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WHAT ARE YOU SCREAMING ABOUT?!

When a Jew cries out “enough with exile!” the Evil Inclination approaches him and argues: What are you screaming about? The Jewish people have demanded that before, but to no avail; the exile continued. Why is it that you think that you will be any different and succeed in securing your demands?!

Translated by Boruch Merkur

The Baal Shem Tov teaches that we must learn from everything a lesson in the service of G-d. If this is true even of mundane things, certainly this is true of a concept in the Torah. What lesson can be learned then from the Torah relating how [after years of hardship] “Yaakov wished to settle in tranquility”? And what can be learned from the [similar] proposition of the Jewish people to forgo the “great fortune” [G-d had promised them] so long as they simply leave exile?

The lesson is as follows.

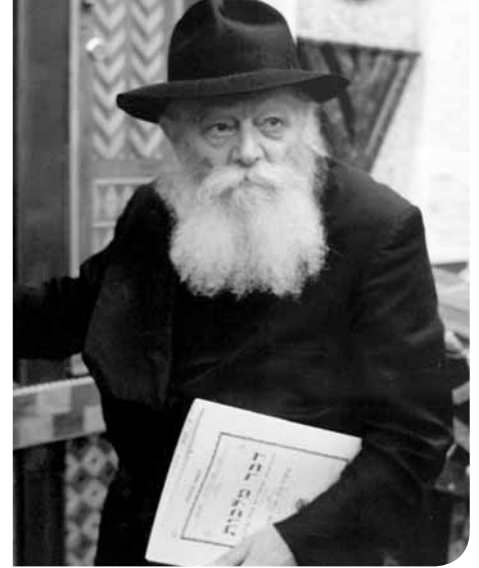
When a Jew cries out “enough with exile!” the Evil Inclination, the Cunning One, approaches him and argues: What are you screaming about? The Jewish people have demanded that before, crying out about leaving exile when they were still in Egypt, but to no avail; the exile continued (in order that they should receive the “great fortune” they were promised). Similarly, “Yaakov wished to settle in tranquility,” yet he too did not achieve the serenity he had sought. Why is it that you think that you will

be any different and succeed in securing your demands?!

In fact, the Evil Inclination continues to argue, by crying out you may further incite [judgment from On High], causing a reaction reminiscent of what happened to Yaakov as a result of his request to settle in tranquility: “the anguish of Yosef sprang upon him.” It is better for you to remain silent and not cry out, lest you anger the Alm-ghty (G-d forbid)!

It is for this reason, we tell the Evil Inclination, that the Torah does not suffice with relating the response to the demand of the Jewish people in Egypt but it also relates the demand itself (that they were willing to forgo the “great fortune” so long as they would simply get out of exile). Since this part of the story is recorded in the Torah – “Torah,” which means “teaching” – the demand itself is meant to teach us a lesson, as follows.

Just as the Jewish people of that time cried out “enough with exile!” – that they were willing to forgo the “great fortune” in order to simply get out of exile – so too, the Jewish people of today



must cry out that their desire is to finally get out of exile.

Although your ancestor (in Egypt) allowed himself to be persuaded that for the sake of a “great fortune” it is worthwhile to remain in exile, do not permit yourself to be persuaded now, because certainly the Jewish people have since then received the “great fortune” through their service of G-d in the time of exile.

It is for this reason that, throughout all the days of the week, Jews cry out, “for we hope for Your salvation all day,” and on Shabbos and Yom Tov they pray, “may our eyes behold Your return to Tziyon with mercy.” These words are said as part of the Shmoneh Esrei prayer, when standing “like a servant before his master,” indicating that this is indeed meant truthfully and in earnest, asking to behold with our physical eyes “Your return to Tziyon with mercy.”

Obviously these words can be interpreted in a manner that is more sublime, referring to the spiritual “Tziyon.” That is, the soul is called “Tziyon” (a sign or symbol), which amounts to the acknowledgement that “I am just a sign [representing G-dliness].” And this is, no doubt, a truthful interpretation. However, were we to only interpret these words according to their esoteric

connotations, ignoring the simple interpretation – the meaning of the words would then be lacking! That is not the case, however, when first interpreting according to the simple meaning. For once the primary interpretation is defined, deeper dimensions of meaning can always be added thereafter.

The simple meaning must first be determined. In our case this means that every single day and several times a day we ask to behold “Your return to Tziyon with mercy.” In fact, it is for this purpose that physical eyes were created; it is then that they achieve perfection. That is, specifically when one’s vision is devoted towards the ultimate purpose of seeing “Your return to Tziyon with mercy”!

It is written in Midrash T’hillim – and cited in the commentary of Radak, Shvilei HaLeket, Rokeiach, among others – that a Jew must demand the true and complete redemption, demanding that the redemption should finally arrive! Indeed, the Chida writes that hope and yearning for the redemption, actually brings about the redemption!

This then is the lesson we learn from the story the Torah tells about the Jews in Egypt proclaiming that they are prepared to forgo the “great fortune” so long as they leave exile, as well the lesson we learn from the fact that “Yaakov wished to settle in tranquility”:

The Evil Inclination, the Cunning One, attempts to employ the story of the Jews in Egypt for his diabolical schemes. It emphasizes that the main thing is the answer (to the demand of the Jewish people) – that for the sake of a “great fortune” it is worthwhile to remain in exile. Similarly regarding Yaakov, the Evil Inclination points out

that in actuality his request was rejected. Instead, “the anguish of Yosef sprang upon him.” However, a Jew learns not only from the answer but also from the demand itself (which is also part of “Torah, which means ‘teaching’”) – that we must cry out “enough with exile!” and to request to finally “settle in tranquility”!

And once we have learned a lesson from the demand, then it is also possible to learn a lesson from the response – that the Jewish people were to remain in exile in Egypt for additional time in order to receive the “great fortune.” The lesson is that after going out of Egypt, the promise of the Alm-ghty (for which reason they were further delayed in exile) – “thereafter they shall go out with a great fortune” – has already been fulfilled. And the service of the Jewish people throughout all the years of exile has been added to that. Therefore, there is no reason for the Jewish people to remain in exile any longer!

Accordingly we can understand why the Torah relates this. For at first glance the question can be asked: Why does the Torah bother to tell us the demand of the Jewish people and then the response of the Alm-ghty? Had the Torah not related this demand, the Evil Inclination would not have had the opportunity to argue that it is not necessary to demand an end to the exile in our times since it anyway will not help, as the case was in Biblical times.

The explanation, however, is self-evident. Were the Torah not to include this question and answer, the Evil Inclination would pose the question, and answer it, in order to disturb a Jew and deter him from crying out “enough with exile!” Thus, the Torah records this

exchange in order to nullify from the outset the argument of the Evil Inclination, in order that the correct response would immediately be known, Namely, that a Jew would not stop crying “enough with exile” for even a moment!

And this is the lesson also with regard to Yaakov:

Just as “Yaakov wished to settle in tranquility,” so do the Jewish people of today need to ask to finally be granted serenity. However, the Jewish people learn from the story to ask for tranquility not only as a created being understands the term, a creature of this world – “Yaakov wished” – but in a manner that is unqualified “settling in tranquility,” referring to the “settling” of the Alm-ghty (insofar as “settling” is a word in G-d’s Torah). True “settling in tranquility,” the way G-d Himself understands the words! And at the same time, “settling” in the simple sense, “settling in tranquility” the way the Jewish people appreciate it, as souls in bodies in this physical world.

Those things that transpire in the meanwhile – that “the anguish of Yosef sprang upon him” – are no more than a preparation to arrive at true tranquility. Of course, at this point we have already fulfilled our obligation in these matters, suffering in anguish, etc., and the time has finally come for there to be the true “settling in tranquility.” [...]

And in the literal sense, the true and complete redemption through Moshiach Tzidkeinu, when there will be the settled serenity in the true and simple sense of being settled in this physical world, speedily in our days, and literally in our time.

(From the address of Shabbos Parshas VaYeishev 5746, bilti muga)

THE REBBE RAYATZ AT A 19 KISLEV FARBRENGEN SAID: **I HAVE A SECRET TO REVEAL TO YOU**

As Yud-Tes Kislev, Rosh HaShana L'Chassidus, approaches, we present selections from the Sichos Kodesh of the Rebbe Rayatz from the farbrengen of Shabbos Parshas VaYishlach, 19 Kislev 5706.

Submitted by Rabbi Boruch Sholom Cohen

Edited by Y. Ben Boruch

THE YOM TOV OF YUD-TES KISLEV

When Anash entered for the meal, the Rebbe Rayatz said: Gut Yom Tov!

By the Tzemach Tzedek, the holiday of Yud-Tes Kislev was celebrated publicly until 5616. From 5616 and on, it was only celebrated quietly due to the fear (of the government).

ROSH HA'SHANA L'CHASSIDUS

It is a Yom Tov for me today because today completes fifty years since 5656/1895, when I heard the following from my father, the Rebbe Rashab, about Yud-Tes Kislev. He said, "It is likely that this day is Rosh HaShana (L'Chassidus).

The wording "It is likely" is because my father the Rebbe did not want to say it on his own, with certainty.

I HAVE A SECRET TO REVEAL TO YOU

I have a secret to reveal to you: On Chai Elul 5655/1894, my

father, the Rebbe Rashab, called for me and gave me guidance in the ways of Chassidus.

My father told me then: By our Rebbeim, this (guidance) began at age ten, but for you it's the age of fifteen because of the traveling (that the Rebbe Rashab did in those years).

MESIRUS NEFESH TO RECTIFY THE CHABAD

At that time (Chai Elul 5655), my father said:

Every year, the Alter Rebbe had mesirus nefesh to rectify the "Chabad" during these three months, from 18 Elul until 19 Kislev.

When a month had gone by, on 18 Tishrei (the 2nd day of Chol HaMoed Sukkos) 5656, my father called for me and said: Today the rectification of chochma is completed.

When another month had gone by, on 18 Cheshvan, he did not call for me but left it for 20 Cheshvan (his birthday) – at the time I did not know the reason for this – and on 20 Cheshvan he called for me and said: The

rectification of bina is completed.

A month later, on 19 Kislev, he said to me: The rectification of daas is completed.

He instructed me to keep this a secret to the extent that people wouldn't even know that I had a secret.

PLACING AN IDOL IN THE HEICHAL

On 19 Kislev 5656, my father, the Rebbe Rashab, farbrenged and said: The Mitteler Rebbe said that when you learn Chassidus without avodas ha't'filla, you get it in the nose (*a shnel* – a sudden finger flick) from my father (the Alter Rebbe)! It's a chutzpa (to learn Chassidus without avoda) and it is likely correct to say that he is placing an idol in the Heichal!

Then my father explained what a caress (*a glet*) from the (Alter) Rebbe is and what a *shnel* from the (Alter) Rebbe is.

TO DAVEN WITH YOUR HEART!

The Chassid, R' Chanoch Hendel then asked: With what do we daven?

My father pointed at his heart and said: With this (with the heart)!

SPIRITUAL STONING!

When you hear Chassidus from someone who is involved in avodas ha't'filla, then it is possible for the recipient to understand from the words of the mashpia something that the mashpia

himself didn't understand as he spoke. But when you receive Chassidus from someone who is not involved in avodas ha't'filla, that is spiritual stoning.

IS IT PERMISSIBLE TO HEAR CHASSIDUS FROM HIM?

The Mittler Rebbe had a rule that one should not receive Chassidus from someone who is not involved in avodas ha't'filla.

The Chassid, R' Chanoch Hendel related that he remembered how sometimes, when you went to a town and met someone who was saying Chassidus, you would inquire about him: Is it permissible to hear Chassidus from him?

“The Mittler Rebbe said that when you learn Chassidus without avodas ha't'filla, you get it in the nose (a shnel – a sudden finger flick) from my father (the Alter Rebbe)! It's a chutzpa (to learn Chassidus without avoda) and it is likely correct to say that he is placing an idol in the Heichal!

THE FISH REEKS FROM THE HEAD!

The Rebbe Maharash demanded a lot of those who sat and learned such as rabbanim etc. which he did not ask of householders.

A Chassidishe rav from Smilyan went to the Rebbe Maharash and complained about the people before whom he reviewed Chassidus, claiming that they did not hear it (properly), and it did not translate into practical application.

The Rebbe answered, “What happens with you yourself? The fish reeks from the head!”

This rav was a Chassidishe

Yid, and the Rebbe's words had an effect on him.

WHEN DO THE PREPARATIONS FOR PRAYER BEGIN?

The preparations for davening begin from the Bedtime Shma, and Tikkun Chatzos is also a preparation for davening if one is holding by it. R' Shmuel Levitin asked: What is meant by holding by it?

The Rebbe Rayatz answered: I mean (those who are holding by it) in terms of bodily health. In general, Chassidim are intelligent and don't break their bodies.

minyan. The Rebbe Rayatz said: By Jews there are no *proste*.

A JEW'S GASHMIUS IS RUCHNIUS

Today is Rosh HaShana. May Hashem help that this *hamshacha* (drawing down of divine light) of Rosh HaShana, be drawn down (over the entire year).

R' Levitin asked: What about gashmius (for the entire year)?

The Rebbe Rayatz replied: A Jew's gashmius is ruchnius!

IF ONLY WE WERE HALF OF WHAT WE KNOW

If we did just half of what we know how we ought to be, that would be good!

EISAV WANTED THE SHORT ROUTE

The title page of Tanya (which is the daily portion of Tanya for 19 Kislev) was handwritten by the Alter Rebbe.

The pertinence of the title page to Parshas VaYishlach is that Eisav and Yaakov are Tohu and Tikkun, with Eisav being Tohu and Yaakov being Tikkun. Eisav wanted the “short route” (i.e. the short-long road which is referred to on the title page of Tanya).

Although Yaakov's approach looks like a “long road,” it's actually “short” (a long-short road) because via this route all the sparks are sifted, unlike Eisav's “short route.”

EISAV WORE A SIRTUK!

The Alter Rebbe told the Tzemach Tzedek: What, do you think that Eisav dressed in a *shermiak* (Russian peasant attire) with a *hock* (ax) in his belt? Eisav wore a white sirtuk and a

SLEEPING IS NOT AN INTERRUPTION

Ramash (later to be the Rebbe MH”M) asked: Isn't the sleeping (after the bedtime Shma and Tikkun Chatzos) considered a *hefsek* (an interruption – before davening) and as such has no effect?

The Rebbe Rayatz answered: Then (after this preparation) you sleep differently and then it has a tremendous effect!

NO “PROSTE” BY JEWS

R' Shmuel Levitin related that he saw (when he was in Georgia) plain, simple Jews (*proste Yidden*) doing Tikkun Chatzos with a

shtraimel and nevertheless, he was still Eisav!

IT SINGS OF ITSELF

The Alter Rebbe was once asked why Chassidim sing as

they daven. The Alter Rebbe answered: T'filla needs to be in such a way that it permeates the person so that he is inspired by it. When it permeates him, it sings of itself!

One must sing a niggun in

order that it will penetrate. When singing a niggun, one need not shout because that is the "voice of the fool," rather one should sing a niggun in a p'nimius'dike way so that it pervades his being.

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



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יחי אדונו מורנו ורבינו מלך המשיח לעולם ועד

A MAN OF LOVE AND PEACE

This is a most apt description of Rabbi Dan Mertzbach of Otniel, who was tragically and mistakenly killed on the 14th of MarCheshvan by IDF forces. In this article we reveal the image of a Jew connected to the Rebbe and chassidus, and whose dream was, in his words, “to daven the Shabbos t’fillos with Chabad niggunim.”

By Shalom Ber Crombie and Levi Rivlin

Translated by Michael Leib Dobry



MarCheshvan, has left a huge void among the heartbroken local residents. One hundred and fifty families live on the settlement, and they have been accustomed to the image of Rabbi Mertzbach, who had joined them from the day the yishuv was founded. They regularly received his advice in both spiritual and material matters.

Based on the military investigation conducted as of the writing of this article, it has been determined that the soldier who shot at the rabbi’s vehicle acted against orders and regulations on opening fire. However, the Mertzbach family has expressed no anger towards the soldier. “We are trying to cling to the image of our father,” said his daughter, Rina Ben-Shabbat. “He was not a man of anger. He loved Eretz Yisroel, the army, and the soldiers. A serious failure

The southern section of the Mt. Chevron settlement of Otniel feels as though it has been orphaned. The tragic death of Rabbi Dan

Mertzbach, of blessed memory, one of the yishuv’s founding pillars, who was unintentionally shot and killed by an IDF soldier on Friday morning, the 14th of



The scene of the Friday morning tragedy

had occurred, and we are neither focusing on the anger nor are we looking for whom to blame, because this will not help us and it cannot bring our father back.”

On that Erev Shabbos, the day that Rabbi Mertzbach used to travel to the gravesite of the Patriarchs in Chevron, thousands of people escorted him to his final resting place. The yishuv residents were left in a state of deep anguish, including the local shliach, Rabbi **Yosef Dahan**, who had been very close with Rabbi Mertzbach, of blessed memory. Last week, he spoke about his unique friendship with the rabbi who always gave much encouragement to the residents of Otniel. “Rabbi Mertzbach loved the Rebbe with all his might and was connected to him with every fiber of his soul. He may not have classified himself as a Lubavitcher Chassid, yet he acted like one.”

Rabbi Mertzbach’s close

friends spoke about how he would customarily write a pidyon nefesh to the Rebbe on auspicious days of the Chabad calendar, would learn Tanya each day, and had a deep fondness for Chabad niggunim, particularly the Alter Rebbe’s Niggun of Four Stanzas. He once expressed how his dream was to daven all the Shabbos t’fillos with Chabad niggunim.

“If we could sum it up in just a few words – Rabbi Mertzbach was connected, heart and soul, to the Rebbe,” said Rabbi Dahan. “On more than one occasion, he expressed to me his great appreciation of the revolution the Rebbe created among world Jewry, calling him a giant among giants.”

A STRONG CONNECTION WITH CHABAD

His connection with Lubavitch began in the days of

his father, a native of Strasbourg, France. According to Rabbi Mertzbach, his father and the Rebbe crossed paths at the Sorbonne in Paris.

Thus, it was quite natural that Rabbi Mertzbach would be an enthusiastic partner in all the Chabad activities on the Otniel settlement. “When we built a Chabad mikveh on the yishuv, the rabbi used his skills as an engineer to assist us. He would host all of our farbrengens and Chassidus shiurim in Otniel at his Beis Midrash.”

He had a special *koch* for Thursday night learning. “On that last Thursday,” the shliach revealed, “Rabbi Dan called to remind me to come to his shiur. It turned out that very few people came that night, and this hurt him very much, since he placed so much importance upon greater Torah study among the residents of Otniel. At half past eleven that night, just before I returned



Yehuda Glick

home, he asked to speak with me and explained how important it was that people should come to the Thursday night study session. He told how it pained him deeply that the class was taking place on such a limited scale. Afterwards, he continued his custom of learning Torah until the morning and then he drove to the Cave of the Patriarchs in Chevron.”

Every Thursday night, Rabbi Mertzbach studied Torah until dawn, and then he would get into his car before sunrise and make the fifteen minute drive to Chevron, the City of the Patriarchs, to daven Shacharis. He did so on the last night of his life as well. “After he was killed, as family members entered the small room where he used to study and write his Torah innovations, they discovered a Tanya on the table. The bookmark was placed on the

page with the shiur for the 14th of MarCheshvan. A few hours after studying from the primary text of Chabad chassidus to which he was so connected, his soul returned to its Maker. He was fifty-five years old.”

THE LEVAYA WITH THE ALTER REBBE'S NIGGUN

Rabbi Dahan speaks about a wise, humble, and modest Jew. “It’s interesting to note that near the Tanya on Rabbi Mertzbach’s table were two other s’farim: The Zohar, with its bookmark on the page discussing the concept of death, and a seifer of stories on the Baal Shem Tov, with its own bookmark on a story about humility – one of the rabbi’s more prominent qualities.”

Thousands of people attended his funeral. “Since I knew how connected he was to Chabad chassidus and how much he loved the Alter Rebbe’s Niggun of Four Stanzas, as a member of the chevra kadisha, I made certain that the niggun he loved so much would be played as his levaya,” said Rabbi Dahan with tears glistening in his eyes.

And so on that Friday afternoon, as the strains of the Alter Rebbe’s Niggun filled the air, Rabbi Dan Mertzbach, of blessed memory, was laid to rest. “We already miss him, and we’re waiting to see him soon at T’chiyas HaMeisim,” said the shliach.

A TERRIBLE BLOW FOR THE YISHUV

Otniel settlement spokesman Yehuda Glick was also deeply pained by this tragedy. “This is a very serious loss. Rabbi Dan z”l was counted among one of the founding cornerstones of this settlement. He was a very

influential figure among all the local residents. From the day the yishuv was founded, he was its living spirit. He organized the Simchas Beis HaShoeiva and the weekly Melaveh Malka, planned the construction of the synagogue, built the school, and was constantly active in all yishuv activities.”

“Rabbi Mertzbach only worked two days a week in his official capacity as an architect,” the shliach revealed. “He spent the rest of the week spreading the message of G-d’s Holy Torah. He would go to all the non-religious settlements in the region and give over Torah classes. At first, he would go from door to door, gather two or three people at a time, and slowly organize his network of shiurim. He built shuls and mikvaos on several yishuvim, and in Otniel, the rabbi established a unique Beis Midrash called *Chibat HaAretz*, where many people learned together. It hosted various study days for local residents with prominent rabbinical figures for the purpose of increasing the glory of Torah. There can be no doubt that we’re talking about a terrible blow for the yishuv. However, we will gather the strength we need to continue and intensify all his tremendous activities.”

“NACHLAT DAN” - A NEW NEIGHBORHOOD IN THE RABBI'S MEMORY

As a settlement, the residents are already making plans to honor Rabbi Mertzbach’s memory. “Our intention is to establish a new neighborhood in Rabbi Mertzbach’s memory to be called Nachalat Dan. It will provide housing units for one thousand new families. We have promised to make certain that what happened will serve as a

basis for greater growth. After the recent Kiryat Arba terrorist attack resulting in the murder of Otniel residents Asher Palmer and his infant son (may G-d avenge their blood), Rabbi Mertzbach said that we must lovingly accept what G-d has done and the mission that He has given us to fulfill in all such occurrences. This is how we feel now. We have a mission to continue the life's work that Rabbi Mertzbach left behind, and to ensure that he will live through us."

**WE WILL REQUEST
CONSTRUCTION PERMITS
FOR HUNDREDS OF NEW
HOUSING UNITS**

As with all other Yesha settlements, Otniel is also going through a very hard time.

"We already endured the settlement freeze, and it was not easy for us. Our yishuv is already filled to capacity. There are one

hundred and fifty families here, and the demand for more housing is tremendous. Young couples and other families want to come and live on the settlement, but there is simply no place where to put them.

"We are currently working to prepare the ground for the construction of another thirty family housing units, and we are requesting the prime minister's consent to build a neighborhood for one thousand families in the late rabbi's memory. The entire settlement is situated on state land, and therefore, there are no legal problems here. The only requirement is the permission of the prime minister."

The people on the Yishuv are coping with the tragic passing of Rabbi Mertzbach with humility in emulation of his own special character. "We could have gone out with great anger while pointing an accusing finger at the soldier who fired the fatal shots, but we chose to act according to

the conduct of Rabbi Mertzbach, who steered clear of all unnecessary expressions of anger and strife throughout his life. He had recently posted a note in the settlement from the Baal Shem Tov's testament, in which he asked that there should never be strife, argument, or anything else contrary to peace. This was his spiritual testament.

"There's a notice in the Beis Midrash, stating that anyone who learns here must resolve to love every single Jew. Rabbi Mertzbach, of blessed memory, was a man imbued with total love, and we must strive to walk in his path. Instead of seeking to blame someone, we should faithfully accept the mission that has been placed upon us.

"We pray that we should soon merit the coming of Moshiach and the building of the Beis HaMikdash, and we will meet the rabbi again at T'chiyas HaMeisim."

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ב"ה

SHLICHUS IN THE DESERT

By Menachem Savyon

This week we'll visit the southwestern United States, the state of Arizona. Arizona, which used to be an utterly barren desert when it came to Judaism, has flourished in the last two decades.

Rabbi Menachem Mendel (Mendy) Deitsch is the shliach in Chandler. He went on shlichus right after Tishrei 5748, shortly after he married. His father, R' Zalman Yuda Deitsch a"h, instilled in his children the importance of devotion to the Rebbe's horaos in general, and especially regarding going on shlichus. As a boy growing up in Crown Heights he heard the Rebbe talk about the holy obligation to go on shlichus and to provide assistance to every Jew, both materially and spiritually.

"I planned on going on shlichus right after I got married. My fellow shliach in Arizona, R' Zalman Levertov was looking for a couple to work in the East Valley, in Chandler."

"IT'S GONNA BE THE LITTLE KINDERLACH"

The Deitsch couple was warmly welcomed by the local Jews. They began programming out of their house with a Sunday



Rabbi Mendy Deitsch

school for local children. They started with six children and grew to over 100 children. When their house became too small, R' Deitsch decided to move to more spacious quarters.

"These are children from homes without any Judaism whatsoever. The only reason their parents are willing to send their children to us is because they want them to undergo some minimal bar mitzva preparation. They don't expect us to provide more than a drop of Jewish learning, but we go way beyond that.

"The children take home what we teach them and make their homes more Jewish, more Chassidish. Thanks to the kids,

we have koshered dozens of kitchens, put up mezuzos in hundreds of homes, and ten children have gone on to Tomchei T'mimim. The children are the catalysts for serious change and we feel that the words of the prophet are coming true, 'and returning the hearts of the fathers through the children.'

"There is a minyan of 'sirtuks' in Chandler. These were families that previously knew nothing about Judaism. There are also about twenty families that keep Shabbos and walk a long way to shul."

MESSAGE FROM G-D

As a shliach of the Rebbe, R' Deitsch tries to connect every Jew with the Rebbe and Judaism. It doesn't necessarily happen easily, but he sees how repeated efforts bear fruit:

"A few years ago, I met a nice Jewish family that had no connection with anything Jewish. I invited them for Shabbos and holiday meals and they were happy to oblige, but the father refused to keep Shabbos. One Shabbos afternoon he was practicing his golf game in his yard when the ball flew up very high and got stuck in a palm tree. After Shabbos, it fell out of the tree.

“The next day he came to me and said, ‘G-d took my ball away because I was playing on Saturday. It looks like He wasn’t happy with my playing on Saturday, so He only returned it to me when Shabbos was over.’

“From then on he began keeping Shabbos. Not only that but he even began growing a beard, and his family became baalei t’shuva and Lubavitchers.

“He is a professor and people who knew him in the past are astonished to see him with a beard. He tells everyone the story about his ball and urges them to keep Shabbos.”

NOSSON A”H MADE AN IMPACT

At the Chabad house in Chandler you can meet many people who aren’t yet living as Chabad Chassidim in their daily lives but they know Tanya by heart! The one responsible for this unusual phenomenon is the beloved late brother of the shliach, R’ Nosson Nota a”h who was tragically killed in an accident on Lag b’Omer a year and a half ago.

“My brother knew all fifty-three chapters of Tanya by heart. Likkutei Amarim was engraved in his neshama. When he visited us in Chandler he would tell people about the importance of learning Tanya by heart. He was a young bachur with a lot of energy and he urged people to do this. Thanks to him there are people who study Tanya by heart and know dozens of lines and even chapters.”

CHABAD AT INTEL

The Ben Shabat family works with Israelis in Chandler. Dovid Ben Shabat came to Chandler ten years ago with his family.



R’ Deitsch with members of his k’hilla

“The next day the professor came to me and said, ‘G-d took my ball away because I was playing on Saturday. It looks like He wasn’t happy with my playing on Saturday, so He only returned it to me when Shabbos was over.’”

They run a company that markets Dead Sea products and employ about 200 young Israelis who sell the products at kiosks in the big area malls.

Their young son Yaakov became interested in Chabad Chassidus while still in Eretz Yisroel, and he learned in Tomchei T’minim. When he flew to his family in Chandler for Yom Tov and saw the many Israelis working for the family business, he decided to implement what he had learned in yeshiva.

With full support from R’ Deitsch, he began special programming for Israelis. Dozens of Israelis attend Shabbos meals at their home including Israelis who work at Intel, those who have kiosks in malls, and tourists visiting Arizona. On Rosh HaShana nearly 200 people davened in the special minyan for Israelis that took place at a hotel. Throughout the year there are shiurim that take place at the Ben Shabat home.

As for outreach to employees of Intel, Yaakov relates:

“Intel’s development offices are in Chandler, and over seventy Israeli families work there. They come from Eretz Yisroel for advanced training in the developmental labs and then return home to oversee Intel’s operations there.

“When we started working with Israelis, there was a group of religious families in the area who had come to train at Intel. They saw the ads we had put in the papers about holiday t’fillos in an Israeli atmosphere, and they came. Now, every group that comes from Eretz Yisroel is informed about Chabad’s programming for Israelis. We help them obtain kosher food, etc.

“One of the young guys who worked at a kiosk was married for seven years and had no children. He wrote to the Rebbe about this and about business matters. In the letter he opened



R' Dovid Ben Shabat on a visit to 770



Yaakov Ben Shabat

to in the Igros Kodesh the Rebbe blessed him, ‘quickly and soon.’ The Rebbe instructed him: ‘Regarding moving in the next two weeks, see to it that you bring a Chitas into your home.’ He left for Eretz Yisroel and we were no longer in touch.

“Eight months later he called me and said his wife was feeling premature labor pains. We wrote to the Rebbe again and the answer we opened to said, ‘Regarding the fears you mention, you should check the mezuzos in her house and the t’fillin of her husband and you will merit a healthy son in the right time.’

“He followed the Rebbe’s instructions to check the t’fillin and mezuzos, and their son was born at the end of the eighth

month. He was premature, but Boruch Hashem his weight was fine.

“At that point he was still working on Shabbos, but after this miraculous birth he told me, ‘I know that this child is not my own but the Rebbe’s, and I have to raise him the way the Rebbe wants.’ He has started keeping Shabbos and wearing a kippa, and has set times to learn Torah.”

PURE WATERS

About a year ago, Rabbi Deitch bought a piece of property for the purpose of building a Chabad house. At a cost of three million dollars, the 13,000 square foot building will contain: a shul, mikva, Jewish library, kosher kitchen, and a Jewish school.

The Ben Shabat family is very involved in the building of the mikva after opening to the following answer from the Rebbe:

I was pleased to be informed about your work in supporting the building of the mikva in Kfar Chabad ... so they can build and renovate the building as much as is required and to do so as soon as possible. Surely, all those who cherish Torah and mitzvos do not need an explanation as to the importance

of this matter. What greater proof do we need than the well-known p’sak din that we sell a Torah scroll in order to build a mikva? [No encouragement] is needed except for the purpose of increasing this aid and for greater alacrity in the aforementioned aid ... with blessings for success in your holy work with expansiveness.

The family knew that there was an urgent need for a mikva since there is no mikva in the area, but they were unsure about how to interpret the instruction in the Igros Kodesh. They asked the Rebbe whether this answer was meant for them or someone else.

The letter they opened to left no room for doubts:

I received your letter of Monday and certainly for one such as yourself it is superfluous to express thanks for your efforts and involvement in the mikva ... May it come to fruition as soon as possible and with the greatest hiddur ... as the advantage of alacrity in all mitzvos is explained in Igeres Ha’kodesh.

Encouraged by the Rebbe’s answers, the family got to work. They located the property where the Chabad house is now being built, which will include a mikva. Yaakov met with an architect, and after showing him the Rebbe’s answers, the architect got excited and decided to donate his work for free. Likewise, he found a contractor who is willing to donate his time, and now the only thing that remains to be done is to raise the rest of the money for the building.

May the prophecy “and I will sprinkle upon you pure waters and you will be purified” be quickly fulfilled with the hisgalus of the Rebbe MH”M now.



INTERPRETING DIVINE PROVIDENCE

By Rabbi Heschel Greenberg

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

HOW CAN YOU EAT AT A TIME LIKE THIS?

This week's parsha features the division between Joseph and his brothers. Joseph was given preferential treatment by his father Jacob, and Joseph exacerbated the situation by telling them of the dreams he had which portended a time in the future when he would be their master. The brothers' hatred reached the boiling point when Joseph was sent by Jacob to find out how they were doing, but when he appeared before his brothers they conspired to kill him.

Reuven, Joseph's oldest brother, stalled for time and told his brothers not to kill him but, instead, to throw him into a pit, Reuven having the intention of later returning and rescuing Joseph. When Reuven left the scene the brothers sat down to eat a meal, and it was then that Judah suggested that instead of killing Joseph they sell him to the Ishmaelites who were passing by. This ultimately led to Joseph's ending up in Egypt and the rest is history, as they say.

When we read this part of the story several questions come to mind:

First, as commentators ask, how is it that they were about to decide Joseph's fate—a life and death situation—and were able to nonchalantly sit down and eat a meal?

Second, why does the Torah have to tell us that they “sat down to eat bread?” Of what import is that piece of information? What does their eating have to do with selling Joseph?

Third, why is it important to know that they **sat down** to eat the bread?

Fourth, Judah, who proposed selling him, came up with the idea only after he saw a caravan of Ishmaelites passing by. What was it about the fact that they were Ishmaelites that gave Judah the idea to sell his brother? And why didn't he think of the idea before the caravan passed by?

Fifth, and most importantly, what lesson are we to derive from this part of the episode? Certainly we can appreciate the lesson as to how we should not give one child preferential treatment and incur the jealousy of the others, as the Talmud teaches us. We also can derive a lesson about how we should not incite others against us by showing off and arousing their jealousy. We can certainly learn lessons such as not to hate your brother and that hatred can even lead to kidnapping and bloodshed. We can also learn from this entire episode how a half-baked solution, Judah's idea of selling Joseph instead of returning him to his father, is not acceptable when it comes to another person's life and well-being.

But what lesson can we

derive from their sitting down to eat bread just when they observed an Ishmaelite caravan pass by that prompted them to sell Joseph?

SELF-DOUBT

The fact that the Torah tells us that they sat down to eat bread implies not that they were so callous as to indulge themselves while Joseph was most likely pleading for his life. On the contrary, as the Chassidic work *Igra d'Kalla* points out, they began to experience self-doubt, and they therefore sat down to reflect on and carefully scrutinize their course of action.

Joseph's brothers, according to our Oral Tradition, were all righteous people. They are referred to in the book of Psalms as “G-d's tribes.” In Kabbala we are told that their souls originated in the lofty world of *Beria*, which is one rung lower than the world inhabited by the Patriarchs, the world of *Atzilus*, the world of G-dly emanation.

A person whose soul is from the pristine world of *Beria* is endowed with incredible spiritual intellectual powers. But unlike the world of *Atzilus* souls, the brothers' souls were not endowed with intuitive receptivity to G-d's will; they had to apply rigorous logic to reach their decisions.

When they expressed their hostility to Joseph it was based not on mere emotions

and feelings of jealousy. In their minds they erroneously concluded that Joseph was a dangerous rebel, a false prophet, and one who possessed presumptuous arrogance. If his power and arrogance were not nipped in the bud, they thought, Joseph could very well become another Ishmael or Esau, only this time there was nobody to check his errant ways as had been achieved in the past. Sarah and Rebecca each were able to control the damage that would have ensued from Ishmael and Esau, had Abraham and Isaac not been informed of their treacherous ways. But now, who was going to control Joseph?

Jacob's wives could not prevent him from showering his love on Joseph. Rachel was no longer alive, and Leah did not possess the ability to influence Jacob. Joseph's brothers felt that they had to be the ones to prevent him from destroying all of the pioneering work of the Patriarchs. In their mind, Joseph was the greatest threat to them and to G-d's plan for the world that would have to come through the right heirs to the legacy of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Now, the brothers were beginning to have doubts about their motives: Perhaps it was an emotional reaction and their egos that motivated them to be so bent on their brother's destruction and not really their righteous indignation and concern for the future of the Jewish people and G-d's plan for the world.

So Joseph's brothers sat down to eat bread. This is to be taken both literally and figuratively. Their intention with their sitting down to eat bread was to give them an opportunity to mull over the situation and digest all of the information that was available to

them. On the literal level, when someone does something on an empty stomach it may not be a well thought out plan. It may be a product of a growling stomach that makes it impossible to think clearly. They did not eat a feast while their flesh and blood was in agony because they were, G-d forbid, callous or banal. They had an obligation to think this matter through, a matter they took seriously and for which they should be commended.

On the figurative level, their sitting down to eat bread was another way of saying they were applying all of their intellectual faculties to objectively assess this situation. Eating bread is sometimes employed as a metaphor for study and reflection, and "sitting down" implies that they did so with the full involvement of their intellectual faculties; they were totally absorbed in this process.

DIVINE PROVIDENCE MISUNDERSTOOD

And at precisely that time they saw the caravan of Ishmaelites passing by on their way to Egypt. This is where they discontinued their introspection and analysis and relied, instead, on their understanding of Divine Providence. Their dilemma was that if they should let Joseph live it might threaten everything that was near and dear to them. Should they kill him it would cause irreparable emotional and perhaps physical harm to their father. Before they could reach a conclusion, the solution presented itself in front of their eyes! To them it was G-d's signal to "have their cake and eat it too." They would rid themselves of the pariah without actually taking his life. To Judah it was a message from G-d as to how

they should respond. Moreover the fact that these traveling merchants were Ishmaelites was a further confirmation to them of the righteousness of their cause.

To them, their brother Joseph was a repeat of Ishmael, an errant son who was sent away by his father because of his threat to Isaac.

THE TWIN LESSONS

And here are the immediate twin lessons:

On the one hand, before we decide to do something drastic in distancing another Jew from us, an action that can have far reaching consequences, for it can either get us more ensconced in exile or get us closer to Redemption, we must sit down and "eat bread," i.e. thoroughly learn and digest all of what the Torah says about the subject of Moshiach and Redemption. When we survey the teachings of the Torah, particularly the teachings of the Rebbe on this subject, we see that Ahavas Yisroel, love of our fellow Jew, and Jewish unity are the catalysts for Redemption and not the other way around. Even if we think that a certain Jew is so far gone, we dare not do anything to distance him further. Sitting down to eat bread is a metaphor for the study of the Torah teachings concerning Moshiach and Redemption. To the extent that Joseph's brothers did that it is commendable, and we must apply that lesson to our own lives.

Conversely, there is another lesson that we must **not** follow their example, that of our trying to apply Divine Providence to an unwarranted conclusion.

While it is true that everything that happens is by Divine Providence, one cannot interpret

the significance of an event in ways that do not concur with G-d's **revealed** will. There was and is no divinely ordained precedent to sell a brother into slavery. If there was even a scintilla of a doubt as to whether Joseph should have been so maligned and punished, his brothers had no right to do it. It mattered not what "signals" they thought they were getting from G-d.

Divine Providence is to be used to reinforce the things that we know are consistent with G-d's will. When we witness an event that reminds us of a Mitzvah it should strengthen our resolve to do the Mitzvah, not the other way around.

SIGNS OF MOSHIACH

All of the events of the past few decades are stark reminders of what we've been told by the Rebbe that we are now living on the very threshold of the Redemption. When we see the signs that the Torah (both Written and Oral) have indicated that are

“ In their minds they erroneously concluded that Joseph was a dangerous rebel, a false prophet, and one who possessed presumptuous arrogance. If his power and arrogance were not nipped in the bud, they thought, Joseph could very well become another Ishmael or Esau, only this time there was nobody to check his errant ways.

signs of Moshiach, including the collapse of the Soviet Empire and the many miracles in Israel, we must take note of these Divine Providential signs in a positive way. They must serve as sources of inspiration to buttress our faith in the imminence of Moshiach's arrival. In addition, these dramatic signs should arouse us to prepare ourselves for this time by strengthening our commitment to the study of Torah and the observance of Mitzvos.

Perhaps, most importantly, one of the powerful signs that we see today, the "caravans"

of modern day "Ishmaelites" traveling in the direction of Egypt, the symbol of slavery and persecution of Israel and the Jewish people, should inspire us to do the opposite of Joseph's brothers. We should look at all the dramatic current events as signals to strengthen Jewish unity and foster greater love among the modern day brothers of Joseph. Ahavas Yisroel, love of our fellow and of Jewish unity is the way to get us out of exile symbolized by Egypt; it is the surest way to make us receptive to all of G-d's blessings, especially the blessing of Redemption.

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KINGSTON HOTEL

MY MOTHER

In this chapter, Reb Heishke offers us a glimpse into the special and refined character of a Chassidic girl, woman and mother, raised in a small town in Ukraine, in a family of Chassidim and T'mimim – his very own mother.

By Rabbi Yehoshua Dubrawski a"h

ONLY THE TRUTH

If towards my father I felt “only” the emotion of guilt, when it came to my mother my entire existence was one of guilt and blame throughout my life; particularly the period in Samarkand. However, not everything can be written. Furthermore, even if I wanted to write about everything my mother went through with me, it is almost certain that an entire book would not suffice. And it would be a “pity” on the readers (if there would be any ...), especially the children and grandchildren, because of the manifold suffering she endured. So I will make do with noting a few of my dear mother’s important qualities and a few episodes that illustrate her character.

I am convinced, taking into consideration that many children speak this way about their mothers, that it is impossible to find a mother like my mother; not only in terms of her devotion, goodness and motherliness, but also her good temperament in general, her refinement and good middos, and her manner of relating to everything and everyone.

I would like to focus on one of

my mother’s traits that only we in the family noticed, but outsiders did not discern; her trait of honesty. She was outstandingly careful, to the point of fear, not to utter anything untruthful. She did not educate us by means of haranguing and speechifying, but when it came to decrying a lie, she spoke about this at length. She maintained that even real improprieties, sins, are not as harmful as saying a lie. If a child sinned, he would regret it far more than one who started telling lies, with one lie leading to another.

In later years, I suspected that her speeches on the hazards of lying were directed especially to me. My two sisters, by nature, were naïve and straight and did not know how to lie. It’s hard for me to say the same about myself. I wasn’t a liar, but “having no choice,” it may have been possible for me to cook up a small lie except for the fact that I lack the ability to lie successfully. That is how I felt. When I once tried circumventing the truth, it felt as though it could be seen on my face.

Here is an example. On the Yomim Tovim, my mother had a jar of *varnia*, cherry jam, which she kept for guests on the top



shelf in the big closet. Oddly enough, during those bitter times people regularly engaged in the pleasant practice of making social calls. It was considered particularly nice to serve tea with *varnia*. Every so often though, I had the urge to nosh from that treat and I would move over a chair in order to reach it.

My mother noticed that the *varnia* supply had diminished and she asked whether I had taken some. I was very ashamed to admit it, and I was fearful of telling a lie since I knew I wouldn’t succeed at it. My mother’s big, beautiful eyes “told” me that she knew anyway, and so I just mumbled a response.

A QUICK PEEK WITH A SORRY ENDING

There is no doubt that the following story that took place at a later time, expresses it better and more interestingly:

Zeide Mendel and Bubbe Merke (Miriam) had a home in Krolevets a few blocks away from us. It was a real delight for us children to visit them, both because of the warm relationship and because of the treats we ate in their house. One other thing – their landlady had fruit trees which grew mainly apples. In the summer she let us collect the apples that had fallen to the

ground.

One summer evening, when we were at their house, I went out to the garden where I heard a commotion. I immediately realized what was going on. Behind the orchard was the soccer stadium where a game was going on between the team from Krolevets and a team from another city. I instantly forgot about apples. This was a soccer game and I had the opportunity of watching it with real players!

(I was very interested in soccer. My cousin and I would play soccer together. We didn't dream of a real soccer ball; we didn't even have a ball. We would make a bundle out of old rags, tied with shoelaces, and would kick it around. It often happened that this "soccer ball" would come apart in the air, spread wings like a bird, and each piece of rag would land individually.)

The stadium did not have seats. Viewers stood around. I knew that my father would not be pleased by my visiting the game, but my Evil Inclination convinced me to just take a quick peek since I also had to go and daven Mincha. However, once I got there, I didn't leave so quickly. First of all, it was hard for me to see the players running on the field because there was a big crowd and I wasn't strong enough to push through.

When I finally found a crack to see through, I accidentally gave a small gentile boy a whack. He began screaming, "You *zhidonok* (derogatory word for Jew), you hit me! Okay, let's see who can hit better!"

He shrieked and cursed and grabbed me by my collar, dragging me amongst the crowd. Nothing I said, no apologies about it being an accident, no pleading, helped.

People turned their gaze away from the soccer match to look at us and took pleasure in the little "game." I was extremely terrified that other gentile children would attack me but nobody else got involved. I only heard them chuckling and cackling, with some chanting "*kumpalom*," which means to give him a "head butt."

The *sheigitz* listened to them and butted me in the face with his bare head. I felt a strong pain in my forehead and saw stars. At this point, I forgot my innate fear and hit him in the face and head with both my fists. I must have "given" it to him because

“People turned their gaze away from the soccer match to look at us and took pleasure in the little “game.” I was extremely terrified that other gentile children would attack me but nobody else got involved. I only heard them chuckling and cackling, with some chanting “kumpalom,” which means to give him a “head butt.”

he left me alone and stood there stunned. I took advantage of the moment and fled. I knew how to run — make that flee — quite well. The *sheigitz* recovered and began chasing after me but he didn't catch me, even though a mishap occurred as I ran. The string that I used to hold the detached sole of my shoe in place tore. Oy vey! But as I ran I kicked the shoe off and continued running with one shoe. He didn't catch me.

A VERY LONG SHMONEH ESREI

As I ran alongside the orchard I saw Zeide Mendel leaving the garden. As I mentioned earlier, Zeide was tall and strong. He apparently saw what had been

going on and he went right over to the *sheigitz*. When the latter saw Zeide bearing down on him, he fled.

When I gasped to Zeide, with half words, what had happened, he said, "You know that in everything that occurs there is a G-dly intention. Hashem sent the *sheigitz* to remind you that you need to 'catch' a Mincha as it is very late. It is almost time for Maariv."

When we walked into the house, my mother saw her "treasure" with a swollen face and bloody nose and she exclaimed, "What happened, my son?"

I burst into tears and Zeide told my mother what happened.

As I recall, he repeated that the *sheigitz* had attacked me in order to remind me about Mincha. I think Zeide then went out to look for my shoe.

My mother hugged me and said, first of all — daven Mincha. Then wash your face and put ointment on your wounds. I felt better despite (as I recall) the sorrow I felt over Zeide and my mother being so sure I hadn't davened. At this point, my goodhearted mother, the best mother, put me into a difficult mood. Perhaps even worse than what I felt while engaged in fighting the *sheigitz*. She said to me the following:

"I will wait until you finish Mincha. After you daven, I really

want you to tell me the whole truth; if not for that despicable sheigitz (*paskudnyak*), you wouldn't have davened at all. What would you have answered if you had been asked whether you had davened? Would you admit it or try to lie?"

I hadn't anticipated such a disaster. In those childhood years, that was the longest Shmoneh Esrei I ever davened. I tried to analyze myself (something which I always did naturally) and I absolutely could not arrive at an answer. Would I have lied and said I davened already? Maybe yes, maybe not. Can I say for certain that I would have admitted the truth? I'm not so brave. I may have started mumbling something and tried to wiggle out of it.

Yet, I had to finish davening and answer my mother. As my mind swirled, I finished *oseh shalom* and then I had a brainstorm. I knew what I would tell my mother – I would tell her the truth!

I barely finished *oseh shalom* and I exclaimed, "I want to answer you. The truth is, I don't know. I don't know what I would have done."

My mother looked at me with her big eyes, took my head in her hands and kissed me on the forehead. Why? I had no idea (nor do I have now).

FOR THE OTHER PERSON'S SAKE

As I said above, it is very hard for me to weave together the chain of events of my mother's life, which was cut short in terrible and catastrophic fashion in Samarkand during World War II. Not just me, but sensitive readers (if there are such) would find it difficult to read. Maybe I

will find a way, one day, to do it with a minimal degree of pain.

Now I would like to share some facts and episodes which illustrate her character, not just as an outstanding mother but as a rare model of someone always ready to help anyone, not just her children.

Despite all the undesirable qualities I was blessed with, in my early childhood I had a highly developed contemplative sense. Relatives would occasionally visit us in Krolevets, uncles and aunts from Moscow and Leningrad, whose material standing was much better than ours. By the way, their visits were happy occasions in our family, especially for us little children. First, it was exciting to be visited by relatives; then there was the additional joy of sometimes accompanying them, when they came and left, with the Jewish wagon driver (usually Meir Vinitzky, a.k.a. "Meir Chametz").

It would happen that one of the children would go to meet them at the train station and see in amazement the steam locomotive which caused our hearts to race and brought wealthy travelers and treats in its compartments from faraway. Then, we kids would enjoy a taste of white bread and jam that the relatives brought, followed by happy days – usually in the summer – in which they stayed in our house.

I noticed that when they went to visit Uncle Nachum (Robinson), a brother of Zeide Mendel, and someone had to stay and watch Aunt Chana's young children, it always worked out that my mother was the one who stayed. Do you think nobody noticed? They noticed, as I heard later on from my father.

In the 1930's, my uncle

Moshe Axelrod was one of the fortunate few who received – I think from Kalinin – a visa for Eretz Yisroel. The train, on which Uncle Moshe and his family traveled, spent a few days at the Krolevets station, and we, and all the relatives, wanted to go to the train compartment where the lucky passengers sat, and say goodbye to them. However, it was very dangerous to accompany people who were leaving the "beloved" Motherland.

We decided instead to say goodbye at the station in Altinovka, a small drowsy village where the train was also supposed to stop. One morning, the entire family walked from Krolevets to that village. Once again the same problem arose. Who would stay with the little children? We discussed it and in the end, my mother stayed.

A POGROM IN OUR TOWN

An outstanding example of her innate good-heartedness towards others when she was still young is a story that I heard from relatives. It was during the time after the communist revolution when the Red army fought in the Ukraine against the remnants of the White army. All these gangs were named for their commanders – Denikin, Petlyura and so on. Many cities and towns in the Ukraine were captured by the Denikin loyalists and their ilk, and there they carried out pogroms against the Jews, murdering Jews and then stringing them up r'l.

Our town of Krolevets went from the Reds to the Whites and back, and many Jews paid with their lives. Twice, the Denikin hoodlums dragged Zeide out of his house, which means they wanted to shoot him in the yard or hang him from a tree (I don't

know why, but they generally did not kill indoors). Zeide was miraculously saved. One time, his salvation came in a roundabout way through my mother who was 12-13 at the time but looked older. The moment the murderers began dragging Zeide, she looked out the window and then left the house and began to run. Where? I don't know.

The murderers noticed that someone had looked out the window and disappeared. There was a Christian householder standing near the window at the time, who wanted to help but was very scared. The murderers asked him whether someone had looked out the window. He said: Yes, yes.

They asked: Where did he run? In which direction? He said the person had fled in the direction of the center of town where their command post was located. Officially, the commanders did not allow the soldiers to kill. Although the White gangs didn't care, they didn't want the brass to know precisely who had killed and where. So they left Zeide alone.

DARING MISSION FROM THE "PODVAL"

The conquest of the Whites lasted a few days. The entire family, including the grandfathers, Bubbe Karasik, and the aunts, hid in mortal fear under the house in the *podval*. This was not a cellar but a dark crawlspace between the floor of the house and the earth and a person could crawl in on all fours. We usually hid there during the day. At night, Zeide and the others went out and the friendly landlord would bring us food.

One person was missing from

our hideout, Uncle Yeruchem, the husband of Aunt Leah'ke. He was one of the elite students of Tomchei T'mimim, a great Chassid and oveid. He was one of the ten special Chassidim who died in the year of the Rebbe Rashab's passing. When the Whites invaded the town, he was in shul, in the midst of davening at length, and he did not return home. It was the second day already and the family was sure he was still in the shul and was hiding there. In any case, he had been without food for two days.

And so, in the depths of the *podval*, a package of food was prepared for Uncle Yeruchem. A discussion ensued as to who would go to the shul, despite the great danger, and bring the food to him (by the way, this was the Old Shul that I described in the previous chapter. It had a Torah in the Aron Kodesh which Zeide-Rav, R' Dovber Karasik, wrote. When the Whites captured the city, they desecrated all the Sifrei Torah except for Zeide-Rav's).

When some time had passed and the family had yet to decide who would go, my mother took the package and began crawling out of the *podval*. It was dark and so they didn't notice immediately. When they realized that she had snuck outside, Zeide Mendel immediately followed her, but she had gone a long way by then. They were all frantic with worry and didn't know what to do (until this day, I don't know why the wife of Uncle Yeruchem, Aunt Leah, didn't go to him). My mother was a nice looking Jewish girl and she was in grave danger. Bubbe Miriam literally tore out her hair. It was hard to calm her. She wanted to go out and look for my mother and they barely managed to restrain her. Bubbe told me that her father-in-law, Zeide Chaim Bentzion, said,

"Children, there is no choice; we must rely on the Guardian of Israel." And he began to say T'hillim.

My mother made it to the shul without any harm befalling her. The doors to the shul were open and my mother walked in. She described the havoc she saw – on the floor were torn talleisim, ripped s'farim, broken shtenders, etc. She walked slowly to the men's section and saw nobody there. She wanted to go up to the women's section to see who was hiding there but was afraid to go up. She began shouting, "Uncle Yeruchem, Uncle Yeruchem!"

Uncle Yeruchem came out of his hiding place which was deep under the steps, white, his head bare, and he said, "Manya'le, what did you do? Why did you come here when it's so dangerous?"

"I brought you food," she said.

Uncle Yeruchem was dumbstruck. He related this himself afterward and added, "We need to toil so much, to learn Chassidus and daven in order to reach such a spiritual level, to be willing to be moser nefesh for another Jew! And here a young Jewish girl did this!"

Uncle Yeruchem began eating and my mother wanted to go back. He said he refused to allow her do that. He said there was a good hiding place for her and he would not allow her to leave. It didn't help when she said that back at home they would go out of their minds with worry about her.

Then salvation from heaven intervened. Two hours later they heard and saw how the Whites were expelled from the city by the Red army and my mother and Uncle Yeruchem returned home.

THE POWER OF A CHASSIDISHE NIGGUN

In the HaYom Yom the Rebbe Rayatz writes, "... A chassidic melody fortifies hope and trust, brings joyousness, and places the home and family in a state of light." Indeed, shluchim can testify that it was often a Chassidic niggun, more than words, that penetrated deeply into people's hearts and souls and was mekarev them to a life of Torah and mitzvos, a life of Chassidus. * The following is a compilation of stories about the power of a niggun, presented in honor of this month of Light, Joy, and Chassidische farbrengens.

By Rabbi Yaakov Shmuelevitz

Shliach, Beit Shaan

When I was a bachur in Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in Kfar Chabad, I had the privilege of doing outreach work on Friday nights and Shabbos afternoons. During those years (5741-5743), organized visits by groups of students from all over the country would come to Kfar Chabad for Shabbos. They were usually pre-bar mitzva boys who came with their teachers and some parents.

Rabbi Yossi Strasbourg, on behalf of Tzach in Kfar Chabad, was in charge of hosting these groups. Yisroel Gliss (now a shliach in Dimona) and I were the counselors who accompanied the boys throughout the Shabbos. The kids enjoyed Shabbos meals

with families, a tour of the Kfar, a conversation with a Chassid, and the davening. Towards the end of Shabbos, they all went to the zal of the yeshiva for niggunim, with the participation of the mashpia R' Mendel Futerfas. The mashgiach R' Maishke Naparstek stood there and ensured that the niggunim were sung properly.

I remember that during the first Shabbasos we wondered whether it was a good idea to bring the whole group for a long hour of old, wordless tunes, without a lecture or explanation.

"What do these kids understand?" we asked ourselves. "What do they get out of listening to some unfamiliar tunes?"

However, as the weeks

passed, we were pleasantly surprised to hear more and more enthusiastic feedback on the part of the students and on the part of the teachers and parents. They said that the highlight of the entire Shabbos was the Chassidische niggunim sung there in the zal, by the dim light of the setting sun.

Unfortunately, we sometimes had groups that did not relate to the messages people tried to convey to them. It happened occasionally that the lecturer wasn't interesting enough and the kids didn't pay attention. We were left with the feeling that the entire Shabbos had no effect on them. Then came the hour of niggunim, and we suddenly saw the tough teachers and an accompanying father or grandfather, one with eyes closed in a sort of d'veikus, another wiping away a tear, and others looking around wide-eyed at the dozens of bachurim singing as they listened attentively.

Months and even years later, in the course of keeping in touch with those boys, we heard time and again about the niggunim that tore down all the barriers and gave the guests the feeling that now we were united. That is when we realized that more than all the lectures, more than all the explanations, and even more than the tasty food, a Chassidische niggun has a special power to open hearts, penetrate inside and touch the neshama, and place the

entire home in a state of light.

SONGS FROM THE CHABAD HOUSE

A Chassidische niggun has a special power that you won't find in a thousand speeches. I experienced this at a wedding of one of the children of a friend of mine, Rabbi Benny Karniel, shliach in Gadera. Rabbi Karniel built up a beautiful community in Gadera. It began with a Chabad minyan in a neighborhood bomb shelter and eventually expanded into a large beautiful building.

A k'hilla grew around the Chabad shul with hundreds of participants at the t'fillos, shiurim and farbrengens. There are particular Chabad niggunim that are beloved to the members of the k'hilla which they sing regularly at farbrengens.

Back to the wedding – at some point, dozens of these “Chassidim from Gadera” made a big circle in the center of the hall and sang those niggunim that they sing regularly at the Chabad house. The band stopped playing and all the guests focused their attention on what was going on. It was as though the k'hilla from Gadera and their beloved shliach were hovering up above as they sang Chabad niggunim with d'veikus. One could see that they were firmly connected to Chassidus, to the Rebbe's shliach, and to Chabad niggunim.

A “JEWISH NIGGUNIM AND MEDITATION” WORKSHOP IN THE FAR EAST

Some of the Rebbe's shlichim in India and the Far East use the power of Chassidische niggunim in their outreach. They have been mekarev hundreds of Jews to Torah and Chassidus through

niggunim. Rabbi Dror Shaul Moshe, shliach in Dramsala, India told me about his niggunim workshops.

“Hundreds and thousands of Jewish tourists come here seeking spirituality and the meaning in life. Sad to say, many of them visit all sorts of ashrams and monasteries which are centers of idol worship. However, this provides us with an opportunity to show them authentic spirituality, the way of Torah and Chassidus.”

Rabbi Moshe conducts a wide variety of courses and workshops which are nothing but shiurim on Torah and Chassidus. Their purpose is to attract these precious lost Jews with spiritual sounding titles that you won't hear in Lubavitch or in Tomchei T'mimim yeshivos.

There is a workshop on Judaism and art; a workshop on the ten s'firos; Jewish meditation; introduction to Kabbala; structure of the soul. The most popular workshop is the one on niggunim and Jewish meditation. It is a long, serious workshop, and Rabbi Moshe says that very often a person who has taken it will comment that he or she experienced a spiritual arousal to t'shuva. In fact, many of those who have taken the niggunim workshop have become baalei t'shuva.

EIGHT HOURS A DAY OF CHASSIDISHE NIGGUNIM!

I heard more about niggunim workshops from some “graduates” who became baalei t'shuva thanks to the niggunim in India. They have since joined the Rebbe's army and are shlichim themselves and give niggunim workshops in some form or another.



One of the “products” of those workshops is a shliach to the kibbutzim in the Beit Shaan Valley (now Emek HaMaayanot), R' Roi Tor. R' Tor, who grew up on an irreligious kibbutz in the Valley, went to India after completing his army service. He visited a Chabad house and participated in some workshops. The workshop that made the

greatest impact on him was the niggunim workshop.

How does it work? The shliach gets the word out among the tourists and spiritual seekers that the following week there will be a six day workshop on niggunim, every day from nine in the morning until five in the afternoon! On Sunday it takes place at the Chabad house; on Monday in a nearby forest; on Tuesday on a mountaintop. They sit in a circle, and the shliach teaches them Chabad niggunim. The niggunim that are most “used” are the standard classics that are saturated with feelings of yearning for G-dliness, such as Kol Dodi, Anim Z'miros, Tzama Lecha Nafshi, etc.

In the remaining time they learn how to concentrate on a niggun, how to harmonize their breath with the meaning of the song, to yearn for G-dliness and to seek spiritual heights. It might sound funny to us (or self-understood), but there in India they take it all seriously. They remove themselves for a few days from the nonsense of the world and make their (long) way towards Torah and Chassidus.

It's not surprising that when R' Roi Tor opened his own Chabad house that he remembered the impact of those niggunim workshops. One of his most successful programs takes place on those nights with a full moon when he has niggunim workshops in the woods or park. Dozens, even hundreds of young people show up, sit around a bonfire, and sing Chassidische niggunim along with R' Roi's guitar accompanying them. They also listen to his Chassidic explanations until the light of dawn.

310 IMMERSIONS IN THE RIVER

“At one of the workshops,” said R' Dror Shaul Moshe, “a young Israeli girl really got into the niggunim. The morning of the third day of the workshop, she told my wife about an incredible dream she had the night before. In her dream she saw the Rebbe singing ‘Tzama Lecha Nafshi’ and she felt waves of holiness and purity that were so powerful that she couldn't contain her emotion. ‘I am still distant from this k'dusha. I can't continue with the workshop,’ she said, and she left the Chabad house. A few months later she returned and found her way to Chassidus.”

R' Dror Shaul has a story in which the opposite thing happened. R' Shai Shur, who now does hafatza at Bar Ilan University, attended a niggunim workshop in India when he was first finding his way to Judaism.

“One day, we went out to the Himalayan Mountains to sing niggunim when it suddenly began to pour. So we entered a large cave that was nearby. Sitting in this emergency shelter actually provided a feeling that this was a special encounter. Everybody got into a truly uplifted state, and Shai felt that this was the moment he had been waiting for all his life. The singing grew stronger and there were explanations, breathing and concentration exercises, when Shai suddenly saw the figure of an old man entering the cave. He was dressed in white and he went over to one of the participants, Nadav Becher (today a musician who reaches out to Jews through niggunim, see *Beis Moshiach* issue #779).

“When we left the cave, Shai came over to me and said that all his life he had been waiting for a

genuine spiritual experience and he had just had it.”

Shai immediately wanted to shed his secular past, and he asked R' Dror what he should do. The shliach pointed at a freezing river and told him it's a segula to immerse *Shai* (310) times. Shai didn't hesitate. He entered the river and immersed as the rest of them stood by and counted out loud, 288, 289, 300, 301.

Shai returned to Eretz Yisroel and went to yeshiva. He threw himself into his learning and got smicha, married and now reaches out to thousands of students at Bar Ilan.

REMEMBER, DON'T FORGET!

A fellow who attended the niggunim workshop said afterward, “It was a bit much for me.” He wanted to forget all the “heavy Chassidic ideas.” He stopped thinking about it and continued his tour of India.

After a few months he returned to R' Dror and said he wanted to attend a yeshiva. What had happened? Although he tried to forget the Chabad house, he could not get the niggun “Kol Dodi” out of his mind. It kept on playing in his head until he decided to return. The power of a niggun ...

NOT WITHOUT THE DALET BAVOS

Another shliach who owes his Chassidic life, to a great extent, to a niggunim workshop, is Rabbi Dotan Korati. He is a shliach at Michlala L'Minhal (College of Business Administration) in Rishon L'Tziyon. I've written about him before.

He grew up on a kibbutz in Kfar Rupin in the Beit Shaan

Valley. I had the z'chus of being the officiating rabbi at the wedding of Dotan and Meirav. The couple was in the early stages of their commitment to Torah and Chassidus, but it was already clear to Dotan that the Dalet Bavos would be played under his chuppa.

For some reason, when it was time for the chuppa, the DJ hadn't managed to get the right CD working. Everyone waited for the groom to approach the bride and cover her with the veil but the groom stood there and waited for the niggun to begin. At some point, Dotan's father tried to insist that he get moving, but the groom refused to go to the chuppa without the niggun. Finally, the DJ managed to get the CD to work and we could hear the niggun over the sound system and the wedding began.

Later on, the bride's father told Dotan that at first he was taken aback and annoyed about making people wait because of a niggun, but after he heard the moving niggun he understood that it was worth waiting for.

NIGGUNIM FROM BIRTH

R' Yair Calev of Kfar Chabad has a marvelous combination of musical talent and the ability to explain Tanya and Chassidus. Several nights a week he delivers a lecture or shiur accompanied by his guitar and soulful Chassidic songs. He keeps the audience enthralled for hours (I myself attended some of his performances) as he keeps moving from talk to niggun, from niggun to talk. The audience has ample time to absorb what they hear during the talking part.

R' Calev told me that people have bought his CD's and listen to them in the car and at home, and everybody in the house



The shliach pointed at a freezing river and told him it's a segula to immerse Shai (310) times. Shai didn't hesitate. He entered the river and immersed as the rest of them stood by and counted out loud, 288, 289, 300, 301. . . Shai returned to Eretz Yisroel and went to yeshiva. He threw himself into his learning and got smicha, married and now is a shliach reaching out to thousands of students at Bar Ilan University.

benefits from the Chassidic atmosphere, "and places the home and family in a state of light."

He heard about a woman giving birth who asked that his CD play because "it calms me and will help the baby be born directly into a Chassidic atmosphere."

CHASSIDISHE NIGGUNIM IN THE GOLAN HEIGHTS

Mr. Gideon Tamir (mentioned before in this column) is the principal of the ORT middle school in Beit Shaan. Gideon has loved music from a very young age. He plays several instruments and appeared in some performances when he was younger.

When he grew older, he attended yeshiva, served in the Nachal unit of the IDF, and regularly visited the Chabad yeshiva in Tzfas in order to learn and farbreng. It was over there that he became exposed to Chabad niggunim, and he volunteered his talents at the big celebration on Lag b'Omer in Miron alongside famous musicians.

Gideon lives in Yishuv Keshet in the Golan Heights and his house is full of Chassidic niggunim. Whenever he can, he buys new recordings of Chabad

niggunim "and places his home and family in a state of light." Not surprisingly, when Gideon's daughter traveled to India, she stopped off at a Chabad house and remained there for four months! When she returned to Keshet, she had some new Chassidic niggunim which she taught the rest of the family.

Young and old gather at Gideon's house on Shabbos afternoon, in his living room or outdoors, and sing niggunim almost like they do in Kfar Chabad.

Among the people singing one can find officers and soldiers in elite units such as Sayeret (ground special forces), Shayetet (naval special forces), many of them guys from religious homes in the Golan Heights who drifted from their roots. Singing niggunim together brings them back not only to their father's house but to their grandfather and great-grandfather's house, and to an unbreakable connection with Torah and Chassidus.

Shortly after Shabbos is over other young people arrive from yishuvim in the area and sit down to Melaveh Malka. Once again, the beautiful niggunim can be heard. "Starring" niggunim are: Dalet Bavos, Tzama Lecha Nafshi, songs of longing for G-dliness and anticipation of the Geula.

THE BUCK STOPS HERE!

PART II

By Rabbi Gershon Avtzon



Dear Reader sh'yichyeh:

In our previous article we explained that the Rebbe has given us, Klal Yisroel, the responsibility to bring the Geula. We quoted the Rebbe's sichos which explicitly state that the world is ready for Moshiach and the Message of Moshiach. There are still a few more questions concerning the practical implementation of Mivtza Moshiach. We will bring the answers **in the Rebbe's own words**.

WHAT IS THE REBBE'S MESSAGE OF MOSHIACH TO THE WORLD?

1) "One must make known to all members of the generation that we have merited that G-d has chosen a person endowed with free choice, who is incomparably higher than the members of his generation, to be 'your judge,' 'your counselor,' and the prophet of the generation. This chosen leader will provide the instructions and advice relevant to the service of all Jews and all people of the generation, in all matters of Torah and mitzvos,

and daily conduct in the manner of 'in all your ways, know Him' and 'all your deeds (should be for the sake of Heaven).' [His counsel has] extended to the essential prophecy of – not just as a Sage and Judge, but as a Prophet, for this is certain – 'immediate redemption' and instantly 'Behold he (Moshiach) comes.'" (Shoftim 5751)

2) On October 20, 1991, Mr. Gary Tochman, a CNN correspondent asked the Rebbe: "Rebbe, can you tell us the message you have for the world about Moshiach?"

The Rebbe responded, "It was printed in all the press of all the countries; Moshiach is ready to come now, it is only on our part to do something additional in the realm of goodness and kindness . . . at least a little more, then Moshiach will come immediately."

3) "The shluchim have already begun long ago to fulfill the work of shlichus in spreading the Torah, Judaism and the Wellsprings of the inner teachings of Torah outward, and for a long time have even

reached **completion** in the work of shlichus, according to the announcement of my saintly father-in-law mentioned above. Nevertheless, the true and complete Redemption has not yet actually come. It must be said, then, that there must be something that remains to be done that will bring the Redemption into reality.

"What is needed is the following: It is known that 'in every generation an individual descended from Yehuda is born who is qualified to be the Moshiach for Israel,' and that 'one who qualifies because of his righteousness to be the Redeemer, and when the time arrives G-d will be revealed to him and send him, etc.' And according to the announcement of my saintly father-in-law, the leader of our generation, the singular shliach of our generation, the singular Moshiach of our generation, that everything has already concluded, it is understood that there has begun to be fulfilled the 'send now the one You will send,' the shlichus of my saintly father-in-law. And therefore it is obvious that the only thing that now remains in the work of shlichus is **to greet our righteous Moshiach in actual reality**, in order that he should be able to fulfill his shlichus in actuality and bring all the Jews out of exile!

"This then must be the

“We see clearly that the intent of the Rebbe is not to give us a way out of Mivtza Moshiach. He is telling us that we must deal with each community and individual in a way that they or he will accept it.

practical lesson that results as we gather now at the opening and commencement of the International Convention of Shluchim.

“We must come out with a resolution and an announcement to all shluchim that the work of shlichus now and for every Jew is, in their capacity, to lead to the greeting of our righteous Moshiach.

“This means that all the details of the work of shlichus in spreading the Torah and Judaism and spreading the Wellsprings of the inner teachings of Torah outward must be permeated with greeting our righteous Moshiach.” (Kinus HaShluchim 5752)

PERHAPS THE JOB OF SPREADING MOSHIACH IS JUST FOR SHLUCHIM?

1) “All Jews, men, women and even children, have the responsibility to increase their efforts to bring our righteous Moshiach in actual reality!

“Therefore it is obvious there is no place for relying on others or imposing the work on someone else instead of doing it oneself, but this is the task of **every man and woman**; everyone must themselves do their job, ‘to serve my Maker’ (for the sake of which ‘I was created’), and certainly one has the ability (since ‘I do not ask except according to their ability’).” (Shmini 5751)

2) “And since this is the Divine service of the time, it is understood this applies to every Jew without any exception whatsoever.” (Chaya Sara 5752)

3) “My intention here is action, and certainly the following will be publicized everywhere:

“In order to realize the immediate revelation and coming

of Moshiach, each and every Jew (the men, whether they are dwellers in the tent (Yisachar) or men of business (Z’vulun), and the women and children, each one according to his ability) should increase their learning of Torah, particularly the subjects of Moshiach and Redemption.” (Tazria Metzora 5751)

DID THE REBBE NOT SAY THAT ONE SHOULD ONLY SPREAD MOSHIACH IF IT IS “MISKABEL,” ACCEPTED?

The following are the Rebbe’s words: “From the international convention must come and be brought good resolutions such that every shliach must prepare himself and prepare all the Jews in his place and city etc. to greet our righteous Moshiach. This should be done through his explanation of the concept of Moshiach, as explained in the Written Torah and the Oral Torah, in a way that **it will be received** by everyone according to his intellect and understanding. This includes in particular learning the subject of Moshiach and Redemption, and specifically in a manner of Wisdom, Understanding and Knowledge.” (Chayei Sarah 5752)

We see clearly that the intent of the Rebbe is not to give us a way out of Mivtza Moshiach. He is telling us that we must deal with each community and individual in a way that they or he will accept it.

For example, some people like stories about Moshiach while others appreciate Gemaras that speak about Moshiach. Some might want to learn Maamarim about Moshiach, while others would rather hear songs about Moshiach. Some places respond

well to billboards, and yet others respond better to personal letters. Each country, city and area is unique. We must figure out the best method to get the message through. There is no excuse not to convey the message!

TO WHAT EXTENT DOES ONE HAVE TO BE PREOCCUPIED WITH MOSHIACH?

1) “Indeed, the preparation for the coming of our righteous Moshiach is the most all encompassing aspect of Judaism and includes all the other points and details of the work of shlichus.” (Kinus 5752)

2) “When one is totally immersed in a certain subject, it is human nature when encountering another topic to immediately search for and find the connection with that subject in which he is immersed, even though this other topic has its own issues and critical features.

“As Jews – particularly in the end of the period of exile (after the passing of all the deadlines and after my sainted father-in-law testified that we have already done *T’shuva* and that all the necessary efforts have been completed) – ‘we are totally immersed’ in ‘awaiting for him every day that he will come.’ Throughout each and every day we wait and yearn for the true and complete Redemption.

“And, inasmuch as Jews are passionately involved with the coming of Moshiach, it is reasonable that in all matters we should search primarily for their association with our awaiting every day that he will come.

“...Similarly it is so with respect to the Torah reading of the Shabbos of Chanukah. During the Torah reading,

as soon as a Jew hears and comprehends the word ‘Mikeitz – the End,’ he exclaims, ‘Aha! This is an allusion to the end of exile, referred to as the ‘end of days – Keitz HaYamim’ [spelled with a final Mem which connotes the end of exile], as well as ‘the end of days – Keitz HaYamin’ [spelled as it is in the end of the book of Daniel, with a final nun which connotes] the deadline for the Redemption!” (Mikeitz 5751)

3) “As we stand in such close proximity to the Redemption, every Jew must accustom himself to this reality. Everyone must internalize a state and feeling of Redemption, by making his personal day a ‘personal day of Redemption’ and transforming one’s private space into ‘the land of Israel.’ One achieves this by performing, at each moment

and in every place, one’s service in thought, speech and action to utter perfection.

“Also, the result of perfecting one’s service (in thought, speech and action) must be expressed in one’s speech. That is, just as ‘the lots themselves spoke,’ so too when one has internalized one’s Divine service to ‘make Israel here,’ to the point of penetration to one’s very core, one speaks to others about it with enthusiasm. At that point one will eagerly publicize the directive of ‘make Israel here’ to one’s family and acquaintances, and certainly to one’s students, and ultimately to all those he can reach. Because this message comes from within, one’s words are words which come from the heart, which are guaranteed to enter the heart and will have their intended effect.

When one actually becomes a living example of this ideal in his own efforts, he can certainly have the effect on others. This is true to such an extent that the listeners themselves will become speakers.” (Pinchas 5751)

After all the above, one may still ask:

It has been so long! What will inspire us to continue to demand and await Moshiach? This we will explain IY”H in our next article.

Rabbi Avtzon is the Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivas Lubavitch Cincinnati and a well sought after speaker and lecturer. Recordings of his in-depth shiurim on Inyanei Geula u’Moshiach can be accessed at <http://ylcrecording.com>. Weekly shiurim on Moshiach topics given by Rabbi Avtzon can be viewed at chabad.info.

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and forget, or at least lose the sense of awe we once attached to them. A recent study published by Gabriel Radvansky out of the University of Notre Dame suggests that passing through doorways causes memory lapses. “Entering or exiting through a doorway serves as an ‘event boundary’ in the mind, which

separates episodes of activity and files them away,” Radvansky explains. “Recalling the decision or activity that was made in a different room is difficult because it has been compartmentalized.”

If I view my life as a series of disconnected events, then I will have trouble connecting the dots to recognize the miracles that got me here, the miracle that is my life. But if I perceive the events of

my life as one thread, or perhaps more aptly one complex rope weaved of many multi-colored threads, with a unified purpose, then I am better equipped to appreciate the “little” miracles and harness them to grow further.

Some people go through life with their heads buried in the sand, some with their heads buried in themselves. I’m not sure which is worse, hiding from the answers or looking for easy ones. But I know neither gets me anywhere worth going. But if I look at the signs that are right there in front of me, confront them, and trust that they are exactly what they seem, then I find that they point to a unified and elegant and intelligent order hidden within the chaos. Because solid revelation abounds, if only you look.

“To me, moments like these are the greatest miracles. They might not be grandiose. They might not be glamorous. But, if we take the time to appreciate them, they can shatter the mundane natural reality of the egocentric self and expose the soul – and anything that can accomplish that without requiring hours of focused meditation or a psychotropic cocktail is a miracle in my books.

DOORWAYS OF PERCEPTION

By Rabbi Yisroel Harpaz



“Solid revelation abounds, if only you look.” These words were scrawled in large block letters using white chalk on a brick wall in Burlington, Vermont, where I spent a couple of weeks a while back. To this day, the image remains firmly embedded in my conscious mind. I have no idea who wrote it, or why – or even what their original intent was. But for some reason, it struck a chord with me, it grabbed me, it resonated. I was in a strange state of mind – one of those outside of self, dizzying, spinning, mind full of questions type of days where I feel the undeniable need to challenge the foregone conclusions of yesterday, and my very existence, by looking for answers to questions I have no business answering in places

I have no business going to. I was contemplating where I’d been, where I was at, and where I was going, and I started feeling that my life was lacking in clarity and cohesiveness. I felt my mind unwinding out of control, like a fishing reel set loose by a wild catch too large to handle. Who do I think I am? How am I supposed to know if I am living the life that I am meant to live? Why can’t I see any sign?

And, in an instant, the writing on the wall broke through all that inner static. It was an answer in plain words, in plain sight – blatant and undeniable and simple as the bricks upon which they were written. Hours later, I found myself standing there again, capturing the scene with my camera as it captured me

once more. Real answers are not found in inner-dimensional wisdom or super-conscious states of being. Though they might help me get there, and see the world in its proper light, it is the world beneath my nose that contains the real answers – but only if I take the time to really take it in.

To me, moments like these are the greatest miracles. They might not be grandiose. They might not be glamorous. But, if we take the time to appreciate them, they can shatter the mundane natural reality of the egocentric self and expose the soul – and anything that can accomplish that without requiring hours of focused meditation or a psychotropic cocktail is a miracle in my books.

In a certain sense, this type of hidden miracle is more powerful than the open, earth-shattering experiences that make headlines, because it is mine, and because it doesn’t need to turn the whole world up-side down to make its point; I am elevated by it, but remain firmly within my earthly reality, with an instant clarity of how to bring the wisdom gained into my life. And perhaps greater than the miracle itself is the capacity and presence of mind to appreciate it, and the ability to recall it later, defying time and space to relive the moment and its lessons.

But, more often than not, we tend to forget and take things for granted – the writing on the wall, the unexplained coincidence, the undeserved success, the unbelievable sunset, the birth of a child. We tend to file them away

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THE KEY PERFORMANCE

By M.E. Gordon

“Okay, everybody, I’d like to get this meeting started.”

Chavie’s gaze swept the room until the chatter and giggling stopped. “As leader of this youth group, I am asking your help for a very special project.” She paused. The twenty-two girls in the room waited impatiently for Chavie to continue. “I think that you are all aware of the ‘Special Friends Club.’ Some of you are volunteers, and know how this club brightens up the lives of children with challenging conditions.” A few girls nodded. Everyone knew that Chavie’s little sister Rikky was one of those children.

“The Special Friends Club could accomplish even more, if there were sufficient funds. I thought that perhaps we could put on some type of performance and raise money for the Club. We don’t have time for anything too elaborate, but there is enough natural talent here to make an enjoyable evening for the women in our community.”

The stillness was broken by excited chatter as everyone had ideas and comments to share.

Chavie quieted everyone down again. “I’m sorry, but I can’t hear everyone at once. I’m

passing out papers and pens. Each of you should write down your ideas and suggestions, what you in particular are interested in doing, and we’ll meet again tomorrow after school.”

The next day, Chavie assigned each girl a task. “Baila and Hadassah offered to do a duet. Breina is going to work on a series of short skits with Esther and Suri. Menucha, Yehudis, and Ella will play flute, violin, and piano. Chani is organizing the publicity and tickets. The final and crowning performance will be Perel and her Puppet Theatre. Chani, make sure that the publicity posters mention the puppet show; I’m sure it will be a crowd drawer.”

At the mention of Perel’s Puppet Theatre, a few girls rolled their eyes, but Chavie didn’t notice. Afterwards, as Baila, Hadassah, Esther and Suri were walking home together, they aired their feelings. “I can’t understand why Chavie has to favor one girl over the others,” fumed Baila. “Aren’t we all in this together?”

“I agree,” answered Suri. “You and Hadassah sing like angels. I’m sure that plenty of people will want to come just to

hear you two.”

“And I’m sure that your skits will be fabulous, too,” added Hadassah. “The last skit that the three of you put on for the Rosh Chodesh assembly had everyone rolling with laughter.”

“Look, just forget what Chavie said about Perel,” said Esther. “It’s not right to be jealous. Let’s discuss something else, like what we should wear on stage.”

The girls started discussing costumes, but inside some girls were still upset. Their resentment grew even more when they saw the posters later that week, which very prominently mentioned Perel’s Puppet Theatre.

The next few weeks, however, everyone was busy perfecting her own part in the performance, and didn’t give much thought to the matter. That is, until everyone came together to run through the whole program two nights before the actual performance. Suddenly the jealousy that had cooled down started simmering once again and soon reached the boiling point. Baila was especially upset. She had to admit that Perel’s Puppet show was something extraordinary, mainly because Perel managed to include some of the children from the ‘Special Friends Club.’ The story they portrayed with the puppets was about how each and every person is special and has something to contribute.

“So if everyone has what to contribute, why does Chavie favor Perel?” muttered Baila. She

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hadn't meant for anyone to hear her comment, but Chavie had been standing right behind her.

"Baila!" cried out Chavie, and then dropped her voice to a whisper. "Baila, please come out to the hallway with me. I think there's something that I need to tell you."

Baila blushed, embarrassed that Chavie had heard her outburst, and followed her sheepishly out of the auditorium.

"Baila, I'm sorry that you are upset. I didn't realize that anyone felt that I was favoring Perel. I suppose I should have praised everyone equally. I really do appreciate that each girl is doing her best and each contribution is valuable. You have to understand, however, that the success of this

program is very important to me. Maybe I should have been more careful not to show it, but I really feel that Perel's Puppet Theatre will show the audience what the 'Special Friends Club' is really all about. Please understand – it's not that I like Perel more – I love all of you the same. I just want this fundraiser to be a success, and that is why I am focusing so much attention on Perel."

"I...I think I understand, Chavie. I'm sorry I made a fuss. You remind me of what we learned this week about Yosef. His brothers were upset because Yaakov seemed to favor Yosef over them. They felt that they each had valid paths in serving Hashem, what makes Yosef any better? Our teacher explained that Yaakov saw that Yosef's

dream indicated that the process of Galus and subsequent Geula is starting, and that Yosef's path in serving Hashem is the primary path that will get B'nei Yisroel through. Yaakov loved all of his children and appreciated all of the attributes that they represented, but when he focused on the ultimate goal, he saw that Yosef had the key. I suppose that in our program, it's Perel who has the key."

"I'm glad you understand, Baila. And by the way, you and Hadassah really do sing like angels ... but I wouldn't want anyone to be jealous!"

The story in this article is fictional. The lesson is based on Likkutei Sichos vol. 25 p. 204-212.

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