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Beis Moshiach (USPS 012-542) ISSN 1082-0272 is published weekly, except Jewish holidays (only once in April and October) for \$160.00 in Crown Heights, USA \$180.00. All other places for \$195.00 per year (45 issues), by Beis Moshiach, 744 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, NY 11213-3409. Periodicals postage paid at Brooklyn, NY and additional offices. Postmaster: send address changes to Beis Moshiach 744 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, NY 11213-3409. Copyright 2011 by Beis Moshiach, Inc.

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THE WORLD ITSELF DEMANDS OF EVERY JEW TO RISE UP TO REDEMPTION

In our times, all the preparations for the redemption have been completed. Even the buttons have been polished [i.e., the finishing touches of preparing for the redemption have already been done]! If people would simply open their eyes, they would immediately behold how the entire world is ready. Indeed, they would see how the world itself demands of every Jew that he should rise up to the status of redemption in a complete and overt manner!

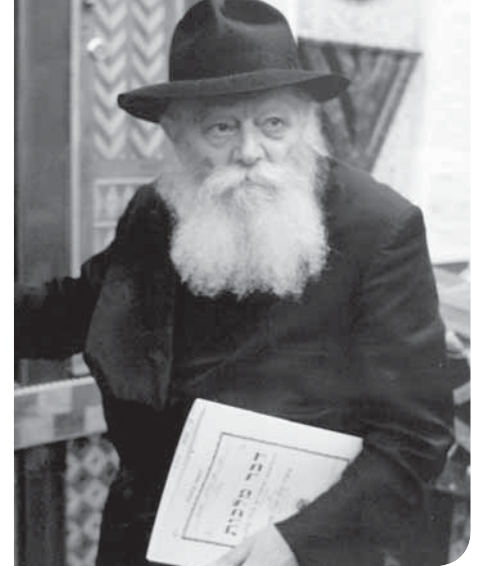
Translated by Boruch Merkur

THE "BLESSED REIGN" OF MOSHIACH OVER THE PHYSICAL REALM

Every single person is asked to do all that is dependent upon him not only in preparing for the redemption but in conducting himself now in a manner that is appropriate for the redemption, in a manner that is in line with the redemption in its ultimate state of perfection. That is, when the redemption is drawn down until it is recognized below, in the physicality of the world, finding expression even in the lowly coarseness of the physical world!

True, the coarseness of the world must be made into

gashmius (physicality) that can be described as "*gishmei bracha* (literally, "blessed rain," but referring here to) physicality that has been refined," and the physicality itself [i.e., refined of its coarseness] must be connected with spirituality so thoroughly that it expresses how "their souls are primary and their bodies are secondary." Nevertheless the ultimate redemption is achieved specifically when the spiritual draws vitality from the physical, the soul draws life from the body!



FEASTING ON THE LEVIASON AND THE SHOR HA'BAR

The above is also to be understood in light of the teachings of Chassidus regarding the Feast of the Leviason and the Shor HaBar, for this feast will be experienced specifically as a physical meal. That is, notwithstanding all the lengthy elucidation on the great significance and symbolism of the Leviason and the Shor HaBar, this dimension of meaning does not rival the quality of the meal specifically as it is enjoyed physically, experienced in the earthly realm. In fact, in the Future Era it will be perceived how all these explanations, brought from the teachings of Chassidus and Musar, draw vitality from the feast in the literal and physical sense.

And as has been mentioned repeatedly, in our times all the preparations for the redemption have been completed. Even the buttons have been polished [i.e., the finishing touches of preparing for the redemption have already been done]! If people would simply open their eyes, they would immediately behold how the entire world is

ready. Indeed, they would see how the world itself demands of every Jew that he should rise up to the status of redemption in a complete and overt manner!

Since we say that the world is now ready for the complete redemption, certainly the Mikdash, the Holy Temple, is ready as well. And in particular, there, in the Holy of Holies, the Even HaSh'viya, the Foundation Stone, which remains unchanged from the time of the creation of the world, is ready for the time of redemption. Thus, immediately we see how the Beis HaMikdash "built and perfected will come down from the heavens and be revealed," and it will materialize in its physical place here below.

“Notwithstanding all the lengthy elucidation on the great significance and symbolism of the Leviasan and the Shor HaBar, this dimension of meaning does not rival the quality of the meal specifically as it is enjoyed physically, experienced in the earthly realm.

THE WORLD WAS CREATED FOR ME

Moreover, since every single person is obligated to say, "The world was created for me," in the singular, it is understood that even if only one Jew were to open his eyes, as above, it would have an impact on the entire world, which was created for his sake. That is, the entire world

would see how immediately the door opens up and Dovid Malka Meshicha enters, passing through the threshold – and the leader of our generation at our lead!

(From the address of Shabbos Parshas VaYigash, 7 Teives 5752, bilti muga)

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RESEARCHER AND CHASSID

Rabbi Aharon Chitrik a”h embodied a rare combination of researcher and Chassid. He was gifted with a researcher’s vision and knew the secrets of his profession. At the same time though, he was a Chassid who was battul to his Rebbe and did not veer an iota from the instructions the Rebbe gave him. * He received detailed instructions and guidance from the Rebbe, and for dozens of years he gave the Rebbe nachas with his work.

By Rabbi Sholom Yaakov Chazan

On 29 Tishrei, we heard the sad news of the passing of Rabbi Aharon Chitrik a”h, member of the editorial board of *Otzar HaChassidim* and one of the people in charge of publishing the teachings of our Rebbeim.

Rabbi Chitrik was born in 5699/1939 in Charkov in the Ukraine. His father was Rabbi Yehuda Chitrik who was a Chassidishe shochet in his city, and his mother was Kaila, the daughter of the chief rabbi of Charkov, Rabbi Aharon Tumarkin.

During World War II the family moved to Samarkand in Uzbekistan, where they lived until they left the Soviet Union. Shortly after they left Russia, his father was sent by the Rebbe Rayatz to Belgium in order to try and remove Jewish children from monasteries where they had

been hidden during the war. When he finished his work there (in 1948), his father was sent to be the mashpia and a member of the *hanhala ruchni* in the Chabad yeshiva in Montreal.

After learning in the yeshiva in Montreal, Rabbi Aharon went to New York to learn in 770. In those days, the Chassidic researcher, Rabbi Avrohom Sofer, lived in Crown Heights. They met, and Rabbi Sofer, who discerned Rabbi Aharon’s talent, included him in his literary work. That is how he started out in the work of researching and preparing Jewish written works for publication.

In 5722/1962, he worked on and published the *Piskei RYA”Z* on various tractates of the Talmud. He also worked on additional volumes of the commentary of Rabbeinu Menachem HaMeiri on the Talmud.

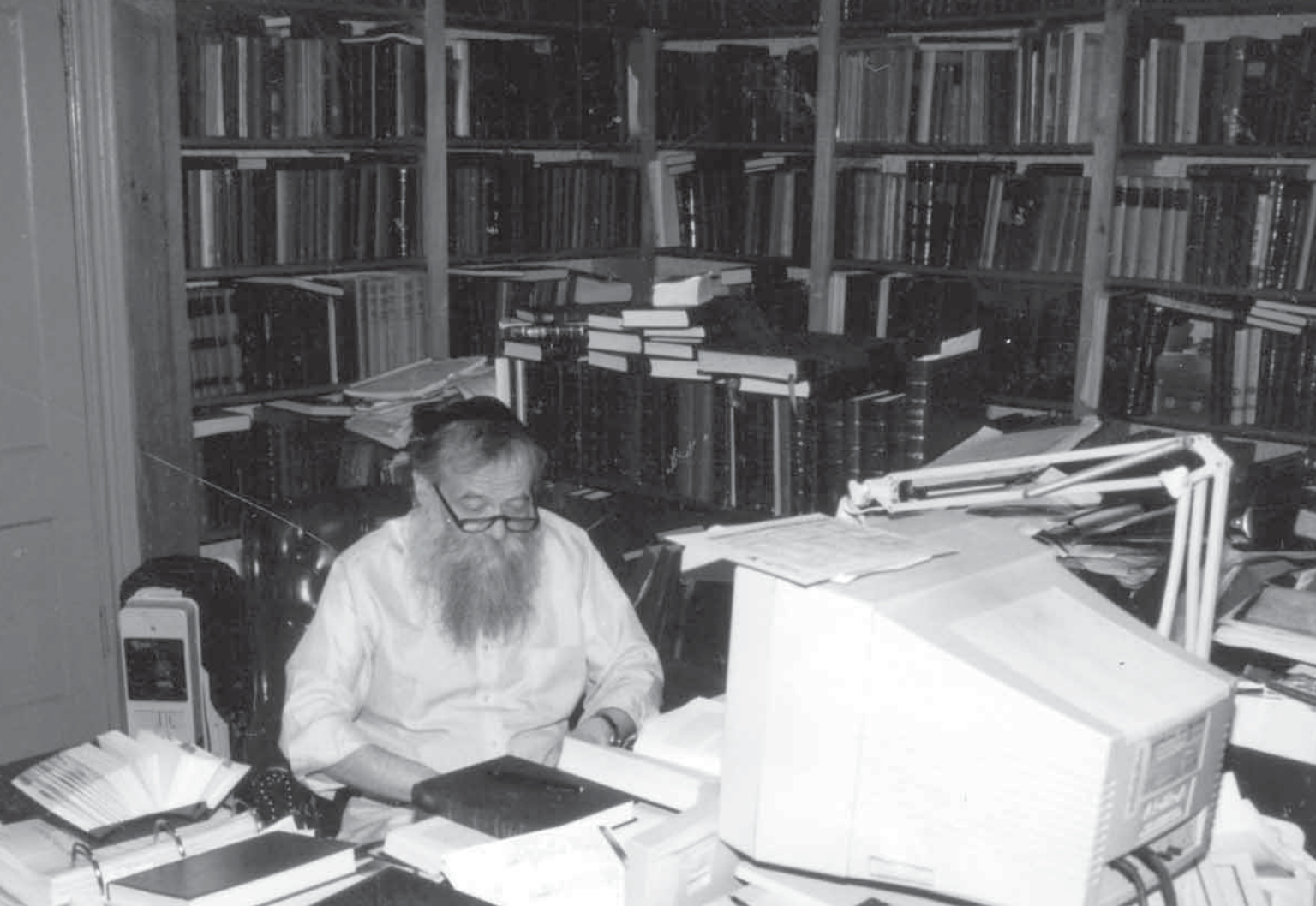
In 5723 he prepared for publication the Tzemach Tzedek’s commentary on the Zohar. In 5744, he reworked the Alter Rebbe’s *Likkutei Torah* and *Torah Ohr*.

The highlight of his work was the huge series of *Likut Pirushim* on Tanya with footnotes, variations in texts, and various commentaries. This series, which he began in 5732 upon an “order from above” (i.e. the Rebbe), was closely followed by the Rebbe throughout the years with many instructions as will be related shortly.

VISITING R’ CHITRIK’S OFFICE

I visited Rabbi Chitrik’s office about fifteen years ago and asked him to tell the readers of *Beis Moshiach*





Rabbi Aharon Chitrik in his office

about instructions he received from the Rebbe in the course of his work.

Whoever entered the small basement where Rabbi Chitrik's office was located found it hard to believe that this was home to the editorial offices of the celebrated *Otzar HaChassidim* publication empire. It was in this little room, surrounded by wall-to-wall and ceiling-to-floor bookcases (in addition to the s'farim lying on tables and chairs) that the work of preparing the s'farim of the Alter Rebbe and Tzemach Tzedek took place. It is from here where dozens of s'farim were published over many years.

Rabbi Chitrik was an expert and authority on old handwritten manuscripts even when he was a bachur. As a young bachur, he

“I walked behind the Rebbe, and he suddenly turned around and asked me about a certain manuscript I was supposed to be getting from the National Library in Paris. I told the Rebbe it was on hold, and the Rebbe said it probably had to do with the tension between France and Algeria for which reason they did not have time to deal with other matters.”

worked on manuscripts of the Rishonim, and the Rebbe took an interest in every detail. Once the Rebbe had him begin working on publishing the works of the Rebbeim, he spent decades in this room on this holy work.

If we wanted to include everything associated with Rabbi Chitrik's work and all the

instructions he received from the Rebbe, we would need to fill many thick volumes. This is what is most unique about Rabbi Chitrik's work, that everything he did was executed upon a direct order from above. The Rebbe said a certain manuscript should be published; then he gave instructions concerning the editing and manner of printing down to the



Rabbi Chitrik

smallest detail; and finally, the target date when the book needed to be bound.

On that fascinating visit to Rabbi Chitrik's office, we decided to focus on one thing only, the crown jewel of all his work: *Likut Pirushim* on Tanya. Forty years ago, the Rebbe gave the job of compiling and arranging all the commentaries of the Rebbeim on Tanya to Rabbi Chitrik. The Rebbe had him simultaneously

work on publishing maamarim of the Alter Rebbe and the series *Ohr Ha'Torah* of the Tzemach Tzedek.

Although the room looked in disarray, apparently there was some order to the chaos. Rabbi Chitrik was able to immediately lay his hands on every letter, book fragment or note that he wanted to show us. The conversation flowed and we entered a world that the Rebbe defined as an "astounding fortune,"

namely working on the publication of the hidden wellsprings of Divine Wisdom.

ENCOUNTERS WITH RABBI AVROHOM SOFER

"How did I get involved with manuscripts?" Rabbi Chitrik asked rhetorically. He immediately launched into an interesting story of Divine Providence:

"In Crown Heights there lived an old man by the name of Rabbi Avrohom Sofer. He published the works of the Meiri from old handwritten manuscripts. Since I was responsible for the library of the yeshiva in 770, together with my friend, Rabbi Shmuel Pesach Bogomilsky, I got to know him. Whenever he needed a certain book, he would come to the yeshiva's library and we would help him locate it.

"One day, Rabbi Avrohom Sofer arrived at his home on President Street on the corner of Brooklyn Avenue and saw a thief trying to enter through a window. He yelled and the thief fled, but Rabbi Avrohom was distraught. Since he was childless, he was afraid to sleep alone in the house. He asked my friend Rabbi Bogomilsky to sleep in his house. Since Rabbi Bogomilsky's parents lived in Crown Heights, he said, 'It would be easier for the other bachur who takes care of the library to do that since he sleeps in the dormitory.'

"The next day, Rabbi Bogomilsky looked for me and told me what he had said. I wholeheartedly agreed. I knew that a man of his age surely got up early in the morning, and he could make sure I got to yeshiva on time. I would go to his house every night at midnight and stay with him until morning.

"He liked to relate what he had experienced in life, as is typical of Jews of that age. Since I was very interested in the topic of

book publishing and handwritten manuscripts, we would sit for hours and talk. He is the one who initiated me into the secrets of handling manuscripts, deciphering them, identifying them and editing them for print.

“So while I was still a bachur, I was already fully immersed in this field. Later on, I merited to work on the *Tos’fos RI”D*. And I worked with Rabbi Kasher zt”l on preparing the writings of the Rogatchover Gaon and others.

“The Rebbe knew about this involvement of mine, and whenever I had yechidus he questioned me in detail about whatever I was busy with at the time. The Rebbe took a particular interest in the writings of the Rogatchover (we know how fond the Rebbe is of his teachings). On these occasions, I got a glimpse of the Rebbe’s outstanding knowledge of this field. It was just unbelievable!

“It wasn’t only in yechidus that the Rebbe asked me about these things, but also on many other occasions. I remember in particular one time, when it was my week to follow the Rebbe home in the evening (we bachurim took turns doing this). I walked behind the Rebbe, and he suddenly turned around and asked me about a certain manuscript I was supposed to be getting from the National Library in Paris. I told the Rebbe it was on hold, and the Rebbe said it probably had to do with the tension between France and Algeria for which reason they did not have time to deal with other matters.”

THE FIRST YOUNG MARRIED MAN IN KOLLEL

Rabbi Chitrik married in 5723, and that was the year the Rebbe founded the Kollel. In private audiences before the wedding, the Rebbe told him to join the Kollel. The Kollel was only a concept at that point, and Rabbi Chitrik asked the Rebbe just who would be running



From left to right: Rabbi Aharon Chitrik, his father Rabbi Yehuda Chitrik, and his grandson of the Gross family

“I stood nearby and suddenly, the Rebbe gave me an ominous look which was so out of the ordinary for the atmosphere of Simchas Torah. My stomach turned over. This happened several times during the hakafos and I knew what the Rebbe meant.”

this Kollel and who would pay the stipends. The Rebbe told him that the Kollel would be under the auspices of the secretariat, which would be responsible for paying the stipends.

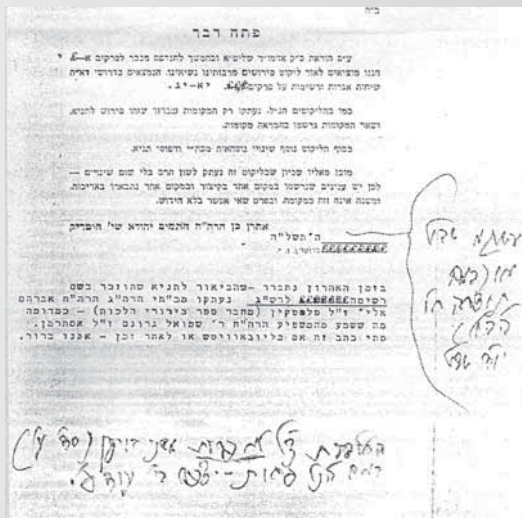
So Rabbi Chitrik learned in Kollel. Two weeks after his wedding, Rabbi Chadakov called him to his office and told him that the Rebbe said he should start working on an index to the Nigleh s’farim of the Tzemach Tzedek. From that point on, until his final days, Rabbi Chitrik worked on publishing the works of the Rebbeim. Every so often he would be assigned another project with the Rebbe constantly emphasizing that it was an additional project and could not be at the expense of his other work.

He started with editing indices for the Tzemach Tzedek’s s’farim. That year, the Rebbe also instructed that marei mekomos (notes and sources) should be arranged for the Alter Rebbe’s *Likkutei Torah*. Rabbi Chitrik participated in this project, which came along with a rare privilege; for an extended period of time, one of the participants would enter the Rebbe’s room and submit the marei mekomos of that week’s Chassidishe parsha.

While doing this work, Rabbi Chitrik asked the Rebbe whether it was worthwhile noting in a separate section all the places where the Alter Rebbe mentions and explains things in Tanya. The Rebbe said that “a grandson of the Tzemach Tzedek

This is a photocopy of instructions the Rebbe added in his own handwriting to wording of the foreword to *Likut Pirushim*. As usual, with all Sifrei Kehos, the Rebbe assigned the date at the end of the foreword. The Rebbe wrote: **Erev Shabbos Kodesh Mevarchim Shevat or (if the publishing is delayed, G-d forbid) Yud Shevat.**

From this we see how important it was to the Rebbe that this kuntres be published quickly. On the bottom, the Rebbe added an instruction regarding the size of the booklet.



was already doing so.” Later on, he found out that the Rebbe was referring to himself and had already given such a list to be printed.

In years to follow, the Rebbe said he should work on publishing the series of *Maamarim of the Alter Rebbe* and *Ohr Ha’Torah* of the Tzemach Tzedek. Rabbi Chitrik accepted the job with the addition of hundreds of instructions and answers from the Rebbe. Rabbi Chitrik referred to those answers as a velt (a world).

Aside from written responses, he received oral answers. When there was a problem identifying a certain manuscript, when there was a doubt about a certain detail, he would ask through the secretariat and receive detailed answers. This was in addition to numerous instances in which he received a phone call telling him, “The Rebbe said ...”

A SURPRISING INSTRUCTION FROM THE REBBE

In 5732, Rabbi Chadakov called Rabbi Chitrik and said, “The Rebbe wants you to make a *Likut Pirushim* (compilation of commentaries) on

Tanya.” At that time, it did not yet have the name *Likut Pirushim* and he was just told to compile explanations and various versions of Tanya from all the Rebbeim. Rabbi Chadakov told him that the Rebbe wanted Rabbi Chitrik to prepare some samples of the general form the work would take, from the first chapter of Tanya.

Rabbi Chitrik collected material for a year and a half and then he began editing it, which turned out to be the main bulk of the work. He submitted a sample for chapter one to the Rebbe along with a long note in which he outlined the rules he was following in his editing work.

The Rebbe made some corrections on this note from which it was understood that the Rebbe agreed with the rest. The approach was to quote only those portions that directly explained passages in Tanya. All other places that merely referred to Tanya or mentioned it without bringing a specific explanation were brought in footnotes.

The Rebbe’s guidance in the note mainly had to do with those footnotes. Rabbi Chitrik wasn’t sure about what to do with those

parts that were not quite connected to the subject – should he omit them entirely? Just refer to them in a footnote? On the other hand, “people don’t pay attention to ‘look here and look there.’” The Rebbe crossed out the option of omission and the sentence remained, “It is worthwhile bringing some things like those mentioned before by ‘see here and there.’”

DETAILED GUIDANCE EVERY STEP OF THE WAY

Rabbi Chitrik went back to editing and received additional instructions in another note. Regarding entire maamarim that deal with topics in Tanya: **Maamarim – just note them. Paragraphs – put them in.** The Rebbe made notations alongside the list of maamarim about which to include.

This note also had very important instructions. “What shall I call the pamphlet or book?” asked Rabbi Chitrik. The answer was clear: **“Tanya – Perek 1, including sources, anthology of commentaries, etc.”**

At this stage, it was clear what would be prepared for print. Rabbi Chitrik received instructions throughout. In the beginning, the Rebbe sent a long note that said that the general form of the page would be: **“to arrange the inside (Tanya) on top and under it the sources, various versions and short explanations, separated by a line ...”**

At the end of the note the Rebbe instructed: **“to request to be able to make a sample (or several) in this format.”**

The next day, he received a call from the office: The Rebbe said not to do that but to print at the beginning of the pamphlet a photocopy of chapter one of Tanya (see box).

This instruction was repeated in

a long note that Rabbi Chitrik got upon which the Rebbe had written “express.” The Rebbe told him to **“continue until it’s completed,”** referring to the work on the Tanya, without having it interfere with the publication of the maamarim of the Tzemach Tzedek **“the completion of which must be done soon ... and is very precious and lofty.”** This was followed by a number of instructions having to do with the work itself.

Then the Rebbe enumerated the final details – he wanted the *Likkutei Pirushim* to come out as a series of booklets, as opposed to waiting until an entire volume was ready; summaries of explanations said by Chassidim should also be included; it should all be completed by Elul of that year, 5733.

“I HAVE NO TIME TO PLAY AROUND”

The first booklet was published for 18 Elul 5733 and he was immediately told to have the second booklet ready for Rosh HaShana “or at least for the bris of the Tzemach Tzedek” (7 Tishrei).

Rabbi Chitrik:

“It did not work out for the date the Rebbe wanted, and I heard his reaction on Simchas Torah. The Rebbe came to the hakafa with the Torah scroll. I stood nearby and suddenly, the Rebbe gave me an ominous look, which was so out of the ordinary for the atmosphere of Simchas Torah. My stomach turned over. This happened several times during the hakafos and I knew what the Rebbe meant.

“Right after Yom Tov, I wrote to the Rebbe that I had been busy working on the next volume of *Ohr Ha'Torah*. The Rebbe wanted it printed for Yud-Tes Kislev and forgave me for the temporary delay in publishing *Likkutei Pirushim*. The same story repeated itself Purim time. The Rebbe wanted another



Rabbi Aharon Chitrik (right) with Rabbi Aharon Yaakov Schwei, mara d'asra of Crown Heights

volume of *Ohr Ha'Torah*. I wrote once again that this would postpone publishing *Likkutei Pirushim* and again, I received permission to postpone it.

“After Purim, the Rebbe wanted the next booklet to be published for 2 Nissan. We called Balshan Press and they said it was not possible to finish the work in such a short time. Rabbi Binyamin Klein got involved. He called his father-in-law, Rabbi Shusterman, who ran the publishing house and explained that this was the Rebbe’s instruction. Balshan had honored requests like this before, but this time they said they could not make any promises.

“We told the Rebbe. The answer was: ‘Go to Shulsinger Press and ask him to print the booklet for the date that was decided upon, and tell him that this is pursuant to what the Rebbe spoke to him about at the Yud Shevat farbrengen about printing Sifrei Chassidus.’ On Yud Shevat of that year, Rabbi Shmuel Shulsinger, one of the people who ran Shulsinger

Press, had been to the Rebbe’s farbrengen. In between sichos, the Rebbe told him to say l’chaim and said a few words to him. Apparently, the Rebbe encouraged him to print Sifrei Chassidus and now the Rebbe wanted to remind him of that conversation.

“I went to Shulsinger Press with the material. Rabbi Shmuel didn’t know me and so he called Rabbi Chadakov to make sure I had the authority to submit material for printing that would be paid for by Kehos. When Rabbi Shmuel heard that it would be paid for by Kehos, he put a halt to all the other things he was working on and began preparing for publishing the material I brought him. This time, we were early and the booklet was ready for Shabbos Mevarchim Nissan.

“This story ended with a very interesting episode. When Balshan Press heard that the Rebbe said to go to Shulsinger, they changed their minds and said they were willing to print the material by the date we



Rabbi Aharon Chitrik with his children, Shmuel a"h and Herschel

wanted. The Rebbe's response was: **I have no time to play around."**

WHY THE REBBE SENT AN URGENT TELEGRAM TO RABBI CHITRIK'S HOUSE

Throughout the subsequent years, the Rebbe continued to encourage the continuation of the work and the publication of *Likut Pirushim*. In writing and orally, the Rebbe made inquiries, responded, and one time, Rabbi Chitrik even received a telegram at his home! It was written in Hebrew with English letters and said: **When will the s'farim *Ohr Ha'Torah Shir HaShirim Volume II* arrive here ready to learn, and also the next booklet of compiled explanations on Tanya?**

Rabbi Chitrik said, "At first I thought it was a prank, and I planned on reporting it to the secretariat. The next day I tried calling but couldn't get through. I hung up and then I received a call from Rabbi Groner who said, 'The Rebbe wants to know your response to yesterday's telegram.'

"Later on I found out that the Rebbe himself sat in his room and dictated the letters in English of the Hebrew words to the operator.

"One of the people who helped out in the Rebbe's house told me that the booklet was always on the desk in the Rebbe's office.

"It wasn't only answers to questions that I received from the Rebbe. Sometimes, I received entire pages of explanations that the Rebbe wrote **especially** for this book."

Rabbi Chitrik showed us an entire page of the Rebbe's handwriting which said, "omission in chapter 5" on it, followed by an explanation on one line from this chapter. There were additional pages with notes to other chapters.

"Since the Rebbe said a summary of the various explanations that had been published on Tanya should be included, I often asked the Rebbe about some detail or another. Then the Rebbe would correct the Pirush and add a lot. Especially when it was a question that I had on the matter or I thought it appropriate to add a certain explanation, I would submit

them to the Rebbe and would receive his response. Sometimes the Rebbe would write a lengthy explanation, other times he would tell me what to omit, and then there were times the Rebbe simply made a dot next to a certain paragraph. I understood from that, that the Rebbe 'caught' a point in that paragraph that he did not agree with, and so I would delete those paragraphs.

"This went on until 5738 and I was up to chapter 15. Until that point, all the material had undergone the Rebbe's scrutiny, with the Rebbe having added dozens of new explanations to be printed in the book. Often, the Rebbe referred to explanations he had written elsewhere (like *Shiurim B'Seifer HaTanya*). I would ask what was meant by this explanation or that, and the Rebbe would add and clarify it.

"Later, I didn't get such detailed responses and the Rebbe only responded in a more general way that only related to content related issues, but there were endless answers urging and encouraging me."

One time Rabbi Chitrik told the Rebbe that it was possible that due to his involvement in a certain volume of *Ohr Ha'Torah*, the printing of the booklet on chapter 14 would be delayed. The Rebbe negated this sharply and wrote about the "astounding fortune (without ayin ha'ra): how do people such as he come to bring to light hidden secrets of wisdom etc."

THE BICHEL THE REBBE TOOK HOME WITH HIM

During this engrossing interview we didn't even get to talking about Rabbi Chitrik's work in publishing the rest of the s'farim of the Rebbeim. However, we heard a wondrous story from him that despite the tremendous importance the Rebbe ascribed to publishing these s'farim,

there still remain things that are the hidden treasures of the king, and have yet to see the light of day:

"A bichel (handwritten notebook of Chassidic writings) in the handwriting of the Tzemach Tzedek once came into the hands of the library and was then brought into the Rebbe's room. I knew about the existence of this bichel and asked Rabbi Groner to request of the Rebbe to release it so that we could use it to make any corrections by comparing it to the maamarim that were printed in *Ohr Ha'Torah*.

"He went to the Rebbe and conveyed my request. The Rebbe asked him precisely which bichel he was referring to. Rabbi Groner took it out and placed it on the Rebbe's desk, and the Rebbe told him to leave it there. This scene repeated itself with the secretary taking the bichel out and putting it on the Rebbe's

“This story ended with a very interesting episode. When Balshan Press heard that the Rebbe said to go to Shulsinger, they changed their minds and said they were willing to print the material by the date we wanted. The Rebbe's response was: I have no time to play around.”

desk. Some more time passed; I asked Rabbi Groner what was happening with the bichel. He told me that since he asked the Rebbe the first time, the bichel was on the Rebbe's desk. After about two weeks, the Rebbe took it home with him and it has been there ever since.”

In recent years, Rabbi Chitrik was ill. However, despite his illness he tried to continue working on publishing Sifrei Lubavitch. During

every free moment, even when he was in the hospital, he asked his family to bring him Sifrei Chassidus that he needed for his work.

His funeral passed 770 on 30 Tishrei. He is survived by his wife Slava (nee Kahan), his brother Tzvi Hirsch in Crown Heights, his sister Chaya Lieberman in Belgium, his sister Sheindel Schneersohn in Flatbush, his daughter Rochel Gross, and his son Herschel. His son Shmuel was killed in a car accident in the summer of 5747.



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APPROBATION

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

Radio Moshiah is constantly growing – and there is still room for expanding and further developing this unique project. Therefore, it is a mitzvah to support Radio Moshiah and assist its development in any way that you can. All those who assist and support this project, will surely merit to be blessed from Hashem, the Source of all blessings, with visible and revealed goodness, both physically and spiritually.

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



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יחי אדונינו מורנו ורבינו מלך המשיח לעולם ועד



DEATH PENALTY SOUGHT FOR MURDERERS OF THE FOGEL FAMILY

Knesset member Michael Ben-Ari of the Ichud Leumi party is extremely busy these days. He is working to advance his initiative demanding the death penalty for terrorists; he is occupied with the outposts and the Supreme Court and is working behind the scenes for unity before the upcoming elections for the Knesset. • He is hoping for one party for all segments of the religious public that will replace the government in Eretz Yisroel. • In a candid interview with Beis Moshiach, he discusses all these issues.

Interview by Sholom Ber Crombie

Pictures by Mendy Hechtman

Knesset member Michael Ben-Ari and Jewish activists Itamar Ben-Gvir and Baruch Marzel created an uproar at the start of sentencing for Amjad Awad, one of the confessed murderers of five members of the Fogel family of Itamar. When Awad was brought into the military courtroom in the Shomron, the three hurled epithets at him. Ben-Ari demanded the death penalty as opposed to sending the murderer to a hotel which is Israeli prison. He is also working on a law that will give the death penalty to murderers of Jews.

This was yet another link in a chain of activities that Ben-Ari is involved in these days, as part of his political-public work to raise awareness for these crucial issues. The issues that have gotten him into the headlines in recent years are the high profile issues of the day, from the fight for outposts to concern for the Jewish security prisoners in prison. He even recently went to Tel Aviv University and distributed flyers stating the fact that the university is

built on land abandoned by Arabs. This was meant to expose the hypocrisy of the Left in their demand that yishuvim built on Arab land be destroyed. In Tel Aviv he also visits, once a week, the local office that he has opened in the south of the city. This is in order to protest the serious African refugee problem that is adversely affecting the Jewish character of the area.

He divides his time between communal activities, demonstrations and protests, along with intense work in the chamber of the Knesset where he tries to use all means at his disposal to stop the deterioration in Shleimus Ha'Am and Shleimus Ha'Aretz.

I met him following the recent stormy weeks on the political front and heard his opinion on the political situation, the outposts, and the upcoming political year, which will be an election year.

You demonstrated regarding the murderers of the Fogel family members. What message did you want to convey to the public?

Our appearance at the courthouse was a clear statement that the correct sentence for these murderers is death. As Dovid HaMelech says, "The righteous will rejoice when he sees vengeance; He will wash his feet in the blood of the wicked." There are two important points here: to do justice to these despicable murderers and to convey a message to our enemies that Jewish blood, surely the blood of Jewish babies, is not *hefker* (lit. ownerless). Unfortunately, the court turned itself into a meaningless circus when the murderer sat there and laughed in the judges' faces along with his lawyer.

After the sentencing, the murderer was sent to the country club, i.e. Israeli prison, where every day he can eat a meal of succulent meat supplied by the Red Cross, and where he can complete his degree thanks to the PA.

We have demanded the end to the absurd situation that occurs with the murderers of Jews. This murderer is sitting in jail and waiting for the next soldier to be kidnapped



Murderers have been turned into cultural heroes. They are sent to jail and then plazas in the PA are named for them.

(may it not happen), so that in another few years he will be freed in another deal. Terrorists who are sentenced to five life sentences are freed without having to serve even one life sentence. The Israeli Left is vocal about releasing the murderer Barghouti. Just this week I sat in the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Security Committee and heard Knesset member Herzog of Labor talk about the need to release this arch-terrorist. Israeli politicians are not ashamed to tell about the jokes they exchanged with him in jail and the author Amos Oz gave him a book that he signed. Murderers have been turned into cultural heroes. They are sent to jail and then plazas in the PA are named for them.

Do you plan on working on this matter in the Knesset?

We submitted legislation demanding the death penalty for terrorists, but that's not the point. The military court did not need our legislation since it already has the authority to give the death penalty. The problem is that the Attorney General Yehuda Weinstein prevented the prosecution from asking for the death penalty. This is precisely the reason we considered it very important to be there and to let another voice be heard – the voice of reason. They have tried to create an environment in which demanding the death penalty is considered barbaric, but the truth is, the one who sends this murderer to a convalescent home is the true barbarian.

Do you think it's possible to change the situation?

I am convinced by what the Rebbe quotes, "*chazaka al ha'taamula, sh'eina chozeres reikam*," that our efforts will bear

fruits. We have to insist on the death penalty for those who murder our people. If someone arises to kill us, his sentence should be death and not ridiculous punishments that convince terror organizations to kidnap more soldiers in order to gain the release of these Jew-killers.

The situation today is insane. I'll give you another example. The State of Israel is begging to maintain ties with the PA government when they have a minister for prisoners' affairs, i.e. a minister for the affairs of Jew-killers. It's absurd. The PA pays a large sum every month to families of murderers. The murderers themselves are rewarded handsomely so they can live a comfortable life in prison. They receive 1500 shekels a month just for the canteen, aside from the money the prison gives them. Our government seeks ties with the murderers of our people and encourages them to continue acting as they have been doing.

Netanyahu gave the impression that he is trying to stop money from going to the PA.

Absolutely not! He needed to speak unambiguously. He had to make it clear that money would not be given to murderers not because they use it for terror, but because we are in charge of Yehuda-Shomron and not they. The tax collections and transfers to the PA needed to be stopped at once just the way it was before the agreement. They did not honor a single agreement and so there is no agreement. With enemies like these, we don't have to honor any agreement.

The destruction of outposts was postponed for half a year. Are you satisfied?

I am very afraid that things are

not moving in the right direction. Government ministers have simply been delaying dealing with simple issues and are not handing down a decision, thus allowing for the possibility that in the end the judiciary will grab the reins.

In the reality of today, we have documentation on hundreds of instances in which Arabs built homes on private property belonging to Jews, and they did not even begin legal proceedings against them. In the Negev they are looking to legalize all of the illegal building that has been going on; with the Arabs in the Galil they are allowing new construction, but they want to destroy Jewish homes. Netanyahu should have clearly said that Jewish homes will not be destroyed. If he allowed unlimited settlement in Yehuda-Shomron, and he merely wanted to work the legal niceties regarding one individual property or another, we would believe him that he really is concerned over proper legal procedures. However, he wants to destroy everything. Postponement of the destruction is merely a postponement of the end, in order to wait for the right time. He's busy with polls and it's just not the right time to deal with confrontation. He is using the approach that was used against the settlers before the expulsion from Gush Katif, i.e. delegitimizing, so he can destroy the settlements. He presents himself as a man of the law on the backs of the settlers, but in other political matters there is no law.

Until now, Netanyahu managed to preserve the image of being in the center, neither right nor left.

I disagree. Netanyahu caused tremendous and irreversible damage to the Right. He submitted to Meretz's platform and warmly adopted the two-state vision. What used to be the platform of the extreme Left has become the agenda of the chairman of the Likud. The

very statement is disgraceful. It would be like someone saying he doesn't believe in Torah, in G-d. He declared that he does not believe in the promise of Eretz Yisroel.

Whatever he says about legalities and the destruction of outposts that lack the proper paperwork is merely a fig leaf for the criminal statement about a two-state vision and painful concessions.

Netanyahu has no authority to act against Am Yisroel. He stole votes from the Right when he announced during his election campaign that he is against a Palestinian state and promised "economic peace" and less than two months after the elections he announced that he was in favor of the two-state vision. All talk about a demilitarized state is gibberish. What happened with Gaza is likely to happen with Yehuda-Shomron, G-d forbid. Netanyahu wants an Iranian state within the Holy Land.

You don't think the right wing of Likud will be able to restrain him?

The Likud party is like that animal that displays its hooves to tell you it's kosher. They are the same hooves that destroyed Yamit, gave away Chevron and destroyed Gush Katif and northern Shomron. This party is the most dangerous one there is today in Eretz Yisroel. Netanyahu lied to the public and stole their votes. The voice is the voice of the people but the hands are the hands of Netanyahu. They fool themselves and enable people like Dan Meridor – Meretz would be considered to the right of him – to lead the party to the extreme Left. Their ideology is empty of all content.

The heads of Likud like Benny Begin and Gideon Saar have worked, since they were elected, against all the interests of the settlement bloc. They have completely lined up with the Israeli Left. When we want a law to be passed that will halt the anti-Semitic support of



The Likud party is like that animal that displays its hooves to tell you it's kosher.

Leftist organizations, they fight it. We expected a bit more leadership from people like Bogey Yaalon but when it reaches the moment of truth, they are silent. There is not a single, significant faction in the party today that can fight on behalf of Eretz Yisroel. All the commotion about the laws they tried to pass were for the primaries, to garner more votes. Hardly any of these laws passed and some of them didn't even make it to a second round of voting in the Knesset.

Unfortunately, there was a lot of noise during the primaries, and the Likud, for a few days, had the image of a nationalist party, but he who proclaimed a Palestinian state destroyed it all. The Likud is an empty shell devoid of any ideology.

Are you already feeling like we are in election mode?

Even without anything happening, within two months we are entering an election year. There will be many politicians who will try to make it sound as though they defend Shleimus Ha'Aretz. However, we will remember just whom stood at our side.

What are your plans for the elections?

I pray for the unification of all the religious parties so we form a united religious front that will give us at least 30 mandates. It is possible and can happen in these upcoming elections. We need to create a united bloc as the Rebbe asked numerous times, so we can change the government. We are prepared for significant personal concessions despite the very strong standing we have with the public; the main thing is uniting. It is possible to unite without conceding on principles. I feel much closer to the Chareidi public than I do to my fellow Knesset members from Mafdal (Mizrachi).

Whenever I want to accomplish something in Judaism-related issues,

I have been successful in doing so together with the members of the religious wing of the Knesset and we have more principles in common. I think Shas and Yahadus Ha'Torah can definitely unite as one party like Agudas Yisroel and Degel Ha'Torah united. We don't have a problem uniting with them either, and I believe that Mafdal will also join. We feel that our real partners are G-d fearing Jews and this is the most natural collaboration there can be.

Unfortunately, we can also learn from our enemies. If the Arabs can make an alliance between their extreme Islamic parties and the liberal secular parties – and the chasm between them is vast – we can surely unite. We also think that a unity like this can save 3-4 religious mandates that are going to parties like Likud today. The religious sector is primarily a sector faithful to Eretz Yisroel and uniting with us can help move the country to the right. This was the Rebbe's heartfelt request and we need to do it.

Will you continue working against the Supreme Court despite the fact that recent legislative attempts have been shut down?

This court ought to be abolished. There is nothing Jewish about it. There are no values and no respect for that which is holy. I would expect that a court established in the Holy Land would operate according to Jewish and nationalistic values with priorities that reflect those values, but the values of the Supreme Court are just the opposite. I bless any attempt to make some balance (by adding right wing judges), but that's like throwing one straw into a mountain of barley. We need to exchange the straw for something more substantial, something that will lead according to Jewish values and not something that opposes everything Jewish.

What is your opinion about

the Tzohar rabbis who were in the news recently?

Their campaign caused enormous, irreversible damage. Without casting aspersions on their marriage initiative of course, I think they became a tool of the enemies of religion and they either don't understand this or don't care; their main goal is aggrandizing themselves. I think there was a far greater agenda here of hatred for the ultra-Orthodox and an attempt to subdue it. The problem is that it's mutual. The ultra-Orthodox must learn not to persecute religious-Zionist rabbis, which has been happening in the dayanim issue. The hatred must be turned to love. There is a common denominator among all segments of the religious public. It is much broader than that among the politicians of Kadima or Likud, and just like they can live together, we can live together. We have a goal and that is to "rectify the world in the kingdom of Shakai," and this is our common goal.

Were you surprised by Rabbi Eliyahu being brought in for interrogation?

The attempted intimidation into silence of Rabbi Eliyahu was religious persecution. In the mosques they will continue singing praise to terror, at the universities they will continue to call for the Israeli people to be ostracized from the world community as racists, and (State Prosecutor) Shai Nitsan will continue with his primary occupation of persecuting and quieting rabbis.

In summary – please leave us with a final message.

I call upon Chabad Chassidim to continue working for the critical issues of the day. As the Rebbe said, in the end all protests help. That is what the Rebbe taught us. We are in this for the long haul and we need to dig in our heels. With Hashem's help, we will be victorious.

GOT TIME?

“You will never find time for anything.
If you want time, you must make it.” –
Charles Buxton

By Rabbi Yisroel Harpaz



There may soon come a day when humanity makes the unimaginable technological advancement that will enable us to produce time. Today, we exert the vast majority of our energy to get the mundane things – work, finances, chores – out of the way, in order to make room for important things – family, friends, study, meaning, self-discovery — whose time may never come. But tomorrow we will have the freedom to pursue the beauty of life without the imposing deadlines of modern living looming over us. We will focus our energies on pursuing meaningful life, and utilize synthetic time, manufactured by quark physicists in nuclear laboratories, for the mundane. Perhaps.

The truth is that we already possess the potential for such technology.

In general, life is experienced as an overwhelming array of fragmentation, flowing from one event to the next, one day to the next, without any sense of continuity, control or causation. We intuitively sense that life is precious, that it offers an opportunity to contribute something unique to the world, but worldly exposure serves to desensitize us to our personal mission; we are too busy treading water and staying afloat to realize that we could learn to swim or fly instead. On the one hand, we yearn

to transform this existential paradox and transcend it. On the other hand, we feel the need to keep moving madly in all directions, either because we are afraid to admit our ineptitude or too foolish to recognize the truth. Time after time, we find ourselves reacting to sudden circumstances, somehow surprised by the fate that we ourselves have generated. This is true of us as individuals, in the way

controlled to be effective. When time is set aside for constructive reflection or pondering the future, then it is effective, and is itself an example of living in the moment – because it is what that particular moment demands. But when thoughts of past reflection and future pondering creep up on us, bringing with them regret, doubt and uncertainty, then it can be distracting and even destructive.



Creating mastery over time, and thereby over life, is to see the inherent value of each and every moment as a newly created, living opportunity, implying that even seemingly mundane activities can be infused with meaning and inspiration.

we view our private lives, as well as the course of humanity in general, in the way we view our collective history and sense our common future.

Creating mastery over time, and thereby over life, is to see the inherent value of each and every moment as a newly created, living opportunity, implying that even seemingly mundane activities can be infused with meaning and inspiration. The ability to live this ideal depends on the strength of our determination to confront life using our faculties of memory and imagination. Memory deconstructs past experiences to determine what was right or wrong, while imagination makes adjustments to confidently plot a new course for the future. But these forays into the periscope of time, whether backwards or forwards, need to be

The passage of time is a relative phenomenon; is it really time that is passing or flying by, or is it we who are passing by time, missing opportunities to do the necessary good that will revolutionize our lives and the collective life of the entire world? The gift of time is not subject to the limitations that our perception of it suggests. Deconstruct the yesterday, rebuild the tomorrow and live today. In our memory of days past and bygone eras, and in our imagination of days to come – and even more so in the present that is created at every single moment – we have the potential to transcend the constraints of time, and boldly go where no one has gone before. If only we could find the time...

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HOLIDAY ADVENTURES IN RURAL AUSTRALIA

In our series of conversations with shluchim, we spoke with Rabbi Dudu Lieder of Melbourne, Australia. The following is a compilation of amazing stories we heard from him about his shlichus in Australia.

By Menachem Savyon

This week, we will visit with Rabbi Dudu Lieder of Melbourne, Australia:

I went on shlichus to Melbourne ten years ago together with my good friend, Shlomo Taubenfliegel. This story took place Erev Yom Kippur when we held a seuda mafsekes attended by Israeli tourists and many other people. At the end of the meal, we began cleaning off the tables to get the room ready for Kol Nidrei.

A few minutes later, a group of ten Israelis walked in. They had come from far away Mildura, a seven-hour drive from Melbourne. They worked on a farm in Mildura and, with mesirus nefesh, had given up a day's work in order to come to Melbourne for Yom Kippur. It was a very moving sight to see the group davening with tremendous concentration.

On Motzaei Yom Kippur they took some food along with them and we said goodbye.



MESIRUS NEFESH

Before Sukkos, Shlomo and I had spoken about the mesirus nefesh of the Israeli group. We concluded that if they had made the supreme effort to come from such a distant place, we had to do something comparable.

We decided that we would make a mobile sukka and visit them.

We got a truck from a local Jewish contractor and some Israelis happily helped us build a sukka on it. Each one did their share, with one building the frame, etc. After a concerted effort over a few hours we had a mobile sukka on a truck.

Two days before Hoshana Rabba we set out late at night. We traveled on a highway that is considered dangerous because it's full of signposts warning drivers about kangaroos that can jump in your way. Kangaroos endanger the lives of drivers, because as soon as they see lights, they jump towards them. They can be large, heavy animals and if, G-d forbid, there is a collision, it is liable to be fatal.

A few minutes after we entered the danger zone, a large kangaroo jumped into the middle of the highway. At first we were terrified but I quickly recovered and at the last minute I turned the wheel and



veered to the side. It was a miracle that we avoided crashing. We clearly saw that emissaries on their way to do a mitzva remain unharmed.

The Rebbe says that when traveling at night you should stop once an hour to refresh yourself. We put on music so we wouldn't fall asleep, and every hour we stopped the car for two minutes, did a little dance and then continued on our way. We were in a rush because there were twenty Israelis in Mildura who went to work on the farm every morning at seven. We wanted to reach them before their ride came to take them to work.

Like in the stories, we arrived at exactly 7:00. We put s'chach on the roof of the sukka and just then, the Israelis came out. They couldn't believe their eyes. There was an honest-to-goodness sukka! They were so touched that some cried to see a sukka in the middle of this forsaken place. Chabad reached them there too.

(Two years ago we met a young man named Sholom in Shikun Chabad in Lud. I did not recognize him with a beard. He told me that he was one of the Israeli's in Mildura and that our sukka had so inspired him that it led him to become religious).

After the group finished taking the lulav and esrog, they got onto the truck. One of them called out, "Dudu, you have a flat tire." We looked for a spare but there was none. We decided to go to a nearby garage to get it fixed. We encountered a drunken Australian who periodically swigged down another bottle of beer. He yelled at us and wasn't interested in working. He was also unwilling to help since it was a holiday for them. We knocked on neighbors' doors to ask for a spare tire.

At one house, a black fellow came out and introduced himself as "Shane." We told him our problem and asked for his help. He looked at me and Shlomo and asked, "Are you

from Israel?" We said we were, and he began telling us how his wife was a Jew from Israel, from Rechovos. She had gone to Israel with the children for the holiday. Since we were Jews, he was willing to help us and give us a spare tire.

About half a year later, I met her. It was Pesach night and we were up to Shulchan Oreich. At this point, I always circulate among the guests, say l'chaim with them, and personally wish them a good Yom Tov. During my rounds that year, a woman introduced herself as Shane's wife. She told me that thanks to the tire her husband gave me, she had become inspired and had decided to leave her gentile spouse. She saw this story as a sign from heaven and decided to join us for the Seder at the Chabad house.

So back to the tire ... After changing the tire, we saw it was too small for the truck. We were afraid to drive that far with the wrong sized tire. That's all we needed, to break

A GIFT OF T'FILLIN

The bachurim Moishey Meiri and Binyamin Kabakov are a tremendous help at the Chabad house. Moishey has this story to tell:

An Israeli tourist from a HaShomer HaTzair (virulently anti-religious) kibbutz came to the Chabad house. During his stay at the Chabad house, he joined the activities and shiurim and helped a lot with the Lag B'Omer program. He is a soundman by profession, and when we made a float for the parade he was a big help.

On Shabbos, when someone gets an aliya, after the Torah is read and we say the Mi Sh'Beirach our custom is for the person to make a positive mitzva commitment. This Israeli accepted upon himself a hachlata but did not tell us what it was.

Before he left for home, Rabbi Dudu told me that someone left a pair of t'fillin at the Chabad house and we could give them to this man. I approached him and told him that someone had left t'fillin and we had decided to give them to him.

He burst into tears. Then he told me, "At the aliya on Shabbos, when I had to make a good hachlata, I decided that since I had gotten involved in Judaism here, I would try to continue back in Eretz Yisroel. In recent days I've been thinking, I'm going back to the kibbutz – where will I get t'fillin from? Now you come over and say you have t'fillin for me."

A month after his return home, we spoke on the phone and he told me that he puts the t'fillin on regularly.

down somewhere where there was no help to be found. We went to a nearby gas station to consult with someone in the know. We met the manager who explained to us that we actually could drive that way, but not to go over 70 kilometers an hour.

When we left the gas station and headed back to Melbourne, I discussed with Shlomo why we had had these mishaps. I wasn't complaining; it was with the understanding that we had a mission to carry out. It occurred to me that the gas station manager might be Jewish. We went back and discovered that he wasn't Jewish. Somewhat disappointed, we started out again when he chased after us in his car and shouted excitedly that he remembered that there was one Jew in the city.

We took the phone number from him and called, introducing ourselves as emissaries of the Lubavitcher Rebbe. He exclaimed, "The Lubavitcher Rebbe? Come right over!"

When we arrived at his house, we

met a man in his sixties. He invited us in and showed us a family tree for the family of Beis Rebbe. That is when we realized that our delay with the tire wasn't for nothing. It was worthwhile just to bring this man a lulav and esrog to shake.

BLESSED ... WHO DID NOT MAKE ME A GOY

I met a Jewish fellow who was living with a local Jewish girl. We kept in touch and he would come to a Tanya class that I gave. At one of the shiurim, he asked some weird questions. At the end of the class, I offered him a ride home. On the way, he began talking to me about Christianity and the new path he had discovered, nebach. He was caught in the net of a gentile missionary who had managed to convince him to convert!

I was horrified to hear that he intended on converting in three weeks. He gave me a copy of the New Testament and tried telling me about how wonderful it is. I took the book from him as the Rebbe told the

missionary who went to see him, "So that there will be one less copy in the world," and we parted.

The date for his baptism was 17 Kislev 5762. I was distraught over this terrible situation and I cried a lot since I had never been involved in anything like this before. I went to Rabbi Chaim Tzvi Groner's office in the yeshiva building in Melbourne in order to write a letter to the Rebbe. I couldn't find a blank piece of paper other than yeshiva stationery and I wrote my letter on that.

I put my letter at random into a volume of Igros Kodesh and when I opened it, I saw the letter began with the words, "Greetings to Yeshivas Oholei Yosef Yitzchok Lubavitch Melbourne." In the letter, the Rebbe explains that when it comes to kiruv it doesn't pay to argue because there is no point; in order to effect a change, it's better to increase the light so it will expel the darkness.

This answer gave me tremendous encouragement and every night I would go to their house and learn with them and show them a video of the Rebbe. I didn't argue at all. One time I slipped and showed them a videotaped debate between a rabbi and a Christian and as the Rebbe had written, no good came out of it. That's what happens when you don't fully listen to the Rebbe.

Two days before the baptism, I davened in Rabbi Groner's shul and I told him the awful situation and cried. At this same time, there was an interesting story that took place in Melbourne that rattled the community. A Christian family had come from Canada for the purpose of converting to Judaism. The father, Rod Salfinger, had been a high level pastor back in Canada. The word had spread throughout the community that the whole thing was just a Christian ploy to ensnare Jewish souls. Rabbi Groner believed that Rod was legitimate. At first I thought it was Rod who had

missionized the young man and so I was taken aback that Rabbi Groner allowed Rod to walk freely around the Chabad house. Rabbi Groner told me that he knew Rod for a long time and he believed his intentions were genuine. He said, “You know what, if that’s what you think, let’s do the exact opposite. Take Rod with you and have him try to convince the Jew to change his mind.”

In incredible hashgacha pratis, a few minutes after this conversation, Rod came to the shul and I told him the whole story. He was willing to try and took me in his car to where the young man lived. The truth is, I was afraid of Rod. It was very dark outside, and Rod put his hand on mine and said something that did away with all my concerns. He said, “Let us pray to G-d that He help us in our task tonight.”

We sat in the living room from ten at night until eight in the morning. Throughout the night, Rod explained the lies upon which Christianity is built. One by one, he tore down the whole pile of fallacious arguments upon which it relies. After a long exhausting night, all three of us sat there bleary-eyed but gratified. We felt that we had accomplished what we set out to do. Just to prove the point, our conversation was interrupted by a phone call. The Israeli looked at the Caller ID and when he saw who it was, he didn’t answer the phone. It was the missionary who had convinced him to convert, calling to confirm the time of the baptism that was scheduled to take place in a few hours.

In a drastic move, the young man asked to put on t’fillin. He stood davening with great concentration and from the next room we heard him emotionally recite the bracha, “... who did not make me a goy.”

Today, he and his wife are religiously observant. They raise their children in the Jewish tradition and they are instrumental in bringing



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many Jews close to the Rebbe.

I testified about Rod in front of the beis din in Australia for his conversion. As evidence I told the beis din the story that took place that night. Today, Rod is a righteous convert and his name is Avrohom.

DIVINE PROVIDENCE BROUGHT ME TO AUSTRALIA

Right after this story, I traveled to Eretz Yisroel where I married. We were unsure where to go on shlichus: India, Russia, or Australia. We wrote to the Rebbe and opened to a letter in the Igros Kodesh, volume 9, p. 151. The letter is addressed to Yehoshua Shneur Zalman Serebryanski, the Rebbe Rayatz’s shliach in Australia.

“Since Divine Providence brought you to Australia and showed you open miracles [which

I associated with the two stories told above], **obviously this is your place.**”

We left for shlichus in Australia, and with the expansion of the shlichus a year later we decided to move to a more spacious place. We deliberated over whether to live in the Chabad house building or somewhere else. On the one hand, living there could be wonderful, because we work with Israeli tourists and a homey atmosphere would add a lot. On the other hand, we were afraid it would adversely affect our private lives.

My wife wrote to the Rebbe and opened to a letter written to N’shei Chabad that said: **Make for Me a sanctuary and I will dwell in them. It does not say “in it” but “in them,” i.e. within every single Jew. From here we learn that every private house must also be a Chabad house.**

HEROISM AND TRAGEDY IN THE SOVIET PURGATORY

The mass arrests in Rostov began on Rosh Hashanah night 5696/1935. The Chassid, Rabbi Shammai Vigan began living in tremendous fear, as well as his wife and daughters. They had no idea what the morrow would bring. Their fears were realized when on the night of Erev Yom Kippur, after midnight, the police broke into his house. They conducted a meticulous search, at the end of which they ordered him to accompany them. His wife and daughters burst into tears. • Profile of a Chassid who gave his life to spread Judaism and saw almost no nachas in his life – Rabbi Shammai Vigan, may Hashem avenge his blood.

By Shneur Zalman Berger

The Chassid, Rabbi Shammai Vigan, learned in Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in Lubavitch under the tutelage of the Rebbe Rashab and Rebbe Rayatz. He studied Nigleh and Chassidus assiduously, but above all else he excelled in avodas ha't'filla.

After the yeshiva in Lubavitch was closed, he and his friends wandered among various cities where branches of Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim were opened. His wandering continued until 5681/1921 when he arrived at Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in Poltava, Ukraine.

The Rosh Yeshiva and Mashgiach of Nigleh was Rabbi Yehuda Eber a"h, and the mashpiim and directors of the yeshiva were Rabbi Shmuel Leib Levin a"h and Yechezkel (Chatshe) Feigin, may Hashem avenge his blood. The bachurim farbrenged often, together with the mashpiim or just among themselves.





the yeshivos, because they were the most religious people of all and those who taught Torah. The branches of Tomchei T'mimim had no choice but to go underground, to cellars of shuls, so that they remained concealed from public view.

Due to the terrible economy in Russia at the time, the bachurim lived under very difficult material circumstances as well. R' Shammai suffered tremendously, and for the two years that he learned in the yeshiva, he had no money to buy clothes. He and his friends wore tattered clothing. Food was limited, and nobody dreamed of beds on which to sleep.

Despite the difficult situation, the bachurim in Poltava learned diligently. At night, they slept on the tables and benches that they learned on during the day.

Years later, Rabbi Michael Yehuda Leib Cohen related:

"When I arrived, all the tables and benches were already taken by the talmidim. Since I was a guest, the bachur Hendel Galperin gave me his place on the table. He recited the bedtime Shma all night instead of sleeping."

The material circumstances were awful, but R' Shammai continued to learn and daven at length and with *d'veikus* as he always used to do.

At a certain point, the Yevsekim (Jewish communists) began taking notice of the T'mimim in Poltava. When the bachurim found out, they became more careful, especially in their correspondence.

For two years the yeshiva remained in existence until the cursed ones closed it down.

Among the talmidim who learned in the yeshiva at the time were the famous Chassidim: Rabbi Bentzion Shemtov a"h, Rabbi Zalman Shimon Dworkin a"h, Rabbi Avrohom (Maiyor) Drizin a"h, Rabbi Yehuda Chitrik a"h, and Rabbi Yehoshua Korf a"h.

MESIRAS NEFESH FOR LIMUD HATORAH

This was one of the most difficult periods in Jewish history, when the communists venomously pursued any Jew who learned Torah and did mitzvos. They particularly hated

THE DANGER MOUNTS

It was a few days before Pesach 5683/1923 when members of the Yevsektzia and the secret police came to the shul led by a wicked, cruel commander known by his nickname,

Taigil. The bachurim who were not yet 18 rushed to hide, while the older bachurim who were legally allowed to learn Torah, remained in their places in tense anticipation.

The Yevsektzia and police conducted a thorough search of the shul and the area. The bachurim were interrogated one by one, as they offered a silent prayer that the younger ones not be discovered. They were asked: Who runs the yeshiva? Who organized the yeshiva? Who supplies you with food and clothing? And so on. They all answered with the same answer they had prepared for just such a situation: "We have no menahel. We learn alone, on our own, and we subsist on what our parents send us."

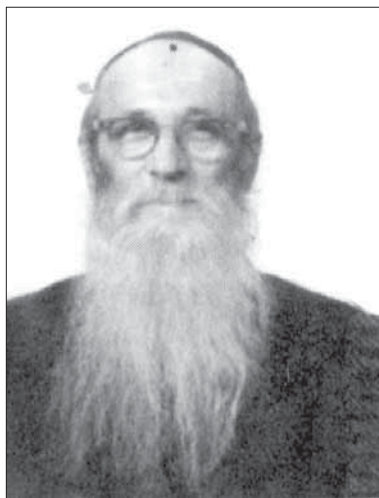
The police realized they were hiding the truth, and they furiously searched the shul and surrounding area. The T'mimim's hearts beat wildly as they feared the younger bachurim would be found. Sadly, all those in hiding were ferreted out. One of the policemen wrote down a list of their names and warned them to leave the city within the next three days.

The young bachurim left Poltava and were sent to learn in other cities, while the older bachurim, including R' Shammai, remained in Poltava hoping for a positive unfolding of events.

R' Yehuda Chitrik was sent to Rostov to ask the Rebbe Rayatz what to do next. The Rebbe's answer was to move to Nevel and continue learning there.

In the middle of Iyar 5623/1923, the older bachurim arrived in Nevel, and immediately returned to learning as though nothing had been amiss.

Lag B'Omer was a few days later. In honor of the day there was a farbrengen for the bachurim in the home of Rabbi Gershon Dov Levin. The main leader of the farbrengen was the mashpia, R' Chatshe Feigin, who encouraged the bachurim



Rabbi Yisroel Jacobson

to continue learning Nigleh and Chassidus.

Fear from the surveillance and persecution was great, and many tears were shed at the farbrengen.

As they sat and farbrenged, the door burst open and in marched policemen who arrested all those present. R' Chatshe miraculously managed to get away, but the rest of them were taken to the police station and held in jail for a few days. They soon learned that they were accused of spying since they did not have proper identification papers. The bachurim realized that this was merely an excuse in order to trap them and force them to admit that they were yeshiva bachurim. The fear was enormous. In the end, the members of the Jewish community in Nevel contacted the government prosecutor of the town, who ordered that they be freed on condition that they leave the town immediately.

Once again, R' Shammai and his friends had to be on the move. This time they traveled to Charkov, where they learned for half a year in one of the local shuls. They slept and ate in the Talmud Torah on Checherkovski Street. Some of the bachurim were hosted by the Chassid Rabbi Aharon Tumerkin a"h, who in those days served as head of the Beis Din in Charkov.

There was an old age home near where the bachurim slept. One day, they heard that R' Chaim Futerfas (grandfather of R' Mendel) lived in the old age home and that he had seen and also heard Torah from the Rebbe Maharash. Shammai and his friends started visiting him in order to hear stories about the lives of Chassidim of yesteryear. Since he was a big gaon, he explained various topics in Chassidus and Kabbala to them.

At the end of Tishrei 5684/1923, the Rebbe Rayatz said the yeshiva in Charkov should move to Rostov. R' Shammai was very happy about this, since the Rebbe lived in Rostov, and he would be able to be near him.

The bachurim continued learning diligently in Rostov where the spiritual demands were high, despite the chaotic times they lived in. R' Chatshe demanded that they learn a lot of Chassidus, and he specifically had them learn the maamer that the Rebbe said during Shabbos. In other words, by the time Shabbos was over, they had to know the maamer that the Rebbe said on Friday night. So they sat all Friday night and reviewed the new maamer.

R' Shammai studied sh'chita, which was forbidden at the time. He wasn't afraid, and when he finished the course of study, he began to shecht so that Jews would have kosher meat. This was despite the fact that many shochtim had been arrested.

On 11 Nissan 5684/1924, the secret police conducted a search of the Rebbe's house for nine hours. They wanted to arrest him, but they finally agreed to his promise to leave the city. The Rebbe said the yeshiva should move to Charkov with a small group of bachurim remaining in Rostov so they could study sh'chita with R' Shammai and continue the tradition of shochtim. The five who remained were: R' Zalman Shimon Dworkin, R' Hendel Galperin,

R' Chaim Dovber Panteleyev, R' Mordechai Teleshevsky, and R' Velvel Kosinitz. It was mesirus nefesh to remain in Rostov, since everybody knew that R' Shammai was under surveillance, but he continued to teach sh'chita so that it wouldn't be forgotten among Russian Jewry.

For Tishrei 5685 the five bachurim and R' Shammai went to the Rebbe Rayatz who was in Leningrad.

BUILDING HIS FAMILY

R' Shammai married the daughter of the Chassidishe melamed, Rabbi Avrohom Fradkin (who was known as R' Avrohom Liadier). R' Shammai knew his father-in-law from the time he was in the yeshiva in Lubavitch. This R' Avrohom had owned an upscale inn in Lubavitch, which hosted wealthy guests as well as those students of the yeshiva with money to spend. When the Rebbe Rashab moved to Rostov, R' Avrohom and his family did too.

In those days of religious persecution it was rare to find a chassan or kalla from G-d fearing, Chassidishe families. No wonder R' Shammai was thrilled with the shidduch.

After his marriage, he moved to Rostov to live near his in-laws. His wife gave birth to two daughters, and R' Shammai had to start working to support his family. To avoid chillul Shabbos he found a job as a night watchman. The salary was a pittance, and R' Shammai and his family lived in poverty.

In 5693/1933 a famine spread throughout Russia. Religiously observant people, who were already living in poverty, were the first victims of starvation. R' Shammai suffered tremendously. He asked the Chassid R' Yisroel Jacobson, who was in America, for help. R' Jacobson sent him five dollars, which we read



about in the following letter:

"Surely you received the receipt from me for five dollars that you sent me, and many thanks to you who literally saved our lives from starvation. Without exaggeration, almost all of the land was not sown, and that which was planted was not harvested etc., and every month they reduce the bread ration they give out. Now there is a law that women and children won't get bread at all, and Hashem knows what will result; it will be far, far worse than the year 5680 and 5681 (the years of famine). Please Hashem, gaze down from heaven and see and have compassion on your people Israel who are cloaked in hunger." (15 Kislev 5693)

In another letter written the week of Parshas VaYechi, he writes in code:

"A law was passed that since there are nearly 100,000 unemployed people, they won't be given even a k'zayis of bread, and I am unemployed and no different from the rest."

It was painful for R' Shammai to see his wife and children starving without the ability to help them. This dreadful situation continued until the period of starvation ended in 5694 when the government changed the laws forbidding private enterprise.

R' Shammai knew he could not continue living a normal life in Russia, and he requested to leave with his family. He needed to procure many documents in order to get an exit visa, and he also needed a large sum of money. One way of getting money for this purpose was to send Sifrei Torah and various religious items from shuls that had been closed in Russia, which the Chassidim in turn sold in the US, and then sent them the money.

In the book *Toldos Chabad in Russia* it relates how R' Shammai did this:

"In the archives of R' Yisroel Jacobson there are 42 postcards that R' Shammai wrote. Nearly all of them are about Sifrei Torah that he would send to be sold, his efforts to leave Russia, and the sending of money to save them from starvation.

"We first read of his longing to leave Russia on 9 Kislev 5693: *'I can inform you that R' Itche Masmid will be coming to the Rebbe Shlita for Shabbos Parshas VaYitzei (code for wanting to leave to be with the Rebbe who was then living in Riga, Latvia). Ribbono Shel Olam, if only we could meet face to face, with all of our bones and flesh. Only Hashem Yisborach knows.'*"

THE REBBE RASHAB'S RUACH HA'KODESH

R' Shammai's sister had a growth on her tongue. When her condition worsened, she went to see doctors. After examining her they told her that it was a dangerous sickness, and it had to be surgically removed.

R' Shammai rushed to the Rebbe Rashab to tell him about his sister and asked what she should do. The Rebbe advised that she should see a dentist, because apparently a rotten tooth had caused the growth.

His sister went to a dentist who found a rotting tooth, which he removed, and she was healed.

The Chassidim said to the Rebbe that this was ruach ha'kodesh. The Rebbe humbly replied, "Shammai came crying about his sister who was in danger, so what else could I have done?"

In the beginning of 5694 he received visas for Eretz Yisroel. He sent some Sifrei Torah to Anash in the US and asked them to send the money to R' Chanoch Hendel Havlin in Eretz Yisroel for tickets.

"On Erev Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sarah he writes: 'My dear brother, I received the visa from Eretz Yisroel from Chanoch Hendel for my family, myself, my wife, and my two daughters. Now I am only lacking the main thing, the check (code for dollars) and tickets for sea passage. Now my dear brother, since I sent you three Sifrei Torah ... I ask you, for G-d's sake, that you hurry and sell them and take for yourself a fee for your efforts as you see fit, and the rest of the money to send to Eretz Yisroel to Chanoch Hendel Havlin.'"

For over a year, R' Shammai continued to send Sifrei Torah and s'farim to the United States, but the minimal returns did not enable him to pay for the passports and tickets.

At the end of 5695 new laws were decreed regarding sending books out of Russia and submitting requests for a passport, laws that made leaving the country much more difficult. The new law forbade the removal of s'farim from the country, and that prevented R' Shammai from obtaining additional funds. As for the passports, the new law stated that if someone wanted a passport, he had

to have lived in Moscow for a year. R' Shammai rented an apartment in Moscow while still paying rent in Rostov. Rent for two apartments cost him 100 rubles a month while he earned only 80!

The last letter in R' Jacobson's archive on this subject is from Rosh Chodesh Av 5695. In this letter R' Shammai writes brokenheartedly about not being able to leave Russia:

"My soul greatly regrets the fact that I had the ability to be in the Holy Land, if only I had the amount that they wanted for passports, but now Hashem knows what the end will be, for they still are not issuing passports for peshutim (code for Russian rubles)."

ARREST AND FORCED LABOR

In 5695 there were mass arrests of Chabad Chassidim throughout the Soviet Union. Some were exiled for many years, and some were executed.

The mass arrests in Rostov began on Rosh Hashanah night 5696/1935. R' Shammai began living in overwhelming fear, as well as his wife and daughters. They had no idea what the morrow would bring. Their fears were realized when on the night of Erev Yom Kippur, after midnight, the police broke into his house. They conducted a meticulous search, at the end of which they ordered him

to accompany them. His wife and daughters burst into tears.

The police took him out of the house and seated him in the car, the "black raven," the vehicle that transported prisoners. R' Shammai was brought under heavy guard directly to the interrogation room. For hours they squeezed him for information about his work as a shochet, about why he didn't work on Shabbos, and why he wanted to leave Russia. The interrogations and torture lasted for over half a year until he was put on trial.

We know about R' Shammai's arrest from a letter that a friend wrote in code: "Shammai ben Leiba Michla HaLevi from Rostov was arrested the night of Erev Yom Kippur for reasons I do not know."

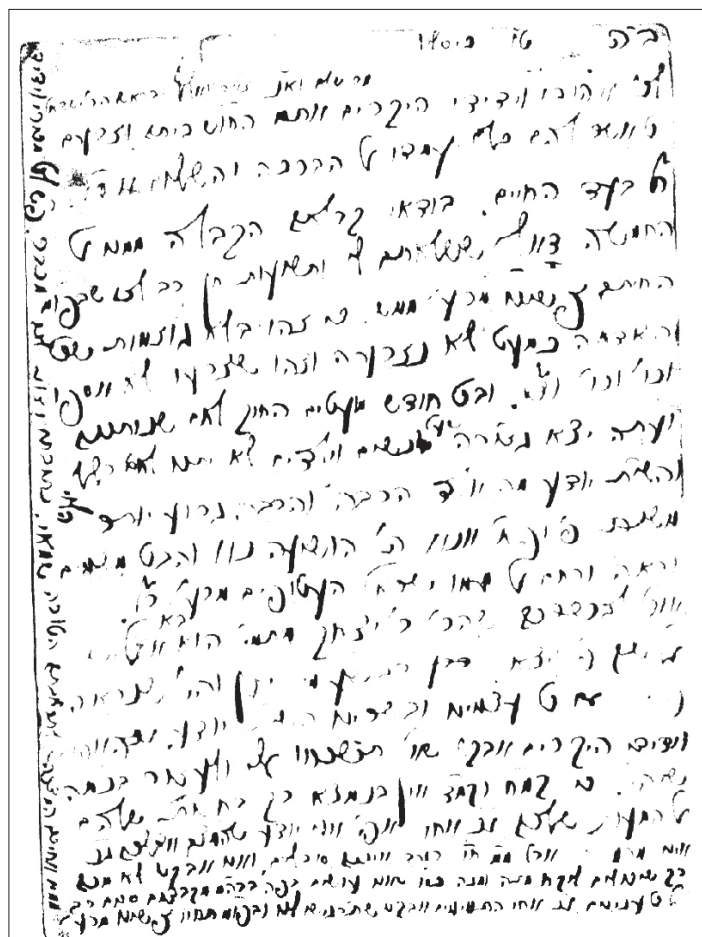
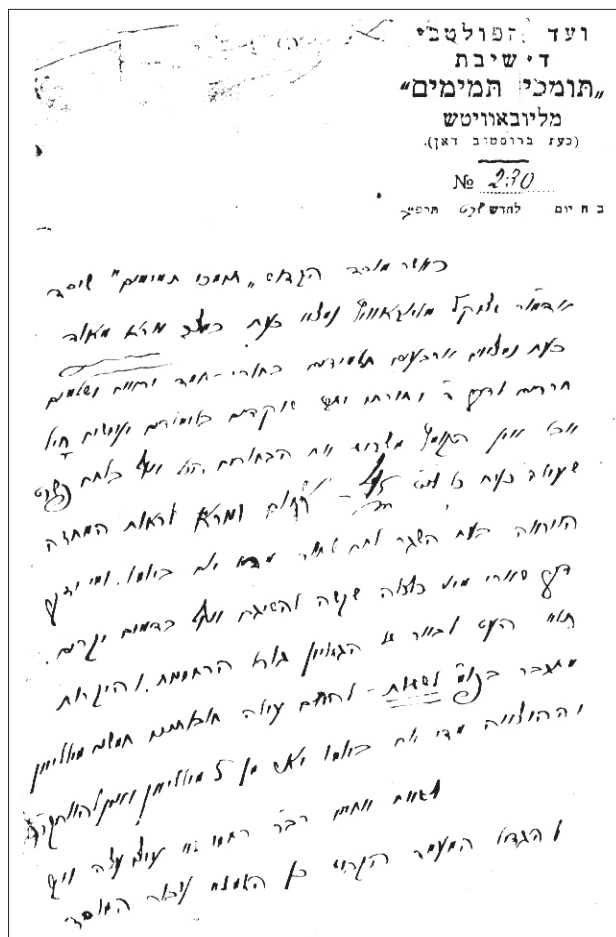
In a letter that his brother-in-law, R' Chaim Podnas wrote to R' Yisroel Jacobson, we learn that he was sentenced to three years of hard labor in Siberia. He writes:

I beg your pardon for not responding until now because we were preoccupied by my brother-in-law Shammai sitting in jail together with other Lubavitchers. The trial took place and they sentenced him to three years of hard labor in Siberia. May Hashem help save them. We received the \$50 and many thanks for that because R' Shammai's family is dying of hunger. I will be brief this time. I await your response. From your friend who blesses you with a kosher Pesach.

In a letter written on Chol HaMoed Pesach, his brother-in-law wrote that R' Shammai was on his way to Siberia to serve his sentence.

The trip from Rostov to Siberia took a long time. Many prisoners were packed into the prisoners' compartment. The stifling air was unbearable, despite it being freezing cold outside. Not much food or drink was provided. No wonder then that R' Shammai arrived in Siberia weak and broken.

In the forced labor camps, he



BAR MITZVAH BEYOND FORTY!

By Rabbi Heschel Greenberg

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



CONFRONTATION

Judah took full responsibility for the welfare of his younger brother Benjamin. Jacob refused to let them return to Egypt to purchase life-sustaining food during the famine that devastated the world at that time. Only after Judah's solemn commitment and guarantee to return him was Jacob convinced to let Benjamin go.

Now, Joseph, the Viceroy of Egypt, accuses his brother Benjamin of stealing his silver goblet and threatens to have him incarcerated.

This parsha poignantly describes Judah's confrontation with Joseph demanding the release of Benjamin that led to Joseph revealing his identity to his brothers and the subsequent rapprochement between them.

Judah takes a courageous stand; putting his life in jeopardy in the presence of a powerful ruler, who could very well have killed Judah.

This story, one of the most moving stories in the Torah, informs us of the responsibilities of every Jew. Indeed, the word Jew derives from the name Judah, who was the progenitor of the most prominent tribe in Israel.

A Jew is one who takes a principled stand even in the face of danger. This is particularly so when the well being of another Jew—his brother or sister—is at stake.

When does a Jew assume the full responsibility for others? It is at the

age of Bar or Bas Mitzvah. A boy becomes of age at the age of thirteen; a girl at the age of twelve.

VAYIGASH: AND HE WAS A BAR MITZVAH?

Based on the above, it is therefore fascinating to discover that the idea of Bar Mitzvah is actually alluded to in the very first word, title and theme of this week's parsha—*"VaYigash-And he approached."* This word conveys Judah's courage, self-sacrifice, leadership and ultimately the reconciliation process between him and Joseph.

Upon close examination we will discover that the word *VaYigash* is an acronym, for the words: *Yud, Gimmel, Shana, V'Yom*, which means: "thirteen years and a day"—the age of Bar Mitzvah.

(A point of clarification: The meaning of "a day" is not that he has to be thirteen full years plus another twenty four hours, but rather that the thirteenth year has to be complete. We do not regard a portion of the thirteenth year as if it was thirteen.)

What is the deeper connection between *VaYigash*, which, as stated, means "and he approached" and Bar Mitzvah? Judah was then beyond the age of forty. What relevance does his confrontation with Joseph have to do with Bar Mitzvah?

It conveys the message that already at the age of Bar Mitzvah we all become responsible for

one another. When we see a Jew (Benjamin) who is held back from returning to his Father in Heaven (Jacob), a Jew (Judah) comes forward to demand his freedom to be a Jew and does not accept no as an answer.

VaYigash is not just confrontation. Ultimately, this confrontation developed into reconciliation, the seeds of which were planted then. The full blossoming of these seeds will occur in the Messianic Age as described vividly in this week's Haftara, prophetic reading.

A Jew—even as he or she enters into the stage of Bar or Bas Mitzvah—has to know that our goal is complete and total unity.

THE SYNTHESIS BETWEEN STUDY AND ACTION

On a deeper level, Chassidic Masters taught us that Joseph and Judah, in addition to being real historical figures, allegorically represent the two worlds of action and study. Joseph is study and Judah is action. So when the Torah says that Judah approached Joseph, it teaches us the need for us to fuse action with knowledge.

It is not uncommon for people who are steeped in theoretical knowledge to shun or deemphasize the practical parts of Judaism. Conversely, there are activists who perform the Mitzvos admirably but who fail to see the value of theoretical study of Torah.

The dichotomy between these two spheres is represented by the emotional gulf that existed between Judah and Joseph at the fateful moment the two of them stood face to face.

VaYigash, Chassidic thought teaches us, is when the two worlds of study and action meet.

Here too there is a connection to the allusion of VaYigash to Bar Mitzvah.

Before the age of Bar Mitzvah a boy (and likewise a girl before the age of Bas Mitzvah) learns about various Mitzvos, but cannot observe them properly. For even if they were to perform them—as they are indeed encouraged to do so as a preparation for adulthood—not being obligated to do them relegates their observance to a lower level on the ladder of Mitzvah perfection.

When it comes to study—the Joseph of Judaism—the pre-Bar Mitzvah child does not lack the fundamental aspect of Torah study. While he may be lacking in the quantitative aspect of learning—his mind is not as developed as an adult—nevertheless, he is already on the inexorable road to higher levels of Torah study. Indeed, the word Joseph means to increase. Over our entire lifetime we increase in our Torah knowledge; at no point can we say we know enough.

However, when it comes to the Judah aspect of Judaism—the observance of the Mitzvos—a minor is in the Minor Leagues, not just quantitatively but also qualitatively. There is an ocean of difference between one who does a Mitzvah out of submission to a Higher will—one translation of the name Judah is submission—and one who does it voluntarily, as does a minor.

At the time of Bar Mitzvah, a boy's actions, his "Judah," approaches and matches his "Joseph," his learning. His actions "catch up," so to speak, with his



The mind understands, but the heart refuses to get excited about the idea. Even when one is turned on to doing the right things, they often find that there is a major blockage that does not let them execute the idea into concrete action. It is Joseph and Judah in their most antagonistic pose.

knowledge of Torah—they are now both playing in the Major Leagues.

T'FILLIN: COLLIDING WORLDS BROUGHT TOGETHER

This process of VaYigash—where two competing worlds meet—has yet another connection to Bar Mitzvah. Although a Bar Mitzvah child assumes responsibility for all of the Mitzvos, there is one Mitzvah that stands out. When a boy becomes a Bar Mitzvah, he begins to put on T'fillin. T'fillin are connected with three parts of the person: the head, arm and heart. If there are three distinct worlds within the human being they are the mind, the emotions associated with the heart and one's actions that one executes primarily through one's hands.

These three parts of the human being are rivals in the best-case scenario and outright adversaries in the worst-case scenario. The mind understands, but the heart refuses to get excited about the idea. Even when one is turned on to doing the right things, they often find that there is a major blockage that does not let them execute the idea into concrete action. It is Joseph and Judah in their most antagonistic pose.

T'fillin—arguably more than any other Mitzvah—is about VaYigash, bringing these worlds together so that they function in complete harmony with one another. The heart beats in accordance with one's understanding and the emotional energy gets

translated into action without any delay. T'fillin coordinates all of our faculties so that they form one unified front in serving G-d.

THE ULTIMATE VAYIGASH

The ultimate power of unification of different personalities, ideologies and faculties eludes us as long as we are in exile. Exile is defined not just as a time of persecution and geographical distance from our Homeland. It is a state of alienation from ourselves, our fellow and our G-d. To be sure we can have all of the above forms of unity but because we are in exile these expressions of unity will be missing either in their depth, breadth or length.

In terms of depth it means that the unity will be a functional one but deep down there can still be some hidden measure of tension and separation.

In terms of breadth, the degree to which we can be united with others might be limited to those who are more like-minded. We may still find it difficult to connect to those who are worlds apart in terms of their upbringing. It doesn't necessarily mean that we are in conflict with them; it just means that we do not possess the requisite energy to develop lines of communication with people who are outside our comfort zone.

In terms of "length" the exile tainted efforts of VaYigash will suffer from our inability to extend our efforts at unity to the next

generation.

The ultimate VaYigash therefore is the experience that will come only with the true and complete Redemption. Then the two powers of Judah and Joseph—with all that these two figures allude to—will be completely reunited, and on all levels.

At that time we will celebrate the collective Bar Mitzvah of all the Jewish people.

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

It is interesting that the word VaYigash is also related to the word

Goshna—to Goshen, which appears in this week's parsha.

The word Goshna comprises the four letters on the dreidel of Chanukah and stand for the four words: "Nes gadol haya shom-a great miracle happened there." The gematria/numerical value of these four letters is 358, the same gematria as Moshiach.

Chanukah, the festival that is associated with the Dreidel and which is always followed by the parsha of VaYigash is related to the word chinuch, which means

education.

Translating the juxtaposition of Chanukah with VaYigash and Goshna into a relevant message for us in these last moments of exile, it suggests that in order for us to experience true Redemption and the ultimate manifestation of VaYigash, we must prepare for it now.

In the same manner as a child prepares for his Bar Mitzvah we must direct our efforts today and condition ourselves to experience the VaYigash reconciliation dynamic in every aspect of our lives.

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WILL WE WAKE UP IN TIME?

The drama that took place in Ramat Gilad was primarily a media event. The army officers came away with minor scratches, and the “serious violence” affected only the road leading into the military base, scarred with brown paint. We cannot fall asleep at the wheel while the government continues with its plans to destroy hundreds of Jewish homes. If the public doesn’t wake up in time (G-d forbid), we will be facing a terrible tragedy as dozens of Jewish neighborhoods throughout Yehuda and Shomron are razed to the ground.

By Sholom Ber Crombie

Translated by Michael Leib Dobry

Nearly six and a half years ago, just two months before the Gush Katif expulsion, I was privileged to spend a Shabbos at the “Maoz Yam” Hotel, located near the Neve Dekalim settlement. This marked the final Shabbos for Jewish guests in the hotel, as thousands of IDF soldiers converged on the hotel that week and evicted all its occupants. The hotel building, once home to the very successful “Dekalim Beach” Hotel, had been abandoned for years since tourists stopped coming

to Gush Katif during the intifada. For a period of several months prior to the expulsion, dozens of families from all over Eretz Yisroel came to the hotel out of a desire to be with their fellow Jews living on the Gaza Strip as the moment of “disengagement” approached. Life on the premises continued quietly, but that didn’t stop the media from reporting each morning about how they were “making a stronghold” in the hotel. The front pages of the daily newspapers showed pictures taken through the gate featuring young people, described in the

caption as “extremist right-wing activists” who have barricaded themselves in the hotel.

In actuality, anyone who wanted to enter the hotel could do so. The hotel gate was closed with a chain that hung loosely on the ground – and without any barbed wire fencing. Even the old hotel gate was broken and rickety, but the media simply ignored the facts. Instead, they spoke about entrenchers, rioters, and preparations for war.

I recalled the story about the “Maoz Yam” Hotel when I saw the recent headlines reporting on hundreds of rioters at the Efraim Brigade. According to the media reports, two high-ranking officers were “injured” when hundreds of young people “attacked” them. There was also a reporter who tried to create a storm by claiming that the lives of these soldiers had been in danger. The Israeli media gave several pages of news coverage to the new “Jewish terrorism” and the prime minister immediately cleared time on his busy schedule to deal with the real threat to the people dwelling in Tziyon – the hilltop youth threatening the stability of the strongest military force in the Middle East.

Anyone who wants to know the facts can check the investigative report on the incident. It states that the officers sustained no significant injuries apart from a few scratches. Not all that pleasant, but not so terrible either. While there was some property damage, this was no war, unless they wanted to let the facts spoil their party.

Along with the “price tagging” incidents last week, the media also covered a major headline story about the “torching of a mosque” in Yerushalayim. The problem was that they neglected to tell us that this was actually an abandoned structure in the city’s Geula neighborhood, located in a playground area for

children. Apart from its castle shape, there were no vestiges of a mosque anywhere. The structure also didn't exactly go up in flames; there was nothing more than a little soot covering the entrance to the desolate building. While this does not justify the act, it's a far cry from the blaring headlines about a mosque being torched in Yerushalayim – which give the residents of Eretz Yisroel cause to believe that a violent religious war is breaking out here.

ACTS OF DELIBERATE INCITEMENT

Behind the media headlines about the “settler violence,” there's a resolute campaign out there to delegitimize the settler community, designed to prepare the groundwork for the uprooting of the settlement outposts. The media already did this once before prior to the Gush Katif expulsion, when it made daily reports about the crazy scenarios concocted by the best and brightest from the Gilad “farm forum” and sent terror through the general populace. The media succeeded in turning the settler community into the national black sheep and the disengagement plan was passed with nary a whimper. It was only during the actual expulsion process that a few journalists suddenly managed to notice the chilling human side to the story, as thousands of Jewish men, women, and children were uprooted from their homes.

These same spin-doctors who invented the libelous statements about the settlers before the Gaza expulsion, paving the way for its implementation, are now operating in the same fashion today. They are engaging in wild and vicious incitement against the settlers, turning every incident with security forces into a premeditated struggle. The main thing is to allow IDF soldiers to break into people's homes in the middle of the night and throw

children out of their beds while they're still sleeping.

The Israeli media ignores the personal distress of those who are suddenly told one day that their house is about to be torn down. This is the same media that tells us that we have to show mercy regarding the illegal Sudanese workers and let them break the law here and there, since they are “in danger of expulsion.” The problem is that this terminology is reserved only for Gentiles who threaten the Jewish nature of Eretz Yisroel. However, when we're talking about the uprooting of settlers' homes, the word “expulsion” disappears and suddenly the media uses cleaner words such as “dismantling.” They show absolutely no patience or empathy towards the kippa-wearing religious pioneer community, living in the rocky hills of the Shomron.

GENERAL ALON'S NUANCED POLITICAL VOCABULARY

In a disgraceful paradox, the one who coined the phrase “Jewish terrorism” in reference to the rioting by the hilltop youth is none other than Brigadier General Nitzan Alon, who will soon be promoted to the rank of major general and receive the appointment as head of the IDF Central Command, which will make him directly responsible for Yehuda and Shomron. This is the same Nitzan Alon who called the murder of Ben-Yosef Livnat, may G-d avenge his blood, on his way to Kever Yosef in Sh'chem – “an incident,” relating to the Palestinian soldiers who committed the act in forgiving terms. From his vantage point, “price tag” demonstrators spraying graffiti are engaging in terrorism, whereas the spilling of Jewish blood can be merely “an incident.”

Nitzan Alon's appointment should serve as a warning sign to the settlers that the winds of a new war are blowing from out of the

office of the Minister of Defense. Ehud Barak is currently in a most difficult political situation. According to recent polls, his Atzma'ut Party, a splinter faction from the Labor Party, may not get enough votes to pass the electoral threshold and secure Knesset representation in the next national elections, which may come as soon as 2012. Therefore, he is trying to make headlines at the expense of the Jewish settlers, no matter what the price. This was the rationale that motivated him to make a nighttime raid to destroy homes in Migron, and this is the reason why he recently looked for a confrontation with the settlers in Ramat Gilad – in spite of efforts to reach a compromise.

This is apparently also the reason why Barak chose to send hundreds of soldiers wearing helmets and flak jackets for the purpose of tearing down one house and an enclosure for goats at the Mitzpeh Yitzhar outpost. With all his heart, Barak was hoping that on a settlement like Yitzhar, they wouldn't let an opportunity to raise a ruckus pass quietly. As a result, the expected confrontation with the security forces would create huge headlines in the papers to show his left-wing colleagues. However, to his great disappointment, his hopes were dashed. The hundreds of soldiers met settlers sitting with great faith and trust in the middle of a Yud-Tes Kislev farbrengen, all unwilling to be dragged into a conflict with the Israel Defense Forces. Instead of headlines on the confrontation, Barak got headlines on the wasted money and manpower, and even the left-wing media attacked the outlandish order to send hundreds of soldiers to destroy one building, a room and a half in size.

The reason why the hilltop settlers decided not to clash with the eviction forces was an answer they had received from the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach, via Igros Kodesh. The clear message within the reply



The Amona evacuation five years ago. Who would want to see such terrible sights again?

was that instead of investing their strength and efforts in an altercation, they should increase in the spreading of light. It stands to reason that if the settlers would have tried to use force against the soldiers, they would have become entangled in some serious violence. Then, the following morning, they would have felt the blows of the leftist media, tearing them apart over the disturbances two days earlier near Ramat Gilad. Instead, the eviction passed quietly, and by the next day, construction tools had already arrived at the site to start rebuilding the destroyed home, thereby removing all remnants of the disgraceful wrecking job.

NOW IS THE TIME TO WAKE UP

After Migron and Mitzpeh Yitzhar, a row of settlement outposts now stand within the crosshairs of the State Attorney's Office and the Ministry of Defense. Ramat Gilad, Amona, Givat Asaf, Givat HaUlpana – and this is just the beginning. All these settlements are built on land that can be made ready quite easily, but the High Court of Justice would not even listen to the settlers. According to the Yesha leaders, this is a desire to destroy for the

“ Ehud Barak is currently in a most difficult political situation. According to recent polls, his Atzma'ut Party, a splinter faction from the Labor Party, may not get enough votes to pass the electoral threshold and secure Knesset representation in the next national elections, which may come as soon as 2012. Therefore, he is trying to make headlines at the expense of the Jewish settlers, no matter what the price.

sake of destruction. Others claim the political machinery can already smell a national election in the air, and Barak and Netanyahu are busy working with their respective local branches at the settlers' expense. In any case, it appears that the region will be the focus of a major struggle in the coming weeks. With no leadership and no call for demonstrations in the city centers, the country's youth is expressing its anger through activities such as the "price tagging." In the present circumstances, anyone who wants to protest can only do so where the action is. No one has yet to raise the flag and call upon the general public to participate in organized protest activities at intersections.

After the shattering destruction at Gush Katif, it seems that the

struggle will once again fall to families living on settlements in danger of expulsion. The public hears that hundreds of families are due to be evicted, yet the response is deafening silence. No one raises their voices against this crime, except for the settlers themselves. This situation brings us back to the days when the resistance slogan was "We'll fight for our home" – when it was essentially the home of us all. Yet, the call is primarily directed towards those whose homes are *r"l* due to be bulldozed.

Last week, the ministerial law committee rejected a proposed piece of legislation for the development of settlements scheduled for expulsion. The reason for the denial was the

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UNDERGROUND MINYAN AND SECRET MIKVA

Rabbi Benzion Robinson was a warm and upright Jew of “the old school,” and was very devoted to his children and grandchildren. He merited children and sons-in-law with whom any Lubavitcher Chassid would consider himself fortunate.

• Portrait of a Chassid from Krolevets who perished in the Holocaust, may Hashem avenge his blood.

By Rabbi Yehoshua Dubrawski a”h

THE RUBINSON FAMILY

Back in the day, there was a second Shabbos minyan in town, in the home of the other Lubavitcher family, the Robinsons. (Several generations ago, the Robinsons and the Karasiks were one family, but I don’t know the details). The head of the family was Rabbi Benzion, may Hashem avenge his blood.

This minyan was secret. It was comprised of the few Lubavitcher Jews in Krolevets as well as the bachurim from Tomchei T’mimim who learned in our town. The worshipers would try to sneak over to the Robinson home, trying as much as possible to avoid attracting any notice. Thus, one could say that this was where the “underground” Chassidishe minyan was held.

Rabbi Benzion was a warm and upright Jew of “the old school,” and was very devoted to his children and grandchildren. He merited children and sons-in-law with whom any Lubavitcher Chassid would consider himself fortunate. They were top talmidim in Yeshivas Tomchei T’mimim. The oldest son-in-law was

Rabbi Mordechai Hirsh Charitonov (of the famous Charitonov family from Nikolayev who were outstanding singers of Chabad niggunim). The second son-in-law was Rabbi Yehoshua Kvartz, who was knowledgeable in both Nigleh and Chassidus. The third son-in-law was the almost legendary giant of a Chassid, the askan who was active in all Lubavitch affairs, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Futerafas.

HEROISM UNDER FIRE

Rabbi Benzion also had a son, Rabbi Moshe, who was an outstanding Chassid, eidel and warm-hearted. He not only had the potential for mesirus nefesh for Torah and Chassidus, he actively was moser nefesh for Yeshivas Tomchei T’mimim.

During the terrible 1930’s when religious Jews suffered greatly from the cruel Soviet persecution, Rabbi Moshe learned with a group of young talmidim from Tomchei T’mimim. Most of the fathers of the talmidim had also learned in Tomchei T’mimim when they were younger.



It is worth pointing out that Chabad Chassidim in Russia were almost the only ones who secretly fought against the bloodthirsty Soviet regime, even though they openly wore “counter-revolutionary signs,” i.e. beards and peios. In this war, many precious people were sacrificed but overall, they were victorious. The soldiers of the underground were, by and large, products of Yeshivas Tomchei T’mimim.

After a period of time learning secretly in Berditchev, the NKVD caught up with the yeshiva. They pounced upon it like predatory animals and arrested Rabbi Moshe and all the talmidim. The story of Berditchev definitely deserves to be written up in detail. I will just mention that the Red secret police wanted to forcibly extract information from Rabbi Moshe and the talmidim such as who organized and supported the yeshiva. The talmidim didn’t say anything but Rabbi Moshe pretending that he inadvertently and under duress “dropped” the name of one of the activists, took all the blame upon himself.

Rabbi Benzion miraculously had the necessary conditions under which he could make his home into a secret, Chassidic hub. He had the z’chus of having his own house with a shed and a barn. Apparently, until the communist revolution, the Robinson family was well to do. They had a large yard and had another

large house under construction.

It was a heavenly kindness that the wicked ones sufficed by confiscating a large part of the yard along with the building under construction. They did not send Rabbi Benzion as a bourgeoisie to the “polar bears,” aka Siberia. He was even able to keep the house and part of the yard. Thanks to that, the Robinsons were able to conceal Chassidic activity relatively easily.

RECALCITRANT HEATER

I’d like to mention additional aspects of Chassidic life of Krolevets that are connected to the Robinsons, which were typical of Jewish life under the black clouds of Stalinism. (Although when it came to Chassidic life in that country, the suffering and hardships in each city or town were different than what was occurring elsewhere).

As I already mentioned, our town – from what I can remember – did not have a mikva. Those who needed a mikva went to the larger neighboring town, Konotop. At some point, Zeide-Rav, my father, and the Robinsons decided, after much deliberation, to build a secret mikva. Through acquaintances and protektzia they somehow purchased the materials they needed – mortar, cement and other items. Mortar, for example, was very expensive and it wasn’t at all easy to obtain from the government “treasuries,” but slowly and quietly they got everything they needed. Then they secretly began to dig and build the mikva.

Where could an illegal activity such as this be done? In the dark barn in the Robinson’s yard. The entire construction was under the supervision and instructions of Zeide-Rav. At first, I didn’t know where my grandfather disappeared to so often. They did not dare inform his 9-10 year old grandson of anything. It was only when the mikva was already built that they secretly

brought me, one night, to see the first mikva I had ever seen.

How would the mikva be heated on cold days? Through people that he knew, Zeide-Rav contacted a quasi-“engineer” whose main advantage was not his professional expertise but his trustworthiness. Zeide-Rav drew up the plans for building a heater, a samovar made of zinc to heat the mikva. After much effort, it was ready. Those involved in the project were very happy but only briefly. The heater decided to refuse to do even a little bit of what it was supposed to do. It remained stubbornly “mute” and the waters of the mikva were as cold as before.

I have no doubt that the heater’s failure to work was “thanks” to the craftsman who made it. My grandfather’s plan was surely correct. The mikva was used primarily by the bachurim who were learning in Krolevets. They would jump in even on the coldest days. The strong and restrained rav was deeply pained and would let slip every so often, although it was completely out of character, how from his “warm” dream all that remained was a cold and frozen dream.

SOME “NON-GASHMIUS” RECOLLECTIONS

As a child I could not, of course, evaluate the qualities of a Jew. However, even as a child, I understood that Rabbi Benzion Robinson was exceedingly warm and caring to all Jews, and especially towards his children and grandchildren. It seemed a bit odd to us that every time he mentioned his grandson, he would warmly refer to him as “Leibele tattlele,” and when he referred to his granddaughter, I forget her name, he would always add, “mammele.”

I have a fond memory of when Leibele was born. Rabbi Benzion firmly insisted that we children, my sisters and I, come every evening

until the bris, and stand near the crib where the baby lay and recite Shma (I seem to remember that on a rainy night he sent the wagon driver to fetch us). Bubbe Sarah, Benzion’s wife, would serve us pudding and tasty baked goods. Pudding on an ordinary weeknight? We didn’t even have any on Shabbos! And we saw baked goods like that maybe on Purim. After we swallowed the treats, Benzion wished each one of us well. Can such a thing be forgotten?

I remember other times in Benzion’s house when I tasted ruchnius (spirituality) and if it wasn’t actually ruchnius, it wasn’t gashmius either. On a few occasions I went with my father to the Robinsons for the third Shabbos meal. As I mentioned, there was a Chassidishe underground minyan there. As for the gashmius part of the meal, I only remember the little challos.

What I cannot forget are the weeks when Rabbi Moshe Robinson, Benzion’s son, came home from Yeshivas Tomchei T’mimim and reviewed a maamer at the third meal.

I sat at the table ensconced amongst the Chassidim. Shabbos was almost over. It was quite dark already in the room and my eyes wanted to close. The heartfelt Chassidic niggun carried my imagination away to some far off place, and then Rabbi Moshe began, quietly and passionately to say the maamer. His words seemed to caress and rock and go on and on ... until my eyes closed in sweet sleep. Sleep? Yes and no. I did drowse, but it’s hard to call it sleep.

When the accursed Germans approached Krolevets during World War II, Benzion, his wife and one son with his family fled on a horse and wagon. It seems that due to the terrible conditions and dangers of the road they returned to Krolevets where they perished al Kiddush Hashem together with the rest of the Jews of the city. May Hashem avenge their blood.

THE BUCK STOPS HERE!

INSPIRING STORIES OF MONEY
MIRACLES RECENTLY EXPERIENCED
BY SHLUCHIM • PART IV

By Rabbi Gershon Avtzon

Dear Reader sh'yichyeh,

In our previous article, we discussed the strength that one must have in these trying times. We discussed where one can find the sources of inspiration, namely the Sichos of 5710 and 5751/2, but we were left wondering: Is this all theoretical or can we see miracle stories today of how the Rebbe helps his Chassidim?

I want to share with you a number of stories that I have heard first-hand (some may have been printed before).

LET US SEE IF YOUR REBBE CAN HELP YOU

My brother-in-law Rabbi Dov Wagner is the Shliach at the University of Southern California. He went on Shlichus together with my sister in 5759 and B"H has been very successful. This story happened in the earlier years of their Shlichus.

Rabbi Wagner had miraculously acquired an old fraternity house, which he was in the process of converting to a Chabad House. At some point in the construction he desperately needed 5,000 dollars. All his regular donors were tied up and he did not know where to turn.

In the Chabad House there was a student that was niskarev through a non-Lubavitch Kiruv program. He always heard stories from Rabbi

Wagner about how the Rebbe helps his Shluchim. On that day he turned to my brother-in-law and told him, "You have three hours to get five thousand dollars, let us see if your Rebbe can help you!"

It so happened that on that day, he was scheduled to have a Shiur with one of the Professors of the University. He was considering cancelling the shiur due to the pressure of the day, but decided to go ahead with it. He learned with the professor for an hour and was about to leave. At that point the professor asked him to sit down for a minute. He told him that for a while he had been watching Rabbi Wagner's work and was very impressed. The previous night, he and his wife had decided to give Chabad of USC \$20,000 in four installments. "Here is the first check of 5000," he said to Rabbi Wagner with a smile.

REPAYING THE REBBE THROUGH HIS SHLIACH

The following stories I heard from a Shliach in the state of Ohio:

"My Chabad House is funded by donations from local donors, and one day one of my main donors, a wealthy man who gave me \$80,000 annually towards my expenses, passed away. Suddenly debts began piling up. The Chabad house was good at giving, but not nearly as proficient at taking. I decided that



rather than be nervous or miserable or do nothing, I would pray.

"The debts began to move into the six digits when one morning as I was opening my mail I noticed a letter with a check enclosed. It was from a woman in California, and the check was for 10,000 dollars.

"In the course of that year I sent a greeting card to that woman before each of the holidays and after each one I received a check for ten thousand dollars. The checks kept the Chabad House solvent while I searched for new supporters."

Eventually, in one of his journeys to find new funds, this Shliach went to California and of course visited the woman who had become his benefactor.

She received him with great joy as he thanked her profusely, explaining how her donations had rescued them. But he couldn't help asking what had prompted her to donate to an organization in an entirely different state and to a Rabbi she had never met. She responded that her granddaughter had brought her a calendar produced by this Shliach and it had triggered something inside her.

She explained: "Some sixty years ago when I was just a young girl, my sister got sick. She contracted some terrible disease that the doctors couldn't cure. Our family wasn't very religious, but with no other choice we began to pray to G-d for help. The help came from a totally unexpected place. We heard there was a Rabbi in

Brooklyn who could cure people by blessing them.

“Of course we never heard of such a thing and probably wouldn’t have believed it if we weren’t so desperate; in our culture, Rabbis and miracles were mere fairytales. But we went. We made an appointment, went into his room, and all I remember is that he had very special eyes, very kind and very wise. The miracle wasn’t long in coming. My sister felt better the next day and soon she was completely healed!

“That was years ago, but when my granddaughter brought in a calendar from your Chabad House last year and I took a look at it, I saw the featured Rabbi and recognized those eyes. It was him! I thought to myself, ‘That man saved my sister. Did we ever even try to repay him? I don’t even know if we said thank you.’ I mean it was like he didn’t even expect it. So that’s when I decided I had to start doing something to show my appreciation to that man.”

SURPRISE DONATION

Here is another story I heard from the same Shliach:

“A few weeks ago I desperately needed \$50,000. I was away for a Shabbos, and when I returned on Monday, I looked at my mail and saw many bills that I needed to pay. I was very discouraged. Then I saw in the pile an envelope from Wal-Mart addressed to Chabad. My first thought was to throw it out with the rest of the junk mail. For some reason I decided to open it. I was shocked to see a check for exactly 50,000!

“I was flabbergasted, but quickly deposited the check. I then tried to figure out why they sent me the money. After doing some research this is what I found out:

“A few months before, one of my Balabatim asked me for a favor. He had a son who was out of school,



“A few weeks ago I desperately needed \$50,000. I was away for a Shabbos, and when I returned on Monday, I looked at my mail and saw many bills that I needed to pay. I was very discouraged. Then I saw in the pile an envelope from Wal-Mart addressed to Chabad. My first thought was to throw it out with the rest of the junk mail. For some reason I decided to open it. I was shocked to see a check for exactly 50,000!”

and he was trying to keep his son busy. He asked me if he could hang around and help in the Chabad House. I agreed, and the boy came to my office and asked me what his job was. I really had no idea what to tell him.

“At that moment I had a flash of inspiration. I took a bunch of blank Chabad House stationery papers and gave it to him. I told him to write letters to all the big companies in town asking for donations. He worked for a week and moved on. I quickly forgot about the incident.

“It seems that he wrote a letter to Wal-Mart, and after taking six months to process the request they miraculously decided to give Chabad \$50,000!”

A VISIT IN A DREAM

My family has the honor of being Mechutanim with Rabbi Yosef Carlebach, Shliach of the Rebbe to Rutgers University and Central New Jersey. His Chabad House is the largest in the United States. The following is a story I heard from him:

“I was in the process of constructing a new Chabad House that would provide a home away from home for the Jewish students of Rutgers University. The five-million dollar facility was almost complete, ready to house more than two dozen women, provide kosher meals to thousands of students a week, and serve as a center for the vibrant Jewish life which Chabad has nurtured at Rutgers.

“Startled out of my sleep, I was surprised to hear Rabbi Groner’s voice asking, ‘How much money is needed to complete the mikveh in the Chabad House?’ ‘Forty thousand dollars,’ was my immediate response; I knew the figure only too well. When Rabbi Groner conveyed this information to him, Mr. A.’s face turned white.”

“But I had a problem. In mid-July I still needed \$800,000 to pay the contractor to complete the project. In addition, I could not receive a Certificate of Occupancy until the building was virtually complete.

“By August, the situation looked bleak. The contractor had walked off the job and refused to return unless more money was forthcoming immediately. Time was growing short – the center was scheduled to open by the first of September – and there was still a good deal of work to be done before the certificate could be issued.”

As the summer days passed, Rabbi Carlebach labored non-stop to obtain the necessary funds. His supporters had already donated generously, and could not give any more large sums. He had called Rabbi Leibel Groner (who had spoken at the groundbreaking ceremony) for some fundraising leads, but Rabbi Groner had also been unable to provide substantial help.

The frustration and stress were taking their toll. One Sunday afternoon in mid-August, in the middle of making calls to solicit funds, Rabbi Carlebach fell asleep with the phone in his hand. However, unbeknownst to him, at that exact moment another person was not sleeping well either.

Mr. A. came from a poor Russian family that had moved to Israel while he was still a child. Lubavitch in Israel had taken care of the family’s material and spiritual needs.

This kindness was never

forgotten, so when Mr. A. immigrated to the United States as a young man, he maintained close contact with the Rebbe. At every step in his business or personal life, he kept the Rebbe informed.

When he started his business, he wrote to the Rebbe for a blessing, and committed himself to giving one tenth of his earnings to charity. His ventures were blessed with success, and in keeping with his commitment, he made generous donations.

He married, and some time afterwards his wife gave birth to a baby boy. But the child weighed only 2 lb. 3 oz.! The doctors were not certain the infant would survive. Even if he did live, they told the worried parents, it was quite probable that he would neither see nor speak.

Mr. and Mrs. A. asked the Rebbe for a blessing for their son. The Rebbe assured them that the baby would develop normally, and his blessing was realized.

Several years later, the A.’s doctor noticed that their son’s muscles weren’t developing correctly. Gravely, he told the parents that the boy might never be able to walk properly. Mr. A. knew only one address from which to seek help, so he went to the Ohel to pray for the health of his son.

Soon afterwards, he had a puzzling dream. In his dream, he approached the Rebbe for a blessing for his son. The Rebbe replied by telling him to visit Rabbi Leibel Groner, his secretary, and follow his instructions. Also, there was an indication that Mr. A. had fallen

behind in his gifts to charity.

Then, still dreaming, Mr. A. visited Rabbi Groner, who told him to go and inspect a mikveh. As the dream continued, Mr. A. watched himself go to the mikveh. Seeing that it was incomplete, he grew increasingly angry, outraged at finding an unfinished mikveh in America.

When Mr. A. awoke, the dream came back to him, and he checked with his accountant. Sure enough, his contributions to charity had fallen behind in the amount of \$40,000. Mr. A. decided to go to Rabbi Groner. If Rabbi Groner told him of a mikveh that needed about \$40,000, he would know his dream was significant.

At that moment, the two dramas began to intermesh. Mr. A. entered Rabbi Groner’s office to tell him about the dream. “Do you know of a mikveh that is in the process of completion?” he asked.

“Rabbi Groner thought of me, and called me immediately,” Rabbi Carlebach continued. “Startled out of my sleep, I was surprised to hear Rabbi Groner’s voice asking, ‘How much money is needed to complete the mikveh in the Chabad House?’

“Forty thousand dollars,” was my immediate response; I knew the figure only too well. When Rabbi Groner conveyed this information to him, Mr. A.’s face turned white.

“Rabbi Groner called me back on Monday morning with the news that a New York businessman might be able to help. Time was of the essence, so I called Mr. A. and offered to drive into New York, pick him up, and bring him out to the unfinished Chabad House. Mr. A. agreed, and I picked him up late Tuesday afternoon. Mr. A. sat quietly for the whole drive.

“As I showed Mr. A. around the Chabad House, he seemed only mildly interested. When we entered the area designated for the mikveh,

however, Mr. A. just stood and stared, transfixed.

"Five minutes passed, then ten. After fifteen minutes, I told Mr. A. that I would be upstairs saying the afternoon prayers. When I finished praying, I heard Mr. A. downstairs talking excitedly on his cell phone.

"On the way back to New York, Mr. A. told me about his dream. 'It's not only that the dollar amounts match,' he told me, 'but the unfinished mikveh in your Chabad House looks exactly like the one I saw in my dream!'

"On Thursday, Mr. A. brought Rabbi Groner the \$40,000. Although it was 10:30 PM, Rabbi Groner called me at once, and I immediately

drove into New York to pick up the money.

"Early next morning, I met with the contractor and the workers. Of the \$800,000 he needed, I had \$500,000 readily available along with the envelope from Mr. A.

"The meeting was filled with tension, and the contractor was prepared to storm out until I stopped him and handed over the envelope from Mr. A. When the contractor realized that funds were indeed available, and after hearing the story of the dream, he ordered his workers back to the site.

"Within a week, the building was ready for occupancy.

"The following Friday, the city

officials and the Board of Health gave their approval, and that night, hundreds of Jewish students were able to celebrate Shabbos in the new Chabad House."

Stories such as these are inspiring and comforting, as we acknowledge the presence and involvement of the Rebbe in the lives of his Chassidim. In our next article BE"H we will retell recent miracle stories that occurred through the Rebbe's letters, the Igros Kodesh.

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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opposition of State Attorney General Yehuda Weinstein. Knesset Members supporting the legislation claim that the committee rejection will prove beneficial, as it will put a great deal of pressure upon the prime minister not to endanger the proposed law. According to the legislation sponsored by MKs Z'vulun Orlev (Bayit HaYehudi) and Zev Elkin (Likud) with the support of another eighteen Knesset Members, including all the coalition faction leaders, if a landowner in Yehuda and Shomron does not appeal to the courts within four years after the construction of a residential neighborhood on his property, the buildings erected there cannot be dismantled and the owner will have to settle for monetary compensation.

It's uncertain whether this law will manage to help those outposts now in danger of being uprooted. Even its sponsors admit that it doesn't provide an answer for outposts in general, but it does for settlements such as Migron, Ramat Gilad, and Amona. But more than that, this attempt at appropriate legislation proves the stupidity of High Court decisions to destroy Jewish homes. We're talking about land upon which no Arab claims ownership. The only ones who do make such claims are those associated with 'Peace Now,' as they want the satisfaction of recording the destruction of more homes in Yehuda and Shomron.

If there is no sudden change in the government's position, thousands of soldiers are expected to visit Yesha neighborhoods in the coming weeks

to drag babies out of their cribs and destroy their homes. Now it depends upon us. A change in government policy will take place only if we wake up. The government ministers and Knesset Members will not raise a single cry of protest, as long as the public lets them sleep well at night. They'll respond only if their offices are deluged with hundreds of letters and phone calls, waking them from their slumber. The power to affect change is within us – the public, particularly Chabad Chassidim faithful to the holy instructions of the Rebbe, stronger and more determined than any government campaign of misinformation. This is the time for us to wake up and have faith in the strength of the leader of the generation, and with G-d's help, there will be *Didan Natzach!*

MENDY REALTY

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JUST DO IT!

By M.E. Gordon

The idea came to Chezky quite suddenly at breakfast in Yeshiva. Chezky had already made a name for himself among his classmates as a 'good head.' He was always exercising his brain, either in learning or in thinking up ideas as to how to get others to learn and do.

"Zalmy," he addressed the red-haired boy sitting next to him, "I just thought of a great idea. I need help implementing it, though. You're the 'action man' around here. Can I count you in?"

"Sure, Chezky, you're the 'idea king.' You lead, I'll follow!"

"Very funny, thanks, but I left my crown at home."

"So tell me your idea, already. Something to improve the Mesivta classroom? Like more comfortable chairs? Or maybe a way to raise money for more s'farim to fill the reference library?"

Shloimy, sitting next to Zalmy, joined the conversation, "I wouldn't mind a fridge and a microwave in our Mesivta room. Then we can have pizza or knishes during our breaks."

"I wasn't thinking of any of the above," answered Chezky. "My idea was to run a program encouraging kids to learn chapters of Tanya by heart. It will be open to all boys regardless of age, class, or school."

"Sounds a bit idealistic to me," interrupted Shloimy. "How many kids do you think would be motivated to join?"

"Well, that's where the great idea comes in," countered Chezky. "We'll give points coupons according to achievement, redeemable for prizes, but the greatest incentive will be a fantastic trip for all those who participate."

"Wow!" Zalmy whistled, "Sounds great, count me in. Let's work out the details, and divide tasks. It'll be a lot of work to organize, but definitely worth it."

"You can count me in, too," added Shloimy, "as long as you don't count on me overworking myself."

"Thanks Zalmy and Shloimy. I'm going to speak to a few more guys and we'll meet together after night Seder to work out all the details."

That evening, half a dozen boys who were interested in Chezky's latest brainstorm came to the meeting. Chezky's sharp mind had already worked through many of the details that would ensure the success of the program. His friends were quite impressed with the elaborate plans he had made, and were happy to help. It was obvious that when it came to figuring things out, Chezky was tops.

Within a few days, the town was buzzing with excitement about the new initiative. Dozens of boys of all ages had signed up. It wasn't unusual to see students walking around with small Tanyas, trying to memorize another line. One parent who was musically inclined made

recordings of a few chapters of Tanya, sung to familiar niggunim. Zalmy distributed these CD's to anyone who asked. Times for testing were set up, and volunteers were found to test the boys. Point coupons were printed, and surprise raffles kept the excitement high.

Zalmy was highly involved in all of the practical details. Whatever Chezky would think up, he would find a way to make it happen. Finally, the program reached its culmination. It had been a smashing success. The prizes were distributed, the grand trip for the participants worked out beyond anyone's expectations. The next evening, during a farbrengen in the mesivta, the mashpia spoke in praise of their efforts.

"Chezky had a wonderful idea, and we are all thankful to him – he really personifies the idea of 'learning brings one to action.' All those who helped are also praiseworthy, but I think there's one bachur who really made it happen more than anyone else. Someone who was ready to do whatever was necessary to implement Chezky's ideas. That is Zalmy. You could say that his actions led to learning!" The mashpia paused, and then continued:

"In Mitzraim, Yosef was king. Yehuda had to step forward to plead before Yosef, but in Moshiach's time, Yosef's kingship joins Yehuda's and Yehuda is the main king. Yosef represents learning; Yehuda represents action with kabbalas ol."

The mashpia looked proudly around the room. "May all of you continue to learn and do, and to do and learn!"

The above story is fictional. The lesson is based on Likkutei Sichos vol. 25, p. 258-266.

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