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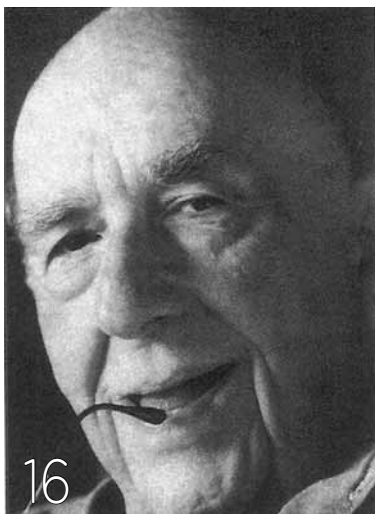
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# A CHAIN REACTION TO BRING REDEMPTION

Afterwards I began to think to myself: I do not know this lady who wrote the letter to me, nor does she know me. She has merely heard of my name, and sought advice from me, etc. If so, what is the intent of this chain letter coming to my attention?! Eventually I concluded that the purpose is to utilize this approach for the sake of holiness. \* On publicizing the words of the Chida and the Radak on bringing about the redemption.

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Translated by Boruch Merkur

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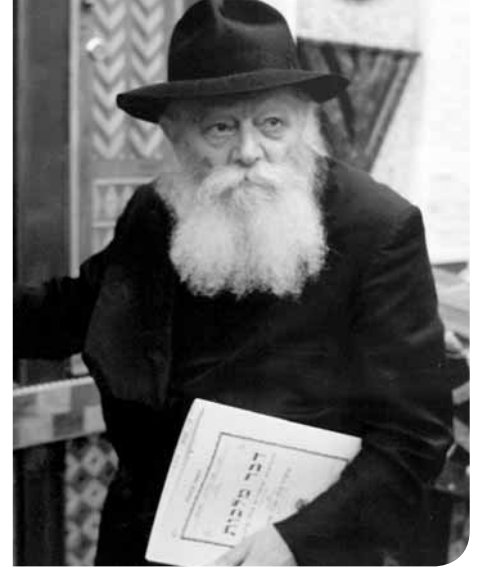
1. Once a certain Torah scholar commented to me about the words of the Chida, of blessed memory, in his book *Midbar K'deimos*, on the section about hope, saying:

“It states in Yalkut T'hillim remez 736 that even if a Jew has no merit other than hope, he is fit to be redeemed – in virtue of his hope ... On this basis, the great rabbi Rabbeinu Yosef Dovid [the Chida] elucidates ... ‘the wording of the blessing, “Speedily cause the scion of Dovid, Your servant, to flourish, and increase his power by Your salvation, for we hope for Your salvation all day.” Saying “for we hope for Your salvation all day” is difficult to understand, for what reason does this provide for our salvation? If we rightfully deserve salvation, it would be attained without hope. And if not, what benefit is there in hope? However, according to what was said above [in Yalkut T'hillim], the difficulty is resolved, reading the blessing as follows: “Speedily cause the scion of Dovid, etc.,” and if it

were said that we have no merit, nevertheless, “flourish...for we hope for Your salvation” – we have hope, and in reward for this hope it is fitting that You redeem us.”

The same message is found – in an astonishing[ly severe] style – in the commentary of the Radak on Nach, at the end of Shmuel II:

“So the L-rd was entreated for the land and the plague was stayed from the Jewish people,’ meaning G-d accepted the prayer of the inhabitants of the land. Understood exegetically, all the others, the thousands who died in the time of Dovid, died only because they did not beseech Hashem for the Holy Temple. It follows logically from this that since those who lived prior to the time when the Holy Temple stood, and who did not live in the aftermath of its destruction, nevertheless lost their lives on account of their neglect to petition for it, how much more so does the severity of this message



apply to us, for we have had the Holy Temple in our days and live in the aftermath of its destruction. Thus, the elders and the prophets implanted in the mouths of the Jewish people to pray three times a day, ‘return Your Divine Presence and your kingdom to Tziyon, and the order of your service to Yerushalayim,’ and the Radak concludes, “Amen, may it be His will forever.”

Practically speaking:

As has been observed from the questions and complaints voiced regarding the hope and anticipation and the clamoring for the true and complete redemption through our righteous Moshiach, there are those who are evidently unaware of the words of the Chida and the Radak mentioned above.

Therefore it is appropriate and proper that one should publish these matters in a “newspaper.”

It must be underscored, however, that this should not be done in my name. Unfortunately there are those who upon hearing that this was said by so and so will argue that the opposite is more logical ... (as is known from similar cases, but now is not the time to elaborate on this). In addition, as far as we are concerned – that is, with regard to the topic of redemption – it is particularly important to cite

the original author, as our Sages say, "All those who say something in the name of the author bring redemption to the world."

Thus, this matter should be publicized in the name of the original author, both with regard to the words of Radak as well as the words of Chida, by quoting their teachings precisely, word for word, in addition to citing the source etc., in order to bring merit to our Jewish brethren who do not possess these texts.

2. Another related matter, but first a parenthetical preface, in continuation with what was said above:

Among the correspondence I have received of late was a letter from a woman who was extremely distraught. What was bothering her? I received a letter – the woman writes – at the end of which the author requests of me, the reader, to make ten copies and send them to ten people. The author continues that in the merit of doing so, the reader will receive a reward, etc., and that the converse is true as well. That is, if the reader does not comply, it is unspeakable what could happen to him or her. In fact, the author asserts, a causal pattern as such has already been noted, for the results were such and such...

The content of the letter is filled with idiocy... The author remains anonymous, and the woman does not know from where the letter came. Nevertheless, the lady asks, since she has received such a fright, if it is acceptable for her to send out the ten copies in order to assuage her doubt.

Naturally I answered the lady that she should tear up the letter ... and that she should completely remove the matter from her mind! I also quoted the verse, "Thus states the L-rd, do not learn from the ways of

the Gentiles, and from the signs of heaven do not fear, for the Gentiles fear them," meaning, even when we are speaking about "heaven," Jews have nothing to fear, for this sort of fear is "the ways of the Gentiles...for the Gentiles fear them."

Afterwards I began to think to myself: I do not know this lady who wrote the letter to me, nor does she know me. She has merely heard of my name, and sought advice from me, etc. If so, what is the intent of this occurrence coming to my attention?! Eventually I concluded that the purpose is to utilize this approach for the sake of holiness.

But first, to preface:

Every single thing in the world must be used for a holy purpose. Regarding forbidden things, they must be entirely rejected and nullified, but regarding permissible things, the approach must be, "all your deeds should be for the sake of Heaven." Indeed, it is clear that the purpose of every thing created in the world is that it should provide some benefit with regard to matters of holiness.

In fact, even regarding something that is permitted but was used until now in an undesirable manner, one should seek out strategies to utilize it for holiness, in accordance with its purpose for which it was created. This is so even if until now, one used it for matters that are the opposite of holiness.

For example, our Sages say, "the world was not fit to use gold. Why then was it created? For the sake of the Holy Temple."

To apply the above to our discussion:

When we see that there exists in the world a concept of sending a letter to ten people, requesting

of each recipient to send out copies to an additional group of ten people and so on (in the local lexicon, chain reaction), this method should be employed for matters of holiness, publicizing something good among our Jewish brethren (so long as there is the slightest possibility that there is someone who is still unaware of this good thing).

With regard to the imminent redemption, this amounts to publicizing the matters discussed above about hoping and yearning and petitioning G-d for the coming of our righteous Moshiach, by means of every person sending a letter (citing what is written in the aforementioned texts) to ten Jews, and that they should each send it to ten more Jews, etc., in a manner of continually adding in light.

A certain context for this instruction, however, should be noted. There are those who are called "*shpitz Chabadniks*" ... and when they hear this kind of thing said in public, in a synagogue and in a study hall, they will leave aside all their concerns and get involved solely in writing letters to tens and tens of Jews. Therefore, I hereby emphasize that it is sufficient that each person write to no more than ten Jews, and if any free time remains, he should learn Torah! ... Regarding all the other Jews (those to whom he did not send letters), someone else will write to them – perhaps one of the ten that he did write to, for example.

3. It goes without saying that the concept of sending letters designed to "frighten" a Jew, G-d forbid, or even a Gentile, is utterly ruled out. When writing to a Jew one should write only blessings.

*(From the address of Shabbos Parshas Lech Lecha 7 MarCheshvan 5746, bilti muga)*



# HOSTING THOUSANDS **WITH THE POWER OF THE REBBE**

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Rabbi Menachem Mendel Hendel  
speaking at the Kinus  
"Tzeis'chem L'Shalom"

The Eshel-Hachnosas Orchim organization is one of Chabad's largest chesed organizations. Nearly every Israeli Lubavitcher family benefits directly from it during the month of Tishrei. \* Out of the thousands of guests who come to Beis Chayeinu for Tishrei, more than half of them sleep in apartments they got from Eshel, and most of them eat in Eshel's huge dining room. \* During Tishrei I observed and spoke with the man who directs this incredible organization, R' Menachem Mendel Hendel, and saw the work going on behind the scenes. When I asked him where he gets the strength from, he answered simply, "From the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach." \* As the guests return home, Eshel spends two weeks packing up equipment and closing down operations while fundraising the enormous amounts of money needed to pay their suppliers and landlords.

By Avrohom Rainitz

**T**uesday, 13 Tishrei, 9:20 pm: It looked as though another full day of work at Eshel-Hachnosas Orchim was coming to an end. Then a call came in from the person in charge of the girls' division who reported about another flight with dozens of girls, which landed two hours earlier. The girls were waiting to hear about lodging arrangements. Rabbi Menachem Mendel Hendel, director of Eshel-Hachnosas Orchim, asked how many girls there were. "200 girls came today. I have places for 120 already but that leaves us with another 80 girls without a place."

"B'eZRas Hashem, all will be fine," said R' Hendel confidently. "We are working

on a few apartments now. In the meantime, there is nothing available but with the Rebbe's brachos I expect places for eighty girls to work out tonight."

Five minutes later, on his way to Maariv in the Rebbe's minyan, he noticed the porch of the women's section of 770 full of the girls' suitcases. He prayed for a solution.

A minute before the davening began, his phone rang and on the line was a resident of Crown Heights who is a friend of Eshel. "I remembered that my cousin has an apartment and maybe you can put guests up there. I'm calling because I wanted to know whether you still need apartments."

Of course, R' Hendel told him that he did and the person said he still hadn't spoken with his cousin but he hoped he would agree. R' Hendel took down the address of the apartment and said he would call back after Maariv.

After davening, he visited the apartment and found an entire house, three floors that had recently been bought by the cousin with nobody living in it yet. The cousin immediately agreed to let the Rebbe's guests use it and the Hachnasas Orchim staff got to work. The cleaning crew did a quick cleaning job while the supply staff sent over a truck with mattresses, pillows and blankets. The registration team gave the girls registration

forms with the brand new address and at 12 midnight the eighty girls walked to the house with their luggage.

This story is one example of the miracles that take place behind the scenes at Eshel-Hachnosas Orchim.

## LAST-MINUTE MIRACLES

You have to be amazed by the open hashgacha pratis that Eshel enjoys, and yet I can't help but wonder: **Why wait until the last minute? Why not arrange apartments weeks in advance?**

R' Hendel smiles in agreement. He is used to these questions. He answers, as Jews do, with a question. "Have you ever tried renting an apartment in Crown Heights for Tishrei? One apartment?"

Actually, in recent years some relatives have asked me for my help in finding a place to rent for Tishrei. My wife and I did some searching for them and we weren't always successful. It's hard enough finding an apartment in the middle of the year, and even harder before Tishrei, and nearly impossible when you want the apartment for just one month.

"So now think about how hard it is to get dozens of apartments for the guests who come for Tishrei."

### So how do you do it?

"With open miracles and a thousand hashgacha pratis incidents. We approach people who have houses, apartments and basements who hadn't thought of renting them, but when they hear that another 500 guests landed today, and 200 of them don't have a place to sleep, they decide to rent it out and earn some money while being part of the mitzva. Some people donate

places for people to stay and that saves us money.

"Of course it's not all done the last minute. We are able to get half the apartments or at least to reach agreements for their use before the guests arrive, but happily, we always get more guests than expected, and then we go into last-minute-mode.

"Another thing you have to remember is that in recent years, the price of apartments in Crown Heights has gone way up and even a basement apartment can go for as high as \$2000 a month. That means that if we rent the apartments in advance, we will have to pay \$4000 for two months. If you multiply that by fifty apartments, that's another \$100,000!

"This year, we were able to offer a pleasant surprise for the hundreds of girls who came at the beginning of Tishrei when we opened the new Eshel building for them. They stayed in the five upper floors of the building in new rooms with kitchenettes and bathrooms. Their dining room was on the second floor."

\*\*\*

Speaking of dining rooms, if you visit Eshel's dining room you will be amazed. Thousands of guests enjoy tasty meals with plenty of food.

"The average guest has no idea how much effort is expended so that he can get his breakfast right after davening," says R' Hendel. "The kitchen help work from the wee hours of the morning in order to prepare for over 5000 people. Even before the guests finish supper, they are working in the kitchen, out of sight, on the next day's breakfast. This happens over and over again for more than a month!

"This year, when the Yomim Tovim were all in sets of three,



they worked double shifts in order to prepare enough food for Yom Tov. Double 5000 meals for six days of Yom Tov for the enormous number of 30,000 meals!"

**It seems clear that many miracles take place, but are there ever any disasters? Has there ever been a situation when you ended up with dozens of guests with no place to stay?**

"There are times like that and I prefer to call them *nisyonos*. In Chassidus it explains that the reality of a test is illusory and when you withstand it, the negativity disappears. When I get a report about dozens of bachurim or even one couple with some children who don't have a place, it's definitely painful. I remind myself that these are the Rebbe's guests and surely he will look out for them. And he does.

"I'll tell you a story. One year, I heard about someone who has five apartments to rent. As soon as I got this information, I called him. However, he avoided me and did not return my calls since he knew why I was looking



Bachurim and Anash eating in Eshel's dining room

for him, and he didn't want to rent his apartments to guests. Hundreds of bachurim came that day and at ten at night a hundred of them remained without a place to sleep.

"I knew that in this guy's apartments there was room for all the bachurim and I decided to go straight to his house. I knocked on his door and he opened it. He was so surprised to see me that he slammed the door shut.

"At first I was offended. He knew that I work on behalf of the Rebbe's guests, not for myself, and he was capable of helping with his apartments. Why did he react that way? Then I thought, what would the Rebbe's reaction be if he was standing here?

"I was sure that the Rebbe would smile and say: Carry on without getting overly excited. I take responsibility.

"I then saw how the Rebbe arranged things in the best possible way. I was suddenly able to reach some people I had been trying to get hold of for a long time and was able to

**"I knew that in this guy's apartments there was room for all 100 bachurim and I decided to go straight to his house. I knocked on his door and he opened it. He was so surprised to see me that he slammed the door shut.**

rent apartments from them. Ten minutes after the slamming of the door, we had places for the hundred bachurim! If that wasn't enough, the next day he called me to apologize for his rude behavior and he let us use all five of his apartments."

### **HACHNASAS ORCHIM LIKE TEMPLE TIMES**

We continued on to Eshel's offices where staff sets up couples with families in the neighborhood.

"We have lists from previous years of families who are willing to host couples. We arrange things with them ahead of time, as soon as we begin working," said the person in charge. "However, much of our success

happens last minute. We talk to people who have no more room; if we would have called them in the middle of Elul and asked about a couple coming in a month, the answer would have been no. Then, when they hear that we have some couples sitting in our office, they decide to put all their kids into one room in order to make a room available for guests."

"Every year I am moved by the unusual hospitality of the people here in Crown Heights," said R' Hendel. "They answer positively when Eshel calls and open their homes to guests, some for places to sleep, some for Shabbos and Yom Tov meals, and some with money, and they do so graciously.

"In the sicha of Shabbos

Parshas Noach 5747, the Rebbe compared the guests who come to 770 for Tishrei to the olei regel who went to Yerushalayim in the time of the Beis HaMikdash. In Avos D'Rabbi Nosson it says, 'A person never said to his fellow, I did not find a bed to sleep in, in Yerushalayim.' The same is true for Crown Heights. No guest remains without a place to stay. There will always be a family who will be happy to have another guest!

"I also host guests and I know it's not always easy. It's hard on the lady of the house who has to put in extra hours in the kitchen. It's hard on the man who has to work additional hours to pay for extra expenses, and it's hard on the children who sometimes have to forgo their beds for the guests. But it's all worth it when you realize how great the mitzva of hachnasas orchim is, plus the nachas ruach it provides the Rebbe, and the tremendous impact it makes on the children to love mitzvos and Chassidishkait.

"In one of the sichos (B'Shalach 5744), the Rebbe says that Crown Heights is 'Kesser Elyon' and when you speak to someone about 'Kesser' he is immediately reminded of the Mishna in Avos, 'There are three crowns, the crown of Torah, the crown of Kehuna and the crown of Malchus.' The crown of Torah refers to Torah study; the crown of Kehuna is the inyan of Aharon HaKohen, Ahavas and Achdus Yisroel; and the crown of Malchus is the inyan of 'Dovid Malka Meshicha,' the belief in Moshiach. The Rebbe says that Crown Heights represents these three crowns.

"In Tishrei these three crowns shine brightly in a special way. At a time that yeshivos are closed for the month in other places around

the world, over here thousands of guests sit and learn all day. In other places, the Yomim Tovim are devoted to being with family while here in Crown Heights, Yomim Tovim are devoted to guests with unparalleled Ahavas Yisroel. And it's all, of course, with a chayus of belief in the coming of Moshiach and anticipation of the immediate hisgalus of the Rebbe MH"MI!"

## THE SMALL DETAILS

I conducted the interviews for this article with R' Hendel during Tishrei. It was impossible to get hold of him for a conversation lasting longer than a few minutes and so the interview took place in installments. Two minutes here, five minutes there, as well as some phone conversations. In one of the phone conversations he asked me to wait while he attended to another call. I couldn't hear who he was talking to, but from his responses I understood that it was a guest whose young son had become sick the night before and she was asking what she should do.

R' Hendel helped arrange an appointment with a doctor and when he ended the conversation I asked him:

**How many such incidents do you take care of during Tishrei?**

"You should ask me how many such incidents I handle every day," he replied. "Every day we take care of at least thirty guests who need medical attention. We have people in charge of this who refer them to doctors and in serious situations, accompany them to the hospital.

"Tishrei is a transitional time between summer and fall and many people catch colds, especially during Sukkos when people are up all night at the Simchas Beis HaShoeiva and

don't sleep enough. It can get chilly and you can get rained on. It's a miracle that only thirty people a day need attention.

"We are greatly helped by the Ahavas Chesed organization headed by our friend R' Avrohom Lieder who personally gets involved with every guest who needs to go to the hospital. Every year, we ask guests to be responsible and to buy medical insurance for the trip to cover the enormous expenses incurred during a hospital stay."

## NACHAS FOR THE REBBE

We walked into 770 early in the morning. The room was full of thousands of bachurim and men sitting and learning a maamer Chassidus of the Rebbe. "See, this is the seder Chassidus in the biggest yeshiva in the world," said R' Hendel proudly.

Aside from the amazing sight of thousands of guests studying the Rebbe's teachings, it was especially gratifying to see how they were all learning the same maamer from the same booklet. "We put almost \$50,000 into the ruchnius department of Eshel, starting with the printing of these booklets, then expensive prizes that are raffled off among those who attend the s'darim and do well on the tests, and finally, with the many farbrengens that are organized."

The ruchnius department has numerous sub-departments. One team is responsible for getting mashpiim to farbreng. Another group arranges places for farbrengens, and a third group takes care of the food and drinks. An entirely separate staff arranges the central farbrengens that take place in 770, which are attended by hundreds of bachurim.



The bulletin boards of 770 display the incredible work done by the ruchnius department, listing dozens of farbrengens every night for every yeshiva with a different mashpia. Alongside these announcements are flyers about panel discussions that take place nearly every night of Tishrei with top Lubavitcher speakers on an array of fascinating topics.

The Maggidei Shiur circulate among the bachurim and ensure that all the guests are keeping the s'darim and using their time in 770 to increase their hiskashrus to the Rebbe through learning his Torah.

From the announcement board I learned about another team which arranges shiurim for men. Every day there were shiurim in Chassidus for men as well as lectures given by Rabbi Zalman Notik, Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Levkivker, Rabbi Shlomo Halperin, Rabbi Shimon Weitzhandler, Rabbi Elozor Kenig, Rabbi Shneur Schneersohn, and others.

When I spoke to the person in charge of shiurim for men, he told me about the positive feedback he gets. "After one of the shiurim, someone came over to me who had so enjoyed the shiur that he took out \$50 from his pocket and said I should pass it on to the one who gave the shiur as a mark of his appreciation."

## VICTORY OF FAITH

One night of Yom Tov, I met R' Hendel at Simchas Beis HaShoeiva. There was a chilly wind and a slight drizzle reminding us of the mabul that had poured down a few hours prior but had not deterred the hundreds of Anash and bachurim from dancing.

"You see the thousands of



R' Hendel (left) giving a prize to one of the bachurim who excelled in shmiras ha'sedarim.

guests," said R' Hendel, "and you can't help but remember Tishrei 5755, the first Tishrei after Gimmel Tammuz. It was that Tishrei when I began running Eshel-Hachnosas Orchim. For many years it was R' Moshe Yaroslavsky a"h who ran the organization. Under his leadership, the organization enjoyed special attention from the Rebbe such as the Rebbe's visits to their sukka, providing 'mezonos' for guests directly from the Rebbe's hand, financial support from the Rebbe's fund at the end of Tishrei, and comments from the Rebbe about Eshel during Tishrei farbrengens.

"In the last years of his life, I had the privilege of helping R' Yaroslavsky run Hachnasas Orchim. After he died in 5754, I and other bachurim founded the 'Vaad Chayalei Beis Dovid,' and we organized 'Eshel-Hachnosas Orchim.' Since then, all the Tishrei activities are l'ilui nishmas this extraordinary man of chesed.

"When I recall the early years of our work and compare it to today, it's truly a wonder. After Gimmel Tammuz, many Lubavitchers thought there is no reason to go to Crown Heights for Tishrei. They even fought against it and looked for

other means of hiskashrus like organized trips for shluchim to the CIS, the goal being for bachurim not to go to Crown Heights for Tishrei.

"In the first year or two after Gimmel Tammuz there was, in fact, a great weakening in this area, and only a few hundred came for Tishrei. Then, slowly but surely, emuna won out and the number of guests grew exponentially from year to year until in recent years we get about 5,000 guests just from Eretz Yisroel.

"Furthermore, in recent years we see those same rabbanim and mashpiim who initially opposed us coming themselves to 770 for Tishrei and they send their talmidim and mushpaim. This is the greatest demonstration of the victory of emuna!

"In recent years we are even getting boys and girls under bar/bas mitzva whose parents send them to the Machane (camp) Moshiach program. Dozens of kids who were born many years after Gimmel Tammuz come here and draw chayus for themselves and their families. A terrific staff closely supervises them all month and instills Chassidishe chayus in them.

"Many of the bachurim as

well as many girls come here thanks to the philanthropist R' Sholom Ber Drizin who provides stipends through the Dor Deia program. R' Drizin is Eshel's main supporter, and with the financial help of many Anash as well, we are able to provide gracious hospitality to the Rebbe's guests. It's a tremendous z'chus and provides much nachas ruach to the Rebbe."

**There are bachurim who come who have different views which leads to arguments. How do you deal with this?**

"Most of the guests rise above differences of opinion with the natural brotherly love that there is among Chassidim. Being here together despite the differences brings about closeness.

"The gashmius department of Eshel-Hachnosas Orchim is a wonderful example of achdus among Anash since we provide full room and board to all Lubavitchers who come here, no matter their yeshiva or views. All are treated equally.

"The ruchnius department does its utmost so that the guests focus on topics that bridge all differences. The maamarim and sichos in the booklets that are provided are selected by a committee that is comprised of Israeli roshei yeshiva who represent an array of views.

"In 770 we see the tremendous power of emuna. We see how Chabad Chassidim believe that the Rebbe is Moshiach, that the Rebbe is with us, and that staying in 770 for Tishrei arouses and strengthens our hiskashrus with the Rebbe. Differences of opinion center on a few areas such as those who go to the Ohel and those who won't; some who want to farbreng with certain mashpiim and others

who won't. Since we want to increase the achdus and respect differences of opinion, we enable every bachur to act according to his hergesh. The message we convey to the bachurim is, even with differences of opinion, you must (1) respect others, and (2) certainly not arouse hatred even if you think someone else is wrong.

"The reason we don't discriminate is because we truly care about the Rebbe's guests. This is the purpose of the organization and therefore, every guest of the Rebbe, no matter his views, is welcomed.

"Those few individuals who want to sow discord only take care of bachurim with specific views. If a bachur with a different view approaches them, they reject him. They demonstrate that it is not the Rebbe's guests they care about but fomenting quarrels. Their attempt at mixing into the learning and the times for learning show they don't care about the guests and don't even have a specific ideology; they just want to destroy. What ideology is there in an attempt to end the learning of Chassidus fifteen minutes earlier or by giving out a maamer from 5729 instead of 5727? We can only pray that sins cease...."

## WHEN FACING DARKNESS, ADD LIGHT!

**Some try to paint a different picture, not as idealistic a one as you make it out to be. Some even took the despicable step of tattling to NY city agencies to cause you trouble. What is your reaction to that?**

"They tell the story of a journalist who would exaggerate the number of participants in events he covered. He once



reported about an event attended by 200,000 people and to everyone's shock, he wrote that 200,000 people were in attendance. When they asked him why he hadn't written at least a million, he said: When there are 30 people and I wrote 300, how many people know that I exaggerated? Maybe three people who were at the event and read the article. But if I exaggerate now, tens of thousands of people will know about it.

"I guess people don't understand this journalistic insight. Thousands of people come to 770 and see the wonderful work of Eshel-Hachnosas Orchim, and these thousands tell their families about it. Tens of thousands of Lubavitchers hear the truth about Tishrei in Lubavitch. What do they think about those who hide the truth and report what they would have liked to see as though it happened?

"When they take old pictures showing violence and write about it as though it's going on today, well, people aren't stupid. They ask their relatives in 770 (and there are hardly any families without representatives in 770) and the relatives don't know what they're talking about. They are in 770 day after day and see bachurim sitting and learning by



Anash and bachurim pack 770 at t'fillos with the Rebbe

day and farbrenging by night. They see 770 humming with Chassidic life 24 hours a day.

“When I hear this nonsense I am reminded of a story I once heard from R’ Leibel Groner. After the Rebbe announced Mivtza T’fillin, he received a letter full of complaints against the campaign. Surprisingly, the Rebbe was pleased and he explained to R’ Groner – everything in k’dusha has opposition, and so this letter proves that the source of this mivtza is in k’dusha.

“I remember that when I went to 770 for the first time as a bachur, one of the mashpiim told about two Jews who went to the Rebbe for Mincha when they suddenly announced that the Rebbe would say a sicha. Of course, all the bachurim rushed over to the Rebbe, climbed tables, etc. One of these men was tremendously impressed by their great desire to hear what the Rebbe had to say while the other man was annoyed by their jumping on tables. The question is how do you look at things and what do you look at?

“Unfortunately, some opt to focus on marginal things and put every negative thing under a magnifying glass. When there are

“After the Rebbe announced Mivtza T’fillin, he received a letter full of complaints against the campaign. Surprisingly, the Rebbe was pleased and he explained to R’ Groner – everything in k’dusha has opposition, and so this letter proves that the source of this mivtza is in k’dusha.

thousands of guests, yes, negative things do happen that definitely are inappropriate for Chabad Chassidim, and everybody denounces it. Sane people know how to differentiate between *ikar* (primary) and *tafel* (secondary).

“I recommend that everybody focus on the incredible fact that thousands of Chassidim come here to the Rebbe with emuna p’shuta, with great effort, and although many of them never saw the Rebbe, they are devoted to every horaa and word in the Rebbe’s sichos. They live with the Rebbe and whoever sets foot in 770 during davening or farbrengens immediately feels the Rebbe’s presence. Thousands of Chassidim participate in the Simchas Beis HaShoeiva every night merely because the “Rebbe said so,” and they go on mivtza during the day despite their tiredness, and they walk for hours on Tahalucha, and it’s

all with chayus, in order to give nachas to the Rebbe. That is the real picture of Tishrei!”

\*\*\*

I heard that Erev Rosh HaShana, a time when every Jew looks for additional z’chusim, some troublemakers thought this was the best time to call New York City agencies in order to report about some places of lodging that Eshel arranged that did not meet government regulations. Thanks to their tattling, firemen came in the middle of the night and ordered the bachurim to vacate the premises immediately. The poor bachurim had to pack up their stuff and go to 770 in the hopes that Eshel would find them another place to sleep.

R’ Hendel, who had to work overtime to find a solution for 280 bachurim, refused to address this scandal directly.

“We are day workers,” he

**“When I asked him about his change of heart, he said that when he saw the bachurim evicted from one of the apartments because of the mesira, he was so upset by it that he decided to return all the money he had asked us for the apartments.**

said, quoting the Rebbe Rayatz, “and our job is to increase the light. That is my response to all this.

“I feel sorry for these people who know what bracha Chazal instituted for them in the Shmoneh Esrei and do their nasty work anyway. They need to remember that these are the Rebbe’s guests and there is someone [the Rebbe] in charge here.

“I once heard about a shliach who was tattled on and when he wrote to the Rebbe, the response was that Lubavitch has only grown from the informing done against it!

“I also see how the Rebbe blesses us with manifold blessings and success despite their dirty work. I’ll give you an example. I heard about someone in Crown Heights who has two apartments for rent and I asked to rent them for the guests. He wasn’t interested and it was only after much importuning that he gave his consent, but he demanded double the usual fee. We had no choice and so I gave him the money he asked for. He warned that if there would be damages, I would have to pay top dollar.

“At the end of Tishrei, after verifying that no damage had been done to the apartments, I called him to come and take a look. He walked through the rooms and then gave me an envelope with all the money I paid him for the apartments. When I asked him about his change of heart, he said that when he saw

the bachurim evicted from one of the apartments because of the mesira, he was so upset by it that he decided to return all the money he had asked us for the apartments.

“A wealthy person in the neighborhood called me and promised a large sum. He said that he was inspired to help because he was shaken up by the mesira.”

## AN EDIFICE OF CHESD

As mentioned earlier, the year’s surprise was that hundreds of girls were able to enjoy staying in Eshel’s new building. When I visited the place, I was impressed by the quality construction and furnishings of the guest rooms. I saw the construction workers working to finish the kitchen on the first floor so it can be opened soon to the public.

I asked R’ Hendel whether the building will service the girls from now on. He said it was a temporary solution for this year only.

“After we finish the kitchen, we will open the building to the public and it will be available for shluchim who want to come here with their mekuravim and enjoy the standards of a proper hotel stay.

“Until now, every couple or family who came, whether for Tishrei or any other time, had to look for a place to stay. Some people have no place to stay because they have no relatives here or friends. They

take whatever they can get and console themselves that it’s just part of life on the road ... (and these are the Rebbe’s guests, no less!)

“Others have friends or family in Crown Heights, but it’s not always comfortable to call and ask them to host your family for ten days. People work hard and are busy with their own problems.

“The new building will provide a solution with sixty nice rooms, comfortable beds, dinette, and attached bathrooms. Now, anybody or any family that wants to come to the Rebbe at any time can call and reserve a place.

“When we raised this idea with Rabbi Marlow a”h, he encouraged us and said that back in the 70’s the Rebbe had already suggested having a building for guests. The Rebbe said that guests would feel comfortable going downstairs at two in the morning to make themselves something to eat without being afraid that they would be waking their hosts.”

## IN CONCLUSION

**Rabbi Hendel offers some final thoughts:**

“First, our thanks to Hashem and to the Rebbe that we had the z’chus to help the Rebbe’s guests. I want to thank all the wonderful residents of Crown Heights since without their help, we could not provide all this chesed, especially all the donors led by R’ Sholom Dovber Drizin.

“I would also like to thank the fantastic staff of about 150 bachurim and 50 girls, thanks to whom we can undertake this vast project. A special yashar ko’ach to: Gilad Basel, Yosef Yitzchok Cohen, Boruch Mishulovin, and Shlomo Frishman. I also have to thank R’ Mordechai Chein and R’ Menachem Shagalov who

stand by my side throughout the month.

"A special thank you to the wonderful staff at *Beis Moshiach* and the Chabad.info website who successfully convey the great chayus here to the whole world.

"Secondly, there is much work ahead of us. As the guests return home, we spend two weeks packing up equipment and closing down operations while fundraising the enormous amounts of money needed to pay our suppliers and landlords. Every donation is welcome and whoever helps is a partner in hosting the Rebbe's guests!

"Third and most importantly, the cry of thousands of Chassidim who spent Tishrei in 770 and did not see the Rebbe. Who would have believed that 18 Tishreis would pass since 5755 and we would still have to organize hospitality in galus? Ad masai?



Beautiful hospitality rooms at Eshel-Hachnosas Orchim used by the girls this year

We want to see the Rebbe!

"All those who had the privilege of being here for Tishrei are ambassadors of the Rebbe to their city, surroundings, and family, to pass along the fire that was ignited in our hearts during this month. It is our obligation to inspire Anash worldwide

to strengthen their hiskashrus to the Rebbe by fulfilling all his horaos, and together we accept the Rebbe's malchus with the proclamation of: **Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu v'Rabbeinu, Melech HaMoshiach L'olam Va'ed!**



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Rabbi Jacob Schwei  
Member of the Rabbinical  
Court of Crown Heights

#### APPROBATION

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

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



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יחי אדוננו מורנו ורבינו מלך המשיח לעולם ועד

# SHOITEH! PARTYING WITH YOUR ARCH-NEMESIS?!



By Rabbi Akiva Wagner

**T**he following story was recently publicized and was printed in different places with minor variations, but the point is the same:

In Tishrei 5736 (1975) the Orthodox world was shocked to hear that on the second night of Hakafof by the Rebbe in 770, Chaim Cohen, the former judge of Israel's Supreme Court, received a hakafa at the Rebbe's minyan and was honored with reciting a verse of Ata Horeisa.

The truth, however, was that the decision to give him this honor was not reached easily. Chaim Cohen, in his younger years, was an Orthodox Jew and a member of Agudas Yisroel, but later broke away and left religious Judaism. He promoted liberal ideas and even married a divorcee despite the fact that he was a Cohen. He was also a main player in the "Who is a Jew" controversy and was one of the judges who signed the contemptible law that conversions do *not* have to be according to Halacha, an issue that r"l caused the Rebbe much pain.

Therefore, when Chaim Cohen arrived at the Rebbe's Hakafof that Simchas Torah, the gabbaim were hesitant to honor such a man. They were

also concerned that the larger Orthodox community would have serious complaints against Lubavitch for recognizing someone who was infamous for his opposition to anything precious to the Orthodox community. Their dilemma was so much greater because they realized that any opposition to a decision to honor him would focus on the fact that it was done in the presence of the Rebbe, and with the Rebbe's apparent consent.

No one wanted to take responsibility for the decision and its ramifications, and the only recourse was to ask the Rebbe himself for direction. One of the secretaries approached the Rebbe with the question, to which the Rebbe immediately responded, "A Jew is here with a hisorerus t'shuva, and you don't want to give him a Seifer Torah?!"

So they gave him a Seifer Torah, he even said a pasuk of the Ata Horeisa and then went into the circle to dance with all those who received a Hakafa. The Rebbe then started the song "Utzu Eitza V'sufar" by himself, and for 45 minutes nonstop, waved and clapped to increase the singing. The people who were there including Chaim Cohen became very tired and wanted to stop to rest but did not dare to do

so while the Rebbe was increasing the singing. During the entire 45 minutes, the Rebbe stood there looking at Judge Cohen while he was holding and dancing with the Torah.

As they had feared, there were those who expressed their reservation against this decision, accusing Lubavitch of supporting the enemies of the frum establishment. Many Lubavitcher Chassidim were themselves puzzled by the event.

Recently, 30 years later, new details have emerged concerning this event. Chaim Cohen had a very close friend who lived in Manhattan, and whenever he (Chaim Cohen) would visit NY he would stay by this friend.

A number of years after that Simchas Torah, one of the shluchim to Manhattan met this friend of Judge Cohen and invited him to come to the Rebbe. The friend adamantly rejected the offer saying, "Ever since Chaim Cohen attended that Hakafof by the Rebbe he changed many of his views and opinions, and I am not yet ready to change my opinions. I am the one who has to suffer as a result of Chaim Cohen's Simchas Torah spent by the Rebbe!"

...

This story recently became

grounds for a debate between two prominent Chassidim in a certain city. R' Sholom Ber was appointed a while ago as a shliach over a defined territory (that, while not an entire state, is nonetheless a noteworthy area).

A few years after moving there, having seen much success, he brought down another youngster, by the name of Chaim, to work under him as a shliach in a part of his neighborhood with his own distinct duties.

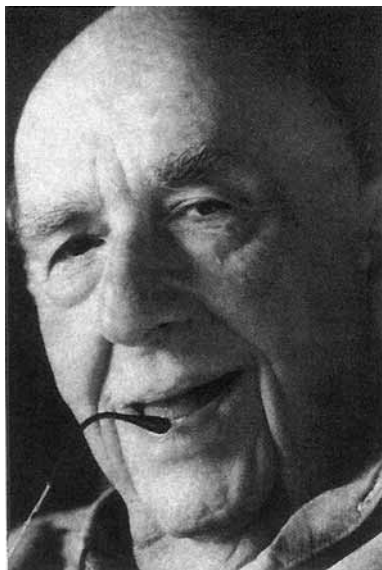
Now, both Sholom Ber and Chaim are distinguished chassidisher Yidden, who are deeply respected by all who know them, and who get along wonderfully with each other as well. Both of them are single-mindedly dedicated to their mission, in which they both achieve admirable results.

The problem that arose recently was when a certain new balabus moved into the neighborhood. This particular balabus, we'll call him Mike, while extremely wealthy and influential, shared much in common with the Chaim Cohen of the above story.

Outspoken against the Rebbe, he deliberately adopted positions that were hurtful to the Rebbe's mosdos. Needless to say, he evoked only feelings of repulsion in Lubavitcher Chassidim who were familiar with what he represented. It was no surprise, therefore, that ever since he moved to town he had found numerous opportunities to be a thorn in the side of both Sholom Ber and Chaim.

Both Chaim and Sholom Ber took every effort to ignore Mike, although his considerable wealth and power made it difficult to avoid him. Yet, they tried to focus on their job and davened

**“One of the secretaries approached the Rebbe with the question, to which the Rebbe immediately responded, “A Jew is here with a hisorerus t’shuva, and you don’t want to give him a Seifer Torah?!”**



Chaim Cohen, the former judge of Israel's Supreme Court

to Hashem to free them of all obstacles.

You can well imagine Sholom Ber's shock and outrage to discover one day that Chaim was holding an event in which he was honoring ... none other than ... Mike!

Sholom Ber was, understandably, fuming. He saw this as the ultimate treason, and he felt that it was an affront to Lubavitch and to the Rebbe. Chaim, however, tried to reason with him. “Look,” he said. “The Rebbe was mekarev Chaim Cohen. Why can’t we be mekarev Mike? You never know what kind of good can come out of it.”

But Sholom Ber was unforgiving. “What kind of a comparison are you making?” he spluttered. “The Rebbe said to give Chaim Cohen a Seifer

Torah because the Rebbe recognized that he was in a state of hisorerus t’shuva, and he gave it to him to arouse his neshama. But you’re trying to use this as justification to show support of someone who is not showing any indication of remorse. Chaim Cohen was ready to put aside his ego and carry the Torah, and the Rebbe allowed him to do so. But you’re lowering yourself to carry, to uplift Mike, who’s continuing to parade as a self-satisfied opponent to all that we stand for. And to support him because you expect (understandably) to get a few dollars out of him is tantamount to selling your ideals, your Rebbe, for money r”!

The argument continued, with Chaim accusing Sholom Ber of extremism, lack of understanding and flexibility, and Sholom Ber feeling betrayed by what he viewed as Chaim's compromise.

...

The story (as you may have guessed) is actually fictitious, but the situation is quite genuine. For we all know a “Mike.” In fact, he’s all around us. Mike represents the big decadent world that surrounds us. It’s full of material success, of monetary wealth, of apparent enjoyments and indulgences.

It represents the enemy. It goes against everything that we believe in and stand for. The whole existence of the world is, as its name denotes, *helem vehester*, one big concealment, an

avowed enemy of G-dliness.

We know it, we state it, we farbrengen about it. We complain bitterly about the “velt.”

But as soon as there’s a possibility of some – real or imagined – gain, suddenly we become best of friends. We honor it, we associate ourselves with it. We turn into loyal allies. We carry it proudly and triumphantly on our shoulders.

And our fellow shliach, our neshama, screams, “Hey! What’s going on over here! You’re fraternizing with the enemy! That’s no friend of ours. How can you sell your ideals, your principles, for some money or fun or imagined enjoyment?”

This brings to mind another Simchas Torah story:

During hakafof on the night of Simchas Torah one year, the Rebbe was speaking to one of the Chassidim present, R’ Y. D. The Rebbe mentioned one of the local chassidish doctors in Crown Heights. The Chassid, who was under the influence of the “spirits” of Simchas Torah, remarked (referring to the doctor by name), “Er iz a shoiteh (he is a fool).”

The Rebbe asked him, “How do you know?”

So he said, “Because I was seen by him.”

Then the Rebbe asked, “And did you pay him the fee?”

To which the Chassid responded, “Of course I did.”

Concluded the Rebbe, “Iz ver iz di shoiteh (Then who is the fool)?!”

We’re always quick to denounce Olam HaZeh in general and galus in particular as wicked, bad and intolerable. These distract us from our mission and turn us astray from

Hashem. They represent evil. They are our nemesis, our eternal foe.

Yet we go and spend our time and money to indulge more in Olam HaZeh, to have more fun and more physical pleasures. We expend our effort to have a greater involvement in the galus experience, rather than running away from it.

*Iz ver iz der shoiteh!*

• • •

This Shabbos, we read, once again, the timeless directive of Lech Lecha: “*mei’artzecha u’mi’moladetecha u’mi’beis ovicha.*” In order to successfully carry out our mission, to be a light unto the nations, to continue carrying the torch that Avrohom Avinu bequeathed to us, we have to put aside our personal cares and our materialistic pursuits.

Mei’artzecho. So you won’t be able to fulfill every last desire that you have. But is that what you’re in the world for? These worldly pleasures are our enemy, our destroyers. The prerequisite, the very first step towards being a Jew, is the readiness to denounce our dependence on material success.

I’m here to go on shlichus. So I won’t have a two-car garage (let alone the 2 cars to go into the garage). I won’t have a penthouse in Miami and a vacation home in Cancun. What are my priorities?

We learn and philosophize and accept and affirm that the whole world is meaningless; it is emptiness, and *ein od milvado*. But as soon as we have to make an important decision, what to do for Chanukah, what to do for the summer, whether or not (ch”v not) to go on shlichus, suddenly the worldly comforts become of great importance. We carry them aloft, and they become a major factor in our decisions.

How can we base our decisions on Olam HaZeh, on the nefesh ha’bahamis that is our archenemy?!

In 1995, the UN was marking its fiftieth anniversary with a series of events. One of them was a concert in the Lincoln Center in NY – by invitation only – on October 23<sup>rd</sup>, for all of the who’s who of dignitaries and diplomats and world leaders. Arafat Yimach Shmo V’zichro, who was in NY at the time, tried to crash the party with a group of his loyal terrorist cronies.

When Rudy Giuliani – then Mayor of NYC – spotted him, and in an act of great courage that brought down upon him the ire of the world – and sadly also much of the established Jewish leadership, he ordered him to leave the premises. The prominent murderer Arafat and his entourage never lived down the resulting humiliation.

Fine, you say that you’re not on the level, yet, to reject outright the entire existence of Olam HaZeh. Okay, so we can understand that we did not yet reach the level of *mo’eis b’ra*, to completely disregard worldly pleasures.

But to party with the murderer of our brethren? Business is business, but whom you party with is inexcusable.

L’chaim! May we all get our priorities sorted out, proudly carry the Torah on our shoulders, and leave the rest of the garbage alone; and may the Alm-ghty carry the Jewish people aloft as a Seifer Torah, so that the entire world will see the wonderful relationship He has with us, with the Geula HaAmitis VeHashleima Teikef U’miyad Mamash!!!

*A written farbrengen directed towards Alumni of Yeshivas Lubavitch Toronto*



# 'ON THAT VERY DAY, AVROHOM WAS CIRCUMCISED'

Discourse of the Alter Rebbe from Torah Ohr, Parshas Lech Lecha.

Free translation by Boruch Merkur

## WHY HAD AVROHOM NOT CIRCUMCISED HIMSELF PRIOR?

"On that very day, Avrohom was circumcised, etc."<sup>1</sup> To understand the difficulty [with the latter verse] cited in published works: Why had Avrohom not circumcised himself prior<sup>2</sup> [to being commanded, when he was 99 years old], for [it is said of Avrohom that] he fulfilled the entire Torah [i.e., all of its Mitzvos] – even the Mitzva of *Eiruvei Tavshilin*<sup>3</sup> ["which is not a law given to Moshe at Sinai but an enactment of the Scribes, established later on" —Rashi] – before it had even been given [at Mount Sinai]?

## CIRCUMCISION: HIGHER THAN G-D'S NAME HAVAYA

To shed light on the above, we must first understand the

concept of circumcision. For it says in Scripture, "It [i.e., the Torah] is not in Heaven, whereby one might say, 'Who will ascend to Heaven on our behalf? (*mi yaaleh lanu ha'Shamayma*)'"<sup>4</sup> – the acronym spelled out in the first letters of the latter part of the verse ("Who will ascend to Heaven on our behalf?") is "*mila*," circumcision; the acronym of the last letters of each word of that phrase spell out G-d's name "Havaya."<sup>5</sup> [This allusion not only juxtaposes and relates circumcision with G-d's name; it suggests that circumcision is in some sense superior. As we will learn, the spiritual significance of circumcision is actually expressed on two different levels; there are in effect two types of (spiritual) circumcision. The first is associated with G-d's name Havaya and the second we will refer to later on in the discourse as the "great circumcision."]

## WHO SHALL CIRCUMCISE MY HEART? ME OR G-D?

To explain, first it is written, "And you shall circumcise the foreskin of your hearts,"<sup>6</sup> and

another verse states, "Havaya, your L-rd, shall circumcise your hearts"<sup>7</sup> [leaving us with the question whether it is our personal challenge to complete the spiritual service of circumcising our hearts or is it within G-d's domain, a G-dly deed to be enacted upon us, being granted G-dly inspiration from On High].

The inference here is that there are actually two levels of circumcision.<sup>8</sup> The first is a personal challenge, insofar as we must [strive to] circumcise the foreskin of our hearts. This level of circumcision is tantamount to the concept of returning to G-d (*t'shuva*) – as it is written, "And you shall return unto Havaya, your L-rd"<sup>9</sup> – by fulfilling Torah and Mitzvos.

## AND HE WILL REDEEM US

Now, our Sages have said, "If the Jewish people return they shall be redeemed; if not, they shall not be redeemed."<sup>10</sup> [That is, antecedent to the Redemption is the return of the Jewish people to G-d through the observance of Mitzvos.] But regarding the era following the gathering of the exiles [upon their return to the Holy Land with the advent of the Redemption] it is written, "And He will bring you to the land and bestow benevolence upon you,

1) B'Reishis 17:26.

2) Commentary of Riva on the Torah: Since the Mitzva of Circumcision can only be performed once, therefore, he did not circumcise himself until he was commanded to do so. There are other answers that the commentaries offer. See *Torah Ohr* 41b.

The explanation according to the literal level of interpretation can be found in *Likkutei Sichos* Vol. 5, pg. 79, Footnote 25.

3) Yoma 28b.

4) D`varim 30:12.

5) Preface to Tikkunei Zohar, beg.; *tikkun* 22 and 70 (131a).

6) D`varim 10:16.

7) Ibid 30:6.

8) See *Igeres HaKodesh siman 4*.

9) D`varim 30:2.

10) Sanhedrin 97b.

etc.,<sup>11</sup> indicating an act of G-d upon us, the second [higher] level of spiritual circumcision, “Havaya, your L-rd, shall circumcise your hearts.” (Indeed, that is the meaning of “and bestow benevolence upon you and make you more numerous than your forefathers,” the level of “How great is Your benevolence which You have put aside, etc.”<sup>12</sup> For regarding Moshe, who was born circumcised,<sup>13</sup> it is written, “And they saw him that he was good, etc.”<sup>14</sup> [connecting the goodness of this second level of circumcision with a gift of benevolence from On High].) The first level of circumcision is a personal effort or initiative in the service of G-d, whereas the revelation of “Havaya, your L-rd, shall circumcise your hearts” is a gift of spiritual inspiration from Above.

## TORAH IS DOWN TO EARTH

It is regarding the second level of spiritual circumcision, which will take place after the ingathering of the exiles and after the observance of all [the Mitzvos of] the Torah, that it is written, “Who will ascend to Heaven on our behalf?” wherein the first letters of this phrase spell the acronym “*mila*,” circumcision, suggesting that it is superior to the Torah [which is referred to as “Toras Havaya,” the Torah of Havaya (alluded to only in the final letters of this phrase)]. Regarding the Torah it is said, “It is not in Heaven,”<sup>15</sup> for it has journeyed specifically downward, descending below [into the

realm of material concerns and physicality], as it is discussed in the Gemara<sup>16</sup>: “Rebbi Yehoshua said, ‘We don’t pay heed to a Heavenly voice [in determining Jewish law],’” for Torah is not in Heaven; it has descended lower than the Heavens. Thus, the Torah is called “Toras Havaya,” for G-d’s name Havaya [in this context] alludes to [the process of gradual descent, as follows]: The first letter of G-d’s name Havaya (YKVK), Yud [the smallest letter in the Alef-Beis], signifies contraction (*tzimtzum*); the next letter Hei [having width and height] conveys [a subsequent, limited] expansion; Vav – drawing down, etc.,<sup>17</sup> for in this manner the Torah is drawn downward.

## CIRCUMCISION IS GREAT

Circumcision, which is alluded to in the acronym spelled out by the first letters of the phrase mentioned above, is superior to the name Havaya, which appears, appropriately, in the final letters. Circumcision, therefore, in contrast with Torah, is associated with the Heavens, higher than the Torah, which has descended below the Heavens.

Thus, our Sages, of blessed memory, have stated, “Circumcision is great for 13 covenants were made upon it.” The meaning hinted at here by “Circumcision is great” is in reference to the greater, superior level of circumcision, which is G-d’s act of inspiring us, circumcising our hearts.<sup>18</sup> For that reason “13 covenants were

made upon it” [which the author goes on to explain].

A covenant is, of course, [a bond that is] beyond reason, beyond intellect.<sup>19</sup> Take for example the relationship of two close friends who make a covenant of their friendship. That is, they agree to maintain their bond even should the feelings between them dissipate in the future, on account of an intellectual reassessment of their relationship. They compel themselves [on account of the covenant] to love one another, at a level that surpasses reason and intellect.

## GREAT MERCY TO ATTAIN THE “GREAT CIRCUMCISION”

In this respect, the revelation and manifestation of the “great circumcision,” mentioned above (which is at the level of “How great is Your benevolence, etc.”), is dependent upon the 13 Attributes of Mercy, which are above wisdom and the intellect, and thus, above G-d’s name Havaya and above the Torah. (On the same basis, since the 13 Attributes of Mercy are higher than the Torah, they are, therefore, the mystical source of forgiveness for sin.) Thus, it states, “until Your people pass through, Havaya,”<sup>20</sup> meaning, until they “pass through” to the level that surpasses Havaya. (Indeed, also with regard to the 13 Attributes of Mercy it is written, “And Havaya passed, etc.”<sup>21</sup>)

11) D’varim 30:5.

12) T`hillim 31:20.

13) Sota 12a.

14) Shmos 2:1.

15) D`varim 30:12.

16) Brachos 52a, where it is discussed.

17) See *Igeres HaT`shuva* Ch. 4.

18) See *Mikdash Melech* on the Zohar III pg. 233b; *Likkutei Torah* Parshas K’doshim in *Taamei Mitzvos* on the topic of “*g’dola mila*.”

19) See *Likkutei Torah* Nitzavim 44b.

20) Shmos 15:16.

21) Shmos 34:6.

## AVROHOM "WAS CIRCUMCISED"

Now we can understand why Avrohom, who fulfilled the entire Torah before it had even been given, had not fulfilled the Mitzva of circumcision. Avrohom wanted to attain the "great circumcision," Divine inspiration. He fulfilled the entire Torah, which is lower than this level of circumcision ["great circumcision"], and thereby merited Divinely inspired spiritual circumcision. Thus it is written, "Avrohom was circumcised" [in the passive tense] – not that he circumcised himself – whereas regarding the circumcising of Yishmoel and Avrohom's

servants, which preceded the circumcision of Avrohom, it is written, "And he circumcised, etc.," for this was the lower level of circumcision, the level of "And you shall circumcise the foreskin of your hearts." Avrohom, however, merited the revelation of "Havaya, your L-rd, shall circumcise your hearts," and for that reason it says that "Avrohom was circumcised, etc." [in effect, by G-d Himself].

## ON THE DAY THAT IS ENTIRELY GOOD

This explanation sheds light on the meaning of "On that very day (*b'etzem ha'yom ha'zeh*), Avrohom was circumcised, etc."

Namely, with the "essence" (*b'atzmius*) of "that day," the day [or era] that is "entirely long, that is entirely good, etc." <sup>22</sup> "The essence of that day" refers to the great revelation of the Future to Come [the Redemption], the revelation of "great is Your benevolence," "entirely good." When the essence of that day [the light of the Redemption] was revealed to Avrohom, then "Avrohom was circumcised, etc." [then he merited the "great circumcision"; i.e., Divine inspiration utterly filled his heart].

<sup>22</sup> See *Ohr HaTorah* Parshas Pinchas, pg. 1201.

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# A LANDMARK SHUL

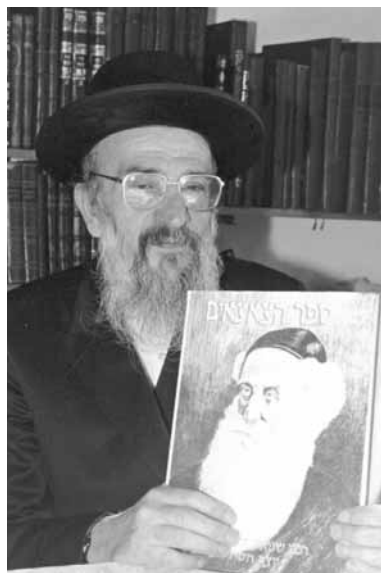
The Chabad shul in the Beis Yisroel neighborhood of Yerushalayim is marking its sixtieth year. \* The story of the shul that first had to struggle for its existence and then ultimately became an active center for Torah and Chassidus for Yerushalayim and all of Eretz Yisroel is retold \* Nostalgia with a Yerushalmi flavor.

By Menachem Ziegelboim

The Chabad shul in the Beis Yisroel neighborhood of Yerushalayim has undergone many changes over the years under the leadership of Rabbi Shmuel Elozor Halperin a”h (d. 2009, see issue #710), rav of the Beis Yisroel neighborhood since 5736 (1976). A stranger, who walks into the shul today and sees the numerous worshipers, the many shiurim, and the farbrengens held on special days in the Chassidic calendar, would find it hard to believe that the shul was once closed due to lack of members.

## AN ANCIENT SHUL WITH A HISTORY

The Chabad shul in Beis Yisroel was not established as a Chabad shul initially. It originally served as a shul for the residents of the neighborhood and belonged to Chassidei Kaidinov.



Rabbi Shmuel Elozor Halperin, rav of the Chabad shul in Beis Yisroel

However, this Chassidus no longer had many Chassidim. The Rebbe of Kaidinov, Rabbi Chanoch Henoch Zilberfarb zt”l, himself visited the shul only one

time. Word of his impending arrival made the rounds and a large crowd came to see him, but then he moved to Tel Aviv where he opened a beis midrash. At that time, Rabbi Aharon Roth (d. 1946) of “Shomrei Emunim” also davened there. He lived nearby.

In the summer of 1948, during the War of Independence, bloody battles between the Jewish soldiers and the Jordanian forces were fought in that area. The Jordanians fired shells constantly, and there were few worshipers who dared visit the shul at all, much less three times a day.

Due to the shelling, the population of the Beis Yisroel neighborhood dwindled, which directly affected the number of people who went to the shul, to the point that on Simchas Torah of that year the shul was without a minyan.



The number of people who visited the shul continued to diminish until one day, the shul sustained a direct hit from a shell that penetrated the eastern wall. As a result, the shul was closed.

Some time went by and Mrs. Pesha Hadassah Halperin, the mother of the Chassid R' Chananya Yosef z"l, passed away. Subsequently, Rabbi Halperin opened the shul for Shacharis, Mincha, and Maariv and he gave a shiur between Mincha and Maariv. Over the years he completed the Six Orders of the Mishna with the congregation as well as a few cycles of Shas.

The Rebbe of Kaidinov visited the shul one weekday and joined R' Chananya Yosef Halperin's shiur between Mincha and Maariv. He then thanked R' Halperin for

maintaining the beis midrash and bringing in an atmosphere of Torah and avoda.

Due to the instability of the shul's programs, membership, and attendance at Minyanim, R' Halperin considered giving the shul over to Chabad Chassidim. He hoped that if a Chassidic group would take it over, its members would feel obligated to attend all the prayers and this would transform the shul into a neighborhood landmark for the study of Chassidus and t'filla.

R' Halperin spoke to a member of the Kaidinov kollel, Yosef Dor z"l, the son and successor of the gabbai R' Rafael Meir Friedlansky z"l, who liked the idea. He got in touch with leading Lubavitch figures in Yerushalayim such as Rabbi Shlomo Yosef Zevin zt"l and Rabbi Ezriel Zelig Slonim

## A SPECIAL OPPORTUNITY

Among the regulars who attended the Chabad shul was Rabbi Aryeh Mordechai Wexelstein zt"l. Although he wasn't a Lubavitcher, he davened in the shul for years.

Throughout the years, Rabbi Chananya Yosef Halperin made sure that every chazan used the nusach established by the Alter Rebbe. One time, when R' Wexelstein went over to the amud, R' Halperin decided to take his stature into consideration and he said, "You are a regular here. If you find it hard to use the nusach Chabad on those days that you have yahrtzeit, we won't insist on it."

R' Wexelstein smiled and said, "The truth is that I always wanted to daven the nusach of the Alter Rebbe, but it is hard for me to switch from the nusach I learned as a child. However, now that I have the chance to daven with this nusach, I consider it a special opportunity, and why would I want to forgo it?"

## THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A CHASSID AND MISNAGED WHO COMES TO OUR SHUL

Rabbi Yitzchok Isaac Bart was one of the people who davened in the shul. At a farbrengen he once remarked, “What is the difference between a Chassid who comes to daven in our shul and a Misnaged? The latter takes his own Siddur, goes over to “his” shtender (lectern) and addresses “his personal” G-d. When he is done, he closes his Siddur and leaves.

“A Chassid who comes to this shul is someone who enters a beis midrash where many people daven. He feels a part of the tzibbur (congregation), and he remains afterward to learn or say l’chaim.”

**“A tiny shul with a handful of Chassidim who struggled to maintain its existence has been transformed into a busy center for Torah and t’filla.**

zt”l, as well as other rabbanim of the neighborhood, Rabbi Moshe Aryeh Leib Shapiro zt”l and Rabbi Gershon Lapidos.

After much discussion it was agreed that this was the only solution that would ensure the viability of the beis midrash. The eve of 12 Iyar 5712/1952 was a day of celebration for Anash in the area and for those who held the shul dear. The worshipers and Anash met at the shul to finalize the details, and this was done with much joy. The main speaker was R’ Halperin who, together with the Kaidinov representative, signed an agreement to turn the shul into a Chabad shul. From then on, it would be a place of t’filla and Torah and a center for the study of Chabad Chassidus, as well as its dissemination and all its outreach programs, in the spirit and under the guidance of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

That Friday night Anash from the area gathered together with many guests who came to attend this historic event. The event was written up in the various newspapers, and *Bita’on Chabad* featured a full report as well.

It’s interesting to note that

after the shul was transferred to Anash, the Rebbe quietly asked R’ Zelig Slonim whether it was all done properly. When R’ Slonim assured the Rebbe that all was kosher, the shul received a letter written especially for the shul and this letter hangs proudly on the wall till this very day. The Rebbe also sent Tanyas for the shul, “a gift from the Rebbe.”

## THE TRANSFORMATION

One can’t help but be amazed by the tremendous positive change that has taken place in this Chabad shul over the decades. A tiny shul with a handful of Chassidim who struggled to maintain its existence has been transformed into a busy center for Torah and t’filla. It is here that Chabad activity in Yerushalayim began.

The transformation of the beis midrash into a Chabad shul took place in 5712 (1952) at the same time that the Rebbe called for conquering the world and “spreading the wellsprings outward.” Following the Rebbe’s proclamation, the Yerushalmi branch of Tzeirei Agudas Chassidei Chabad (“Tzach”) was

founded. Tzach began working on two main fronts: spreading the wellsprings by strengthening the Chabad community and by impacting others. These two divisions are actually perfectly complementary.

It was only natural that when they looked for a place to conduct the various activities arranged by Tzach, they chose the Beis Yisroel Chabad shul as the ideal location. The shul, which was undergoing a renaissance, was an excellent location for the meetings that took place, which resulted in Torah, Chassidus, outreach and other activities. It all came from a small room in the beis midrash and was directed by members of the hanhala of Tzach in Yerushalayim: Rabbi Nachum Rabinowitz, Rabbi Zushe Wilyamovsky, Rabbi Zev Dov Slonim, Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Halperin, Rabbi Shimon Jabobowitz, Rabbi Elozor Erentrau, Rabbi Hillel Rabinowitz, and Rabbi Shmuel Elozor Halperin, who now held the position of secretary and acting chairman.

Shortly after the founding of Tzach in Yerushalayim, the idea was proposed to organize the Lubavitch youth of Yerushalayim into a unit that would operate under Tzach of Yerushalayim. The idea took shape with the help of many people, mainly Rabbi Tzvi Greenwald along with Rabbi Shmuel Elozor Halperin who took the organization under his wing.

After much effort, the first, historic gathering of Chabad youth took place. This kinus was held in the shul on the Chag Ha’Geula, 12-13 Tammuz. It was more successful than anyone anticipated it would be, with about 300 hundred children filling the shul. They

say that polio was raging at the time and one would have expected that with a gathering of this sort, contagion would have been a significant concern, but miraculously, there were no untoward results.

The eastern wall was graced by distinguished Chabad rabbis of Yerushalayim: Rabbi Shmaryahu Nachum Sasonkin, Rabbi Moshe Leib Shapiro, Rabbi Chananya Yosef Halperin, Rabbi Ezriel Zelig Slonim, Rabbi Pesach Mann, Rabbi Nachum Rabinowitz and the director – Rabbi Shmuel Elozor Halperin.

As a result of these programs that were held in the shul, Chabad's well-known Yeshivas Erev of Yerushalayim was launched. Afterwards, the innovative program spread to Kfar Chabad and other cities around the country. Hundreds of talmidim passed through over the years and many of them became T'mimim.

The beis midrash was constantly humming. It acquired a reputation as a happening place, and it served as a center for the dissemination of Torah and Chassidus.

For a long time there were shiurim in Chassidus for older students of Lubavitch descent who learned in other non-Lubavitch yeshivos. These shiurim were given by the rav of the shul and the rosh yeshiva of Toras Emes at the time, Rabbi Shmuel Elozor Halperin. These shiurim helped inspire many of them and strengthen their connection to their Chabad roots.

Over the years, many outstanding Chassidic figures attended the shul and left a deep impression on its character. Among them were: the mashpia R' Yisroel Yitzchok Halperin, R' Dovid Goldberg, R' Pesach Mann



The Yeshivas Erev that began in the shul

## THE FOUNDING OF THE GEMACH

The Chassid Rabbi Yisroel Sofer went to the shul one evening and saw Rabbi Chananya Yosef Halperin giving a shiur on the parsha. The atmosphere of friendliness and commitment to Torah pleased him, and he gave R' Halperin a sum of money to start a gemach.

Many people benefited from loans through this gemach. It helped numerous families regain financial stability. In particular, it helped many Sephardic young men who, at this time, were starting to establish G-d fearing homes. The gemach grew, but during the period of tremendous inflation the money was devalued and the gemach went bankrupt. All that remains are the ledgers that show how many kindnesses were accomplished through this gemach.

(who, by request of the Rebbe's representative R' Zelig Slonim, would review a maamer every week during the third Shabbos meal). Rabbi Avrohom Yaffe, who davened in this shul as well, was an outstanding Torah scholar who served as gabbai and Torah reader. There was also R' Uri Orenstein, scion of the Lubavitcher Orenstein family in Yerushalayim, a talmid chacham who sat and learned.

Among the people who switched over to the shul was the Chassid, Rabbi Bentzion Fundaminski, who although a working man was also a talmid chacham and a descendent of

the Alter Rebbe. On the Yomim Nora'im one could see him daven at length as he cried copiously.

At a farbrengen at the shul held for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, one of the participants remarked, "Boruch Hashem that we merited that this beis midrash continues to bustle with life, with Torah, t'filla and Chassidische farbrengens, and is a place that draws people to come and taste of the teachings of Chassidus Chabad. Many of the finest Jews from Yerushalmi families have come close to Chassidus, and the impact of the place is felt around the world."

# HE NEEDS YOU!

When Shlomo Meirzon was born in Riga, nobody imagined how difficult his life would be, spiritually and physically. Each stage in life entailed another challenge. He made it through most of them successfully, but in order to make it through his current challenge alive, he needs you. **Yes, you!**

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## LIFE IN DANGER

Three times a week, Shlomo Meirzon needs to go to the hospital and undergo dialysis for many hours. In a slow and exhausting process, his blood is purified of the accumulated toxins that are generally cleared away by the kidneys. Since the age of fourteen, when his kidneys stopped functioning, his life depends on dialysis.

Although dialysis works well, the side effects are terrible. The removal of fluids too rapidly, the rapid changes in sodium levels in the blood and the slow reaction of the nervous system (which monitors blood pressure) often causes a drop in blood pressure which can result in nausea, dizziness, severe headaches and even fainting and loss of consciousness.

Someone who is satiated cannot feel hunger and a healthy person cannot feel what a sick person feels, but as observant Jews we know that when the Torah says we should desecrate the Shabbos for a seriously sick person, it means their lives are truly in danger. Rabbi Shmuel Wosner, who is considered the

greatest Chassidic posek today, once told those who help people get kidney donations that when there is an opportunity to get a kidney on Shabbos, it is a mitzva to desecrate the Shabbos to do so! This is because, as long as kidneys are not working and a person needs to rely on dialysis, this entails danger to life.

## JOURNEY TO CHABAD

Shlomo was born in Riga, Latvia under the dark cloud of communism. He took his first steps in Judaism in 5749 when the winds of freedom began to blow and he attended the first Jewish school that opened in the Soviet Union. His friend, Gershon Paley, would bring him his t'fillin every day and he would put them on during recess.

One day, Gershon suggested he join him for Shavuot at the Marina Roscha shul in Moscow. His mother reluctantly agreed to let him go for the two days of Shavuot, but after experiencing Mattan Torah in yeshiva, he decided to undergo a bris mila and remain in yeshiva. He had to contend with his mother who, nearly every week, would

go to Moscow in an attempt to persuade him to return home. "You are missing your exams," she pressured him, but once he got a taste of Torah the rest did not interest him.

He spent the following years learning along with shlichus. He also joined a contingent of bachurim who held a vigil near the Lenin Library as part of the efforts made to retrieve the "Schneersohn Collection." 24 hours a day, the bachurim held a protest vigil near the library and explained why they were there to visitors.

## UNSUCCESSFUL TRANSPLANT

Motzaei Simchas Torah 5752 he did not feel well and had difficulty breathing. He was taken to the hospital where they discovered that his kidneys had stopped working and he was experiencing edema of the lungs (an abnormal accumulation of fluid that produces swelling).

He spent a month in the ICU and fought for his life. When he left the hospital he was told that his kidneys were no longer working and that he would have to be on dialysis three times a week.

A few months later he received the good news that a suitable kidney had been found for him. He underwent a kidney transplant and after being under observation in the hospital for a month he was released. Throughout this time, he was helped by the shluchim in Riga, R' Nosson Berkahan and R' Mordechai Glazman.

Apparently the transplant wasn't performed in the best possible manner and the weather in Riga did not agree with him. His doctor advised him to go



to Jerusalem both because of the dry air and because there he would receive better medical care than in Riga.

Shlomo went to the Gutnick Center in Yerushalayim where he learned safrus and began volunteering for Bris Yosef Yitzchok.

Then, at the age of 28, shortly after he married, his problems recurred. Every three months he went to the hospital for extensive testing. The transplanted kidney deteriorated from visit to visit. Erev Yom Kippur an infection was discovered in the transplanted kidney and he had to undergo an emergency operation to remove the kidney.

Nearly seven years have passed since then and several times every week Shlomo goes to the hospital for dialysis to keep him alive. Life on dialysis is very hard. His daily schedule is dictated by dialysis and trips to the hospital, then the nausea and side effects. Above all else there is the uncertainty and nonstop tension.

Shlomo is waiting for a new kidney. Those who are familiar with the procedures involved when waiting for a kidney in Eretz Yisroel (and anywhere in the world) knows that it can take years.

## YOU CAN HELP!

Half a year ago, Shlomo read in *Beis Moshiach* about someone who was able to locate a kidney donor through Rabbi Lieder's Ahavas Chesed organization. Shlomo contacted R' Lieder and when R' Lieder went to Eretz Yisroel for the seudas hodaa for that kidney transplant, the two of them met.

R' Lieder took copies of all the medical documents and began the process which would enable Shlomo to receive a kidney transplant in New York. Shlomo recently came to New York for donor compatibility testing. He is being hosted by R' Lieder who takes care of all his needs. Now he is waiting for a donor to give him new life.

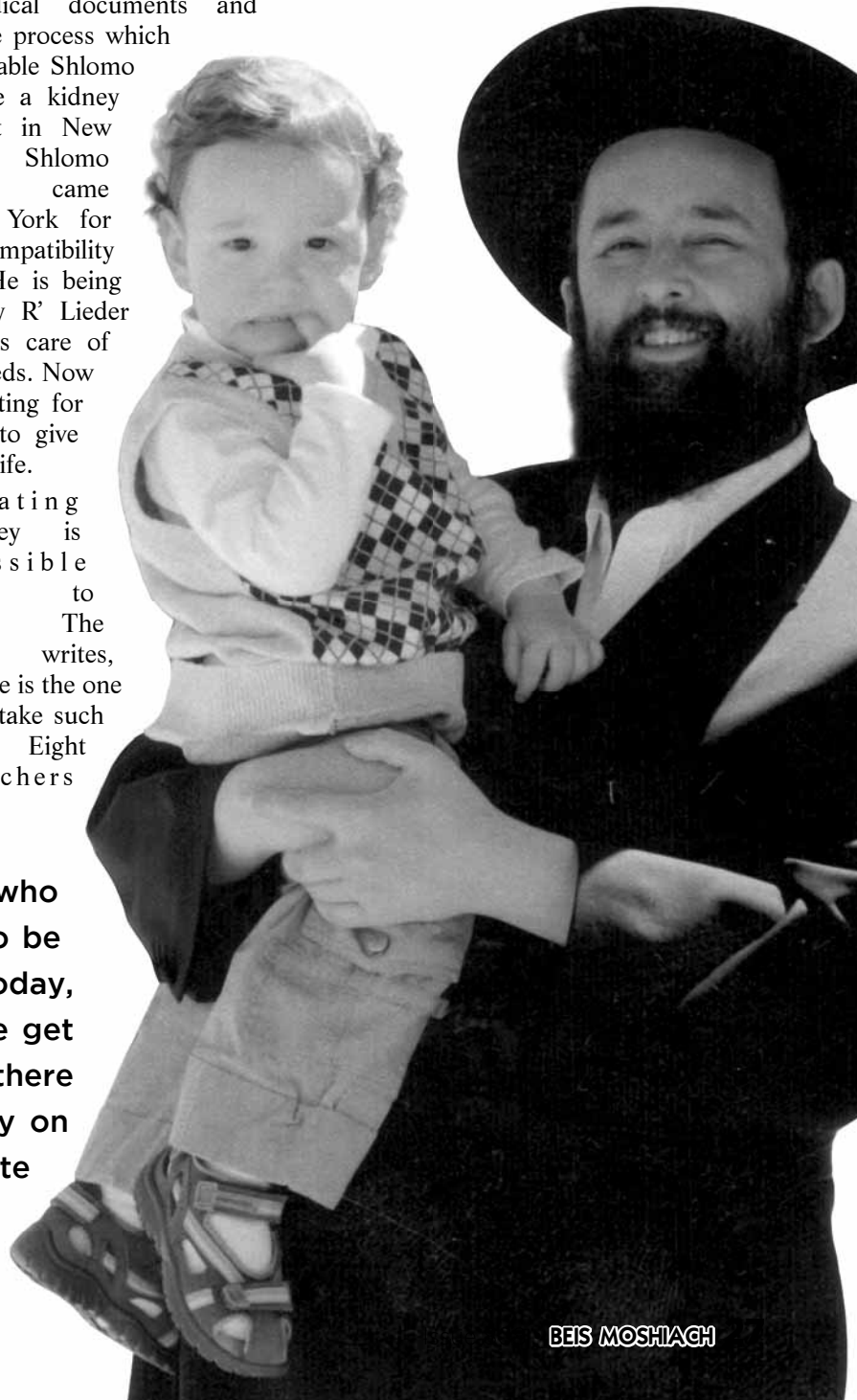
Donating a kidney is permissible according to Halacha. The Radvaz writes, "Fortunate is the one who can take such a step." Eight Lubavitchers

have already donated a kidney and have saved lives. If you want to join them and save Shlomo's life, call Ahavas Chesed now:

**For additional information about donating a kidney, to donate a kidney, or to help with the high costs of a kidney transplant, please call Rabbi Lieder at 718-221-2424 or 646-805-8405; rabbilider@gmail.com**

**“Rabbi Shmuel Vosner, who is considered by many to be the greatest Chassidic posek today, once told those who help people get kidney donations that when there is an opportunity to get a kidney on Shabbos, it is a mitzva to desecrate the Shabbos to do so!**

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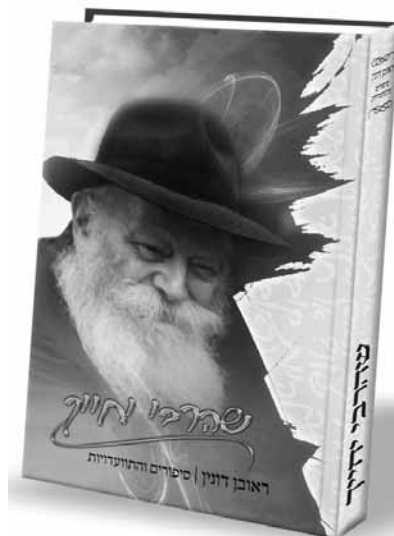


# REUVEN DUNIN ON MASHKE

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

Collected and Arranged by Chanoch HaLevi Shachar

Translated by Michael Leib Dobry



## NOACH'S THREE CUPS

Once on Simchas Torah night, someone took a bit too much mashke, to the point that it led him to physical violence. The following day, the whole thing repeated itself, and after he started drinking, he began to act wild again. Later that day, we went to a shul at the end of the neighborhood (a Litvishe shtibel) in order to read the Torah. One bachur called up another bachur (who had also had his fair share of mashke) for an aliya, but the latter refused. A struggle ensued in the process, and one of the pillars on the bima was broken as a result. From that moment on, we never went to that shul again – something that caused Reuven tremendous anguish – and we subsequently organized an Aron Kodosh in Reuven’s home.

On the Shabbos following that incident Reuven said, “We are familiar with the story in the Midrash about Noach planting a vineyard when he first left the ark. He drank three cups: the first like a lamb, the second like a dog, and the third like a *chazir*.

How do we explain this? *The first cup like a lamb* refers to someone who takes mashke in accordance with the Rebbe’s limitations and then becomes a proper vessel like a lamb, usually rather quiet and sometimes bleating gently. *The second like a dog* is when the person takes more mashke, and barks at and sometimes even bites everyone like a dog. *The third like a chazir* is when he continues to drink and reaches the third level – wallowing in his own filth like a pig in its pen. Thus, when the drinking causes someone to raise his hand upon another Jew (*l’havdil*, like a dog that bites), it is absolutely forbidden according to Torah for him to touch any mashke.”

Reuven would repeatedly emphasize the absolute ban, from his point of view, upon anyone taking a drink at a farbrengen who was not prepared to keep his hands to himself. To wet your whistle – yes, but no more than that.

(Chanoch HaLevi Shachar)

## THE MONKEY FROM HAIFA

When Reuven would farbreng, he would insist that everyone say “L’chaim.” He explained this by claiming that if someone doesn’t have a “L’chaim,” the words of the farbrengen simply won’t penetrate his mind and psychological defenses, or as he would say, “If you think that you came to see a performance by the monkey from Haifa as he scratches himself, makes all kinds of funny faces for you and makes the place exciting, then I’m here to inform you that the monkey is going home. I came for a farbrengen, and at a farbrengen, you say L’chaim. If this isn’t clear, then we have a misunderstanding, and I’m out of here.”

(Chanoch HaLevi Shachar)

## DO YOU WANT TO FARBRENG OR NOT?

At a farbrengen with T’mimim, some of the bachurim refused to say “L’chaim,” and they sang the niggunim merely to go through the motions; it was a really dry affair. The main thing, from their point of view, was that

the show should get started.

So Reuven explained that he had come to a farbrengen, not a show, and then said. “I don’t know how to tell you this gently and from the heart, but there were times when I worked in excavation that we had to start up the tractors manually. (NOTE: Back then, prior to the development of the electric starter, starting the tractor required cranking it by hand. Reuven would often tell about the winter season, when they had to light a fire in order to heat up the gas tank, thus enabling the fuel to reach the minimum temperature necessary to start the engine.) This was done through a piece of metal shaped like a Lamed, and they would insert it into the tractor and turn the object by hand, until the tractor would decide that it was ready to work that day. If you would have told me beforehand, I would have brought some piece of metal... in order to get things moving. However, I don’t have this piece of metal here now, so decide if you want to farbreng or not. I have no intention of begging you to do anything. If you don’t want to farbreng, fine. May you live and be well, I’ll forget all the effort I made to come here, and we’ll just remain friends.”

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

## ONE CUP (1)

As we were making our way to a warehouse in downtown Haifa to buy some cases of lemon vodka wholesale for a farbrengen, I asked Reuven about the concept of having only one cup for everyone to use for saying “L’chaim.” “I’m not sure from whom I heard this,” Reuven said in reply, “but the whole idea of using one cup has

**“If you think that you came to see a performance by the monkey from Haifa as he scratches himself, makes all kinds of funny faces for you and makes the place exciting, then I’m here to inform you that the monkey is going home.”**

several aspects to it. First of all, if I’m not mistaken, I think that R’ Mendel told me that there had been a plague in Russia a long time ago, and the doctors warned against more than one person drinking out of the same cup due to the fear of infection, resulting in the established custom of each person having his own cup. The Chassidim then decided (it seems to me that this was already back in the days of the Baal Shem Tov) that they started drinking from one cup in order to feel more like brothers. They could rely upon the Rebbe that no mishap would ever come from a farbrengen (besides the fact that the alcohol would burn out all the germs).

“Secondly, it is written that Torah guards the wealth of the Jewish People, and if you distribute [mashke] to each person in his own cup, it will stay there until the end of the farbrengen. This creates a situation of *bal tashchis*. Also, each time you tell someone to have L’chaim, he will take a new cup, so no one will suspect that he’s not drinking. And if all this is not enough for you, then imagine that you were the one to buy all the mashke at your own expense, and see how quickly you’ll understand.”

We loaded the car with cases of lemon vodka and 95% proof alcohol. When the lemon vodka was polished off and Simchas Torah came around, we developed a new idea: mixing the alcohol with juice

concentrate. This way, it will be both sweet and sharp. The results are well-known to anyone who has ever tasted this concoction. Apparently, the reason for this was the low price of regular alcohol in relation to vodka. But thanks to this mashke, we merited unique revelations that we would unlikely experience anywhere else, such as the stories about Shamil and Anim Z’miros.

(Chanoch HaLevi Shachar)

## ONE CUP (2)

At a farbrengen with Reuven people would say “L’chaim” out of only one cup. Once when someone said that the cup was dirty, Reuven replied, “What do you mean ‘dirty?’ Don’t you see everyone drinking from it?”

(Mendy Ashkenazi)

## WITHOUT MASHKE

When Reuven’s doctor would not allow him to consume alcohol, he would sit and say “L’chaim,” but he would only moisten his lips. Having been appointed by Reuven to be the *sar ha’mashkim*, I was perplexed because Reuven insisted that I give mashke to everyone, including him. During the farbrengen, Reuven whispered to me, “It can happen that you reach an age when it’s possible to farbreng without mashke.”

(Chanoch HaLevi Shachar)

“So what do you do when it doesn't have enough of an effect? Then you do a somersault, and that sufficiently mixes the mashke to let you keep farbrenging.”

### MIXING THE DRINKS

I asked Reuven if it was permissible to mix different types of mashke. Reuven replied that he had never heard the Rebbe speak against this. “But,” Reuven added, “you must be stringent not to exceed the prescribed limit. So what do you do when it doesn't have enough of an effect? Then you do a somersault, and

that sufficiently mixes the mashke to let you keep farbrenging.”

(Leizy Wilschansky)

### ONE DROP

At the Yud Shvat 5752 farbrengen in Morristown, Reuven said, “Chassidim used to have no problem with Moshiach – even T'chiyas HaMeisim was fine with them, since they

had grasped [the idea] from the wellsprings of Chassidus. I don't know how much they actually grasped, maybe just a few drops, but it is explained in Chassidic sources that even one drop from “*mayanei ha'yeshua*” (the wellsprings of salvation) is enough (as in the story of the king's son and the precious crown jewel). The Rebbe once said at a farbrengen in response to those who are amazed by the whole concept of a mashke quota, that there can be a drop that is as effective “like from the wellsprings of salvation.”

(Audio transcript – courtesy of 'Kol Mevasser' Institute)

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# THE ZEIDE-RAV

## PART 1: CHILDHOOD IN PODOBRANKA

Following his earlier descriptions of his great-grandfather, this installment begins a sub-series about R' Heishke's grandfather, R' Menachem Mendel Dubrawski, whom he called Zeide-Rav. In part one, he tells of his Zeide's childhood and chinuch with his own grandfather, R' Meir, in his mother's hometown of Podobranka.

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By R' Yehoshua Dubrawski a"h

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### GRANDFATHER R' MEIR

After the passing of his mother Tzivia, Zeide-Rav was raised by his grandfather, R' Meir (the father of his own father R' Yehoshua) in the small town of Podobranka in White Russia. Zeide Meir was a Chassid of the Tzemach Tzedek and would be "oleh regel" (travel to the Rebbe on foot) often.

R' Meir was a big Chassid. As great a Chassid as he was, that is how poor he was. A Chassid such as he had to see the Rebbe every year, but a pauper such as he, (a *yomker* pauper – "yomker" in my grandfather's lexicon meant: deeply, profoundly) did not have the means to pay for even a cheap wagon harnessed to an old mare that dragged her feet. That is why he would walk to Lubavitch.

The journey there and

back took several weeks. As he traveled, if he did not manage to reach a village by the time night fell, he would sleep in the forest or on the riverbank. He did not know what it meant to fear bandits or a wolf. Over his shoulder he would sling a small bundle containing provisions for the road – bags of hard black bread crusts and some onions. Naturally, while R' Meir was away from home, the poverty back home became even more extreme.

He told Zeide about an open miracle of the Tzemach Tzedek that he personally witnessed. It is quite likely that this "little" episode of the Tzemach Tzedek's ruach ha'kodesh is unknown to the public.

The Tzemach Tzedek was very weak during the last years



of his leadership, but many Chassidim still came to see him in yechidus. Instead of receiving them all in the yechidus room, he received one after the other while sitting near the window. My great-grandfather Meir was third in line waiting to approach the Tzemach Tzedek, so he clearly saw and heard what happened.

A man gave a *pidyon nefesh* to the Rebbe but instead of scanning it, the Tzemach Tzedek read it out loud. The man had written, asking for a bracha, "*avuri ... v'avur b'nei mishpachti*" (for myself and my family members), but instead of reading it as the man had intended it, the Rebbe changed the vowels to read, "*b'ni m'shifchasi*" (my son from my maid). The man tried correcting the Rebbe but the Tzemach Tzedek read it once again, "*b'ni m'shifchasi.*" The man tried again, this time more quietly, whispering, "*b'nei mishpachti*" and the Rebbe said, "Fool, fool, who are you talking to?"

### WHY THE SHABBOS GOY YEARNED FOR MOSHIACH

Podobranka was completely Jewish, there was nary a gentile to be seen. Yes, one gentile lived in the town (I think his name was Chvedka), the Shabbos goy,

“Someone once heard the Shabbos goy sigh and say, “Ah, when is Moshiach coming already?” The Jew asked, “What do you mean? Your messiah came already.”

whose entire being was defined solely by his doing *malacha* for Jews on Shabbos that only a goy can perform. He was an expert on Jewish life, spoke fluent Yiddish, and was even knowledgeable about communal matters. Even the little town of Podobranka had two rabbanim, of course. When the Shabbos goy noticed a woman going to the rabbi to ask a halachic question about a chicken, he would advise her, “Go to so-and-so since the other rabbi is more stringent.”

I don’t remember whether Zeide told this story about the Shabbos goy of Podobranka or about another Shabbos goy:

Someone once heard the Shabbos goy sigh and say, “Ah, when is Moshiach coming already?” The Jew asked, “What do you mean? Your messiah came already. Surely you know that only we Jews await the coming of our Moshiach!”

The Shabbos goy said, “Of course I know that, but I am waiting for your Moshiach, because now, while your Moshiach has not yet come and you are in exile amongst us gentiles, I am your servant. I hope that when your Moshiach comes and we gentiles will be in exile amongst you, that things will turn around and you will be my servant.”

### R’ LEVIK’S CHAVRUSA

Bubbe Tzivia came from the famous Chaikin family though I don’t remember how, but she was definitely a niece to R’ Boruch Shneur’s rebbetzin, the mother of R’ Levi Yitzchok zt”l

(referred to by Chassidim as Reb Levik), the Rebbe’s father. In the correspondence between Zeide and R’ Levik, the acronym for the term *she’er b’sari* (lit. flesh of my flesh, i.e. a relative – ed.) always appears in the salutation to express the warm feelings of being blood relations.

R’ Levik and Zeide were not merely cousins; they were also classmates for a period. Zeide was about one year older than him. When they were 12-13 they learned by the great Chassid and lamdan, R’ Yoel Podobranner (Chaikin) who was their uncle. Zeide spoke a lot about R’ Yoel Chaikin and his teaching, influence, and conduct, whether about the actual material they covered, or the unique salt (Heb. play on words meaning clever) and pepper (Heb. play on words meaning complex) “flavor” he conveyed – both in the learning itself and in “peripheral” matters.

R’ Yoel would ask them scholarly riddles, hard questions that even learned bachurim would find difficult. One such question that Zeide asked me, I posed to readers who were b’nei Torah and none of them knew the answer. As Zeide told me, R’ Yoel asked this question to his two talmidim and **both of them** came up with the answer, but R’ Levik answered first.

When R’ Yoel sang the praises of these two talmidim, he would say that in the two main intellectual abilities of “grasping” and “deep comprehension,” they were equal in one and R’ Levik was better in the other.

I am no maven in genius.

I remember Zeide-Rav in his old age when he was already broken down by life and was very far from what he was in his youth, but if a maven like R’ Yoel equated my grandfather with R’ Levik, it is safe to assume that he truly possessed an unusual mind.

### THE CHILD WHO CREATED AN UPHEAVAL

When Zeide-Rav grew up as an orphan by Zeide Meir, there were two melamdim in the town who taught Gemara. Why two? Mainly for the same reason that many towns had two rabbanim, shochtim, etc. – one for the Chassidim and one for those who were not.

The problem was that the Chassidishe melamed, although a scholar and a refined Chassidic personality, gave a Gemara shiur that was entirely unsuitable for young students who needed to learn and understand a deep topic thoroughly and receive a derech in learning. He would offer up all sorts of *p’shetlach* and *dreidlach* (convoluted explanations) when they barely understood the simple meaning of the Gemara with Rashi and Tos’fos.

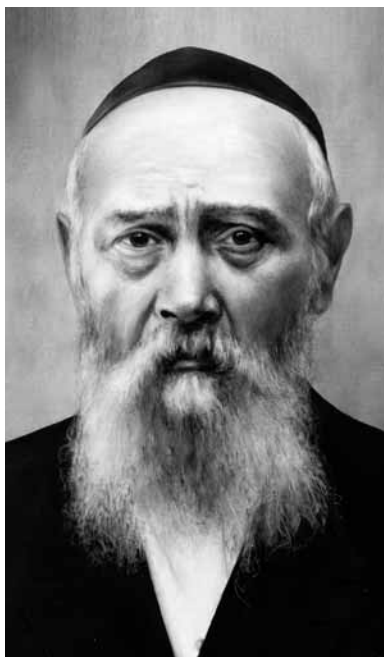
The “Misnagdishe” melamed was an excellent teacher and he showed his students how to understand the simple meaning of the Gemara “on the spot” (i.e. without bringing in difficult questions from other places). Of course, the more Chassidishe people sent their boys to the Chassidishe melamed, and it was only natural that an outstanding Chassid such as Zeide Meir would send his grandson Mendele, a scion of Chassidishe stock, to the Chassidishe melamed.

Zeide-Rav was strong-willed already as a child. He had firm

ideas and he wasn't afraid to act in accordance with his understanding. As young as he was, he felt that what his teacher was providing wasn't quite "it." He decided as a one-time experiment to go and listen to the shiur given by the other melamed. He did not consult with anyone; he just did it. He snuck into the shul where the Misnagdishe melamed was teaching and he loved it! This was learning! Without asking anyone, he joined the other melamed's shiur.

Although I think he was the youngest boy in his class, since he was so smart all the other students looked up to him. When he switched to the other melamed, many of the other boys followed him. One by one, they left the Chassidishe melamed until he was left without talmidim. Of course, this left the melamed brokenhearted. Aside from the humiliation, he had lost his income. He complained to his fellow Chassidim and the town was in an uproar. This was a Chassidishe town, after all, and the Chassidim were furious. Who was to blame for this despicable rebellion?

There was a commotion in the shul where Zeide Meir davened.



An investigation was done and they found that the guilty party was none other than ... little Mendele, R' Meir's grandson! The shul reverberated with calls to "twist the ear off" of such a "chevraman" who had wreaked such havoc.

When young Mendele arrived at shul, he was met by scowling faces and angry questions were hurled at him – how could he do this? How did a young whippersnapper dare do such a thing? He did not have even one

defender (this time, said Zeide, he was a "little" confounded).

Some older Chassidim told Zeide Meir (for whom they all had respect) to give his grandson what he deserved. What R' Meir told Zeide later in private is another story; what he did was "give it" to the people who made a fuss:

"What are you screaming about? If a young boy doesn't care about what people will say, just so that he can go and listen to a good shiur and thoroughly understand the Gemara, he should be held up high...and these people want to "give it to him?!" If someone is to blame here, it's not the talmid but us, the parents and Chassidishe askanim. A child who learns Torah does not need to know, nor does he have to deal with, community matters. **We** were the ones who needed to ensure that the talmidim learned as they should." And the crowd calmed down.

Sadly, I don't remember what happened to the Chassidishe melamed, but one thing is certain: attending the Misnaged's shiur did my Zeide no harm; all his life he remained a Chassid, through and through.

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# A LIGHT TO THE NATIONS

By Rabbi Heschel Greenberg

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



## ABRAHAM'S CONCERN

When Abraham was given the Mitzvah to circumcise himself, the Midrash relates how he responded, "Before I was circumcised there were many wayfarers who would come to me, whereas now that I am circumcised no wayfarers will come to me."

The question has been asked what connection does circumcision have with Abraham's hospitality? And why was Abraham so concerned that he would not attract any wayfarers once he was circumcised? The simple answer was that he was talking about the short-term effects of the procedure. He would not have any guests coming to him as long as he would be convalescing.

A deeper answer to this question is that circumcision served as a testimony to Abraham's unique relationship with G-d. Circumcision is a covenant that G-d made with Abraham and all his Jewish progeny that sets them apart from the rest of the world. To Abraham, circumcision would place him on a pedestal in relation to the other nations. With his elevation to the status of a chosen person and the father of a chosen nation, how would other people feel? Would they not become alienated from Abraham? With such an attitude, would they ever care to enter his

home again?

This premise can also explain why, according to Rashi, Abraham consulted with his friend Mamre as to whether he should circumcise himself. The question is asked, why would Abraham consult a friend as to whether he should follow G-d's command?

In light of the above it may be suggested that his question was not whether he should comply with G-d's command, but whether it would create a barrier between him and the other nations of the world.

While Abraham knew that regardless of the consequences vis-à-vis his neighbors, he would go through circumcision. His question was: would his circumcision indeed have a deleterious effect on his relationships with others and if yes, what could he do about it?

## G-D'S REASSURANCE

We can now understand why G-d changed his name from Abram to Abraham. Abraham, the Torah states, translates as: "A father of a multitude of nations." By giving him this name, G-d was responding to his fears. Not only would he not lose the people he had already befriended, but his influence will spread far and wide to an even greater audience—he will become the father of a multitude of nations.

This premise will also clarify why immediately after the story of Abraham's circumcision the Torah continues with the way G-d sent angels disguised as people so that Abraham could play host to them. By relating this event, the Torah wishes to underscore that his circumcision did not deter people from coming to Abraham. Soon after his circumcision—even as he was still recovering from the self-inflicted surgical procedure at the age of 99!—he was able to reach out to strangers. This helped to assuage Abraham's concerns that he might lose contact with outsiders.

## WHY DID ABRAHAM CARE ABOUT LOSING GUESTS?

One can still raise the question as to why Abraham was so concerned about this Mitzvah of circumcision in particular. Our Sages tell us that Abraham anticipated all of the commandments even before they were given at Sinai and performed them to the extent possible. (For example, while he could not recite the Hagada on Passover night that describes the future Exodus of the Jews from Egypt, he could have eaten Matza. He may have even recounted how G-d saved him and his wife Sarah from their ordeal in Egypt at the hands of Pharaoh as recorded in the



beginning of this week's parsha.)

Why then did he not show any concern that his very different code of behavior would not alienate others?

To answer this question we have to ask another question. Why did Abraham care if the performance of circumcision would distance wayfarers from his home? If G-d was not concerned, why should he be? True, inviting guests into your home is a mitzvah—but if G-d gives us one Mitzvah and then tells us to do another that will override the first one, that too is G-d's will. Why then did Abraham worry about the possible loss of wayfarers coming to his home?

## ABRAHAM'S MISSION

Abraham was charged by G-d to reach out to all of the people with whom he had contact and to “convert” them to ethical monotheism. In the very beginning of the parsha the Torah relates how Abraham came to Canaan with “the people they acquired in Charan.” According to Rashi this was not a reference to servants or slaves but to the people they succeeded in influencing to accept the belief in one G-d and to follow in the just and kind ways of Abraham and Sarah. This was not just Abraham fulfilling a specific Mitzvah. It was his *raison d'être*. This was his life's mission.

To this end G-d promised him before his leaving for Canaan that “I will make your name great,” the meaning of which is that Abraham's fame will enhance his influence over others. Rashi explains that the “greatness of his name” alludes to the expansion of his name from Abram to Abraham that occurred in conjunction with his



# Abraham's dilemma was how does one balance the two? How can one be an “elitist” and expect the rest of humanity to be receptive to the message?

circumcision This connotes that Abraham's future would revolve around his ability to change the world and make it conform to G-d's plan.

We can now understand Abraham's dilemma. Abraham knew that he had to continue to influence the world, which he did primarily by playing host to wayfarers. In order to have an effect on others they have to feel that you share interests, come from the same background, or have a similar destiny.

As long as Abraham's focus was on ethics and morality there was common ground between him and all the others. Even the recognition of G-d was achieved by Abraham's demonstrating to them how G-d was their Provider and Benefactor. Abraham essentially introduced them to a G-d who is the Creator and Provider of all humanity equally. From that vantage point it was relatively easy to convince them to follow in his footsteps.

Once he would be circumcised—which goes against nature—to form a supra-rational bond with G-d—to the exclusion of the rest of humanity—it had the potential to thwart his ability to influence others. Abraham's dilemma was how does one balance the two? How can one be an “elitist” and expect the rest of humanity to be receptive to the message?

Moreover, Abraham's question was, how does one reconcile the changing of his name to Abraham with the connotation of reaching out to other nations with the fact

that it came in conjunction with circumcision, an act which separates him from other nations?

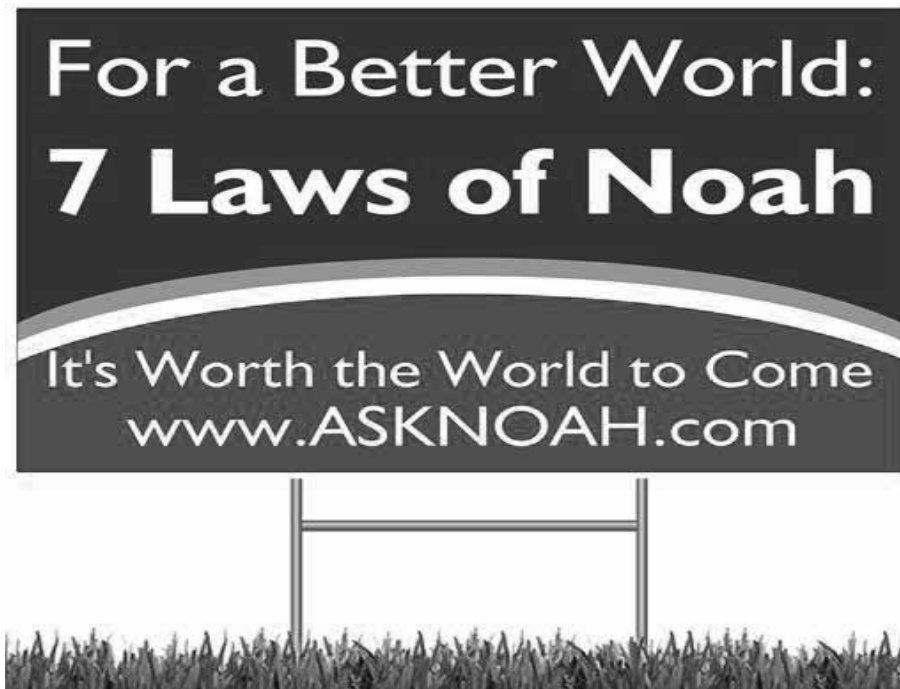
## THE NEW GUEST

The answer to his dilemma is further provided in the Midrash: “G-d said, ‘Heretofore people came to you; now I, in My glory, shall come and reveal Myself to you. This is the meaning of the subsequent verse at the beginning of the next parsha, ‘G-d revealed Himself to him in the plains of Mamre.’”

G-d's response to Abraham was that in the past these **people** were coming to **you**. Since you are a finite human being and they are finite human beings there is a limit how far you can go to influence them. There are barriers to your soul's potential, and therefore you needed to find common ground with others in order to have an effect on them. Now that you are made “perfect” by circumcision, you now also will have access to the Divine. Nothing can prevent G-d from entering Abraham's home to bestow a G-dly glow in it. This will do wonders to remove all impediments and barriers to inspiring and influencing others.

## LESSON FOR CONTEMPORARY TIMES

There is an obvious lesson to be derived from the above. When we try to be a “light unto the nations” we may entertain the notion that we must not focus on our unique relationship with G-d. It might be thought that



**“The story of Abraham turns this argument upside down. On the contrary, only when we live a more Jewish life and identify with our special relationship with G-d, can we really have an impact.**

this will drive a wedge between us and the rest of the world. We might be apprehensive that it will not help us to bring the world closer to following the Seven Noachide Commandments (the commandments given to all of Noah and his progeny that are geared to make the world a habitable and stable place). Many have used the argument that favored assimilation in some form as the only means to relate to the other nations and have a positive influence upon them.

The story of Abraham turns this argument upside down. On the contrary, only when we live a more Jewish and exalted life and identify with, and enjoy, our special relationship with G-d, symbolized by circumcision, can

we really have an impact. And this is not only attributable to the greater respect we will command when others see us living a more refined and G-dly life, but also because we then allow G-d to become our “guest” in our homes. This, in turn, will radiate G-dly truth and light to all those outsiders who may enter our sphere of influence.

### **SEVEN MITZVOS AND MOSHIACH**

The Torah belief in the Messianic Age is that Moshiach will influence all nations of the world to follow in their Seven Mitzvos. Indeed, Maimonides’ Yad HaChazaka devotes several chapters to the laws concerning

our obligation to educate and influence the nations of the world to observe the Seven Noachide Commandments. Immediately following these laws Maimonides discusses the laws concerning the coming of Moshiach.

Why does Maimonides link these two themes of the Noachide commandments and the Messianic Age?

One simple answer is that as we get closer to Moshiach, we are witness to an unprecedented phenomenon. Never before have Jews had the freedom to practice their own religion undeterred and to even inspire non-Jews to keep their Mitzvos. This paves the way to the day when Moshiach will “call unto all the nations to serve G-d as one.”

However, in light of the above, one may suggest a deeper explanation: as we get closer to the Messianic Age when G-d’s unfiltered light will shine, we are empowered to inspire all the nations of the world more than at any time previously.

In the days of King Solomon, at the peak of Israel’s spiritual development—occasioned by and reflected in the construction of the Beit HaMikdash, the Holy Temple—the nations of the world were enamored with the Jewish people and their teachings and were attracted to them.

Similarly—and even more so—as we stand on the threshold of the final Redemption we can already see and bask in some of that unprecedented G-dly light—the positive version of “global warming.” As a result, our ability to be a “light to the nations” has become easier. And the more of that G-dly light associated with the Messianic Age that we identify with, the greater the potential we have now to change the world for the good.

# GILAD IS HOME. NOW WE HAVE TO DAVEN!

This prime minister, who concocted the prisoner swap to increase his standing in public opinion polls, must go – back to his job as a foreign policy spokesman or United Nations ambassador. He knows how to speak like no other Israeli politician can. He has an excellent talent for rhetoric and oratory. However, he also possesses an inveterate weakness – lack of leadership.

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By Sholom Ber Crombie

Translated by Michael Leib Dobry

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## 1.

Gilad Shalit has returned home – safe and sound. He has come back to his parents and his extended family as a free man. It's impossible not to be moved by the pictures of this soldier, held hostage for five years and four months, now walking around his natural environment in Mitzpeh Hila. The entire Jewish People shares in the joy of the Shalit family – his parents Noam and Aviva, his brothers, and his grandparents. Am Yisroel is a nation that redeems its captive brethren, a nation that knows how every soul represents an entire world.

The stirring pictures of Gilad at home touched the hearts of millions of Jews throughout the globe. They remind us again of

the uncompromising unity of the Jewish People among all walks of life. Jews from every corner of the earth felt a tremendous closeness to this Jewish boy from the Galilee, as if he were a part of their own family.

We are definitely allowed to rejoice that this captured soldier has finally been released from his confinement. The Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach, who steadfastly opposed irresponsible prisoner exchange agreements made by previous Israeli governments, always expressed endless fatherly love for every soldier who fell into captivity. Many soldiers taken prisoner in times of war were later privileged to visit the Rebbe, who welcomed them warmly and listened to their troubled souls.

## 2.

But what's more important is the self-examination on the day after. We must not remain indifferent in the face of the weakness within Israeli society, which turns into jelly from the tears of one mother, while it places the security of millions of mothers into the hands of bloodthirsty terrorist organizations committed to their destruction *r"l*.

According to claims made by former Mosad chieftain Meir Dagan, 231 Israelis were killed as a result of the Tennenbaum prisoner swap. Assuming that this comparative information is correct, this means that for every two terrorists released, one Israeli was murdered. The released prisoners of yesterday became the murderers of tomorrow.

The 'Tennenbaum' deal resulted in the release of more than four hundred terrorists. These murderers did not lose their motivation during their incarceration in Israeli prisons. They resumed their activities with the same terror organizations they were affiliated with in the past. Hezbollah only became stronger as a result, and it immediately set out to kidnap the next soldier. The military and intelligence capabilities of the Israel Defense Forces were insufficient to stop the next round, which brought more bloodshed, more anguish, another prisoner swap, and more

## WANTED: NOAM SHALIT

### MISSION: PERSISTENCE FOR THE LIBERATION OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE

On the night of Simchas Torah, I went out on Tahalucha to Boro Park together with a group of Anash from the Chabad community of Herzliya. We came to a shul for Bukharin émigrés to spread some holiday joy, and the congregation was honored with a d'var Torah by the Rebbe's shliach in Herzliya, Rabbi Yisroel Halperin. In his talk, he mentioned the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov regarding how everything we experience in this world must teach us something in our Avodas Hashem. Naturally, this includes an issue of considerable interest among Jews today – the release of Gilad Shalit.

Rabbi Halperin spoke to the congregation about the Rebbe's clarion call to find ten stubborn people who will take the necessary action to bring Moshiach Tzidkeinu. The Rebbe demanded "*akshanim*" – those for whom the issue has particular relevance. Among such Chassidim, the very thought that Moshiach will not come today is absurd. Each day, they think to themselves, "What have I done **today** to bring Moshiach in actual deed?" The Rebbe has demanded that this matter should touch the very essence of our being.

The story of Gilad Shalit was one man – his father, Noam Shalit. He was determined and would not relent. He turned a whole country upside down and brought the entire political/military structure to its knees. This matter was of the utmost importance to him. He didn't sleep at home and wait for others to do the work; he went on this mission until the very end. He knew that the matter depended upon him; it was his responsibility – and no one else would do it for him.

The Rebbe placed an extremely vital shlichus upon our shoulders. The Rebbe demanded that we must not wait for someone else to do the job. We have to be the "*akshanim*," as if the mission was just as important to us. The Rebbe taught us that one person can turn over the whole world. Noam Shalit taught us how to do this. You simply have to devote yourself with all your might, harness the strength of everyone you can. Get to every location within your reach – kibbutzim, kindergartens, and youth clubs, Jews near and far physically and spiritually – and instill a greater sense of awareness in the message of this shlichus, the call of the Rebbe.

We have an even greater mission to carry out. We are responsible for the whole world; it is our job to "*ker a velt haint*" with its fullest implication. We also have the unlimited strength of the Rebbe. All that is demanded of us is persistence, acting with a true sense of duty. Above all, we must realize that no one can be left with a feeling of apathy and complacency on this matter. We have been promised that a good prophecy for the world never goes unfulfilled, and we will soon merit the realization of "*Hineh Zeh Moshiach Ba*" – for he will surely come.

families watching helplessly as the murderers of their loved ones were set free.

The political leadership approved the deal, but its decision was apparently made a bit too hastily. While only

yesterday just a handful of government ministers had taken a clear position on the matter, today virtually all of them have already expressed enthusiastic support for the heavy cost incurred. This is not the way to conduct a complex struggle for

national security against terrorist organizations.

### 3.

It's a bit hard to imagine how the perpetrators of the horrific lynch in Ramallah eleven years ago, the opening salvo of the second intifada, will be persuaded to halt their murderous activities. It's strange to consider that someone who looked into the eyes of sixteen Israelis on a bus headed for Yerushalayim and slaughtered them in cold blood could be convinced to change his outlook on life.

As for those who claim that we have a powerful army and outstanding intelligence services that know how to meet the challenge, they seem to forget that we have enough credible security threats to deal with at any given moment – without providing these terrorist organizations with another one thousand professional killers with sizable backgrounds in shattering skulls.

Someone has to pay the price for this uncertain and potentially bloodletting deal. It's simply inconceivable that the citizens of Eretz Yisroel will continue to go blindly after these same political leaders who have sacrificed national security time after time.

This prime minister, who concocted the prisoner swap to increase his standing in the media ratings, must go. He has proven that he is incapable of facing the pressure. He operates according to the public opinion polls, while failing to understand the complex reality of the Middle East. He has to go back to his job as a foreign policy spokesman or United Nations ambassador. His qualifications in the area of international diplomacy are impeccable. He knows how to

speaking like no other Israeli politician can. He has an excellent talent for rhetoric and oratory. However, he also possesses a serious weakness – lack of leadership.

#### 4.

But it's not just the occupant of the premiership who has to be called to account. We must also demand that his governing coalition partners who supported this decision must vacate their places around the Cabinet table. The Likud Party has demonstrated that it simply doesn't know how to rule the country. Every time its leaders promise to change policies, they end up implementing policies that are worse than the official "left-wing" parties. Every time that people go to the polls and vote for the right-wing parties, this merely gives all the Likud Party's seats to the left-of-center bloc. Instead of a left-wing government and a right-wing opposition, the Likud applies the left-wing approach as the ruling party with the support of the leftist opposition. Begin, Shamir, Sharon, and Bibi – every Likud prime minister implemented the left's policies while in power. As a result, we lose both the power to govern and the power to present an effective opposition.

This hostage deal is a dangerous sign of the weakness of Likud leadership. All the promises that the Likud Knesset Members would keep Bibi securely on the right have come to naught. No one managed to stop this horrendous agreement.

There's only one way to put a stop to all this – and it's no easy task. We must remind all those who take part in such dealings that when the next Knesset



After 1,941 days, Gilad Shalit returns home to Eretz Yisroel

**“ This is what the Rebbe himself requested. This is not a matter of politics; it's a matter of life and death.**

elections come along, they will be made to answer at the polls. This is what the Rebbe himself suggested and requested. This is not a matter of politics; it's a matter of life and death.

Nearly all the political parties were collaborators in this process. From the Shas Party to the NRP-styled Bayit HaYehudi – and they must pay the price. Ministers Eli Yishai, Ariel Attias, Daniel Hershkowitz, and Silvan Shalom can no longer call themselves right wing. They have proven that they are too weak. There were only three government ministers who stood up to the pressure and voted against the prisoner release: Uzi Landau, Moshe (Bogie) Yaalon, and Avigdor Lieberman.

#### 5.

We are now faced with a series of very perilous challenges. There is talk of opening a new round of negotiations with the "Palestinians" to reach an agreement on official Israeli recognition of a Palestinian state. This situation is most dangerous and we must not become complacent in maintaining our security. We have to take immediate steps to deal with this emergency. If the settlement community in Yehuda and Shomron wakes up now, there is still a chance to change things for the better. The residents of Eretz Yisroel do not want another disengagement, and the support within public opinion for the Jewish settlements must be translated into actual strength

**“But he can’t sell these lies to the voters again. The next time, we will stand firm and remind the voting public that it was Netanyahu who systematically capitulated to terrorism.**

on the ground. It is absolutely forbidden to place this situation in the hands of the leftist policymakers. They don’t rest for a moment. They’re constantly taking action, making plans, surveying the region, marking off the future borders *r”l*, etc. Netanyahu’s bulldozers must be stopped before it’s too late.

During this most recent prisoner swap, we also discovered that Netanyahu succeeded in placing his own personal “yes men” in charge of the national security structure – just as Sharon had done. Sharon appointed Dan Chalutz to push through the Gush Katif expulsion and Bibi appointed people to head the Mosad and the GSS who would easily say “Amen” to every adventurous proposal, without ever really investigating the potential consequences. It is quite suspect how the previous Mosad and GSS heads adamantly opposed the prisoner swap, whereas their successors appointed by Netanyahu gave it their full support.

This situation is not a new one. The Rebbe frequently spoke

about the political considerations that contravened the statements made by Israeli generals within the defense community. However the overall picture looks now, one thing is certain: Netanyahu has managed to bring his own people into the national security agencies, and they wouldn’t dare to speak out against any dangerous policy initiatives. This situation requires vigilance. We must make certain that what took place during the most recent hostage deal does not happen the next time around.

## 6.

Yet, with all the pain and anguish stemming from this disgraceful agreement, there is also some consolation. We have seen how the public is not stupid; it knows how to understand an issue. While it did respond to the cries of Aviva Shalit – “Merciful, children of the merciful,” as we are indeed a compassionate people, but it also knew to express shock at the insanity displayed by its leaders. Bibi cannot say that he received the people’s backing to release terrorists with actual

blood on their hands. He did this on his own volition and with the support of a majority of his government ministers – not the support of the people.

The nation of Israel wants its leaders to conduct the affairs of state according to Torah – “He who comes to slay you, slay him first.” Today, the public clearly understands the Halacha in Shulchan Aruch, stating that when Gentiles besiege a Jewish city, even for straw and stubble, we must go out against them armed with weapons of war.

Netanyahu and the Likud Party were the victors in the last election because they promised to crush Hamas. Regrettably, Bibi has instead chosen to restore Hamas to life. But he can’t sell these lies to the voters again. The next time, we will stand firm and remind the voting public that it was Netanyahu who systematically capitulated to terrorism. We will remind the People of Israel that it was the Shas Party that supported the settlement freeze and aided in the destruction of Jewish homes. We will remind the Jewish citizens of Eretz Yisroel that there is only one way to maintain strength in the face of terror: the path of the holy Torah, the path of the leader of the generation – the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach.

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# 'ARE WE HOME YET?'

By M.E. Gordon



Peretz was hot and uncomfortable in the crowded van. He wiggled out of his coat, waking his younger brother Chaim, who had dozed off leaning on Peretz' shoulder.

"Are we home, yet?" asked Chaim.

"Not yet," answered Peretz while trying to find a way to shift the suitcase off of his foot.

"Look! It has already snowed!" Chaim exclaimed. "I can't wait to get home. Maybe Dmitri and Vlad will want to come over and we'll have fun in the snow. I can share some New York nosh with them, and tell them what it was like to spend Tishrei by the Rebbe."

"I'm sure they'll be happy to see you," answered Tatty. "Both boys came to all of our Tishrei programs, but they certainly missed you. They asked me if they should start saving now so they can also go to the Rebbe."

"Like Alex did!"

"Please call me Avi," interjected the tall young man in the front seat.

"Avi didn't just go for Tishrei. He's been learning in Yeshiva for four years already, haven't you, Avi?"

"Yes, but now I'm back, as a shliach."

"But before you went to yeshiva, you also helped out in the Chabad House."

"Then I was a worker, now I'm a shliach!"

Peretz wasn't sure what the difference was, and he wasn't sure that he cared. He was too depressed about coming home. He looked glumly out the window at the familiar streets, thinking how nice it would be if he could go straight back to New York and stay there. Just imagine – he'd have lots of frum friends around, plenty of farbrengens to go to, and the learning would be amazing. He could daven with the Rebbe's minyan, and be in the daled amos of 770. That's beside the material advantages, like having plenty of kosher food available at the highest standard. To get a bottle of milk would be as simple as walking into the nearest grocery, instead of having to travel to a farm to watch the pre-dawn milking.

Peretz' mood didn't lift even when his mother and little sister greeted him as he came into the house. Chaim and Zelig were bubbling over with news of their trip, and Mommy listened to each of them intently. Avi helped Peretz and his father bring in all of the suitcases and boxes. The boys had brought back many cartons of kosher food and Judaica items, both of which were impossible to get locally. Peretz sighed, thinking about the contrast between where he just came from, and where he had just come back to.

"Did you forget to pack your smile?" joked Avi, "maybe we can get someone in Crown Heights to send it special delivery."

"Oh, Avi, I think I'd rather if someone would send *me* back to Crown Heights instead."

"What's wrong with coming home? This is your family's shlichus! Just think of the parsha, you are just like Avraham Avinu, Hashem tells him to leave everything that's comfortable and familiar, and go to the land that He will show him."

"But it's not exactly like that. Hashem was sending Avraham to the holy land of Israel. I just left the holiest place and came back to a galus! I *wish* I had a shlichus like Avraham Avinu."

"But you do! And Boruch Hashem, I do too, now!" answered Avi.

"I don't understand. Firstly, wouldn't you rather be back in yeshiva? Secondly, you worked in Chabad House before you left, how is it different now?"

"It's true that I used to help a lot in Chabad House before I left, but then whatever I did was for me, on my terms. Sure your father appreciated my help, but I only did what I enjoyed doing, and what was most rewarding. Now that I've learned in yeshiva, and understand what it means to be a shliach, it's different. I've come back as a shliach, ready to do whatever is needed. A shliach is not just running on his own steam, but has the power of the meshaleiach behind him. In fact, the shliach is like an extension of the one who sends him!" Avi broke out in a big grin. "Now

that's a reason to be happy!"

"But weren't you happy in yeshiva?"

"Sure, yeshiva was wonderful, but I knew that it was a preparation for something even more important. Just as the Jewish people went to the Beis HaMikdash for Yom Tov to be inspired and draw buckets of holiness, but the purpose was to bring that back with them even beyond the borders of Eretz Yisroel, and make the mundane world a dwelling place for Hashem, so too must we do today. Going to yeshiva, or spending Tishrei in New York is inspiring, but then you have to use that inspiration to fulfill Hashem's command of Lech Lecha."

Chaim walked in, with Dmitri and Vlad behind him. "Hey, Peretz! I was telling my friends about the trip, but I can't remember all of the amazing stories that we heard. Can you sit down with us and help me? Mommy said we can take one package of nosh for a mini – farbrengen."

Peretz looked at Avi, who gave him a wink, and Peretz answered with a smile: "Okay!"

"Looks like you didn't leave your smile behind, after all," Avi said, as he pulled out a package of smiley cookies from one of the boxes he had brought in. "Will this do for nosh?"

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