down, it banged into his knee and woke him up. This enabled him to remain alert for the morning Seder. ‘I have one chassid,’ the Rebbe said (in reference to that bachur – Reuven).”

(Rabbi Lior Rosenbaum)

ALL TOGETHER NOW

“One thing that really annoys me (regrettably to this very day) is when I see people sitting at a shiur or a farbrengen...and the door opens. I have to tell you – and may G-d forgive me – what I want to do when I suddenly



As I was leaving 770, the Rebbe saw me and asked where I was going. I started to explain to the Rebbe that I had been working all night, and I was going to rest for a while. ‘What you do at night is your problem,’ the Rebbe replied.

see a sizable percentage of the participants turning their head (and their concentration) to see who came. In other words, they’re just waiting for someone to wake them up and arouse their interest. There are those [bachurim in the yeshiva] who have a public telephone outside – and [as soon as] there’s a ring, even before the first ring ends, they’ve already zipped away from the table. Why is the phone so interesting now? You came to learn. You’re sitting at a farbrengen. Forget the world. Why are you making yourself crazy? What’s going on here? There are even those r”l who talk in the middle of singing a niggun. Getting up in the middle of a farbrengen? How is this possible? Such a bachur just doesn’t realize that within matters of holiness, there’s an aspect of inclusiveness, togetherness. When you learn Torah, everyone learns. When you sing, everyone sings. When you farbreng, everyone farbrengs. Why do you have to be different from everyone else?”

(Audio transcript – courtesy of ‘Kol Mevasser’ Institute)

THE T’MIMIM ABOVE ALL ELSE

On a Chai Elul during the eighties, Reuven was invited to farbreng in one of the main Anash communities. On the afternoon of the long awaited day, the yeshiva in Tzfas called and asked Reuven to come and farbreng with them. With little hesitation, Reuven accepted

the invitation. As we were traveling to the farbrengen, I and my traveling companions suddenly realized that the point of destination had been changed. I asked Reuven where we were going, and Reuven replied as if in a dream, “To Tzfas.”

In my “infinite wisdom,” I said, “But we were invited somewhere else.”

“That’s true,” Reuven replied, “but the T’mimim asked that I should come and farbreng with them.”

When I asked about his previous commitment, he said, “Quite right, but the T’mimim asked, and they come first. You have no idea how happy I am to have this privilege of farbrenging with the T’mimim. It’s hard for me to explain this to you, but there’s nothing or anyone in the world that could convince me to go elsewhere.”

Yet for my part, I continued to pepper him with questions. “And what will we say to the first group of people who invited you?” I asked.

“In the end, they’ll be sorry that they missed out on a great show with the ape from Haifa,” Reuven replied. “But here, you’re dealing with something else entirely – the T’mimim, the Rebbe’s holy flock. They are much more critical (towards themselves), and I can farbreng with them and have a chance to do t’shuva. What possible reason could there be to pass that up?”

(Chanoch HaLevi Shachar)



SIMCHAS TORAH

LUBAVITCH STYLE

By Shneur Zalman Levin

FIERY HAKAFOS

Perhaps it can be said that the apex of the year for the Rebbeim was the two days of Shmini

Atzeres and Simchas Torah. We see this in the teachings of the Rebbeim about these days and in their conduct on these days.

The emphasis on this day/s is on dancing which expresses the “drawing down” of the greatest lights to the lowest place, specifically into the feet of a Jew;

through dancing. Even the torn shoes of Jews left behind in the beis midrash after the dancing on Simchas Torah are a highly sought after commodity, for the angels come and collect them and make a crown!

The dancing, oh the dancing, has always been the point of it all. Dancing, capering about, one foot here and one foot there, lifting one's foot slightly off the ground while lifting the soul to soaring heights above this material mundane world.

The Baal Shem Tov would say, "Yisroel, holy nation! What are you rejoicing about so much? In our holy Torah. Have you ever seen the gentiles, l'havdil, rejoicing and dancing with their religious books? When do the gentiles dance? When they are drunk. Where are their places of entertainment and rejoicing? In bars and other places where people sit around and waste time. And what do they do as they rejoice? They roll about in the muck and kill one another. While we, the Jewish people, where are we on our great day of rejoicing? In the beis midrash! Why do we dance, sing, jump about and exult? In honor of the holy Torah! When do we rejoice together and become as one man with one heart? On Simchas Torah!

"So I say to you, Yisroel, holy nation, this day is a day of three-fold joy! It is a day of rejoicing for the Torah, the Jewish people, and Hashem. We have nothing but this holy fire, the fire of our holy Torah. There is no joy for the Jewish people except in Torah, and no joy for the Torah except in the Jewish people. This day on which the Jewish people rejoice is called Simchas Torah because this is the joy of the holy Torah, the joy of the Jewish people for the sake of heaven."

THE ALTER REBBE ONE HUNDRED EXPLANATIONS ON "ATA HOREISA"

By the Alter Rebbe, Simchas Torah was a "big deal" as he received it from his teacher, the Maggid of Mezritch and then from his teacher and colleague, R' Menachem Mendel of Vitebsk. The tzaddik from Vitebsk once refused to say the verses of "Ata Horeisa" before the hakafos, saying: Today, I will not say Ata Horeisa. Today 100 explanations in Ata Horeisa were revealed to me and I have not yet achieved them in avoda, and so, how can I say these verses?

His followers were forced to bring him to a "din Torah" before the Alter Rebbe who explained to him that although he had merited this great revelation of 100 explanations, even if he would achieve them with his avoda, he would then attain even greater spiritual levels and so on.

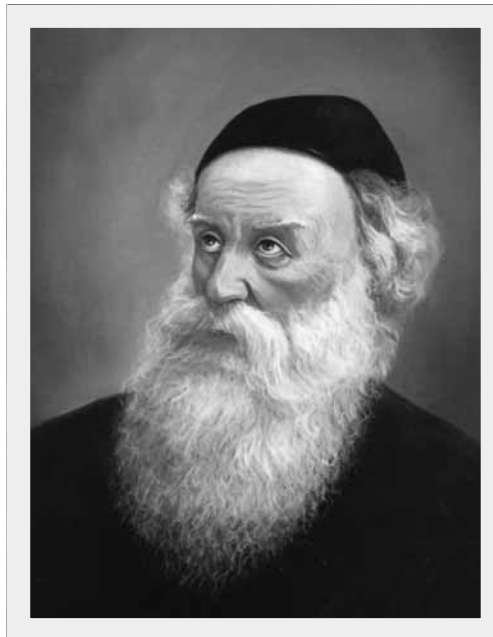
When the Alter Rebbe led his flock, the dancing on Simchas Torah was a very lofty matter. In one of his discourses he said that the Crown of Malchus is drawn down on Rosh HaShana; the Crown of Kehuna on Yom Kippur; and the Crown of Torah on Simchas Torah. When his sons asked him why he did not mention anything about the Crown of a Good Name, he said, "The Crown of a Good Name is drawn down by the dancing on Simchas Torah."

By the Alter Rebbe there were two sets of hakafos. The first were held in the Alter Rebbe's room with a small group of Chassidim, which were called "yechidus hakafos." Then the Alter Rebbe would join the rest of the Chassidim in the beis midrash for their hakafos.

The dancing was not merely a source of spiritual elevation

for the Chassidim, but was also a source of open miracles. The hakafos were a time when the gates of heaven were open, an auspicious time for making requests and experiencing giluyim.

As the Alter Rebbe danced with the talmidim of the chadarim (students of the classes set up for the study of the then new discipline of Chabad Chassidus), the rest of the people stood around and watched, clapping and joining in the singing. Nobody dared to attempt to join



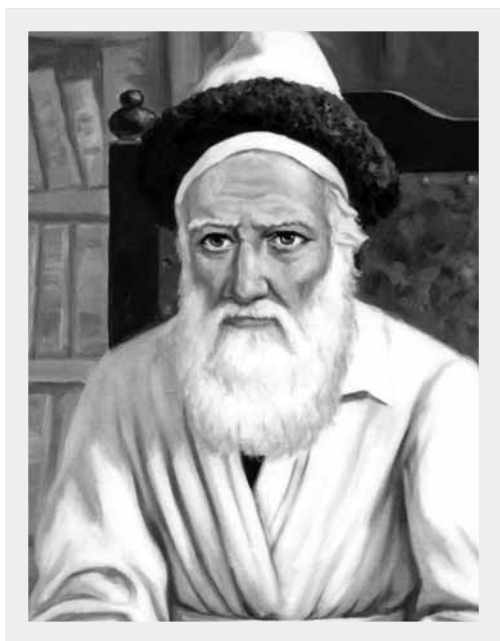
the dancing.

One year, the Alter Rebbe unexpectedly left the circle and drew in a simple person. The crowd was taken aback and the man himself did not know why he merited to be included. It was apparent that the man was experiencing something otherworldly in the dancing. Afterward, one of the Chassidim said, "We all saw that he was growing weaker and could not continue. Then, a moment before he collapsed, the Rebbe laid his hand on his shoulder and said,

‘Dance, dance, ask, ask.’

“This wasn’t only puzzling to us, it was puzzling to him too, for he did not know what the Rebbe wanted. In any case, he continued to dance until he really could not go on, and then the Rebbe himself carried him to a chair.”

This scene was considered exceedingly strange by the residents of Liozna and they all waited to see what would occur next. A few weeks passed and then someone came to the Alter Rebbe and told him that the man had become dangerously ill and



he wanted a bracha. The Rebbe’s response was, “He already asked.”

The greatest miracle of all though, happened in 5547/1786; the story is well known. It was bitter cold that year and many of the people who came to the Rebbe for Sukkos and Simchas Torah had caught colds and worse. The inns were full of sick people with high temperature.

When the Chassid R’ Pinchas Reizes saw what was going on, he asked the Alter Rebbe on the morning of Shmini Atzeres, to bless the many Chassidim. The Rebbe leaned his head on his arms as he was wont to do in a state of d’veikus, and then said, “The Torah is described as ‘eish das lamo’ (a fire of faith for them). Today is Simchas Torah and everyone should come to hakafos because ‘fire consumes fire.’ The fire of Simchas Torah will consume and eradicate the fire of their illness.”

R’ Pinchas repeated what the Rebbe had told him to all those present outside the beis midrash. Later on, many of the sick people got up and made their way to the Rebbe’s beis midrash for the hakafos. The Rebbe’s message about attending hakafos in order to be warmed by the fire of Torah had been heard by everyone and whoever could go, did so.

Small groups of men brought those patients who were unable to walk on their own. They carried them to the beis midrash. The Alter Rebbe recited Kiddush and then told three Chassidim, “I appoint you as shluchim for healing. Mix this wine in all the bottles and give it to the sick people to drink for a refua shleima.”

All the sick people who received the Rebbe’s wine recovered by the next day in a miraculous manner. This engendered tremendous excitement and inspiration and made a Kiddush Hashem.

THE TZEMACH TZEDEK

We have no information about the Mittler Rebbe’s Simchas Torah. The only thing we know is that the Rebbe Rayatz said that during hakafos the Mittler Rebbe was unable to walk

alone with a Torah scroll. He would take a few steps and then someone walking behind him had to hold on to the Torah. “It wasn’t due to his weakness, but because of his state of d’veikus.”

We know a lot about the Tzemach Tzedek’s hakafos. By the tender age of four, he was already intensely caught up in the hakafos. It is told that at the height of the hakafos on Simchas Torah 5554/1793, R’ Pinchas Reizes took the little four year old Menachem Mendel in his arms and danced with him. The Alter Rebbe saw this and commented, “Put him down. He can dance on his own. Within his soul, the knowledge of Torah shines forth in a revealed manner.”

If that is how it was in his childhood, it only intensified as he grew up. Chassidim could not forget the Simchas Torah of 5576/1815 for years afterward. They say that during the hakafos, the then young man danced for hours and even his most athletic contemporaries could not keep up with him. They dropped out while he continued to dance and he announced, “Dance Yidden, dance, rejoice with the simcha of the Torah; in its merit you will have life, children and ample parnasa.”

When his wife, Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka, saw this, she went to her father, the Mittler Rebbe and complained that he was tiring out the Chassidim with his dancing. “You should see for yourself how he is completely divested of his physicality,” she said to her father.

Her father replied, “The light of Simchas Torah is illuminated in him now, as it was illuminated in the Beis HaMikdash. Through his rejoicing on Simchas Torah, he merits a revelation of the essence of his soul as it is in

Atzilus and beyond; the Torah itself is elevated within the Divine Essence through his rejoicing on Simchas Torah.”

Every year, on Motzaei Simchas Torah after Maariv, the Tzemach Tzedek would change his coat since the coat he wore on Yom Tov was torn and soaked with perspiration. When he would go to his room to change his garment, there were Chassidim of the Mittlerer Rebbe who would take pieces of the torn garment as a segula for success in Torah and avodas Hashem.

THE REBBE MAHARASH

During the nesius of the Rebbe Maharash, they had a nice custom in Lubavitch on Simchas Torah. After the hakafos, the Chassidim would come from all the shuls in Lubavitch to the Rebbe Maharash's beis midrash and would continue dancing for hours.

One year, the people from one of the big shuls joined the Rebbe's hakafos, led by their gabbai. The Rebbe was up to saying the verses of Ata Horeisa. The Chassidim entered the beis midrash with shouts of joy and immediately joined the merrymaking. The gabbai of the Rebbe's beis midrash honored the guest gabbai with the recitation of a verse, but they said that the gabbai had to come up to the amud and say his pasuk from there.

The gabbai pushed his way to the front and approached the amud which was next to the Rebbe. Before he said the verse, the Rebbe jovially asked him to explain it.

The gabbai, who was tipsy, said, “I'm willing to explain it but first I need to say l'chaim.”

“He is right,” said the Rebbe

and indicated that they should bring him mashke.

After they poured him l'chaim, they urged him to begin explaining the verse. The gabbai said, “Give me a bit more mashke,” and they did.

Then he said to the Rebbe Maharash, “Rebbe, I don't know whether I can explain it well. Let the Rebbe explain the verse.”

The Rebbe agreed and immediately read the verse and explained it thus, “Let our sayings be – what should our sayings be? – only that which is desirable before the Master of all things.”

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The Rebbe Maharash's Simchas Torah dancing was also capable of bringing about miracles. His son, the Rebbe Rashab, said, “His Simchas Torah ... his Yud-Tes Kislev ... those who saw the Primordial Light are myself, R' Manish, Gronem, and maybe Moshe too,” referring to the Rebbe's chozer who was very mekushar to him.

The story is told about one day of Sukkos when someone asked the Rebbe Maharash for a bracha for his very sick son. The Rebbe Maharash did not take the *pidyon nefesh* from the table and the Chassid understood that it was a decree that would not be rescinded. He sadly sat down in the beis midrash and cried.

He spent a very miserable Sukkos with the Rebbe. He tried to control himself because it was, after all, Z'man Simchaseinu (the time of our rejoicing), but it was difficult for him.

On Simchas Torah, he went to the Rebbe's beis midrash where everybody was rejoicing. The simcha rose to greater heights when the Rebbe walked in. He stood and took in the niggunim

and the festive davening with the entire crowd singing and dancing, which grew even more intense with the beginning of the hakafos.

The Chassid looked at the dancing Chassidim. There was elderly R' Isaac who could barely walk on a weekday, who seemed to have been rejuvenated since he was dancing intensely while holding a Torah scroll.

The waves of simcha kept breaking against the wall of sadness surrounding the Chassid. It made some cracks and then slowly seeped in. There was Chaim the beggar dancing. His clothes were ragged and his children did not have bread to eat; he was dancing with all his might. His face looked different; it shone.

It didn't take long before the Chassid felt himself swept up in the rejoicing. He remembered what he had heard from the Rebbe the day before, about the great day of Simchas Torah, a day of simcha in this world and the upper worlds. “All the worlds rejoice on Simchas Torah. The entire Order of hishtalshlus rejoices and dances on Simchas Torah.”

Within minutes, he was in the center of the circles of dancers, having forgotten his tzaros and his child lying on his deathbed.

The next morning, when he went to take leave of the Rebbe, he did not mention his son's illness for he had accepted the decree from above. However, this time, unlike the previous time, the Rebbe smiled at him and blessed him. The Chassid was about to leave the room when the Rebbe said, “On Chol HaMoed, when you came here and asked for a bracha for your son, I saw no chance that he would live. A decree had been passed in heaven

and I saw no way of annulling it. However, now, after Simchas Torah, when you forgot your tzaros and you rejoiced with the Torah, the decree was rescinded and your son will live.”

THE REBBE RASHAB

Every year, the night of Shmini Atzeres, after saying a maamer Chassidus and davening Maariv, the Rebbe Rashab went home to make Kiddush. Likewise, everyone else went home for Kiddush. Then they all returned to shul for the hakafos.

When the Rebbe returned



to shul, they began saying the p'sukim and the gabbaim announced the names of those who had bought them. These men honored the Rebbe with the recitation of the p'sukim. Sometimes, the Rebbe would make some brief remarks as he did one year, when they announced that all the Chassidim who lived in Moscow had jointly purchased the verse, “Rise up...” The Rebbe said that Moscow

needed to “rise up...”

The Rebbe was honored with the first and seventh hakafa. How magnificent it was to see the Rebbe and his son (later to be the Rebbe Rayatz), both wearing shtraimlach, each of them holding a Torah in his left hand and the other's shoulder with their right hands. The dance lasted a long time and the crowd stood around singing joyously.

After the Rebbe returned to his place, all the Chassidim danced. The Rebbe's son danced with the yeshiva bachurim.

Each year, on the night of Simchas Torah, the Rebbe would go to shul to daven Maariv. Before the davening, he would sit at his place on the eastern wall while facing the crowd.

At the end of the davening he would go to his mother's house to wish her a “good Yom Tov.” Before leaving the shul, the talmidim of the yeshiva stood in two rows and the Rebbe walked between them from the shul until his mother's house. They all held lit candles and lamps and they sang Napoleon's March in a very joyous manner.

The same routine was repeated when he left his mother's house for his own home, where he led a farbrengen for a select few.

How magnificent it was to see the Rebbe as he walked to his mother's home, surrounded by torches of fire as the singing of the crowd reverberated.

It once happened that the farbrengen lasted all night, and they had not yet eaten a proper Yom Tov meal. The Rebbe said to close the shutters (i.e. so as not to let in the daylight) and he laughingly remarked, “On my mother's side I descend from Misnagdim,” and he said that meat should be served and they

should fulfill the mitzva of eating meat on Yom Tov.

Only then, did the farbrengen end and they all dispersed to their homes to rest a bit before Shacharis.

On Simchas Torah, the Rebbe Rashab would be Chassan B'Reishis. After Mincha, they would bring the food from his house to the big hall of the yeshiva. The Rebbe and his son, and all who ate with them, ate in yeshiva.

One year, the Rebbe spoke at the meal about how when Moshiach comes, he will come to Lubavitch. One of the Chassidim asked, “But it says, ‘His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives?’”

The Rebbe smiled and said, “The Chassidic explanation of Mount of Olives is that olive oil symbolizes p'nimius ha'Torah. Chassidus is studied here, in Lubavitch. If in Eretz Yisroel Chassidus will become accepted, then he will go there.”

The farbrengen, which began during the day, continued until late at night. That is the way it was every year on Simchas Torah in Lubavitch.

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Simchas Torah 5659/1898 went down in the history of Lubavitch as the day yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim was named.

It was towards the end of the hakafos on the night of Simchas Torah. It was almost dawn when the Rebbe stopped the hakafos and began explaining the idea of seven circuits. When he finished, he loudly said, “With Hashem's help, I founded a yeshiva where they will learn Nigleh and Chassidus. In other words, they will know that in Nigleh there is p'nimius ha'Torah and they will understand the Chassidus like they understand an inyan in

Nigleh.”

The Chassidim burst into a Chassidic niggun and when the niggun ended he said, “Now is Simchas Torah. I pray to the Giver of the Torah that He help the talmidim of the yeshiva, and I plead before Him.”

At this point, the Rebbe continued what he had been saying with the hakafos niggun, “*Kadosh v’nora hoshia na, rachum v’chanun hatzlicha na, shomer ha’bris aneinu b’yom koreinu.*” The Rebbe stopped walking around the bima and said they should sing a niggun again. When they finished singing, he continued, “*Tomeich t’mimim, hoshia na, takif lo’ad hatzlicha na, tamim b’maasav aneinu b’yom koreinu.*”

When he finished reciting all the p’sukim, the Rebbe was tremendously joyful and he sang and danced for a long time. Even after he returned to his place, he said they should sing, dance and rejoice.

Simchas Torah of that year was considered a historic Simchas Torah in the annals of Chabad, for it is then that the army of Tomchei T’mimim began to officially march under an official banner.

There were also wondrous giluyim on Simchas Torah 5670/1909, when the Rebbe Rashab drank plenty of mashke and spoke a lot about his father, the Rebbe Maharash, with copious tears.

Simchas Torah during the years 5677-5678 are also remembered and stand out in the history of Lubavitch. It was in the midst of World War I and nevertheless, the Rebbe Rashab farbrenged with the Chassidim despite the difficult circumstances.

In conclusion, there was a

year when hakafos were not made by the Rebbe Rashab. After some time, the Rebbe said a deep inyan in Chassidus to his son. When he finished he said, “I would forgo all this depth for the stamping of one foot during the hakafos on Simchas Torah.”

THE REBBE RAYATZ

Simchas Torah by the Rebbe Rayatz was different from one time to the next with the Rebbe frequently moving from Russia, to Riga, to Poland, and then to the United States. In each location the holiday took on a slightly different character.

We know about the Rebbe Rayatz’s Simchas Torah before he married, in his father’s lifetime, from his writings. The following, which was written by the Chassid, R’ Refael (Folye) Kahn, adds another dimension:

“After the Rebbe returned to his place, all the Chassidim would dance for a long time. The Rebbe’s son, Rayatz, continued to dance with the bachurim from the yeshiva.

“It once happened that in the middle of dancing I felt someone tap me on the back. I turned around and saw that it was the Rebbe’s son! His eyes were closed and he was speaking, as though to himself, ‘It’s one thing, the avoda of Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur, nu, but the avoda of Simchas Torah is to dance, to bang with your feet, to be more happy, more happy!’”

The first Simchas Torah of the Rebbe Rayatz’s nesius was in the year 5681/1920. “Simchas Torah of the year 5681 was special and is remembered as something exceptional,” said the Chassid, R’ Nachum Gorolnik.

After hakafos and Musaf, they davened Mincha and then sat

down to a farbrengen that took place in the large hall, the very place where the Rebbe Rashab had passed away. It seemed as though this farbrengen was dedicated to the Rebbe’s longing for his father.

Simchas Torah 5690/1929, the year that the Rebbe traveled abroad to drum up support for Russian Jewry and his yeshivos, as well as to inspire American Jews, was celebrated in the United States. The Rebbe Rayatz describes the hakafos in a letter to his Rebbetzin:



“... We went to the first and the seventh hakafa in the usual way. The crowd sang very powerfully and chose very good niggunim, with such enthusiasm that the street was uplifted. In fact, much later there was a huge crowd gathered outside on the street. They say there were children whose parents had brought them. The older ones listened and watched and they picked up the little children. Passersby on foot and in cars stopped to see what was going on.

“After our first hakafa, they gave the Sifrei Torah to others and everybody in the room, about 300 people, danced, and likewise in the second and third room. There was genuine holy fervor and the hakafos lasted until 2:30.

“I left the room and the *oilimische* crowd left and about 300 people remained for the seuda. They brought about 200 challa rolls and set them up on the table. At 3:30, I went out to join the meal. The people were singing and dancing, each one in his place. I spoke three times for about ten minutes and the crowd enjoyed it very much, and they all got chayus from it and warmed up. Only I know my own situation, and in the middle I became immersed in thought and the crowd divided into three groups. One group remained in the room, another group left for the other room, and a third group danced with great joy and as they tired they were replaced by others. The meal ended at 6:30. This was the first time that something like this happened in America.”

On Simchas Torah 5691/1930, the Rebbe Rayatz was in Riga and as he did every year, before the hakafos he held a farbrengen which was well attended by Chassidim and other dignitaries who lived in Riga, as well as ordinary people.

Among the people present, a young group of students stood out. They came, they said, to see how Simchas Torah is celebrated in Lubavitch. It was a special farbrengen with many giluyim. Among other things, the Rebbe spoke about the coming of Moshiach and even said that there was a *ketz* for that year, 5691.

The Chassid, R' Tzvi Hirsch Fuchs said that in later years in

Poland, the Rebbe Rayatz would dance hakafos with his three sons-in-law for a few circuits during the first hakafa, and then he would sit down (or stand) near the shtender while his sons-in-law continued to dance. In a nearby room the talmidim of the yeshiva stood and watched.

That was Simchas Torah in Russia, in Riga and in Otvotsk, while in the United States it was somewhat different. The Rebbe Rayatz had problems with his feet and could not dance but he would preside over the simcha.

In an issue of *HaK'ria V'HaK'dusha* a fascinating description (in Yiddish) is given about the first Tishrei in 770 after the Rebbe Rayatz arrived in the United States and settled in 770.

In those days, the combination of the authentic Chassidic atmosphere which was sourced in distant Lubavitch, and Crown Heights, which was a modern American neighborhood, was considered an enormous novelty. The local people, who saw authentic Lubavitcher simcha for the first time, were amazed by it.

Simchas Torah of 5701/1940 was the first Simchas Torah in this location. Ever since, these walls have witnessed many decades of uplifting simcha.

The fact that Simchas Torah and the hakafos are auspicious times for yeshuos is obvious from the following line said by the Rebbe Rayatz. It was at a Simchas Torah farbrengen in 5709/1948 when the Rebbe said to R' Kazarnovsky, “If they take some mashke now, it will save them from having to take medication throughout the year.”

When Ramash (later to be the Rebbe) heard this, he took cups full of mashke. At the end of the farbrengen, Ramash filled his

cup again but the Rebbe Rayatz suddenly put his hand on his. However, Ramash did not want to forgo drinking and he started to bend towards the cup. The Rebbe Rayatz smiled broadly and R' Berel Chaskind came over and drank the cup.

THE REBBE MH”M

We have a tradition from the Rebbeim that there are “Chassidic Ushpizin” who correspond to the classic Ushpizin. On the first day of Sukkos – the Baal Shem Tov; the second day – the Mezritcher Maggid; the third day – the Alter Rebbe, and so on. Accordingly, Shmini Atzeres is the celebration of the Rebbe Rayatz (which the Rebbe explains at length) and Simchas Torah is the Rebbe’s holiday, the ninth in the chain of nesius.

On the first Sukkos after he married, in Tishrei 5690/1929, the Rebbe was in Riga and he farbrenged with Anash at the Simchas Beis HaShoeiva and then on Shmini Atzeres and Simchas Torah. R' Eliyahu Chaim Altheus tells about that special farbrengen in a letter that he wrote to the Rebbe Rayatz:

“The night of Shmini Atzeres there was Kiddush in the Rebbe’s sukkah with all of Anash, until late at night, with everything conducted in an orderly fashion under my supervision. R’ Menachem Mendel (later the Rebbe MH”M) drank a lot with great humility and without standing out in any way, and he spoke a lot, several hours without stop, words of Chassidus spiced with Midrash and Kabbala with gematria, like his father (R’ Levi Yitzchok). It was sweet to my ears to hear it and all those present were tremendously impressed.

“The next day, word spread of what he had spoken about

and his tremendous abilities, and as is the way of the world, with exaggeration, albeit for the good, as in this way all difficulties and barriers were removed and each one said, 'The Rebbe took a suitable son-in-law for himself.' Even the visitors all had to concede against their will.

"As a result, the next day many people gathered and before the hakafos there was a Kiddush by Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah in R' Yechezkel Feigin's room, also in a very orderly way. R' Menachem Mendel sat at the head and spoke for four hours straight!

"I seated each one in his place, rabbanim on one side, wealthy householders on the other side, and gave each person a fitting place. The Volshanik brothers, the Cheifetz brothers, Wexler – Wexler is the father of the younger Wexler – greatly taciturn like his son, as well as a great critic and he considers himself a big intellectual. He came for the first time to hear for himself what he was told in the Berliner minyan about the greatness of the Rebbe's son-in-law. He remained with all the Chassidim until 2 at night. He left in great amazement and he told me, 'I never saw or heard anything like this before.' I heard similar remarks from all in attendance.

"The hakafos consisted of much dancing and a lot of simcha, niggunim that made the heart rejoice. The next day, on Simchas Torah, we all came together, about 100 of us, at eleven o'clock, and we left at three in the morning.

"...Throughout the eight hours of farbrenging, R' Menachem Mendel did not move from his place and the entire time he spoke warmly, arousing people to t'shuvah and avoda. Each time he mentioned the Rebbe, it was with

tremendous respect, 'I heard from the Rebbe'n, he should be well,' 'The Rebbe should be well.' How good and how pleasant it was for me to hear all this, fortunate are we that we merited this."

• • •

Throughout the years, even before the nesius, Simchas Torah was a day of revelation by the Rebbe. He would lift up all those around him many inches off the floor. You could see the tremendous simcha on the Rebbe even in the years before

he became Rebbe, as R' Leibel Groner relates:

"Before the nesius, the Rebbe would dance Simchas Torah night from ten o'clock until seven in the morning. This was astounding as nobody else could dance that long. Those who danced rested now and then, but the Rebbe continued dancing with tremendous fervor without a break.

One year, someone came down from the Rebbe Rayatz's house and said that the dancing



was disturbing them upstairs. Someone went over to the Rebbe and whispered this in his ear. The Rebbe took off his shoes and continued dancing all night as he sang in a whisper, “Sha, sha, sha.”

R’ Zalman Posner remembers something similar:

“One year, the Rebbe danced all night on Simchas Torah, joined by another three or four Chassidim. Throughout the dancing they sang the niggun, ‘Ai, ai, ai ... Mareh Cohen.’ Each of the men dancing rested now and then, but the Rebbe danced nonstop all night.”

When the Rebbe was still in Europe, there was one year that he could not be with his father-in-law, the Rebbe, and he stayed in Paris for Simchas Torah. That Simchas Torah is remembered by those who lived in the Pletzl section of Paris. They flocked to the shul at number 25 where the Rebbe did hakafos nearly all day.

Some of the participants said that they particularly remembered a dance which lasted for three hours in a row to the niggun of “Al HaSela Hach.” The Rebbe sang this song while getting everyone to dance along until their strength gave out. While the people dancing dropped in and dropped out, the Rebbe danced the entire time.

• • •

It is hard to describe hakafos

by the Rebbe MH”M. As soon as he walked into the beis midrash, he would get things going as he urged the crowds on with a wave of his hands, clapping and dancing, to increase the simcha. The crowd responded with tremendous enthusiasm. The Rebbe went to his place on the bima and from there, continued to lead the singing. A “choir” of thousands raised the sound level to ever higher decibels as the Rebbe stepped up the pace. The packed crowd stood in place and jumped-danced as best as they could.

The high points of the hakafos were the first and seventh ones, when the Rebbe was honored with the Torah scroll. Most years, the Rebbe danced with his brother-in-law, Rashag, with the Rebbe placing his hand on Rashag’s shoulder and the Torah held in his other hand.

In 5748 and from 5750 on, the Rebbe danced alone in the center on a raised platform, holding the Torah with both hands, and looking majestic. The Rebbe danced with the Torah as he turned slowly towards the thousands of Chassidim packed together. His face shone with great excitement and intensity, and he would raise and lower the Torah as he turned. He would scan the entire crowd, raising everyone high above the ground.

Chassidim knew that it was an

auspicious time and many people made requests of the Rebbe as he walked from the Aron Kodesh to the hakafa platform, mentioning names for a yeshua.

They say that in 5712/1951, the Rebbe told one of the people present to say the pasuk, “L’oseh niflaos gedolos” and asked him whether he believed that he would have the yeshua he needed that very night. The man burst into tears. The Rebbe told him to say the pasuk again, more forcefully, and asked him again, “Do you believe that there will be great wonders tonight?”

The Rebbe told him to say the pasuk several more times until he finally said, as though to himself, “Fine, he believes already.”

• • •

Much more can be said about Shmini Atzeres and Simchas Torah with the Rebbe, about the farbrengens, the Rebbe teaching new niggunim as he did for about a decade, about Tahalucha to shuls to bring joy to other Jews, and about the years when special things occurred. But we will have to stop here.

We must end with what the Rebbe Rashab said, “The 48 hours of Shmini Atzeres and Simchas Torah must be dearly cherished, for at each moment one can draw buckets-full and barrels-full of treasures both material and spiritual, and this is accomplished by dancing.”

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THE REBBEIM'S PREPARATION OF THE WORLD FOR MOSHIACH: THE TZEMACH TZEDEK

Part IV

By Rabbi Gershon Avtzon, Dear Reader sh'yichyeh:

This week we are going to learn about the third Rebbe of Chabad, Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch, the Tzemach Tzedek.

HIS LIFE

The Tzemach Tzedek was born to his parents Rabbi Shalom Shachne and Rebbetzin Devorah Leah (the daughter of the Alter Rebbe) on Erev Rosh Hashanah 1789. His mother passed away when he was very young. She willingly gave her life so that her father could live and spread Chassidus, and thus he was raised by the Alter Rebbe.

When Rabbi Menachem Mendel was fifteen, Rabbi Shneur Zalman instructed him to work with his uncle Rabbi Moshe in communal affairs. This was in addition to his responsibility to review all inquiries on Torah matters, and after discussion of the law with Rabbi Yehuda Leib of Yanovitch (Rabbi Shneur Zalman's brother and author of She'eris Yehuda), to submit responsa in outline form to Rabbi Shneur Zalman.

After residing briefly in Haditch where Rabbi Shneur Zalman had been interred in 1813, Rabbi Menachem Mendel settled in Lubavitch in the Mogilev province in 1814, together with his father-in-law. He stipulated that no communal

problems intrude on his studies. His assiduity in study was exceptional, and he continued to examine all Torah inquiries received by Rabbi Dovber, the Mittlerer Rebbe who took over the leadership of Chabad Chassidus after the Alter Rebbe. When Rabbi Dovber approved, he would answer the letters. This system lasted about twelve years.

HIS IDENTITY AND MOSHIACH

The Tzemach Tzedek was very involved in drawing the Sh'china into this physical world and preparing the world for Moshiach. As it is known from the Gemara, his name Menachem is connected with Moshiach (Sanhedrin). He is best known as the Tzemach Tzedek, which is the name he gave to his printed Torah responsa. This name is connected to Moshiach as well, for its numerical value is the same as that of his name Menachem Mendel. In an even more

direct connection, Moshiach is also referred to by the names Tzemach (T'fillos Hoshana Rabba) and Tzedek (Yeshaya 11:5 and Yirmiya 23:5).

In Halacha, the number three represents Chazaka (a permanent strength and stability). The Tzemach Tzedek was the third Rebbe of Chabad, and as such he represented the qualities of endurance and strength. This is evident from the following story. The Alter Rebbe once saw the Tzemach Tzedek writing Chassidus and asked to see his writings. However the Tzemach Tzedek did not want to show it to him. So the Alter Rebbe asked the Tzemach Tzedek's wife to bring it to him. After reading it, he immediately called in a few Chassidim and recited the bracha of SheHechiyanu. He then explained, "Now that we have a chazaka of three generations of Chassidus, we know that Chabad Chassidus will continue until the coming of Moshiach!"

The Tzemach Tzedek was

“After reading it, he immediately called in a few Chassidim and recited the bracha of SheHechiyanu. He then explained, “Now that we have a chazaka of three generations of Chassidus, we know that Chabad Chassidus will continue until the coming of Moshiach!”

“Firstly, there were his sons to continue his legacy, and secondly, “If Chassidim will band together, they will prevail until Moshiach comes.”

similar to his grandfather the Alter Rebbe in the fact that he was known and respected as one of the foremost Halachic and Torah figures in his time. This was in addition to the tremendous amount of Chassidus that he taught. “I generally studied eighteen hours daily, including five hours of writing,” he wrote to his son.

In a supplement to Torah Or (N. Y. 1954, p. 285), the Frierdike Rebbe writes:

By the age of ten [Rabbi Menachem Mendel] had a swift and beautiful hand. He could write a page of thirty lines in five or six minutes. Every day he wrote for three hours, and to make up for Shabbos and Holy days, he wrote the following evening. Once his son complained about the excessive stringency with which a certain teacher, R. Gershon, treated him. “Is that stringent?” Rabbi Menachem Mendel exclaimed. “It is nothing compared to the regimen I imposed on myself at the age of nine, regarding hours of study and writing.”

THE POINT OF CHASSIDUS

What was unique about his learning and teaching was his synthesis of the revealed parts of Torah (Nigleh) and Chassidus (Nistar). This shows that the Torah is “Torah Achas” – one Torah – and this is the way the Torah will be learned in the times of Moshiach. By bringing the hidden parts of Torah into the revealed parts of Torah, we receive the power to bring

K’dusha to the physical world. By learning Torah in the way of the Tzemach Tzedek, we prepare ourselves for Moshiach.

Regarding the times of Moshiach, the Torah tells us that “We will know Hashem.” In Chassidus it explains (Tanya Perek 3) that Daas, knowledge, means connection and unification. The Tzemach Tzedek, the third Rebbe, represents Daas (the third s’fira). Hence, his teachings unified all aspects of Torah and gave Chassidim a deep understanding and connection to Chassidus. This is evident from the difference between Torah Ohr that is without his explanatory notes and Likkutei Torah which is much more accessible.

Here are a number of stories that further demonstrate the connection between the Tzemach Tzedek and Moshiach:

A Chassid once asked the Tzemach Tzedek, “What is the purpose of exerting ourselves in the study of Chassidus, which deals with abstractions that no mortal mind can fully grasp? After all, when Moshiach will come, even those who did not study Chassidus will know G-d, as it is written, ‘For they will all know Me.’”

The Tzemach Tzedek replied, “A person listening to a conversation conducted on the other side of a wall does not grasp it all; he only grasps its general drift. But later, when the conversation is repeated to him in all its detail, he understands everything that he had heard previously. Every moment or

two he thinks, ‘Aha! Now I understand all those connections and details!’

“Here, too,” explained the Tzemach Tzedek, “it is true that someone who studies Chassidus grasps only part of the subject. But when Moshiach will teach it in the Time to Come, that man will be able to look back and say, ‘Aha...!’

“And not only that, but someone hearing those teachings for the second time will understand them much more deeply than someone who will then hear them for the first time. As the above-quoted verse says, ‘For they will all know Me, from their smallest to their greatest,’ it is obvious that the understanding of a young child cannot be compared to that of an adult.” (From Exile to Redemption, p. 83, Yirmiyahu 31:33)

On another occasion, the Tzemach Tzedek overheard his Chassidim conversing. One said to the other, “Who knows when Moshiach will come?”

The Tzemach Tzedek responded, “Those are the words of Bilam the wicked, who said ‘I see him, but not now.’ A Jew on the other hand must constantly await the arrival of Moshiach.” (Beis Rebbe Vol. 3 pg. 180)

Over the years, the Rebbe cited on numerous occasions the story told by the Rebbe Rayatz about the Tzemach Tzedek who stood strong against the government position during the famous gathering in Petersburg aimed at making determinations regarding Jewish education. Time and again, he was placed under arrest and threatened with the direst of consequences, and yet he wouldn’t back down in the slightest. His words and actions were seen by some as outright treason against the Czarist

regime, and they felt that his life was in real danger. One of the great leaders of the time who was present at this gathering asked the Tzemach Tzedek how he was allowed to put himself in mortal danger, adding that if he hadn't considered the consequences to himself, he should have at least

thought of the Chassidim and other Jews. The Tzemach Tzedek gave a two-part response. Firstly, there were his sons to continue his legacy, and secondly, "If Chassidim will band together, they will prevail until Moshiach comes."

Rabbi Avtzon is the Rosh

Yeshiva of Yeshivas Lubavitch Cincinnati and is a well sought after speaker and lecturer. Recordings of his in-depth shiurim on Inyanei Geula u'Moshiach can be accessed at <http://ylcrecording.com>.

Continued from page 39

own, had been sent to public school. One year, they brought a group of children to 770 and had a Kinus with them in the sukka. When the children left, the Rebbe moved aside the curtain in his room and watched them until they disappeared from view.

R' Shmuel Zalmanov of Montreal was one of the bachurim in charge of Shaloh. When R' Chadakov told him that the Rebbe wanted to farbreng with the children of Shaloh, he asked whether they could include children who had already transferred to Jewish

schools. Permission was granted and the bachurim began a race against the clock. They had to inform everybody and provide transportation from all the neighborhoods where the children lived.

In the meantime, the Rebbe asked that the event be publicized, and he personally edited the announcement.

The Rebbe walked into the special farbrengen and washed his hands. They sang niggunei simcha and the Rebbe said brief sichos in between with R' J. J. Hecht translating. At the end of the farbrengen, the Rebbe gave out Kos shel Bracha and dimes

to the counselors for them to give to the children. This was the last time the Rebbe farbrenged in the sukka.

Supposedly, the Rebbe said that if there was a sukka big enough for everyone to stand in, he would farbreng once again.

The time has come for heaven to have mercy on us so that this Sukkos, we will merit to sit in the biggest sukka of all about which we will be able to say, "All Yisroel are worthy of sitting in one sukka," the sukka made from the hide of the Leviathan. With Hashem's help, nobody will miss the farbrengen of Simchas Beis HaShoeiva 5772.

Continued from page 41

that can be done under such circumstances. All that is left for you to do is pray and hope for a miracle.'

"The doctors also said that I must come back for a follow-up examination in another two weeks, because sometimes in the case of a strained nerve, it can lead to even greater vision impairment.

"I returned home with the same feeling of encouragement and hope that I would soon merit immediate salvation. Naturally, I continued to daven Mincha each day with the utmost stringency.

"Then...the unbelievable happened. After twelve days of hope and faith, the miracle occurred!

"It was on the day of my scheduled follow-up exam. I woke up that morning and thought that I was dreaming. Something most unusual had taken place. To make sure I wasn't imagining things, I ran downstairs to the street, and lo and behold, I discovered that my sight was totally normal.

"I was so elated that I immediately got into a taxi and emotionally told the driver, all the way to the hospital, about the miracle that had just happened.

"When I arrived at the hospital, I ran straight for the ophthalmologist's office. He called in the entire staff, all of whom at first couldn't believe it. After a brief examination, he informed me that a true miracle had taken place! They were at a complete loss for any possible explanation.

"I told them about the Rebbe's encouraging bracha and my stringent observance in davening the Mincha prayer.

"Indeed, I had been privileged to see the Rebbe's bracha – "that you will merit bringing good news."

EIN OD MILVADO - THERE IS NOTHING ELSE BUT HIM

In honor of the holidays of Sukkos, Shmini Atzeres and Simchas Torah, we present a chapter from R' Dubrawski's memoirs from a later period in his life. * A poignant portrait of Simchas Torah in wartime Samarkand.

By Rabbi Yehoshua Dubrawski a"h

It was the second Tishrei in Samarkand, during the war. What did the few Chassidishe minyanim look like on Rosh HaShana, Yom Kippur, and Sukkos during days of starvation, disease, and casualties? I could only imagine since I did not go to shul. I was still too weak and quite swollen from typhus and starvation. But how could I stay at home for Simchas Torah? So even in my condition, I "packed" my heavy feet into Samarkandian "topkes" (slippers woven out of flax) and dragged myself to the nearest Chassidic minyan by R' Michel F. in his little attic.

As I slowly schlepped along, R' Chaim – a very Chassidishe man and a big scholar, caught up with me. He looked at me for a bit, as though barely recognizing me after not seeing me for months, since I took sick. In the period before that, he was greatly mekarev me. He called me "bachur'l" and even "spoke in learning" with me, along with his only son Itchele.

"Listen here bachurchik," he took my hand in his right

hand, "I see you have swollen feet, and I have night blindness. It's becoming dark and I don't see anything. Come, let's go together."

His hand was small, wizened, and oddly cold and I had a strange, creepy feeling. I knew that R' Chaim had lost his wife and only son in recent months. By holding my hand, the way you hold a child's hand, I felt that he wanted to hug me and adopt me to replace his Itchele. But he began to talk to me about this and that, not as you would to a bar mitzva aged boy. R' Chaim spoke and sobbed and tears dripped from his eyes even when he didn't cry. Since his Itchele and his mother had "gone," he did not stop crying. He had not yet fallen into despair so that he had complaints against G-d, but whenever he opened his mouth to daven, to bentch, to say a bracha, "I begin crying like an old woman."

We walked very slowly and when he cried, we crawled along even slower and he grasped my hand more tightly. He argued, pontificated and held forth about

Chassidic ideas that I did not understand or even hear, but I almost envied him (to the extent that a child can envy a rav and Chassid). If only I could cry like I used to ... In my early childhood, I was an outstanding "crier," but now, if only I could cry a little bit, it would have been a bit easier to speak, to sleep, to live. But from the time they carried out my pure little sister from the dark mud one-room hut [she passed on as a young child, as will be related in later chapters – ed], I felt as though something inside had torn, fallen, or who knows what.

Yet I could not manage to cry; not one tear emerged from my eye, even on the long nights when I heard my mother try to muffle and hide her sobbing. Any connection I had with crying seemed to have frozen, coagulated, turned to stone (years later, I heard that this happened to young people who suffered the Nazi horrors in concentration camps).

R' Chaim did not stop remonstrating with himself: Nu, so he cried constantly like a child, so he was a "weak shmatte," but now, it was almost Simchas Torah! "Do you know how much simcha Chassidus demands on Simchas Torah?"

In tears, R' Chaim recalled his days in Lubavitch where he still had strength to work on himself a bit. And now, Hashem should have mercy! The mind did not rule the heart. Absolutely not!



Would he stand and recite Ata Horeisa and burst into tears like an old woman? Would he go to a hakafa with a Torah scroll and with tears coming forth from his eyes? “Don’t think bachurchik, that I am embarrassed. No. But is this fitting for a Tamim?”

R’ Chaim spoke and I remained silent until he turned to me and said sharply, “Say something! Why are you quiet? You are an intelligent bachurchik, a Chassidishe *beindel* [lit. small bone, i.e. someone who ‘gets the point’ of Chassidus]. Do you have any advice?”

I was intelligent?! That didn’t sit well with me in my mind. Ah, what a peculiar man.

He immediately caught himself. He knew that I had lost three of my closest relatives (my father and two sisters died in Samarkand). He kept quiet for a while. I felt that I had to say something and I mumbled, “I ... I ... I can’t cry.”

R’ Chaim turned and took my two hands in his hands and with wounded eyes he said, practically roared, “So, so, you cannot cry! You can’t do it anymore!”

We somehow climbed the

“There was silence; only R’ Chaim who was standing next to me placed his hand on my heaving shoulder and said, “Nu, bachurchik ... Do what I did. Do it for our Father in heaven, this is what He wants! Come, let us say it together.”

high, crumbling steps that led to the makeshift minyan by R’ Michel in the attic. In the narrow room there was a minyan and a half, which included ten people who said Kaddish. They were getting ready to make Kiddush, the attendant repast prepared by R’ Michel and another Lubavitcher, a rare thing in those days. On the old, five-legged table (I don’t remember why and how but R’ Michel’s table had five legs) was a bottle of “samahonka,” a homemade alcoholic brew with an acrid smell; a few pieces of salted fish; hard cookies – mezonos; and even a large clay bowl with blackberries.

R’ Chaim did not want to make Kiddush himself on “samahonka.” He was too weak for that, but he had to say l’chaim! It was Simchas Torah before hakafos – is that a small thing?

“It’s still not the end of the world,” R’ Chaim whispered in my ear. “We still have our Father in heaven and He wants us to live, although...nu, we must obey and live.”

R’ Chaim said l’chaim time after time, but would not let me drink the mashke. “You bachurchik, say l’chaim and I will drink slowly and you will eat *farbaisien* (food eaten along with mashke), okay?” I didn’t listen to him and I took the occasional generous swig of “samahonka.” Although I thought that since I was very weak I would faint right away from a little mashke, I was very surprised by myself. Either from the mashke or the *farbaisien* (which R’ Chaim kept pushing towards me) or maybe both together, I suddenly felt an internal shift and upheaval, in my mind and heart; a new arousal, a feeling of chayus/energy like in years past; something began to

push there inside, to bubble and seethe.

R' Chaim said something to the people; he spoke and cried, more crying than speaking, but I didn't hear him. I was in turmoil.

When the Kiddush was over and they got ready to say Ata Horeisa, once again I felt despondent after having been uplifted somewhat. It happened, I think, because I took R' Chaim's pain to heart, for in a few minutes they would honor this Chassid with the first pasuk and he would be so anguished over his crying. Why *he* was so fearful is obvious and understandable, but as for me, perhaps I was more nervous than he.

R' Michel began the Simchas Torah niggun and caused me further discomfiture when he announced, "We honor the Chassid and great lamdan, R' Chaim with the first pasuk of Ata Horeisa!"

I looked down or perhaps my vision blurred over, as I did not

see R' Chaim; I did not want to look at him at that moment. For a moment it was quiet. Then I heard R' Chaim's voice:

"Now dear Jews, we must forget all the negative things. Now we will rejoice on Simchas Torah. Hashem, the Torah, and Yisroel are one! Literally one! Do you hear, Jews? '**Ata Horeisa lo'daas, ki Hashem Hu HaElokim, ein od milva-a-do!**'"

Oddly enough, R' Chaim said all this without crying, with nary a trace of sadness. On the contrary, he said the pasuk in the time honored festive strains of Simchas Torah and with the nusach that was used in the good days before the war. How did he manage that? How was he able to control himself?

I couldn't understand it at the time. In a very strange way, I began feeling a warmth, an elevation of spirit, as though I had been injected with a new source of energy from somewhere. Was it from the Kiddush or, more

accurately, from R' Chaim's Ata Horeisa that was not said with tears and was so Yomtovdik? Till this day, I don't know, but dormant wellsprings of emotion were suddenly renewed within me and within seconds, had turned into high stormy waves, until tears began falling from my eyes. How peculiar; I suddenly felt the urge to cry and not just an urge. When they honored me with a pasuk, I don't even remember which one, I could barely get the first word out when I burst out sobbing. There was silence; only R' Chaim who was standing next to me placed his hand on my heaving shoulder and said, "Nu, bachurchik ... Do what I did. Do it for our Father in heaven, this is what He wants! Come, let us say it together."

We both somehow managed to finish the pasuk ... since with this pasuk, R' Chaim's voice also broke a bit ... Mine did so, thanks to R' Chaim, and his, at least that is how I felt, did so because of me.

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G-D IS NOT SPIRITUAL!



By Rabbi Tuvia Bolton, Mashpia in Yeshivas Ohr T'mimim in Kfar Chabad

Most people, even Gentiles, are familiar with the opening sentence of the Torah: "In the beginning G-d created the heavens and the earth."

But at first glance it has no practical importance.

Why should it matter to us how the world got created, or if it was created at all? In any case, it happened thousands of years ago! Why can't the Torah just be like the other religions and say that G-d rewards and punishes whoever doesn't follow the rules? Who cares how the world got here?

However, the teachings of Chassidus and Kabbala reveal several vital messages based on the fact that the Torah begins this way.

First of all, the Torah is telling us what the world is made of. The basic element of creation is neither atoms nor quarks of energy or even spirit... all these are themselves creations.

Rather G-d created the world from *nothing*. In other words, the basic element of creation (even now) is nothing!

The story of B'Reishis is only telling us how G-d *began* creating it. In truth, however, the world has no independent existence of its own and depends on G-d to bring it, in its every detail, *constantly* from nothingness into existence.

What is the vital message?

The same G-d who created the world also created man in order to permeate the world with meaning.

In fact, that was – and still is – the entire purpose of creation (See Rashi B'Reishis 1:1 and 1:31).

So it is impossible that anything in the world can prevent us from obeying its Creator.

In other words, although the world may at times seem to resist or even oppose the Torah, nevertheless, if we make a firm resolution to do what is right we are assured of success.

Here is a story to illustrate:

Once I was approached by a group of three missionaries in Manhattan. As they began their pitch, I interrupted and said I wanted to ask them a question. Certain that they had all the answers they eagerly agreed. "Do you think G-d is spiritual?" I asked.

They looked at me in open-mouthed bewilderment, then at one another as though to say "What has he got up his sleeve? Think he's nuts?" They shrugged their shoulders, turned back, and answered, "Of course He is spiritual!"

I answered "I'm surprised at you! You don't even know the first sentence of the Torah!"

Their eyes opened wider and

wider as they protested, "Of course we do! 'In the beginning G-d created the Heavens and the Earth.'"

"See!" I answered triumphantly. "That's exactly what I mean! 'The Heavens' refers to all the spiritual creations; 'The Earth' is the physical. So you see G-d is not spiritual. *He creates the spiritual!*"

I paused briefly, and when I was sure they were thoroughly confused, I added, "Or in other words, *our* G-d creates *your* god!"

They turned on their heels and briskly walked away.

This brings us to another vital lesson.

B'Reishis also teaches that G-d loves and is infinitely close to us.

The fact that G-d creates each of us anew every instant – as well as caring, providing for and answering all our prayers – implies that He is constantly and personally involved with each one of us. This should make us infinitely grateful and inspire us with joy and energy to constantly renew our life and our connection to Him.

This is certainly true and meaningful for the Gentiles as well. In fact, it is the basis of their Seven Noachide Commandments. Because the Creator also creates and cares for

“The next day the Mikva lady told me that the Rebbe called her the previous night after the incident, and when she told him what I had done he said, ‘Blessed be the hands that sawed off that lock.’

them constantly, it is forbidden for them to worship any power except for the G-d who loves and brings them into existence.

But it will take Moshiach to reveal these truths to all mankind. That truth is hinted to in the second sentence of the Torah: “The earth was confusion and emptiness and darkness ... and the spirit of G-d hovered on the face of the water.”

According to the Midrash (Rabba 2:4) this “*spirit*” is referring to the “Spirit of Moshiach.” In other words the ‘spirit’ of Moshiach existed even before the creation of Man!

What does this mean? How can Moshiach be so important? Why does he have to be mentioned in the beginning of creation? What does it have to do with confusion, emptiness and darkness?

Truth be told, most Jews, even religious ones, know little or nothing about Moshiach. Massive Torah tape libraries contain nothing on the subject. I recently saw a book about Moshiach written by a religious lecturer (with no less than a doctorate in religion) who had almost no understanding of the topic.

Moshiach will be a great Jewish ruler, like King David, King Solomon and Moses, who will bring the entire world to perfection. He will do this by educating and inspiring all mankind to follow the will of the Creator – the Gentiles according to the Seven Noachide commandments and the Jews according to the Oral and Written

Torah.

And *only* he can do it.

Just as without Abraham there would be no Jewish people and without Moses there could have been no Exodus or receiving of the Torah, so too mankind cannot leave its egocentric limitations and realize its true G-dly potential without Moshiach.

The Rambam writes that we must believe in and long for Moshiach, and anyone who does not do so actually denies the entire Torah (Laws of Kings 11:1). Other Torah giants explain further that this faith and longing will actually help bring Moshiach.

The Rambam explains earlier that each deed we do can change the entire world and reveal Moshiach immediately, and the Lubavitcher Rebbe even provided us with a detailed plan of action to make it happen. In addition, the Rebbe explains that there will be two periods of Moshiach and our deeds will bring them about.

At first, Moshiach will educate and enlighten the world, beginning with the Jews, to do only good deeds. He will dissipate the “confusion, emptiness and darkness” that has reigned supreme for thousands of years. The Temple will be rebuilt, all the Jews will return to the land of Israel, and will be free to learn Torah and pursue Judaism; there will be no hunger or war, and peace and prosperity will prevail in the world.

In other words, the first stage of Moshiach will see natural changes that have precedence in the history of man.

In contrast, the second period will be completely outside of nature. The world will be transformed with the revelation of G-d and great miracles.

That is why the Torah tells us that the spirit of Moshiach came first. It teaches us that not only is Moshiach the goal of Judaism, but also that our deeds will cause these two stages.

The first period, when there will be no hunger, war or other obstacles will be caused by our service of G-d with joy and determination as though there are no obstacles.

But the second period, when all nature will change, will be brought about by our service of G-d in a totally new way, with totally new powers completely beyond our nature.

Here is a story to illustrate:

An elderly Jew with a large black Yarmulke once appeared in the Ben Gurion Airport Chabad House.

He stepped up to the counter, and when he was asked if he would like a cup of coffee gratis, he answered that he would – but only if it was full to the brim.

The perplexed Chassidim standing behind the counter did as he said; they filled the cup, with his constant encouragement, to the point that the slightest quiver would cause it to spill. Then to their amazement the old fellow lifted the cup without spilling a drop and drank it.

When he finished, he smiled proudly and said, “I did that to show you how great your Rebbe is!

“I’m not a Chassid Chabad,” he explained. “My name is Rabbi Baker, and years ago I was the Rabbi of a large shul in New York. We also had a Mikva for women. But then, like so many

Shuls in the U.S.A., the older people either died or moved away, and the neighborhood filled with gentiles. The board of directors of the Shul began hinting that they would like to sell out and make a nice profit, but I was against it.

"Men kept coming to Shul and women kept using the Mikva. Then an interesting thing happened. The lady that was in charge of the Mikva told me that very often the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Schneersohn, would call her up, ask her how she was feeling and encourage her work.

"This continued for several months until one evening I was in the middle of teaching a class in Talmud in the Shul when she burst into the room and shouted frantically that someone had put a large lock on the Mikva door.

"I understood that it must

“How can Moshiach be so important? Why does he have to be mentioned in the beginning of creation? And what does it have to do with confusion, emptiness and darkness?”

have been the directors trying to discourage women from coming, but I didn't know what to do. I am not the strongest of people, and I considered myself to be an honorable Rabbi, certainly not one to go fighting battles.

"Well, I don't know how I did it but I ran to my car, found a metal saw (to this day I don't know how it got there), ran to the lock, and began sawing away in public. A bunch of people even stopped to look, but I didn't care. About a half hour later the door was open, and the women were able to enter.

"The next day the Mikva lady

told me that the Rebbe called her the previous night after the incident, and when she told him what I had done he said, 'Blessed be the hands that sawed off that lock.'

"That is what I wanted to show you," the old Rabbi concluded. "Today I am over ninety one years old, and my hands are steady as a child's because of that blessing."

May we all realize our potentials, exceed even our wildest dreams of success and do all we can to fulfill the purpose of creation, i.e. bring....

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THE CHIEF RABBI'S SECRET SOURCE FOR DIVREI TORAH

In a Sukkos sicha, the Rebbe explains the Midrash that says that in the merit of fulfilling the mitzva of the four minim which are associated with “rishon” (first) in the Torah, as it says, “and you shall take for you on the first day,” the Jewish people merit the building of the Beis HaMikdash and the coming of Moshiach, both of which are alluded to in the word “rishon.” * The following touching stories are from shluchim and Chassidim about the incredible impact of Mivtza Sukka and Mivtza Dalet Minim.

By Rabbi Yaakov Shmuelevitz
Shliach, Beit Shaan

IT ALL BEGAN WITH THE CHABAD HOUSE SUKKA

At least two baalei t’shuva who got involved with Chabad of Beit Shaan, took their first steps in a sukka. I’ve mentioned one of them in this column before, R’ Yotam Klein, shliach in Bolivia, who took a long, winding road from his childhood at Kibbutz Gesher and Ashdot Yaakov, to monasteries in forsaken villages in East Asia and South America.

The long journey ended one Erev Yom Kippur in New Jersey where he discovered a Siddur for the first time in his life, and was moved to the depths of his neshama by the words “Modeh Ani.” Two days later,

he was on a plane back to Eretz Yisroel. On the first day of Chol HaMoed Sukkos he came from the kibbutz to Beit Shaan to buy a mezuzah. That is how he came to our Chabad house sukka. We got into a conversation and he attended some shiurim. After sukkos he went to learn at the Chabad yeshiva in Tzfas. Later on he went to 770, eventually got married, and went on shlichus to Bolivia.

THANKS TO SLEEPING IN A CHABAD HOUSE SUKKA

The second story began with sleeping in a sukka and ended with a sleepless night on Hoshana Rabba in Beit Shaan. This is what happened:

Leon came from Russia twenty years ago when he was ten, and settled with his parents in Beit Shaan. His parents registered him in a non-religious school which fit their lifestyle. When Leon grew a bit older, he heard that there was a religious school in town and he asked to be switched there. He later discovered a place that was even more religious, Midreshet HaGalil in Migdal HaEmek, and he went there.

Leon learned in school that according to the Shulchan Aruch, you must eat and sleep in the sukka. Since Leon’s parents had no interest in building a sukka, he came to the Chabad house and asked to be able to sleep there the nights of Sukkos. I gently explained to him that according to our custom, we don’t sleep in the sukka but if he wanted to, he could sleep there.

We put a bed in the sukka and every night, Leon came to our house, went through the kitchen and living room and went to sleep in the sukka.

With his daily visits, it was inevitable that Leon would hear a shiur here and a farbrengen there, and was thus exposed to the idea of immersion in a mikva and giving Jews the opportunity to do the mitzva of the four minim. Leon, who had changed his name to Aryeh Leib, switched to the Chabad yeshiva in Merkaz Gutnick, and from there went to the yeshiva in Kfar Chabad, K’vutza in 770, and then

established a fine Chassidishe home. He has worked on shlichus in a number of places and countries.

At one point he told me that the thing that made him decide to become a Chassid happened on a sleepless night at the Chabad house in Beit Shaan.

"It was the night of Hoshana Rabba when I joined the shliach in learning through the night. At about 1:00 I walked with him to the B'nei Akiva branch for a shiur that the shliach was asked to give there. At the end of the shiur, I mentioned to the shliach that at the Midrasha in Migdal HaEmek we were learning "HaMafkid" in Gemara but I didn't understand the material well. To my amazement, the shliach said we could sit down and learn the entire chapter then and there, even if it took until dawn.

"We went to the shul, took out Gemaras, and the shliach learned daf after daf with me until we finished and I understood the entire chapter well. I remember saying to myself, if a shliach of the Rebbe is willing to sit through the night and learn with a young bachur with the utmost Ahavas Yisroel and for no other reason, then I want to be like him."

I HOPE TO HAVE A CHASSIDISHE HOME LIKE YOU

R' Yisroel Gliss, shliach in Dimona, relates:

One day, I noticed a new face in shul. He was a 14 year old Russian immigrant. I went over to him after the davening and asked his name. He told me that his family was not religious, but he took an interest in davening and began to attend shul. I invited him to a Shabbos meal and after a while he became our

regular guest and ben bayis. At one of the meals, he told us that now he understands the Rebbe's approach to chinuch and hachnasas orchim and when he grows up, he wants to have a Chassidishe home just like ours.

Of course we hosted him for all the Sukkos meals. We also had some bachurim from the yeshiva as our guests, who had come to help us out by manning the communal sukka and helping people do the mitzva of the

in 5745, we bachurim went on Mivtza Dalet Minim all over the city. I took my lulav to an old age home in Brooklyn and I began going from room to room, asking people whether they were Jewish.

After going through all the departments, we went to the lobby where people were sitting here and there with nothing to do. An old woman sat there in a wheelchair, staring into space, seemingly unaware of her surroundings. I went over



Dalet Minim. The Russian boy joined them on mivtzaim and after Yom Tov he went to yeshiva with them. At first, he only went to visit the yeshiva, but when he finished high school he entered the yeshiva as a Tamim. A few years later he married and today he lives in Nachalat Har Chabad.

MUTE CRY

The following story was told by R' Nechemia Schmerling, shliach in Kfar Yona, at the inauguration of a mikva:

When I learned on K'vutza

to her and loudly asked, "Are you Jewish?" As I waited for a response, one of the nurses came over and said, "Forget it, for three years now she hasn't spoken a word."

For some reason I didn't give up and I tried to put the Dalet minim in her hands. Then the unbelievable happened. The woman began loudly saying the bracha with a Polish-Chassidish pronunciation. The other people in the lobby came over to witness the miracle taking place before

Continued on page 66

RESTORING THE LIGHT

By Rabbi Heschel Greenberg

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



WHO WROTE THE LAST EIGHT VERSES

This parsha marks the end of the Five Books of Moses. And the end of the parsha—its last eight verses—describes poignantly the passing of Moses.

The Talmud (Bava Basra) deals with the obvious question. The entire Torah was written by Moses. How then could Moses have reported his own passing, burial and eulogy?

The Talmud provides two answers, represented by two Talmudic Sages. According to the opinion of Rabbi Yehudah (according to another version it was Rabbi Nechemia) it was actually Joshua who penned these last eight verses and not Moses. Rabbi Shimon demurs and argues: Is it possible that the Torah should be missing one letter? Does it not say, “Take this Book of Torah” [implying that Moses had already completed the entire book]?” Rather, Rabbi Shimon maintains Moses did in fact write these last eight verses. The only difference is that these verses Moses did not verbalize and that he wrote them with tears.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

The Talmud then applies a practical ruling to these final eight verses: “One individual reads these verses.” Rashi

explains that this means that these eight verses cannot be split up into two sections to be read by two individuals. Thus, the meaning of “one individual reads these verses” should actually be interpreted as “all these verses should be read as one.”

Maimonides has a different way of interpreting these words: Since these verses were not transmitted in the same manner as the rest of the Torah (either because they were written by Joshua or that Moses wrote them with tears), one does not need a minyan (a quorum of ten men needed for the public reading of the Torah) to read these verses. They may be read even by an individual.

We must try to understand why these last verses would be considered inferior to the other verses of the Torah, since they are an integral part of the Torah. If even one letter of these last eight verses would be missing or written defectively it would invalidate the entire Torah. Why then could it be read by an individual in contradistinction to all the other parts of the Torah which require a minyan?

We also have to understand Rashi’s approach that these eight verses must be read without interruption, why would the fact that they were written by Joshua or that they were written with tears warrant not splitting up the reading into two parts?

THE FILTERING PROCESS

To resolve the foregoing it is necessary to understand the two views as to whether Joshua wrote the last eight verses or it was written by Moses with tears.

Either scenario suggests that these last verses of the Torah were meant to link the exalted state of Moses’ generation and the one’s to follow, which were of a lower level. Moses knew that future generations will need to have the powerful G-dly forces that the Torah generates condensed to make them accessible.

According to the Rebbe (see *Toras Menachem*, 5749 p. 43) the entire story of Moses’ passing is more than a description of the departure of his soul from his body in the classical sense of death. Moses’ death is actually a process where he allows for his brilliant light to be “diminished.” In this regard the Rebbe cites the Zohar: “One who falls from their level is called dead.”

Based on this analysis, one way of understanding Moses’ death/decline was his allowing for his intense light to be filtered.

However, there are two ways the transition can be made between Moses’ era and subsequent ones. In one scenario Moses’ light is reflected through Joshua and his teachings. Our Sages compare Moses to the light of the sun and Joshua his successor to the reflective

light of the moon. There is nothing altered or introduced from a foreign source. True, the radiance is dimmed for it is only reflected light, but the moon does not reflect anything but the light of the sun, and Joshua reflected faithfully all the light that Moses radiated. Moses, therefore, allows for the Torah to be completed by his successor. By doing so, Moses was able to link his own stature—since these last eight verses written by Joshua were incorporated within the corpus of the Five Book of **Moses**—with that of the more accessible approach of Joshua, who actually write these last eight verses.

SELF-LIMITATION

Rabbi Shimon, however, provides for another solution to the problem as to who wrote the last eight verses. It is axiomatic that the Five Books of Moses are unique even in comparison with the other Biblical books because they are the product of G-d's communication with the most transparent receptacle—Moses.

Rabbi Shimon therefore adopts the second scenario, in which Moses writes the words of the Torah, but it is written with tears. By writing it himself, the light that emerged from these letters were not merely reflected light. These were Moses words, albeit in a form that differed from the rest of the Torah.

According to some, writing with tears means that he used tears instead of ink to form the letters. Another interpretation understands it literally that as he was writing he shed tears. This was an indication that Moses was undergoing a transformation that represented the first stage in the process of "death." Either way, Moses, in his last eight verses



If someone were to ask, why didn't the great Sages of earlier years have access to this knowledge, the answer can be found in the last eight verses of the Torah.

of narrative, was "diminishing" himself.

Moses recognized that a transition had to occur. But to preserve the integrity of the Torah even that transition had to be ascribed to Moses himself and not even to his trusted disciple Joshua. When a person limits himself, for example, it is not the same as when he is limited and reflected by others.

MINYAN POWER

We can now understand why these eight verses are different in regard to reading them in public. Since, these last eight verses constitute the bridge between the Five Books of Moses and the rest of the Torah revealed to future generations, the Torah's radiance is somewhat concealed. When we read the preceding parts of the Torah that reveal the intense G-dly light that characterizes Moses' writing, we must have a minyan to absorb that light. Only a collective body of people has the capacity to experience that intense light without being overwhelmed.

This explains why Kadish and other prayers cannot be recited by individuals except within the context of a minyan. The word Kadish is cognate to the world k'dusha, holiness. More precisely it connotes a level of Divine energy that is detached from our realm of reality and accessibility. An individual cannot break out of his own reality and grasp something beyond his reach. A group of ten—that represent the

totality of the Jewish people—forms a new reality that is receptive to the otherness of G-d's light generated by the Kadish, other prayers and the reading of the Torah.

By contrast, the diminished or filtered light generated by the eight last verses are indeed within reach of each and every person as an individual.

NO PAUSE NECESSARY OR DESIRABLE

We can also understand Rashi's contention that these eight verses are singled out that they must be read without interruption. The reason for the interruptions in the Torah, Rashi tell us, was to give Moses time to reflect on and digest the words of G-d that were spoken to/through him. This was necessary because of the transcendent nature of these G-dly teachings.

The last eight verses, however, do not require the pauses because they were tailor made for those who were/ are on a lower level. The pauses are not only unnecessary, they can be detrimental. When we take something straightforward and uncomplicated and we dissect it and parse it too much it can actually cause its true meaning to be adulterated and distorted. Or, to use another analogy, when a potent drink is diluted with water it makes the drink drinkable. If however, the drink is already drinkable and water is added to it, it ruins its taste.

NEW LIGHT

The transition from Moses to Joshua and subsequent generations wherein the radiance of Torah had to be dimmed was not a permanent situation. As we prepare for Moshiach and the final Redemption we are told that the process will actually be reversed. The Biblical prediction that “A new Torah shall emerge from Me,” (Isaiah 51:4; Midrash, Rabba, VaYikra 13:3) is understood to mean that the same Torah we have now and we will have for all eternity will have its full radiance restored. Moreover, even new dimensions that were contained subliminally in the Torah that was given to

Moses but not able to be revealed even then, will also emerge from G-d through the teachings of Moshiach. The full potency and radiance of the light of Torah will be manifest for all.

Indeed, since the Baal Shem Tov and the emergence of the Chassidic movement with the innovative teachings of Chassidus we were afforded a foretaste of this new light of Torah.

If someone were to ask, why didn't the great Sages of earlier years have access to this knowledge, the answer can be found in the last eight verses of the Torah. The radiant teachings of Moses were concealed even from the generation that

immediately followed Moses' generation. However, as we approach the Messianic Age, G-d allows for some of the hitherto concealed precincts of Torah to be revealed. The objective is to prepare us for the time when the light of Torah will shine totally unobstructed and when all that was utterly hidden from us will be in full view of all.

At that time, the tears Moses shed to allow for the Torah to become accessible to all of us will be erased together with the tears that we have shed throughout our long stay in exile. We will experience unmitigated joy!

Continued from page 63

their eyes. The woman shook the minim with great love and everybody present saw the power of a mitzva.

MIVTZA SIMCHAS BEIS HASHOEIVA

A final story from Sukkos in Beit Shaan. A few years ago, we started making Simchas Beis HaShoeiva in a Chassidishe atmosphere. We hire musicians, an emcee, a juggler, and show excerpts of videos of the Rebbe. We advertise heavily and pray that people will come in droves. Thank G-d, we have been very successful and people know already that it's worth attending the Chabad house event.

One year, due to lack of coordination, two Simchas Beis HaShoeiva events were scheduled for the same time, ours and the municipality's. The mayor went to the city event where there weren't many people. He got a phone call from one of his assistants, telling him to hurry over to the Chabad event because the whole town was there.

He came, spoke in praise of Chabad, and then he said that in light of the broad public support that he saw here, he felt that the time had come to build a big, central building for the Chabad house so that all the activities could take place there, the davening, shiurim, etc.

One year, we had Chief Rabbi Yona Metzger in attendance and he spoke at the Simchas

Beis HaShoeiva. Upon his arrival to Beit Shaan, shliach R' Shmuel Reinitz welcomed him and entered his car in order to direct the driver to the event. R' Reinitz sat in the back seat and found a *Shaarei HaMoadim* with ideas about Sukkos based on the Rebbe's sichos which apparently was how the Chief Rabbi prepared his divrei Torah that he delivered all over the country.

The videos of the Rebbe that are shown also have long-range effects. A young man from Beit Shaan decided to become a Chassid. He said that one of the things that made the greatest impact on him was watching videos of the Rebbe at the Simchas Beis HaShoeiva.

ADD IN ACTS OF GOODNESS & KINDNESS
TO BRING MOSHIACH NOW!

DAVENING: A RENDEZVOUS WITH MOSHIACH

By Rabbi Levi Kagan



A NEW SONG

In a yechidus (Shevat 26, 5721) with the Rebbe, the *Toldos Aharon* Rebbe spoke about his talmidim who learn Gemara for three hours before davening, then daven with excitement and kavana for an hour-and-a-half. The Rebbe said that they should also learn chassidus before davening to give them a deeper understanding of the davening.

The Rebbe explained this at great length and gave an example from the Midrash on the words “שירו לה' שיר חדש” – “Sing to Hashem a new song.” Why a *new* song? Why not suffice with the songs that have been sung thus far? Our sages teach that all songs in the present are in the *feminine* (שירה חדשה); just as a woman endures labor pains, so too all miracles are followed by pain. The songs of the Future however, will be in the *masculine* (שיר חדש) because the great wonders of the messianic times will not be followed by any pain and struggle. It will be a final and conclusive redemption.

The Rebbe then showed that in times of galus, when a Jew davens and recites “שירו לה' שיר חדש” the implication is that he

has the ability to uplift himself into a state of Geula. With this the Rebbe demonstrated that when a Chasidic explanation is applied, two simple words in davening have a more lofty implication, as of living in the era of redemption.

This teaches us how important it is for us to learn chassidus before davening. It also relates to the Moshiach sections of our davening.

In a regular day's davening, you can find the theme of Moshiach mentioned over *sixty* times. However, the reference is not always so clear. It requires kavana and studying the T'filla to notice how a particular prayer refers to Moshiach.

My experience is that it is well worth the effort, and that there are at least three benefits:

1. Davening with More Kavana: It is difficult to take upon oneself all at once to have kavana during all of davening, so the inyan of Moshiach is a good thing to start with. Davening will have more relevance, urgency, and excitement, as Moshiach is something constantly on our hearts and minds.

2. Yearning for Moshiach:

Each one of us davens three times a day and begs for Moshiach in his or her davening. If we think deeply about these words in our davening, we will bring ourselves to a more profound and truer yearning for Moshiach.

3. Learning concepts of Moshiach: The Rebbe spoke many times about the need to study the concept of Moshiach as it is mentioned in the Torah. By learning and thinking about the references to Moshiach that are made in davening, we are learning concepts of Moshiach in Torah, since much of davening is from Torah.

I would like to bring this to life by providing examples of some of the Rebbe's explanations on parts of davening that relate to Moshiach.

TWO ERAS IN THE DAYS OF MOSHIACH

The commentaries explain that the fourth הל'י describes the Future. We thus need to understand the statement in that paragraph: “The exaltation of G-d in their throat and a *double-edged sword* in their hand.” Why is a sword mentioned here when it says of the future that “They shall beat their swords into plowshares . . . nation will not lift a sword to nation?”

The Rebbe explains that at first when Moshiach comes, there will be a need for weapons because the nations will not yet

“By learning and thinking about the references to Moshiach that are made in davening, we are learning concepts of Moshiach in Torah, since much of davening is from Torah.”

be refined. This is the meaning of “a double-edged sword in their hands to bring retribution upon the nations.” Only at the Geula’s completion will we merit “and they shall beat their swords into plowshares.”

A SONG FOR THE FUTURE

The song of Az Yashir contains many words in the future tense, beginning with its first words, Az Yashir (lit. then he *will* sing). The Mechilta interprets these words as referring to the future Geula. The Rebbe in a maamer (“Tipol Aleihem,” 5731) says that the entire verse “תפול עליהם...” (“Terror and dread shall fall upon them . . .”) speaks primarily of the Future. Similarly, Az Yashir’s conclusion speaks about the days of Moshiach. The Rebbe explains in a sicha (*Likkutei Sichos* Vol. 31, p. 82) that just as the redemption from Egypt was the first and beginning to all the future redemptions, so too Az Yashir, the *first song* of redemption, is the beginning to all future songs. Thus, among the ten songs the Mechilta mentions, Az Yashir is the most general, containing within it all future songs, including the one that will be sung upon the coming of Moshiach.

WAITING ALL DAY

Seven of the nineteen brachos in the Shmoneh Esrei relate to Moshiach. The Rebbe explains (Sicha, Parshas Eikev, 5741) that of these, “את צמח דוד עבדך” (“מהרה תצמיח ותחזינה עינינו” and “בשובך לציון”) (“*speedily* cause the scion of David your servant to flourish,” and “May *our eyes* behold Your return to Zion”) are the primary proof for the necessity of wanting Moshiach to come now, indicated by



In fact, there are halachic opinions (Mishna Brura and others) that during Kaddish one should concentrate on Moshiach’s coming and that the request for his coming be fulfilled very soon.

“speedily” and “our eyes.” The words “כי לישועתך קוינו כל היום” (“For we hope for Your salvation all day”) teach us to continually think about Moshiach and hope for his coming, long after we finish davening.

This yearning, says the Rebbe (citing the Chida, the Kabbalist Rabbi Chayim Yosef David Azulai), will be our merit to bring Moshiach.

AMEN FOR MOSHIACH

The words “יתגדל ויתקדש שמה” (“Exalted and hollowed be His name, Amen, May His great name be blessed”) request a state of revealed G-dliness, which will occur with the coming of Moshiach. In fact, there are halachic opinions (Mishna Brura and others) that during Kaddish one should concentrate on Moshiach’s coming and that the request for his coming be fulfilled very soon.

It follows that simply answering Amen to Kaddish or the brachos about Moshiach in the Repeated Amida is in effect a request for Moshiach’s coming, and indeed this should be our kavana when answering these Amens (see *Shulchan Aruch Admur HaZakein, Orach Chaim* 129:4).

HASHEM’S PRAYERS

Answering “אמן, יהא שמה רבא” (“May His great name be blessed,” has the virtue of arousing Hashem’s desire to bring Moshiach. The Gemara (Brachos 3a) tells how

Rabbi Yosei said, “I once traveled on the road, and I entered one of the ruins of Jerusalem to pray. Eliyahu HaNavi came and said to me, ‘. . . at the hour that the people of Israel enter the synagogues and houses of study and respond in the *Kaddish* “May His great name be blessed,” the Holy One, blessed be He shakes his head and says, “Fortunate is the king praised this way in his house; woe for the father who has exiled his sons, and woe to the sons who have been exiled from their fathers table.””

The Rebbe comments that we are to learn from this that Hashem greatly desires to return His children to their home and to their Father’s table and have them praise Him with the coming of Moshiach, may it be speedily in our days, now, Amen.

Indeed, may we in fact, by studying and concentrating on the meaning of Moshiach and redemption in our T’fillos, merit returning to our Father’s table and praising Him, with the coming of Moshiach speedily in our days, now, Amen.

This article is dedicated to the memory of my father Rabbi Yitzchak Meir Kagan z”l, who inspired me with his daily early morning studying of chassidus and davening.

The author recently compiled a seifer “מתפלה לגאולה,” consisting of a collection of commentaries on the parts of davening that relate to Moshiach. To receive a copy, with free shipping and handling, please call: 248-968-7014.