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744 Eastern Parkway  
Brooklyn, NY 11213-3409

Tel: (718) 778-8000  
Fax: (718) 778-0800  
admin@beismoshiach.org  
www.beismoshiach.org

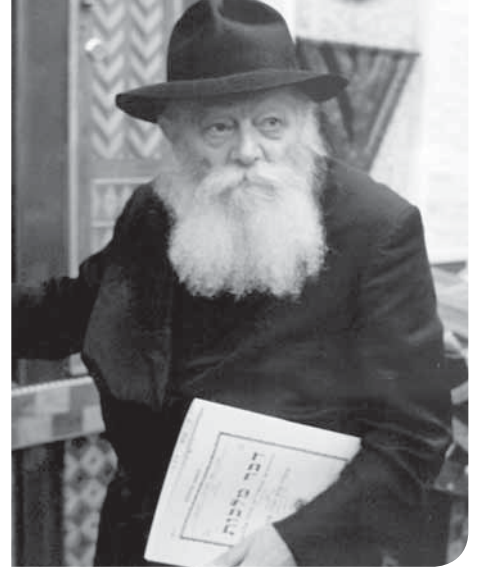
**EDITOR-IN-CHIEF:**  
M.M. Hendel

**HEBREW EDITOR:**  
Rabbi S.Y. Chazan  
editorH@beismoshiach.org

**ENGLISH EDITOR:**  
Boruch Merkur  
editor@beismoshiach.org

# BASI L'GANI 5712

In honor of Yud Shvat, Beis Moshiach presents a selection of the maamer the Rebbe MH"m delivered on Yud Shvat 5712, in accordance with the custom established by the Rebbe to review each year a section of the Rebbe Rayatz's maamer "Basi L'Gani" of 5710. • This year we focus on the second section of the profound and foundational chassidic discourse. • Part 2




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Translated by Boruch Merkur

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## CAUGHT IN THE QUAGMIRE OF "ONE SIN BRINGS ABOUT ANOTHER SIN"

2. However, upon contemplating one's state and standing, determining his condition through introspection and self-evaluation, as discussed above, he may conclude that – even if at the moment he is not a sinner, nevertheless – “my sin is constantly before me.” That is, the sins that one has committed throughout his life (including his shortcomings prior to the age of *bar mitzva*, as the Mittler Rebbe writes) endure, for those sins have not been properly corrected.

Evidence for this – that one's sins remain uncorrected – is as follows. Had his repentance been sufficient, he would not be trapped in the negative feedback loop of “one sin brings about another sin.” In fact, had he indeed been a *baal t'shuva*, one who has properly repented, his service of G-d from that point on would surely be with greater strength than it had been. Since he had previously been entrenched “in a land of drought and of the shadow of death” [i.e., devoid of G-dliness], it should have aroused in him a powerful thirst for the Divine. However, upon considering his true standing at present – without indulging himself with leniencies and without fooling himself, even to the slightest degree – he is confronted by the fact that his situation is the exact opposite. Not only has his former distance from G-dliness not brought him to the great love of G-d whereby even one's intentional sins become as merits, but the contrary, it has made him coarse and insensitive towards

G-dliness; he has become caught in the quagmire of “one sin brings about another sin.”

Now, there is the temptation to view one's situation as explained in *Tanya* Ch. 29 – that he has already done a proper *t'shuva*, but given his present [advanced] standing, his previous repentance does not suffice and he must now attain a higher degree of *t'shuva*. However, the conclusions of this self-evaluation, discussed above, rule out this complimentary interpretation of “my sin is constantly before me.” He must come to terms, rather, with the fact that he has simply not succeeded in correcting his misdeeds; his inadequacies in his Divine service act as a barrier between him and his Father in heaven, interrupting and deterring his service of G-d.

## ME, A KORBAN TO G-D?!

Contemplating all of the above, and knowing the great significance of the concept of *korbanos*, and how his approach to the service of *korbanos* is clearly inadequate, he is fraught with angst. As discussed above, *korbanos* embody the devotion of one's faculties and sensibilities to G-d, dedicating them to the point that they are absorbed within “the fire from above.” Indeed, the secret of *korbanos* reaches as high as the secret of the *Ein Sof*, Infinite G-dliness. Acknowledging his shortcomings, he is faced with the question: How can I possibly be found to be a desirable “*korban l'Havaya* – a sacrifice to G-d”?

To assuage this angst, the Rebbe Rayatz

expounds on the commentary of the Alter Rebbe on the word “*mikem* – from you”: “*Mikem*” means that the matter is demanded “of you” and is dependent “upon you.” The individual must assume this responsibility, irrespective of his personal standing and all his past history, and knowing the anguish of his heart. Indeed, he is personally charged with the mission of making of himself a *korban* that is desirable to G-d, to the extent that every single individual can ask of himself, “When will my deeds approach the deeds of my forefathers – Avrohom, Yitzchok, and Yaakov?”

This then is the meaning of “*mi'kem korban l'Havaya* – of you, a sacrificial offering to G-d”: It is within your power to become “a sacrificial offering” to G-d, to approach and unite with Havaya. *Korbanos* relate to G-d's name “Havaya” in particular – not “Elokim,” which is numerically equivalent to “*ha'teva* – nature,” but specifically “Havaya” [representing that aspect of G-d that transcends nature]. This is in accordance with the Zohar's explanation of the verse, “One who slaughters [a sacrifice] to Elokim shall be eliminated,” for the whole concept of *korbanos* relates specifically to Havaya, which transcends G-d's name Elokim.


### KORBANOS REACH THE EIN SOF

The truth is that *korbanos* reach even higher than that, higher than G-d's name Havaya, as the verse states, “*lifnei Havaya* – before Havaya.” Indeed, as stated above, “the secret of *korbanos* reaches as high as the secret of the Ein Sof,” beyond G-d's name Havaya. Although Havaya transcends G-d's name Elokim, nevertheless the four letters YKVK allude to the *Seider Hishtalshlus*, the natural progression and descent of G-dly light into the worlds [illustrating how this name of G-d bears some connection to the natural world]: *tzimtzum* and *hishtashtus*, the contraction of G-dly light (Yud) and its manifestation within the spiritual worlds (Hei), *hamshacha* and *hishtashtus*, drawing this light lower through the spiritual words (Vav) and extending into the physical world (Hei). The Ein Sof, however, transcends even G-d's name

Havaya, and as we have stated, the Divine service of *korbanos* reaches the Ein Sof Itself.


Thus, the Torah continues in the next verse, “he shall offer it, in accordance with His will, before G-d, *lifnei Havaya*.” The preceding verse says, “*korban l'Havaya*,” but, after mentioning, “of the livestock, of the cattle, and of the sheep,” it concludes by saying, “*lifnei Havaya*,” as the Tzemach Tzedek elucidates: “*lifnei Havaya*” means “beyond Havaya.” This teaches us that the concept of offering sacrifices, in a manner that its reach is “beyond Havaya,” is a service that involves not only the G-dly Soul but, “of the livestock, of the cattle, and of the sheep,” referring to [aspects of] the Animal Soul.

The latter is especially true of the Mikdash, the Holy Temple, where there could be the offering of *korbanos* using physical animals, a service of G-d that reaches “*lifnei Havaya*,” the secret of the Ein Sof.



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## MIRACLE ON THE TRAIN TRACKS

Rabbi Shaya Aharon Lee of Beitar Ilit experienced a most awe-inspiring miracle after receiving a puzzling bracha from the Rebbe during a private audience at the end of Tishrei 5739. “As I went through the yechidus in my mind, I recalled those moments when the Rebbe was immersed in his thoughts, speaking to himself as it were. I realized that the Rebbe was in another world, and he did what he did in order to nullify the Heavenly decree that hung over me.”

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By Nosson Avraham

Translated by Michael Leib Dobry

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**R**abbi Shaya Aharon Lee of Beitar Ilit, member of the local Anash community, is one of the older baalei t’shuva who found his way back to his Jewish roots, thanks to the Chabad outreach activities in England. He grew up in a home that observed minimal kashrus standards, received a leftist-Communist education, and Judaism was absolutely the last thing on his mind. He later enrolled at the University of Manchester, where he was accepted to the Department of Physics, seemingly reaching the pinnacle of his academic aspirations. Yet, it was specifically there, where in 5733 (1973), his pintele yid began to spark.

“During a relatively short time span, several things occurred that led me to conduct a much deeper examination of Yiddishkeit,” he recalled. One of the things that led him to look even deeper into his personal opinions was when his Gentile friends who had worshipped the Communist idol began associating with the Arab students on campus, despite the fact that the Arabs were obviously responsible for the outbreak of hostilities during the recent Yom Kippur War. “I realized that although scientists know how to connect things and can explain what happens when they are connected, they don’t understand *why* things happen.

“I had a professor, a devout Christian, who strengthened me in what I was thinking. ‘When you learn physics,’ he told me, ‘you realize how much we really don’t understand about the Creation and that it is much greater than we are.’ I developed a connection with the Rebbe’s shliach in Manchester. I also participated in a Shabbos on Judaism with Dr. Yitzchak Block of London, Ontario, and Rabbi Shmuel Lew. They amazed me with their approach, making substantive arguments that were music to my ears. As time passed, my knowledge of Judaism grew deeper until I finally decided to abandon my academic studies in favor of a life of Torah and mitzvos.”

All this was merely a warm-up for the unique story that Rabbi Lee experienced in 5739, due to the Rebbe’s bracha during an amazing yechidus at the end of Tishrei. “During the yechidus, the Rebbe said something to me that I didn’t understand. The Rebbe didn’t just make a puzzling statement; he even gave a specific timeframe – that year. I believed that if the Rebbe said

these things, they must have some significance...”

## A CRYPTIC BRACHA

“I came to 770 for the first time in my life in Elul 5738. Tishrei that year was very special indeed. When there was simcha, it was true and genuine, of a kind that I had never experienced before. When there was a need for serious conduct, it was most intense, inner, and sincere. I felt that all this was causing a unique reawakening within me. When Tishrei came to an end, I joined the many guests in making an appointment for yechidus with the Rebbe. I was requested to keep my questions to a minimum,

language barrier; I felt as if the Rebbe was somewhere else.

“I tried to listen carefully and understand if the Rebbe was speaking Yiddish, English, or some other language I knew, but I couldn’t understand a thing. I realized that the Rebbe was simply on some other spiritual plane. After a long interval, the Rebbe began to speak in plain English, and I understood every word. The Rebbe gave a clear response to all my questions. Before departing, he made a somewhat obscure statement: **‘May all your journeys during this year be successful.’** I had no idea what this meant.

“I left the Rebbe’s room,



**“Thank G-d, the terrorists’ plot failed, and the whole country was talking about the great miracle that saved the passengers.”**

in order not to take up the Rebbe’s time and create delays for others waiting in line.

“Around this time, I had a certain personal problem. I consulted with the shliach in London, Rabbi Nachman Sudak, and asked him if I should raise the issue before the Rebbe. He replied that in his opinion, the Rebbe doesn’t answer questions of this type. Nevertheless, I decided that I would ask the Rebbe about it. As the yechidus began, the Rebbe made reference to this personal problem.

“I remember something amazing when the yechidus started: The Rebbe received my kvittel, but he didn’t look at me. Instead, he looked down at the table and began to speak. The Rebbe spoke, but I didn’t understand a single thing he was saying. But it wasn’t just the

puzzled and confused. I didn’t ask for a bracha to make any trips, and I’m generally not a big traveler. What exactly did the Rebbe mean?

“At first, I thought that maybe the Rebbe was referring to journeys in connection with shidduchim. But the nature of the bracha was still quite mystifying, particularly since the Rebbe specified a time – ‘during this year.’

“A few days after that yechidus, I left 770 to fly to England and visit my parents, and from there I headed for Kfar Chabad to learn in Yeshivas Ohr T’mimim. Upon my arrival, I asked the rosh yeshiva, Rabbi Shneur Zalman Gafni, what the Rebbe meant. He inquired about what I had written in my kvittel and what the Rebbe’s exact words were, and he eventually said that

he too had no idea. 'Apparently, you'll have to understand this yourself during the year,' he told me."

## A FRIGHTENING EXPLOSION

"It was only that summer that I finally realized what the Rebbe had meant with his amazing foresight.

'It was a bright summer day when I traveled with a friend by train from Kfar Chabad to Yerushalayim. We got off at Ramleh, and then we waited for about an hour until the train to Yerushalayim arrived. We boarded the train and enjoyed the glorious view of the Jerusalem hills from our window. We passed the time by reviewing the Rebbe's sichos, and everything seemed quite calm and tranquil.

"But it all changed in an instant. When we were about to pull into the Yerushalayim railway station, near the Malcha neighborhood, there was suddenly a powerful explosion

that shook the railroad car. About a minute later, thick smoke began to billow from the car. The train came to a halt, and after a few minutes, we realized the extent of the miracle we had just experienced. Terrorists had placed an explosive charge on the railroad tracks, and it went off right under our car. Yet, incredible as it may seem, the only thing that exploded was the igniter, designed to set off the powerful charge that would have shattered our railroad car. Thank G-d, the terrorists' plot failed, and the whole country was talking about the great miracle that saved the passengers.

"As we disembarked the train without a scratch, I suddenly remembered what the Rebbe had said to me at the end of that yechidus: 'May all your journeys during this year be successful.' As I went through the yechidus in my mind, I recalled those moments when the Rebbe was immersed in his thoughts, speaking to himself as it were. I realized that the Rebbe was in

another world, and he did what he did in order to nullify the Heavenly decree that hung over me.

"The Rebbe said 'this year' – and that's exactly when the miracle took place – during that year of 5739."

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As mentioned above, Rabbi Shaya Aharon Lee is an integral part of the magnificent community in Beitar Ilit, headed by Rabbi Asher Lemil HaKohen. He makes his parnasa working for a hi-tech company that provides electronic services for missile systems.

However, he doesn't deal just with material matters. In his own home, he established and gives over a longstanding shiur on the Laws of Shabbos, according to the halachic rulings of the Alter Rebbe. Many people participate in this class each week. "I feel that the Rebbe saved my life," said Rabbi Lee, as he concluded his amazing story.

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# D.I.Y. (DO IT YOURSELF) CHASSID

By Rabbi Akiva Wagner

**T**he Alter Rebbe was once travelling with a group of his Chassidim. Along the way, they encountered a Chassid of Reb Chaim Chaikel of Amdur. Reb Chaim Chaikel was one of the foremost talmidim of the Mezritcher Maggid. He led a large group of Chassidim in Amdur (today called Indura, which is located in the north-western corner of present-day Belarus, close to the borders of Lithuania and Poland).

Like many of the talmidim of the Maggid, Reb Chaim Chaikel held the viewpoint “*V’Tzadik B’Emunoso Yichyeh – Al Tikri Yichyeh Ela Y’chayeh*,” in other words, that the Chassidim were not expected to learn and explore the concepts of chassidus and P’nimius HaTorah on their own; rather, they were dependent on the inspiration that was provided for them by the Tzaddik.

As the Chassidim passed this particular Amdurer Chassid, he was in the midst of davening. They observed how his davening was with extreme excitement and passion, to the extent that he was completely oblivious to the presence of the Alter Rebbe and his entourage. Being Chassidim and Chabad Chassidim at that, they were extremely honest with themselves, and they took note of the fact that this Chassid’s level of davening surpassed their own. Although they didn’t comment, this caused them some consternation; if that was the case, then perhaps in fact the approach of the other talmidim of

the Maggid was more effective? If it enabled this Chassid to daven in such a manner, then why were they working so hard on studying and understanding chassidus on their own, for seemingly the approach of the other Talmidei HaMaggid achieved better results!

The Alter Rebbe recognized their concern, and told them, “In this case, it is not that Chassid who is davening; it is, rather, Reb Chaim Chaikel who is davening. I want to achieve with my Chassidim (through Chabad chassidus) that the Chassid himself should daven (even though it won’t be (necessarily) on the same level).”

[Being Chassidim, and Chabad Chassidim at that, they understood and appreciated the response.]

A similar, rather famous story with the Rebbe that was oft repeated (although with a few variations) is told as follows:

The Rebbe once asked a Chassid to influence an acquaintance of his to begin letting his beard grow. The Rebbe, however, stipulated that under no circumstances should he disclose that the source of the request is the Rebbe.

This particular acquaintance enjoyed a very close relationship with the Rebbe, and was the recipient of many kiruvim. In his resistance to the suggestion that he grow a beard, his trump card was always that “It can’t possibly

be as crucial as you say. You know what a close relationship I have with the Lubavitcher Rebbe. If he thought that it was so important (as you suggest it is), surely *he* would have said something!” The Chassid was left biting his tongue, unable to provide the real answer to that question!

Finally, on one occasion, the Chassid complained to the Rebbe about how that condition makes his task almost impossible, and requested it be revoked. The Rebbe refused, and offered the following explanation: “If he knows that the request is coming from me, then it will be *my* beard, and I want it to be *his* beard!”

Chazal tell us that Talmud Bavli differs from Talmud Yerushalmi, for while the former is full of questions and answers and arguments, the latter, in comparison, is referred to as an “*ohr yashar*,” or a direct, unchallenged light. Thus, the Gemara (Sanhedrin 24a), after listing the various disadvantages of the learning of the talmidei chachomim in Bavel as opposed to their counterparts in Eretz Yisroel, equates Talmud Bavli to darkness in relation to the Yerushalmi. Yet the Midrash applies the following pasuk in describing the study of Gemara: “Those who wander in the darkness see (through that) a great light.”

Indeed, questions and confusion are a challenge and a hindrance to progress. Yet he



who perseveres, he who faces the challenges and struggles through all of the difficulties, emerges so much better as a result. It is easier, in some ways greater, to go straight to the conclusion, to never entertain any questions about the outcome. But only by working through the problems does one achieve a deeper, more thorough, more real understanding of the subject matter. Only then does the knowledge he acquires become truly his.

Just as it is with regards to intellectual pursuits, so too it is in life in general. The hardships that the Yidden endured in

Tzemach Tzedek and asked for a bracha for his son that he shouldn't forget anything that he learns or hears (in Lubavitch), and automatically he'll become a Chassid.

The Tzemach Tzedek retorted, "It's already three generations that my grandfather (the Alter Rebbe), my shver (the Mittler Rebbe) and I are working towards the end that Chassidim should be "Oisgehorvete Chassidim" – Chassidim that result from toil and effort, rather than 'b'derech memeila'diga Chassidim ["automatic Chassidim"]!"

All too often, we're looking

our part. We are all looking to hire the mashpia who will find us the easy path in life; let him do the work for us, and we should just enjoy the benefits.

But that is not the approach of chassidus – of Chabad chassidus. Chassidus expects us to strive for p'nimius, to struggle with our obstacles, to overcome them through our own efforts. Perhaps the results won't be as impressive as what we would have if we never experienced our galus in the first place, but what we end up with will reflect who **we** really are.

If you encounter a galus, a helem v'hester in your life ch"v, attack it head on. You were provided with all of the resources, and you possess all of the necessary kochos. It's not pleasant, and surely not welcome, but the way you deal with it will – possibly – shape and determine who **you** are and who **you** become.

• • •

It's currently ***hachana*** season, when all are preoccupied – each person at his level and to his degree – with the preparations for the upcoming day of Yud Shvat. Many are scrambling to find just the right hachana, the perfect hachlata.

So, we have to bear in mind that shopping for a hachlata is not like shopping the boxing day sales, looking for a good deal, a good value that shouldn't involve too harrowing of a shopping experience. Our personal hachana need not be something earth shattering or overwhelming. It doesn't have to be dazzling or unique.

But it can't, at any rate, be a discount. The one criterion is that it has to be something that costs. It has to be something that I'm willing, and that I do, pay for.

**“It is easier, in some ways greater, to go straight to the conclusion, to never entertain any questions about the outcome. But only by working through the problems, does one achieve a deeper, more thorough, more real understanding of the subject matter.”**

Mitzrayim, the terrible sufferings of Galus, are the equivalent – the Zohar tells us – of the struggles to understand Torah (“B'chomer Do Kal V'chomer...”).

Surely we would be much happier not to experience any “galus” in our avodas Hashem, not to face any challenges from our Yetzer Hara or from the external distractions and temptations that surround us (at any rate some of us ...). Not only would our lives be so much simpler, but the level and manner of our Yiddishkait would be on an incomparably higher level. Yet – *bediaved* – there is a definite benefit from struggling through our difficulties. For, only then is the Chassidishkait, the ensuing avoda, ours.

A Chassid once came to the

for shortcuts to G-dliness – an easy way to acquire knowledge (if I could just beam all the information on my I-pod into my brain ...), an easy way to daven (to become an oved without any work ...), a quick path to Chassidishkait etc. When we go on mivtzaim, we want an instant vort to give over, that we shouldn't have to learn for. We expect our shul-going experience to be with utmost comfort. We want to practice Ahavas Yisroel that should never be tried by circumstances.

Of course, the ultimate goal is to live a chassidishe life and set up a chassidishe family. But we come – sometimes – to expect that endeavor to come easily and are disappointed when there is any amount of work involved on



When considering the possible hachlatos, you need to find something that you need to work on. It may be that completing Shas won't involve any effort (it's already on the blackberry anyway). And it may be that learning Chitas or davening will be a difficult move for you right now.

Whatever the case is, you have to properly assess [through discussing with your mashpia, your asei lecha rav] YOUR

current stage in life, and what is something that YOU have to work on at this point. Whatever your issues may be, when you work them through as a preparation for Yud Shvat, then you connect with the Rebbe on a personal level. Then it will be correct to say that YOU are the one getting ready, not some mitvza or some project or some organization through you.

L'chaim! May we all take the opportunity to work on those

areas that we personally need to work on, to improve our Yiddishkait, our Chassidishkait, and our hiskashrus, and may the Eibeshter bring an immediate end to this long and bitter galus, and replace it with the **immediate** revelation of Moshiach Tzidkeinu Teikef U'miyad Mamash!!!

*From a written farbrengen directed towards Alumni of Yeshivas Lubavitch Toronto*

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



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יחי אדונו מורנו ורבינו מלך המשיח לעולם ועד

# THE EARLY SETTLERS OF KFAR CHABAD

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This is a transcript of a radio program that was broadcast on Kol Mevasser Radio in Kfar Chabad. Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Kaminetzky was the moderator. Historic recordings were played of leaders and elders of the Kfar, and of songs that were recorded in Kfar Chabad and sung by residents of the Kfar.

**I**n order to get back to the early days of the Kfar, we will hear some tapes of interviews with three of the first secretaries of the Kfar – Rabbi Yisroel Leibov, Rabbi Yitzchok Mendel Liss, and Rabbi Dovid Chein, who told about how the Kfar was founded, the difficult







Rabbi Yisroel Leibov



Rabbi Dovid Chein



Yitzchok Mendel Liss

### early days, and its subsequent development.

**Rabbi Leibov:** We were a few dozen Lubavitcher families that wanted to make aliya. On Motzaei Shabbos, 24 Shevat 5709, we boarded a ship that sailed to Eretz Yisroel. The sea voyage was very difficult. It took five days and on the fifth day we arrived. We were taken to the immigrant camp in Pardes Chana. The rav of the yishuv, Rabbi Diskin, was a very distinguished person and he welcomed us warmly. We had no individual homes. All the families lived in one building, in one large room. Each one was allotted a space. We felt very good to be in the Holy Land, Eretz Yisroel.

A telegram was sent from Aguch in Eretz Yisroel to the Rebbe Rayatz which said: The fifty families, 200 people, are mostly in immigrant camps and their situation isn't good. To buy shmura matza and other Pesach needs, at least 20 kilograms are needed per family. We are strongly requesting help and

assistance for them in the form of substantive monetary support via telegraph. Please send a response via telegram.

This was signed by Zislin, Gurary, Altheus, and Eliezer Karasik.

**Rabbi Chein:** We sat in the immigrant camp in Pardes Chana. There were some families in other immigrant camps, but most of us were in Pardes Chana. Two months later another ten families arrived. People began thinking about what to do, how to organize, how to provide for their families, where to live.

There were some suggestions, some locations. In the end, they recommended that we settle in Kfar Safraya near Tel Aviv and build an agriculturally based village. There were all sorts of people and mosdos that strongly opposed our accepting Kfar Safraya. It really was a good location, central, near Tel Aviv.

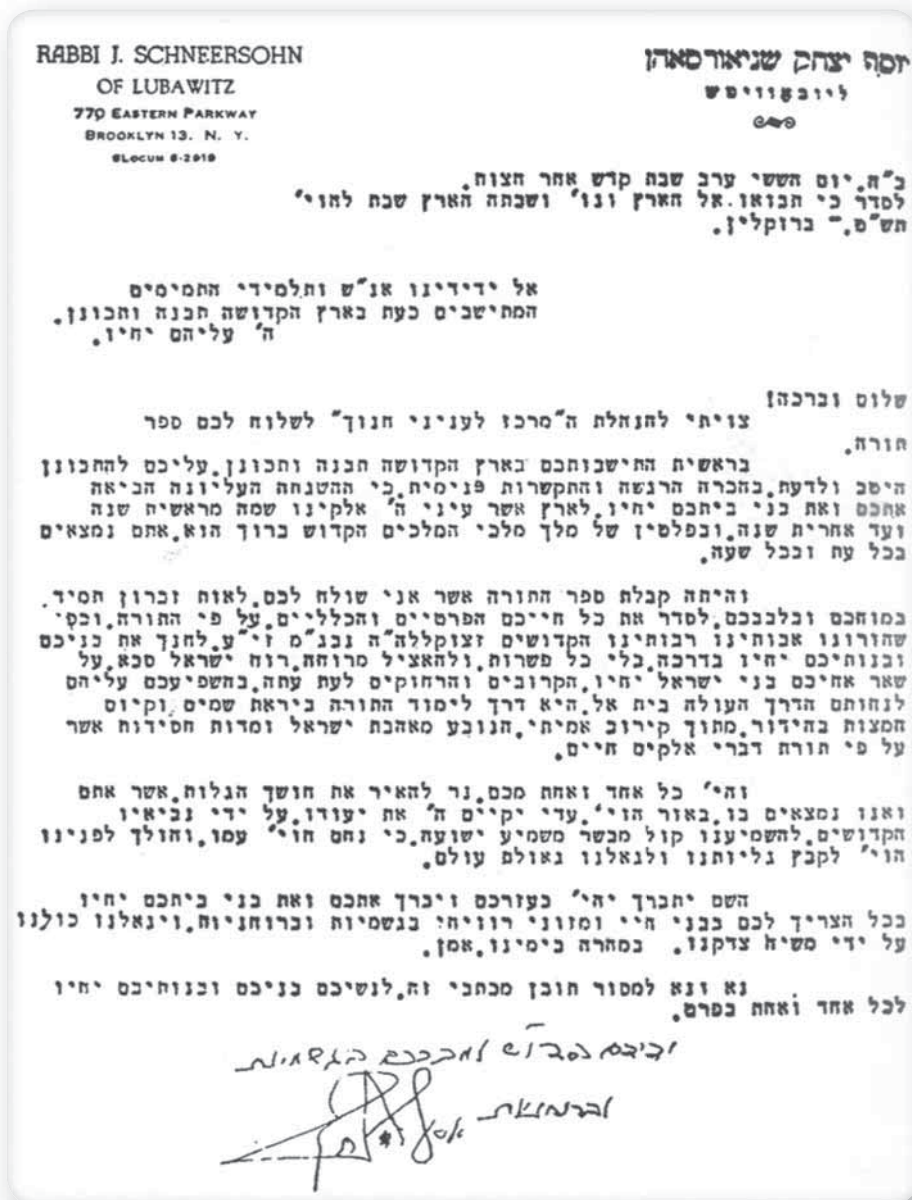
A committee formed in the immigrant camp. The members of the committee were Zalman Feldman, Zalman Sudakevitz,

Zalman Bronstein, Yitzchok Meir Greenberg, and others. The Jewish Agency gave them an idea – in order to get into this Kfar Safraya, create the facts on the ground. That will enable you to get the full backing of the Jewish Agency and the Agricultural Center. Choose from among your people, five or six young fellows, to go to this village and settle there. There is a building there which has a roof. It used to be a school. Settle there and establish the fact that you from Chabad live in Safraya.

A group of five people were picked: Avrohom Feldman, Zalman Rivkin, Shmaryahu Feldman, Yisroel Kook and I. We were young, healthy fellows and we took whatever we could with us. I remember that we took some pitas and left Pardes Chana for this Kfar Safraya.

As they told us, we found the school. Water? There wasn't any! Of course there was no electricity. We somehow found a well (located where Gittel Friedman's kiosk would be in





The first letter to residents of the Kfar

later years). We had to manually draw water with a pump and after twenty minutes you would get half a pail or three quarters of a pail of water. That was the only source of water for the Kfar.

I remember how we felt. We found a house with a floor and a roof and had no fear of the NKVD, no fear of informers, no fear of the authorities. We had no minyan in the morning, and I remember that we wrapped

ourselves in tallis and t'fillin and began davening out loud. We were so happy that we had come to a place where we could daven out loud without fear. Our hopes ran high.

We needed one of us to go to Tel Aviv. You had to walk on the road for two and a half kilometers among the thistles. For those who remember, it was a sort of broken down path that nobody had maintained. The cost

of getting to Tel Aviv was seven grush. I arrived at the Central Bus Station and bought bread. I was afraid to buy margarine because I thought it would melt. I think I also bought a kilo of sugar.

Regarding the aliya of the Chassidim to Eretz Yisroel, the Rebbe Rayatz wrote:

B"H

24 Kislev 5709

Brooklyn

To our friends Anash, may Hashem be with you, greetings,

In response to your general letter of the 12th of this month regarding the suggestion of traveling to the Holy Land to settle there on a settlement of your own, I responded to some of those who signed the letter or who asked their question in their personal letters to me; as for the others who signed, I give my consent to this suggestion. May Hashem help that the trip go well and you arrive successfully in the Holy Land. Try to settle in the small yishuvim, in the safer places. May Hashem give you ample parnasa and serenity with established times for Torah and conduct in the ways of Chassidus, and be successful materially and spiritually.

I bless you materially and spiritually.

**Rabbi Chein relates:**

Representatives of the Jewish Agency came and divided the Kfar. The half on the left was given to Poel HaMizrachi and the half on the right was given to Chabad. The Kfar was built of 1000 houses made of clay which is what the Arabs used for their houses. Among these hovels were about 100 homes built of cinder blocks with broken roofs, windows and doors. Many homes had their floors ripped out.

The Jewish Agency promised to bring us a contractor to seal the windows, build doors and make roofs out of tin where there were none, but at least there would be a roof and the house would be secure. We didn't believe them. It was hard to believe that they would come and make sure that every family would have a home and live in peace and quiet.

They also promised that since the contractor needed workers, each person would get at least three days of work a week. They paid a lira and forty grush a day. To earn five liras in one week was enough to buy bread, leben, margarine and perhaps even more. People felt hopeful.

The contractor came and whoever wanted to work was given the job of removing stones. They destroyed about 300 Arab homes and the cinder block houses remained. These were to be repaired and we hoped that we could settle in them.

The suggestion of turning the Kfar into an agricultural venture was accepted, since there was no choice. Although we weren't farmers, they explained that we could raise cows, chickens and in a year or two we'd be fine. There would be what to eat.

There were fields near the homes around the Kfar. They told us: You can grow vegetables. You'll have vegetables and milk.

The Jewish Agency will give 50 chickens to each person and you'll have eggs.

After Pesach, the Rebbe's shliach, the first one we saw here in Eretz Yisroel, his son-in-law, Rabbi Shmaryahu Gurary, came with the Rebbe's bracha and instructions for us to work in agriculture here in this Kfar.

This is what the Rebbe's letter said:



Rabbi Zushe Rivkin, a Chassidic farmer in Kfar Chabad

**“One day I went to Yerushalayim and nagged him as usual. He began shouting and said, “Even the wadi is called Wadi Shafrir and you want to change the name of the Kfar?”... It occurred to me to use this point to our advantage and I said: You say the name is historic. You have Wadi Shafrir, so you already have a historic name. Let us call the village “Kfar Chabad.”**

////////////////////////////////////



Aerial view of the new neighborhoods



*B"H*

28 Nissan 5709

Brooklyn

*To my friends Anash and the Talmidei HaT'mimim and all those with them, those who cherish Torah and mitzvos, may Hashem be upon them, yichyu,*

*Peace and blessing!*

*I hereby inform you that my son-in-law Rabbi Shmaryahu Gurary is leaving today, with Hashem's help, for Eretz Yisroel, in order to visit on my behalf and on behalf of Agudas Chabad, the refugees of Anash and the Talmidei HaT'mimim, and all those with them who made aliya to the Holy Land. To see, on location, their welfare and material and spiritual circumstances, and to develop a plan regarding their settling down with Hashem's help, materially and spiritually.*

*I asked my son-in-law to give regards to all our friends, my beloved ones who are bonded to my heart, and to give them my blessing from the depths of my heart, materially and spiritually. And I pray that Hashem will grant him success, and he will carry out his mission in the finest possible way.*

*Your friend who seeks your welfare and good, materially and spiritually.*

**Rabbi Chein:** We lived under the prevailing conditions. The lack of electricity wasn't felt much. Water wasn't lacking. We would light kerosene lamps at night and gather in the shul, and we lived with hope.

However, some of the material hopes dissipated somewhat, because Arabs began coming over the border and stealing. For example, say we received chickens from the Agency; they stole them. We each got a calf

and had to hope the calf would grow into a cow, and that this cow would give us another calf, so that over the years we would be wealthy farmers. But this dream was shattered, because the Arabs came nearly every night. As much as we tried to protect our belongings – two to three pairs would go from dark till dawn with guns – the thieves were much faster than us, and nearly every night they would take a calf.

There were many calves which the police with their detectives would find on the border, but many of them were taken away by the thieves. Almost nothing remained of the calves. For the maybe 10% that remained, they tried all kinds of things – tying them with big iron chains on their legs and head, but the Arabs overcame this. That is the story about our farming attempt that did not work out. There were families with children who, in order to earn money for their basic necessities, had to look for work outside the Kfar.

After a week or two, we received a Torah scroll. It was Erev Shabbos Parshas Behar. The Rebbe wrote, "and the land will rest a Shabbos for Hashem" and gave many brachos, expressing great hopes. The Rebbe sent us a Torah so that we should live with this Torah. It was very moving to receive a Torah from the Rebbe with these brachos. It touched every one of us deeply.

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The head of the Vaad, Rabbi Zalman Feldman, was an ardent Chassid with a brilliant mind, who wanted to do a lot. He got permits from the Agency to build a tile factory. This factory was capable of employing six families who worked in two shifts, seven hours and seven hours. He would

market the tiles, but still and all, it was only six families.

There was another fellow, Rabbi Zalman Bronstein, also of the Vaad, and he tried to arrange a weaving factory since some of the immigrants had worked in this field before the war, in Russia. They bought machines and began weaving. Once again, there were difficulties in obtaining wool and in marketing. All these attempts remained engraved in the hearts of those who were involved in it. I remember that Rabbi Zalman said to me in despair: We have sweaters but no way to sell them. Take some sweaters, go to Rishon L'Tziyon, Nes Tziyona, Yehudiya, and go around to the houses and sell them. You'll earn something and I'll earn something. And I did it; I went around door to door for a few days with a suitcase and sweaters. I managed to sell some but that wasn't the solution to the problem.

This is a letter from the Rebbe Rayatz regarding the financial plight of the residents of the Kfar:

*B"H*

12 Cheshvan 5710

Brooklyn

*To my friend and student, Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Hecht,*

*Peace and blessing!*

*My friend is aware that with Hashem's kindness I merited to found a Lubavitcher settlement by the name of Kfar Chabad. Many Lubavitcher refugee families who recently made aliya have already settled in Kfar Chabad. Yet, on the other hand, the financial hardship of our friends, Anash, in Eretz Yisroel is very great. Much money is needed for their settling down to a happy life, materially and spiritually. Therefore, I am asking you, my friend and talmid, to devote yourself in working on behalf of the refugees*





Rabbi Binyamin Cohen, in charge of Maintenance and Cultivation in the Kfar

*in general, and especially at this time when monetary aid is needed immediately for them. I fervently hope that Hashem's desire will meet success through his hand, and that my friend and talmid will carry out his shlichus in the best possible way.*

*From one who seeks his welfare and blesses him materially and spiritually.*

**Rabbi Chein:** There was tremendous pressure from the Agency that we continue farming. What is farming? Let's say an agricultural instructor came and said that in two days you will all be planting carrots. They give us land and we go out and plant carrots.

**In those days there were campaigns that are unfamiliar to us today. Rabbi Chein tells us about one such campaign:**

There was Mivtza Batzal (the Onion Campaign). I remember it very well when, after the onions grew, we all went back out to the field and packed them in boxes.

We had to send the onions to Chaifa because Tenuva Tel Aviv no longer accepted green onions, and they said our onions had to be sent to Chaifa.

Rabbi Yisroel Leibov tried to give me hours of work. He told me: I decided to help you – we need to transport the onions to Chaifa, so you go in the evening and I will write you down as having done a day's work.

I was happy to oblige and I went to Chaifa. The trip took about six hours. I arrived at 3:30 in the morning and the Tenuva warehouses were still closed. They told me to stand on line. They unloaded the onions at about six in the morning, and I was given a receipt that said they had received X number of boxes of onions. That was all. I went home and began waiting to be paid for the onions. It turned out that since there were a lot of onions and it was sold very cheaply, the commission that Tenuva charged ate up the entire

worth of the onions. That was the end of that.

As for the carrots, every person received sixty grush for supplying X number of boxes of carrots. It was a tough experience.

There were other experiments, such as watermelons and melons. We produced watermelons and melons, and bulldozers came and destroyed it all and that was the end of that.

Rabbi Liss tells us about the name "Kfar Chabad:"

I'll tell you how we got the name Kfar Chabad. As you know, the name of the Kfar changed several times. At first it was called Safraya Bet, then Shafrir, then Shafrir Chabad. It took a long time before it was named Kfar Chabad.

There was a government committee of names next to the prime minister's office and it was headed by Benzion Eshel. I would go nearly every week to nudge him to call it Kfar Chabad.

He refused. He said the name Shafrir was historic, because it was once called Shafrir and it is also mentioned in the Gemara. I could not convince him to change the name.

One fine day I went to Yerushalayim and nagged him as usual. He began shouting and said, "Even the wadi is called Wadi Shafrir and you want to change the name of the Kfar?"

It occurred to me to use this point to our advantage and I said: You say the name is historic. You have Wadi Shafrir so you already have a historic name. Give us this Kfar.

This made an impact. After some more meetings he agreed. I still have his letter in which he approves the name Kfar Chabad.

To conclude, here is a letter that shows how Kfar Chabad was run and how it developed:

*B"H*  
7 Kislev 5710  
Brooklyn

*Minutes of the instructions to R' Pinchas Altheus regarding Kfar Chabad in Eretz Yisroel:*

*The Rebbe shlita appoints a committee composed of Rabbi Karasik, Rabbi Moshe Gurary, and Rabbi Pinchas Altheus, to run the Kfar as the Rebbe's representatives. The head of the Vaad upon whom the Rebbe mainly relies for Vaad decisions is Rabbi Karasik. The menahel upon whom the Rebbe relies for carrying out resolutions, with Hashem's help, is Rabbi Pinchas Altheus. In a small book are written all resolutions and instructions of Rabbi Karasik with his signature and a copy is sent to the Rebbe. Regular reports, when dealing with matters of the Kfar are to be sent directly to the*

*Rebbe. The office needs to be in Kfar Chabad, a sum of money was designated to buy a typewriter and other vital expenses to set up an office, a desk, chair, etc. \$5,000 was allocated as a loan to start a Gemach. It should be arranged for the Gemach to be maintained by a bank... As for electricity, negotiate with the Electric Company, if they have to give them some amount (for installation fees), not a very large one, it should be based on the expectation that it will be returned through billing for electricity usage. The money that will come back will go into the Rebbe's fund. If they make other conditions, inform the Rebbe. Loans from the Gemach can be given to expand the tile business. If this requires enlarging the capital base of the Gemach, inform the Rebbe.*

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ב"ה

# A CALL FROM RABBONIM TO SAVE YESHIVAS TOMCHEI TMIMIM LUBAVITCH – HA'KRAYOT

Dear Anash שיחזי,

This is the 15<sup>th</sup> year that Yeshivas Tomchei Tmimim Lubavitch Ha'Krayot has been in existence. Today, it consists of a yeshiva ketana (high school) and a yeshiva gedola where it teaches the bachurim the way of pure faith in Hashem and His anointed one. It is a source of material and spiritual parnassa for dozens of families and through them, for the entire area.

Unfortunately, the yeshiva has fallen into dire financial straits. This not only makes the continued existence and expansion of the yeshiva difficult; it endangers the very existence of the yeshiva!

**Therefore, we turn to you with a heartfelt plea:**

**Please don't allow  
this holy mosad to collapse!**

Please donate generously and convince your friends to do likewise. Whether you give a lot or a little, every dollar adds up to a significant sum. With your help, we will be able to put the yeshiva back on its feet and provide tremendous nachas ruach to the Rebbe MH"M.

In the merit of your participation in saving the yeshiva through the mitzva of tzedaka, to support Torah and those who teach and learn it, Nigleh and Pnimityus Ha'Torah, may we all merit to be blessed from the Source of all blessings, with everything we need, with "children, life, and livelihood," in a generous way, and most importantly – the hisgalus of the Rebbe MH"M and the true and complete Geula, now!



Donations can be given to the Menahel of the yeshiva, Rabbi Eitan Pizem 050-464-6774 [chabadks@netvision.net.il](mailto:chabadks@netvision.net.il)  
Deposit: Discount Bank, Branch 138 Kiryat-Yam #711810 Yeshivas Chabad  
Mail: Yeshivas Tomchei Tmimim, POB 908 Kiryat Shmuel-Haifa 26109



# IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ELEVENTH HOUR

A compilation of stories relating to the histalkus of the Alter Rebbe on Motzaei Shabbos Parshas Shmos, chaf-daled Teives

## “IT WILL PROVE USEFUL”

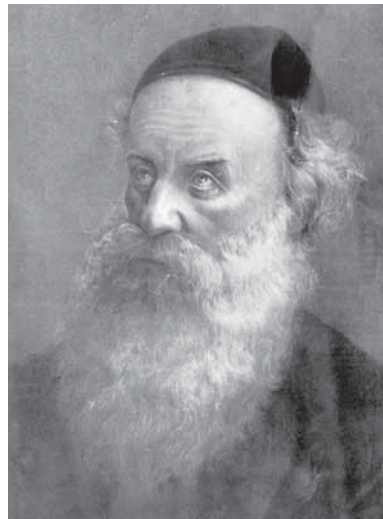
The Rebbe MH”M related the following story he heard from his father-in-law, the Rebbe Rayatz:

On the Erev Shabbos before his histalkus, the Alter Rebbe emptied his pockets (a requirement before Shabbos) of a few notes and gave them to his grandson, the Tzemach Tzedek. The Alter Rebbe told him, “These will be useful to you.” Some say that one was the well-known reshima beginning with the words “Nefesh HaSh’feila” (The Downtrodden Spirit).

The Rebbe asked his father-in-law what the point is of the reshima, because it didn’t have a beginning or an end. The Rebbe Rayatz laughed and didn’t answer.

Although the reshima was written before the Alter Rebbe’s histalkus, it obviously has a connection with it. It is one of the last writings of the Alter Rebbe, and may, in fact, be the last. (One of the Chabad Rebbeim, probably the Tzemach Tzedek, said that the Alter Rebbe wrote it a week before his histalkus, and the contents refer to himself since he wasn’t learning at the time and was involved with Anash in worldly matters, etc.).

At this time, the Alter Rebbe told the Tzemach Tzedek some



other points, which the Tzemach Tzedek mentions in his Chassidic discourses. He writes in one of the discourses, “I heard from the mouth of my holy grandfather, the Rebbe, if I recall, on the Erev Shabbos prior to his histalkus...”

## THE FINAL KIDDUSH

In 5691 (1931), the Rebbe Rayatz related:

The Tzemach Tzedek had a cup the Alter Rebbe had used for his final Kiddush in the village of Piena, which had leftover dried-up wine in it. The Tzemach Tzedek would place it on the table during the Pesach seider, as did his son, the Rebbe Maharash. After his passing, his wife, Rebbetzin Rivka, did so until the maid once mistakenly washed it,

and then the cup was lost.

## AROUND MIDWAY THROUGH THE 11<sup>TH</sup> HOUR

The Tzemach Tzedek described his grandfather’s histalkus:

“On Friday, Erev Rosh Chodesh Elul, [the Alter Rebbe] traveled with his household to Krasna, and on the following Friday they fled from the French and traveled until they arrived in Piena on Erev Shabbos VaYishlach 5573 (1813). On Motzaei Shabbos Shmos, 24 Teives, around the middle of the eleventh hour, [the soul of] the holy ark, light of Israel, anointed of G-d, was taken captive and required in the Heavenly Academy. Hashem should speed the coming of our redeemer, and ‘arise and sing those who dwell in the earth,’ and [the Alter Rebbe] among them. He will let us hear wonders of Hashem’s Torah, which revives the soul, soul in a body, for the dew of Torah resurrects. Amen, may it be soon.”

This note is the only source of the time of the histalkus, which was approximately 10:30 p.m.

150 years later in 5723 (1963), on this date, which came out on Motzaei Shabbos as it did back in 5573, there was a special farbrengen in 770 that began at that time. Among other things, the Rebbe mentioned this note of the Tzemach Tzedek and the time it specified.

## INYANEI RABBANUS AND WRITING OF SEGULOS

On the night of 20 Kislev 5693 (1933), the Rebbe Rayatz related the following to his son-in-law, the Rebbe MH”M:

“The night of the histalkus,

the Alter Rebbe gave his grandson, the Tzemach Tzedek, something he had written. This note was burned in 5617 (1857). It was not a maamer Chassidus."

The Rebbe asked, "Did it have something to do with pidyon nefesh, inyanei ha'nesius, or was it concerning the Rebbe's household? The Rebbe Rayatz answered, "More than that."

Another source relates that on that Erev Shabbos, the Alter Rebbe gave the Tzemach Tzedek a note about inyanei rabbanus.

In a letter he wrote in 5648 (1888), the Rebbe Rashab mentioned that there was a note suggesting segulos, among them a segula for a woman whose children died in childhood, and he advises in the name of his mother, Rebbetzin Rivka, the wife of the Rebbe Maharash, that one who suffers from this should do as is written. He indicated the source of the note, as well: "They say that the tzetel (note) was given by the Alter Rebbe to the Tzemach Tzedek in Piena, leil Motzaei Shabbos, before his histalkus, and that it is from the Maggid or the Baal Shem Tov."

### **"THEY WERE AMAZED BY THE SIGHT"**

The introduction to the Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch (signed by three rabbanim, sons of the gaon and author, z'l, the first one being the Mittler Rebbe), relates this about the Alter Rebbe's histalkus:

"...after many amazing wonders, we saw from him, z'l, in those days before his histalkus, his mouth did not cease reviewing [words of Torah] until the day of his passing. After he davened Maariv and said Havdala with a clear, settled mind and with extraordinary dveikus, on Motzaei Shabbos 24 Teives 5573,

in a singular bond he was bound up with the Holy One Blessed Be He... he elevated his soul to Him with joy and gladness of heart. Everyone standing there could clearly see the event as it transpired, and they were amazed and awestruck by the sight."

### **HAVDALA BEFORE DAVENING**

Rabbi Chaim Eliezer Bichovsky wrote in the name of Rabbi Yaakov Henkin, who heard this quote from the Chassid R' Yisroel Yitzchok of Rudnia, who served the Tzemach Tzedek for many years. The Tzemach Tzedek had told R' Yisroel: "Before his passing, the Alter Rebbe said: 'There's reason to say that Havdala is a Biblical mitzva and Maariv is merely reshut, and since time is short, Havdala should precede Maariv.'

diabetes, and they did not have the medications that we have today.

There is another story about Havdala over coffee: Rabbi Moshe Dov Ber Rivkin, a'h, wrote in 5713 that the Rebbe Rashab recited Havdala over coffee on the last Motzaei Shabbos of his life.

### **YOU ARE AFFECTED BY YOUR ACTIONS**

In a letter from the Tzemach Tzedek discussing fear, it says:

"A person should always display happiness in his body movements, because the heart is drawn according to one's actions...and then Hashem will draw down a spirit from Above of joy and gladness of heart.

"I heard from the Alter Rebbe in Piena that this is what the Maggid said on the verse, 'Like



**A person should always display happiness in his body movements, because the heart is drawn according to one's actions.**

This explains the introduction in the Shulchan Aruch that says that the histalkus was "after he davened Maariv with the Havdala in 'chonein ha'daas.'" Havdala with a cup of wine is not mentioned, since this had already taken place before the davening (which preceded the histalkus).

### **HAVDALA ON COFFEE**

On Chaf-Dalet Teives 5715 (1955), the Rebbe mentioned that he heard that on the night of the histalkus, the Alter Rebbe had said Havdala on a cup of coffee. He had not heard this from his father-in-law; but there was a basis for this assertion since the Alter Rebbe suffered from

the appearance of a sapphire, and on the image of the chair was the image of a person... – according to how a person acts down here is what he will be shown from Above. That is why [the Alter Rebbe] stopped me from singing a niggun that was mara sh'chora (gloomy). I davened Maariv before his death with a niggun of mara sh'chora, and he waited until I finished and told me this."

The Rebbe MH"m related this on Shabbos Parshas Shmos 5719, Chaf-Beis Shvat, and then said, "Zol men zein b'simcha, vet men milmaaleh oich vizen aza tenua" (Be happy, for then from Above there will be a similar response).

# BRINGING SPIRITUAL HEALING TO SUNY DOWNSTATE

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By Menachem Savyon

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**W**hen I told Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Holtzman that I wanted to hear stories about his shlichus for this column, he said, “I don’t have any special stories. It’s all routine here. I can tell you many stories along the lines of: I asked someone to come and complete a minyan and discovered he had never heard the word ‘siddur’ before in his life, and he ended up joining us for Mincha and put on t’fillin. I have many incidents like that, but otherwise, no special stories.”

We continued talking for a while longer. After you read this article, you can decide for yourself how many of R’ Holtzman’s stories are special.

## AS A RESULT OF FOOD DISTRIBUTION

Before getting to the stories, here’s some background about

the shlichus. It began with something else R’ Holtzman is involved in. At the beginning of the previous decade, he began a project to give out food to needy families in Crown Heights. In his position as director of the organization “Yad V’Ezer,” founded in 2003 in Crown Heights, he helps needy families or families that have a member hospitalized.

During that first year, he had to be at SUNY Downstate Medical Center in Brooklyn in order to supply food to a frum person who was hospitalized there. While he was there, he observed that there was a lot of opportunity for patient assistance and outreach, and he discussed this with the people in charge. They told him that patients hospitalized there are usually just passing through and those who are there for an operation etc. have people to take care of them.

“If you are still interested, try it for a month and I’m sure you’ll see for yourself that there isn’t much to do.”

He immediately got involved with the Jewish patients there. Employees took an interest and loved the Judaism he introduced to the place. When the administration saw that the pilot project was successful, they got involved and included it in their budget. They even designated a central place for an office, a room for a library, etc. Eventually, R’ Holtzman was appointed rabbi, or chaplain, of the medical center and the shliach of “Chabad of SUNY Downstate.”

SUNY is the only medical center in Brooklyn. It is enormous and includes a college of medicine, a college of nursing, physical therapy programs, etc. It is ranked seventh out of 112 medical universities in America.





R' Holtzman with SUNY Downstate medical center in the background



Doctors at SUNY are renowned for their expertise.

Their campus, located a mere fifteen minute walk from Crown Heights, has about 1500 Jews, many of them students. In one class, that started its four year program this year, there are nearly ten religious Jews and dozens who are not religious. R' Holtzman has a minyan every morning for students.

The cafeteria offers a kosher menu for those who are interested, which is a rarity in the US. R' Holtzman also supplies kosher food to Jewish patients. He does this along with his daily conversations with doctors and Jewish employees, putting up mezuzos and helping people put on t'fillin. There is holiday programming for every Yom Tov.

Now, back to the stories.

## JEWISH PRIDE

A Jew from Boro Park went to the office of a dermatologist at the medical center. This doctor is tops in his field and has appeared on the list of the fifty best doctors in America. The man knew that the doctor was associated with the medical center where R' Holtzman serves as shliach and rabbi. In his conversation with the doctor, he mentioned that he knows R' Holtzman.

The doctor opened a drawer and took out a picture of himself shaking the Dalet minim in the sukka with R' Holtzman. He showed the photograph to the patient and said, "Since he has become rabbi of our center, I am proud to be a Jew!"

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"What's the likelihood of a

Jew who knows nothing about Judaism saying the chapter of T'hilim that corresponds to his age?" asked R' Holtzman rhetorically. "It almost never happens but here on shlichus, it's possible!

"There is a neurologist at the medical center who is an expert on strokes. She's one of the best doctors in the field in the US. She knew nothing about Judaism.



A menorah in front of SUNY Downstate medical center



On the cherry picker at the menorah lighting with the president of SUNY Downstate, Dr. John LaRosa

One day, she called me and said she has a son who is studying medicine and she wanted a bracha for him. I suggested that she say a chapter of T'hillim. I asked her how old he is and when I gave her a T'hillim translated into English, I showed her the chapter that corresponds to his age. She gave him the T'hillim and the chapter number to say.

"After some time, she called again and asked me to bless him that he be successful in his studies. I used the same idea again and said he should say that same chapter I had shown her. She said, 'But rabbi, since you gave me that book of Psalms for him, he has been saying that

chapter every day!'

"She asked me to put up a mezuzah on the door of her house and at a later point, to put mezuzos on the other doorposts. One day she even came to shul and little by little she is getting more involved in Jewish observance."

## THE NUN WHO WENT CRAZY

I asked R' Holtzman whether he ever received any indication from the Rebbe about this shlichus. He said, "I'll tell you something that happened to me and you'll see how the Rebbe is with me all the time on shlichus at the medical center.

"I heard that a patient at the center had died and her body was in the morgue. I did not know her but I knew she was Jewish. I brought a group of bachurim to guard her body and recite T'hillim. I wanted to bring them inside, near where her body lay, but the morgue was locked and the people in charge said the bachurim could only stay in the

hall.

"Since I wanted them to be inside, I spoke to the security man who was Jewish, and told him to leave the place open. He didn't give it much thought and was sure I was speaking with the authority of the chaplain.

"The next day, I heard that the chief of security told a nun who was the chaplain for Catholics, 'The rabbi is lucky, because I would have arrested all the boys!' He said I had left the morgue open and people could have stolen bodies from there.

"Until I came along, the nun was in charge of religious matters. She saw this as an opportunity to get rid of me and began fighting me behind my back. I didn't know what to do. Then, for no apparent reason, the nun left the medical center. I found out that she was in an insane asylum. I saw how the Rebbe ensured that things would work out.

"As for the chief of security, he ended up becoming a friend of mine. When we had the public menorah lighting and I thanked the president of the medical center from on top of the cherry picker, I noticed him motioning to me not to forget to mention his name too."

## THE LITVISHE ALSO DO MIVTZAIM

"The medical center has thousands of employees, including religious Jews. There is a minyan of Litvishe Jews who weren't comfortable with Chabad at first, but now they come to me in order to sell their chametz before Pesach, etc. They have a pushka in the place where they daven and they once asked me, as the rabbi, to take the money and use it for tz'daka purposes. They



said they preferred that I use it to help one of the Jewish patients, but I said I would buy t'fillin with it, to keep in my office for Jewish employees. They weren't thrilled with the idea but went along with it.

"This past Tishrei I arranged for a Yizkor service for Jews who work on Yom Tov. When I gave out the page with the prayers that needed to be said, one of the people who read the Shma on the page said to me, 'That's what I say every day with the t'fillin in your office.' I was flabbergasted since I had suggested that he put on t'fillin a while ago and he did not know how to do it himself, so how was he putting them on every day?

"It turned out that a Litvishe fellow who works in one of the operating rooms, davens in the office every day and he was mekarev this fellow. He put t'fillin on with him several times and eventually taught him how to put them on himself. Before Pesach, this Litvishe fellow takes matzos from me for some of the not-yet religious employees.

"So we see that non-Chassidim are also joining in the Rebbe's mitzvaim!"

## THE FORECAST: HEAVY RAINS

"Every year, before Sukkos, we put up a sukka near the medical students' dormitory for those who want to eat in a sukka. One year, I decided to put up a big sukka in the central public area too, so that it would be accessible to all the employees of the medical center (the university campus is in an enclosed area). Of course, every little thing requires permits and involves complicated bureaucratic arrangements. Nevertheless, I



R' Holtzman (speaking) hosting a meeting of the Central Council of Rabbinical Chaplains of the USA and Canada (CRCC). On the left is Rabbi Gavriel Tzinner a well-known posek and author of Nitai Gavriel, who honored the meeting with his presence.

**“When I called a high ranking member of the board who was supposed to speak at the event, I left a message which said: Although the forecast says it will rain on that date, you know that it won't rain during the party.”**

hoped things would go smoothly.

"I approached the chief of security to ask for a permit and he came with me to see what location I had in mind. When we arrived at the spot where I wanted to put up a sukka, he asked me: Where does it say in the Torah that the sukka needs to be over here?

"I said: It doesn't say that anywhere; it's where I want it to be.

"The chief of police gave me the permit on the spot. The sukka made a big Kiddush Hashem and nearly 400 Jews entered the sukka over Yom Tov to shake the Dalet minim.

"In addition to the usual outreach activities done throughout Sukkos, we planned a sukka party for 150-200 Jews. We checked the dates and picked

a day that worked out well with the students' schedules. The program was planned and all the details were worked out.

"One day, I took a look at my email and saw one that came in from a religious professor from the medical center. She asked when the party would be taking place, if it would be taking place at all, since the forecast was for heavy rains for that day. Indeed, I hadn't checked the forecast when I made my plans. For reasons I can't explain, I replied that the party would take place as planned because it wouldn't rain.

"When I called a high ranking member of the board who was supposed to speak at the event, I left a message which said: Although the forecast says it will rain on that date, you know that it won't rain during the party.



"It was the date of the party and at nine in the morning it was pouring. The party was planned for twelve and in my heart of hearts I was beginning to get nervous. What would I do if it didn't stop raining? In the meantime, I got a phone call from the security personnel at the medical center who informed me that the sukka was about to collapse due to the strong winds and it was a danger to the public. I told them not to worry, that I would show up immediately to take care of it.

"I went to Crown Heights to get more s'chach and asked someone who works in this line to come and help me. When I arrived, whom did I see, but the chief of security himself! When the other officers saw him outside, they left their positions and came over to say the sukka would fall momentarily. They were sure I was planning on taking it down and the chief was offering to bring more people to help me dismantle it.

"It was really a 'mabul' but there was no way we would take the sukka down. The Lubavitcher along with me went to a hardware store to get metal

cable and some other items. As it poured, we worked on fixing and strengthening the sukka.

"It was almost time for the party. In the meantime, I got a phone call from the woman in charge of bringing the food from a restaurant. She asked me whether to cancel the order and if not, where to bring the food. The pouring rain interfered with our phone conversation and I had to tell her loudly, 'What do you mean – "where to bring the food?"' To the sukka, of course!'

"She asked: But it's pouring!

"I answered her confidently: Yes, but the party is at twelve as planned.

"The rain stopped ten minutes before twelve and all the students came on time. They had been in class until then and were unaware of the drama taking place at the sukka. When everything had worked out well, the Lubavitcher with me said, 'When you loudly spoke to that woman who asked where to bring the food, you answered her so confidently as though you knew ahead of time that it would stop raining.'

"You know what? I

answered him. 'I really didn't know what would be. I wrote the professor in an email that it wouldn't rain during the party and I don't know where I got the confidence to write that. I suppose that you have siyata d'Shmaya when you work on the Rebbe's inyanim. I wrote to the Rebbe that the party would be a very important event for being mekarev the students to Judaism and belief in Moshiach and I was sure the Rebbe wouldn't allow anything to go wrong.'"

## FULFILLMENT OF A PRAYER

A Jewish nurse who works at the medical center told me:

In 5754 a certain doctor, Dr. Friedman from the medical center, called her. He considers himself an atheist and he told her that he was consulted regarding the medical care of the Lubavitcher Rebbe at Beth Israel hospital. "If you are interested, I'll let you join me in the Rebbe's room," he said.

A car was sent to bring them to the hospital and when they arrived there, they had to pass several checkpoints before they could enter the Rebbe's room.

"We entered the Rebbe's room and when I was there, I felt it was a holy place. Since I did not have children, I prayed there and asked the Rebbe, after years of searching, that a suitable offer should come our way so I could adopt a child."

Not long afterward, she adopted a boy.

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R' Holtzman concluded by saying, "Every action on shlichus hastens the hisgalus of the Rebbe MH" M at which time, the hospital will turn into a museum."



# THE BUCK STOPS HERE!

## PART V

By Rabbi Gershon Avtzon

Dear Reader sh'yichyeh,

In our previous article, we told over some miracle stories that have occurred to the Rebbe's shluchim after Gimmel Tammuz. At the end of that article, I promised to share some fascinating stories that occurred with Chassidim connecting to the Rebbe through the Igros Kodesh.

As I was considering which stories to include, an interesting episode happened. I was in Crown Heights for Chanukah this year. One night, after a farbrengen, I came to 770 to Daven Maariv. It was late and most of the lights were closed. I went upstairs to the small Beis Midrash and noticed two Bachurim learning. I knew who they were and went over to say hello. We started talking, and the conversation turned to the topic of Igros Kodesh. They said that they do not write to the Rebbe through the Igros. In addition, they mentioned, there is no source for such behavior by Chassidim.

I told them my classic story that I heard from Rabbi Akiva Wagner, Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivas Lubavitch Toronto: "A young boy got a new cell phone from his parents for a present. The next day, he went to visit his grandfather and showed him the new phone. The elder gentleman was used to having a phone with wires that is connected to the wall, where the connection is visible. He laughed at his grandson and told him that it is

impossible that the little gadget could be a phone. They got into an argument that seemed to be going nowhere, as each person was speaking from a very different perspective.

"In the middle of the discussion, the father walks in and observes the scene. He asks them both to calm down and to be quiet for a moment. He takes the small cell phone and dials a number. He puts the phone to his father's ear and tells him to listen for a moment. When he hears a live voice on the other line he exclaims, 'I don't know how it works, but it is definitely a phone!'"

### A WIRELESS ERA

Before Gimmel Tammuz, our connection to the Rebbe was through visible and tangible "wires" such as dollars, t'fillos, farbrengens, lekach and more. Today, the connection is not visible. Our children wonder if there is still a way to connect to the Rebbe.

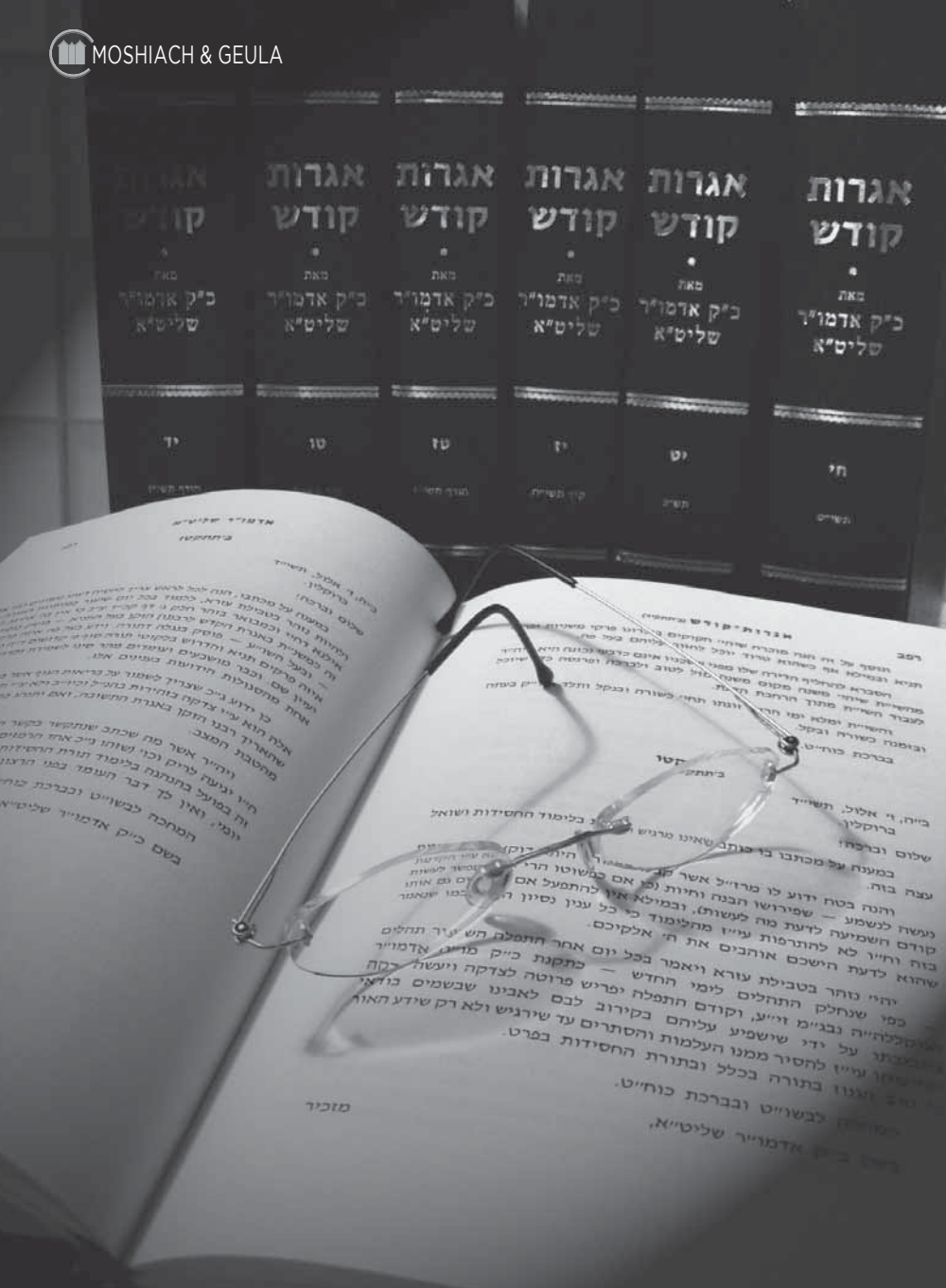
It is our job to tell our children that we live in a wireless era. The cell phone is the biggest proof. All we need to do is dial the Rebbe's number – encourage them to write to the Rebbe through the Igros Kodesh – and you will hear them exclaim, "I don't know exactly how it works, but I know that the Rebbe lives!"

I told them what Rabbi Mendel Glukowsky (Shliach in Rechovos, Israel) said: "I had

the z'chus to be the first person to come up with the idea of getting answers from the Rebbe through the Igros. It was right after Chaf-Zayin Adar, and people were very confused. I had just made a hachlata to study five Igros of the Rebbe every day, and discovered that I was finding answers to questions that were then very pertinent to my life. It often happened that someone would ask me a question, and that same day I would see the answer, or realize that I had come across it the day before.

"The first few times I thought it was merely a coincidence. But when it started happening more frequently, I realized that there was something unusual going on. I remember that at the time, one of my family members had to be hospitalized. I opened the Igros to a letter the Rebbe had written to someone who was going into the hospital, where he explained that the reason he had to be hospitalized was to have the opportunity to be mekarev Jews there, and that everything would be fine.





for compiling most of the sources in Hebrew and making it available to the public.

We will develop and explain the concept based on sources in Tanach, Gemara, Halacha, and Maaseh Rav:

## WHERE DO WE FIND IN TORAH THAT PEOPLE/ TZADDIKIM USED SIGNS TO DIRECT THEM?

1) When Avraham Avinu sent Eliezer to find a wife for Yitzchak Avinu, the Torah tells us (B'Reishis 24:14) that he asked Hashem for a sign: "And it will be, [that] the maiden to whom I will say, 'Lower your pitcher and I will drink,' and she will say, 'Drink, and I will also water your camels,' her You have designated for Your servant, for Yitzchak, and through her may I know that You have performed loving kindness with my master."

2) In Navi (Shmuel I – 14:8): And Yonasan said to the youth who bore his weapons, "Come, and let us go to the garrison of these uncircumcised; perhaps the L-rd will act on our behalf, for with the L-rd there is no limitation to save with many or with few"... And Yonasan said, "Behold, we are crossing to the men, and we shall reveal ourselves to them. If they say thus to us, 'Wait until we reach you,' then we shall stand in our place, and we shall not go up to them. And if they say thus, 'Come up to us,' then we shall go up, for the L-rd has given them into our hand, and this will be the sign for us."

## WHERE DO WE FIND SUCH BEHAVIOR IN THE GEMARA?

1) The Gemara (Gittin

"People were so dejected after Chaf-Zayin Adar. They didn't know what to do without detailed instructions from the Rebbe. The Rebbe was only answering yes or no to questions posed by the mazkirim. It was then that I started to remind people that the Rebbe had already said that 'the Rebbe will find ways to answer,' and I began to share many of my personal experiences with the Igros.

"Word spread, and the idea caught on among Anash.

And that is how it came to be a widespread practice."

They heard what I said, but they had one demand: "Show us sources!" It was then that I realized that there may be others who have the same question, so before I tell over some miraculous stories that I have heard first-hand or witnessed personally, I will write some of the Torah sources, especially those from our Rebbeim, regarding such a practice. I would like to thank Rabbi Gershovitz (Tzfas, Israel)



67b) relates (after retelling a fascinating story that happened with Rav Sheshes and the Reish Galusa): “When he was about to depart they dug a pit and threw a mat over it, and said to him, ‘Come, sir, and recline.’

“Rav Chisda snorted behind him, and he said to a boy. ‘Tell me the last verse you have learnt.’ The boy said, ‘Turn yourself aside to your right hand or to your left.’

“He said to his attendant, ‘What can you see?’

“He replied, ‘A mat thrown across [the path].’

“He said, ‘Turn aside from it.’

“When he got out, Rabi Chisda said to him, ‘How did you know, sir?’

“He replied, ‘For one thing because you, sir, snorted [behind me], and again from the verse which the boy quoted, and also because the servants are suspect of playing tricks.’”

2) The Gemara (Chulin 95b) relates: “Rav used to regard a ferry-boat as a sign; Shmuel a [passage in a] book; and Rabi Yochanan [a verse quoted] by a child.

“During the lifetime of Rav, Rabi Yochanan used to address him thus in his letters: Greetings to our Master in Babylon! After Rav’s death, Rabi Yochanan used to address Shmuel thus: Greetings to our colleague in Babylon! Shmuel said to himself, ‘Is there nothing in which I am his master?’

“He thereupon sent [to Rabi Yochanan] the calculations for the intercalation of months for sixty years. Said [Rabi Yochanan], ‘He only knows mere calculations.’ So he [Shmuel] wrote out and sent [Rabi Yochanan] thirteen camel loads of questions concerning doubtful



cases of treifa. Said [Rabi Yochanan], ‘It is clear that I have a Master in Babylon; I must go and see him.’ So he said to a child, ‘Tell me the [last] verse you have learnt.’

“He answered, ‘Now Shmuel died.’

“Said [Rabi Yochanan], ‘This means that Shmuel has died.’ But it was not the case; Shmuel was not dead then, and [this happened] only that Rabi Yochanan should not trouble himself.”

## DID SUCH STORIES HAPPEN IN REGARD TO THE REBBEIM OF CHABAD?

1) Just before the Alter Rebbe was taken away on trumped-up charges of subversive activities against the government, his brother-in-law, Rav Yisroel Kosik, came to him and asked for instructions.

“Go immediately,” said the Rebbe, “and I mean *immediately*, to Petersburg. Go just as you are now, without delay. Someone else should also go to Berditchev to inform Rav Levi Yitzchak so that he may pray for me.”

Losing no time, Rav Yisroel left for Petersburg without even changing his clothes. Nor did he return to his hometown in Babinovitch to obtain a passport, but instead borrowed one belonging to a friend. Meanwhile, someone else left for Berditchev, as the Rebbe had ordered, but in all the excitement and haste, the man forgot to note the name of the Alter Rebbe’s mother, which is needed for the kvittel, the petition, which is called a pidyon nefesh.

In Berditchev the emissary informed Rav Levi Yitzchak of what had happened. The Berditchever fell to the floor in agony and cried bitterly over his mechutan’s terrible predicament. Finally he composed himself enough to interrogate the emissary on the Alter Rebbe’s state of mind when he was taken.

“Was he upset?”

Receiving an affirmative answer, Rav Levi Yitzchak inquired further.

“Was he deeply upset or just a little upset?”

“It appeared that he was only a little upset,” replied the emissary. “I noticed that he

forgot to take along his house slippers, but he did not forget to take his tallis and t'fillin."

Rav Levi Yitzchak was very impressed by this reply and commended the man's power of observation.

"Now tell me, what is the name of the Alter Rebbe's mother?"

The emissary, of course, did not know what to answer since in his haste to arrive in Berditchev he had forgotten to ask for the name. By the time he remembered to ask, he was already far along his way and was afraid to return because the Alter Rebbe had emphasized the importance of speed.

There was a Chumash on the table. The Berditchever opened it, and the first verse he saw was in Parshas Mikeitz: "Yaakov saw that there were provisions [shever] in Egypt." (B'Reishis 42:1). "The word shever," said the Berditchever "is an acrostic for Shneur ben Rivka."

Someone asked the Berditchever why it couldn't be Rachel, which also begins with a Reish. He answered that the word shever contains two letters from the name Rivka, a Reish and a Beis. And so it was. Rav Shneur Zalman himself sometimes signed his name "Shneur ben Rivka."

2) The Frierdike Rebbe describes a story that happened to him when he was in jail (Seifer HaSichos 5687, pg. 174): "When I was in jail, the first seifer I saw was a Navi Shmuel. When I opened it, I saw the verse (Shmuel 2 – 21:17) that says 'But Avishai the son of Zeruya aided him, and he struck the Plishti, and killed him. Then the men of David swore to him saying, you shall no longer go out with us to battle, so that you extinguish not

the lamp of Yisroel.' When I saw this verse, I was very happy and I made a mental-note of it."

## WHERE ARE THERE SOURCES IN HALACHA FOR SUCH BEHAVIOR?

1) The Rama rules (Yore Dei'a 179:4): One is permitted to ask a child "Tell me the latest verse that you learned" and act accordingly. The Shach (Sifsei Cohen) adds to that: You may even do an action, such as opening a seifer, and act accordingly.

2) The Posek Erech Lechem (179) rules: It seems to me that one is permitted to open a Seifer Torah and see a Pasuk and act accordingly, for Torah is our life.

3) The Seifer Ta'amei Minhagim (pg. 509) states: The reason you find in Gemara that the Sages asked children to quote verses – rather than open s'farim – is because there were no printed s'farim and hand written s'farim were not always readily available.

## DOES THE RAMBAM NOT RULE THAT SUCH BEHAVIOR IS FORBIDDEN?

1) The Rambam rules (Hilchos Avodas Kochavim 11:4): It is forbidden to practice soothsaying as idolaters do, as [Leviticus 19:26] states: 'Do not act as a soothsayer.'

...Similarly, a person who sets up omens for himself, e.g., if this and this happens, I will do this. If it will not happen, I will not do it, as Eliezer, the servant of Abraham did, and the things of the like – all this is forbidden. Anyone who does one of these things because of such omens is [liable for] lashes.

2) Yet, Raavad argues and says that what the Rambam is

saying is a great mistake! How can he say that Tzaddikim like Eliezer – and like the Sages in the stories brought in the Gemara – transgressed the Torah!

3) The Kesef Mishna also argues with the Rambam. He explains that if the sign that one is following connects to what he is doing – i.e. a sign for Rivka's worthiness is if she gives water to the camels – than it is certainly permitted. As the SMaG rules that we see many Sages acted on the verses quoted to them by children.

4) See the Ran in his commentary to Chullin (95b) who also argues with Rambam in this regard.

**In short: From all the above we see that in this instance, we do not rule like the Rambam.**

## WHAT DOES THE REBBE MH"Y HAVE TO SAY ABOUT THE ABOVE?

1) Someone once wrote to the Rebbe that he has many options, and he is not sure which one to follow.

The Rebbe wrote him back (Heichal Menachem Vol. 2 pg. 217): "There are those who open a Chumash or a T'hilim; based on the Pasuk that they see, that is what they follow."

2) In a Sicha of Parshas Noach (Seifer HaSichos 5749 pg. 309), the Rebbe said:

"We can add that we find sources for this custom – to look into Torah for signs of how to act – in stories of Chazal regarding the Tanaim and Amoraim; they asked children the pasuk they learned and acted accordingly.... This has been the custom of G'dolei Yisroel and even simple men and woman, that they would open S'farim and act accordingly...."

From the above is clear that it is permitted and encouraged to connect through Sifrei K'dusha.

## THE REBBE ON IGROS

Another thing I told those two bachurim was a simple observation: Anyone that knows the history of the printing of the Igros appreciates what a gift we received from the Rebbe. For years the Rebbe's dedicated secretary Rabbi Shalom M. Simpson kept copies of all the Rebbe's letters without considering printing them. Only in the later years did the Rebbe permit – at the special request of Chassidim – to let his letters be printed.

The Rebbe encouraged Chassidim to learn these letters, as is evident from the following story that Rabbi Simpson related: "One day while I was talking to the Rebbe about the Igros, the Rebbe asked me if Chassidim are learning the letters. I told him that I heard from my son who was learning in Morristown that the Bachurim have a daily shiur in Igros. The Rebbe responded, 'About the Bachurim it is a given, I am asking about the Balabatim!'"

It is clear to me that the Rebbe was preparing us for this time of concealment by giving us another tool with which to communicate with him.



“One day while I was talking to the Rebbe about the Igros, the Rebbe asked me if Chassidim are learning the letters. I told him that I heard from my son who was learning in Morristown that the Bachurim have a daily shiur in Igros. The Rebbe responded, ‘About the Bachurim it is a given, I am asking about the Balabatim!’”

In the next article, I will BE”H relate a few fascinating stories which I witnessed or heard first-hand that occurred through the Igros Kodesh.

Hatzlacha Rabba! Moshiach Now!

*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>.*

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# THE TOMORROW SYNDROME

By Rabbi Heschel Greenberg

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



## PHARAOH PHD

This week's parsha features seven of the Ten Plagues that were designed by G-d not just to punish the Egyptians but to educate them as well. Each plague would introduce Pharaoh and the Egyptian people to the existence of one omnipotent G-d and to an appreciation for the special relationship He has with the Jewish people. The ultimate goal, of course, was to translate their education into practice by allowing the Jewish people go so that they would be free to serve their G-d. But if that was the only goal, G-d could have accomplished it with but one massive plague. The fact that it took ten plagues to achieve His objective, added to the fact that it was G-d Himself Who hardened Pharaoh's heart, proves that the plagues were also, if not primarily, an educational program.

The Ten Plagues were thus a ten Semester course that would, in the end, grant the Egyptians a degree in theology, specializing in the subject of G-d's ability to change nature.

The very first plague of blood which affected the Nile River, Rashi says, was intended to strike at the river which was their god. What then was the purpose of the second plague, that of frogs, which also was related to the Nile from which the frogs emerged? Indeed, this plague was initiated by G-d who tells Moses to

instruct Aaron to strike the Nile just as he had done for the plague of blood. What theological lesson did the Egyptian ruler learn from this plague? If it discredited the Nile what did it add on to the first plague of blood which already accomplished that goal?

## THE PLAGUE'S ENDING

The answer might lie in the way the plague ended. Pharaoh begs Moses to plead with G-d to remove this nuisance. Moses then asks him when he should pray that the frogs disappear. Pharaoh's response is "tomorrow."

Rashi explains: "Pray today that they should cease tomorrow."

Now the reason Pharaoh did not want to see the plague stop immediately, commentators explain, was intended to test Moses to see if indeed his power was from G-d or perhaps, instead, Moses was some sort of magician. Pharaoh therefore told Moses an unexpected time for the plague to cease. If Moses could still stop the plague at his appointed time this would indeed verify Moses' claim that it was a punishment from G-d and not a product of magic or some special knowledge of natural phenomena.

When it ceased precisely as Pharaoh was foretold it would—tomorrow—he was introduced to the knowledge that not only was it G-d Who was in command of

starting a plague when He chose, but that He could also stop it at whichever time He wanted.

The theological lesson was that G-d's control over all of nature, including their vaunted idol, the Nile River, was subordinate to G-d's will, and that this subordination was absolute. G-d could start the process, and He could end it.

## JEWISH EDUCATION

The Ten Plagues were not just theological lessons for Pharaoh and the Egyptians; they were also intended to educate the Jewish people as to G-d's greatness, His love for them, and the way they had to prepare themselves to be freed from exile.

What lesson can we learn from the way this plague of frogs ended?

We can glean one lesson by first answering another question concerning the way Pharaoh asked for the plague to cease. As was mentioned above, Rashi states that Pharaoh asked Moses to pray today that it cease tomorrow. What difference would it make to Pharaoh when Moses prayed? He could just as well have prayed the next day that it cease then?

## WATERING DOWN THE EFFECTS OF THE PLAGUE

One way of answering this question is to read Pharaoh's

mind. Pharaoh wanted to diminish the effect this plague would have on the Egyptian people. If they would see how the plague would cease the very moment Moses finished praying that would prove to them that Moses was a G-dly man and that the plague was G-d's doing.

If, on the other hand, Moses would pray today, but the plague would not cease until tomorrow, the people would still remain skeptical as to the source of the plague. If G-d was so powerful, they would ask, why did it take a full day for the plague to end?


### PHARAOH MENTALITY

There is an important lesson we can learn from this that can apply to our own unique situation as we are poised to leave the current exile and to enter the age of Redemption.

Pharaoh is the force that tries to keep us enslaved and ensconced in exile. Even when he sees the miracles that G-d has performed he tries as hard as he can to inject doubts as to the true nature and origin of these miracles. One way Pharaoh accomplishes this feat is if the Jewish people grow skeptical when we do not see the immediate effects of all the signs that point to the fact that we are in the last moments of exile. If our prayers for the Redemption have the power to bring Moshiach, why hasn't it happened already? If the Rebbe told us unequivocally that "the time of your Redemption has arrived," why is the time of Redemption still not yielding the actual Redemption?

### A TALE OF TWO QUESTIONS

And while we cannot give any rational answers to this question, we ought to know that

 **The Ten Plagues were thus a ten Semester course that would, in the end, grant the Egyptians a degree in theology, specializing in the subject of G-d's ability to change nature.**

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this question can be phrased in two opposite ways. One way is desirable and constitutes the approach of Moses while the other plays into the hands of Pharaoh.

The first "kosher" form of the question must be directed to G-d. This is, in fact, what Moses did when things got worse after he spoke to Pharaoh as he was commanded to do, as recounted in the end of last week's parsha. Instead of things getting better for the Jews, they got worse. G-d's promise, it seemed, did not materialize. Moses then complained to G-d as to why the Jews were not liberated immediately? Why did they suffer more as a result of his going to Pharaoh? Why, now, is the Redemption not happening today? Why the "tomorrow?"

This is a legitimate way of raising the question. We have a right and indeed an obligation to say to G-d "*ad masai*-how much longer?!" How much longer do we have to wait for the promises we were given for the coming of Moshiach to take us out of exile? This demand is not a denial of G-d or of the message of Moses, and of the Moses of our generation to us; it is, rather, an affirmation of it. Our belief in the fulfillment of G-d's promise is so strong that we cannot possibly find any logical explanation for it not happening, and not happening today.

When Pharaoh and his ilk, however, raise the question, their version of it is intended to dampen our spirits and sows

doubts into the very efficacy of our prayers and of the very fact that we will leave this exile imminently. Pharaoh wants to demoralize us with his questions so that instead we will prefer to remain in exile.

### TODAY, NOT TOMORROW!

There is another way we can explain Pharaoh telling Moses "tomorrow." This is the lexicon of exile. A Moshiach oriented person says, "Today." I want Moshiach today! And I expect Moshiach today! As we say thrice daily in our most important prayer, "And for Your salvation I hope for every day," which is understood to mean that I hope and anticipate that he will come today. When we hear someone saying "things will get better, but I don't want, care, or expect it to happen today" they've been infected with Pharaoh's "tomorrow" syndrome.

This explains why the Torah doesn't say when the plague actually ended. While we assume that it ended precisely as Moses told Pharaoh it would, and in fact Rashi says that he did actually pray that day that it would cease tomorrow, the Torah does not mention this explicitly. Perhaps it is the Torah's way of saying that the word "tomorrow" should not appear in our vocabulary when it comes to the end of pain and suffering or the end of exile. Our motto is "today," or as the children (and the innocent child within us) sing "We want Moshiach Now!"

# FEAR-FILLED NIGHTS

Oy, those fearful nights when the heart fluttered! The deep silence of the night was broken by a frightening knock at the door. We were well aware that “they” took people away in the middle of the night.

By Rabbi Yehoshua Dubrawski a”h

## HEAVENLY PROTECTION

My hometown of Krolevets in the Ukraine, during the worst of the Stalin years, had some sort of special luck or heavenly protection. The rav of the town was my grandfather, Rabbi Mendel Dubrawski. Officially, he managed somehow to be an official member of the proletariat (i.e. a worker), but the whole town knew that he was the rav.

My father Lipa, who had a long, Chassidic beard, could have easily been imprisoned for his manifold “counter-revolutionary crimes.” As chief bookkeeper at the government shoe factory, he kept Shabbos and Yom Tov and he did not allow his children to attend public school, even for a day. There were other similar “crimes” for which he was frequently called down by the NKVD and threatened with all sorts of terrible things.

There were a few other Chassidishe, shomer Shabbos families and in addition to all this, our town hosted some bachurim from the secret Tomchei T’mimim yeshiva.

The mazal was that despite all this, the purges of the 1930’s skipped the handful of frum Jews in our town!

## WAVE OF PURGES

This unusual situation is even more outstanding in light of the following fact:

The wave of arrests and exiles did **not** skip our town. At that time, when the *Yezovniks* went wild (Yezov was the head of the NKVD after Stalin liquidated the previous head, Yagoda), the residents of the two nicest houses in town disappeared one night.

In those twin houses, built of red brick, lived the people holding the highest positions on the Soviet city council: the director of the borough council and the chairman of the city council. From early in the morning, word spread about the two big *knackers* (big shots) disappearing as though the earth had opened and swallowed them up.

When the Jews of the town passed by those red houses, it was always while casting them a hasty sideways glance and quietly wishing for them to sink into the ground. Even we young ones reined in our curiosity from looking at the decorated windows. But when these two houses were suddenly without signs of life, the Jews looked at them sadly, with natural Jewish

compassion. After all, the two former *shishkes* (Yid. lit. cones, i.e. holders of high position), Heydak and Shiroka, were not the worst people around.

Nobody knew where Shiroka had disappeared to with his entire family. Heydak’s wife and their son the sheigitz’l were cast off on some small street on the edge of town. She eventually sold newspapers and suffered literal starvation together with her mentally disturbed son.

Later, additional senior people from the local NKVD and police offices were exiled. Jews were fearful again, especially, of course, the religious-Chassidishe families. When they met, they barely spoke. With half-uttered words and mute looks they asked one another, “Where to?” In correspondence, they used code words and various hints.

We heard frightening news about the arrests of rabbanim, shoachim, and askanim (who spread Judaism and Chassidus in towns and cities), fresh victims of the Stalinist murder machine, and of the hangman Yesod and his officers in the NKVD. Even we children were terrified by the persecution, all the more so when we saw a red-cap (i.e. government figure) on the street, or even just a *knepel* (Yid lit. button, i.e. policeman), or a militiaman.





## SELF-IMPOSED EXILE

When we went to sleep, a strange fear descended upon us from the dark doors and the gloomy hallways. Oy, those fearful nights when the heart flutters! The deep silence of the night was broken by a frightening knock at the door. We knew that “they” took people away in the middle of the night.

During the first frightening weeks, even the calm Zeide-Rav, the man with bitachon and Chassidic fearlessness, couldn’t take it. The pleading of Bubbe and the entire family forced him to leave town.

My father could not and would not travel. He only occasionally expressed his fear in some offhand word, but his big dark eyes said a lot. On those long nights when I had a hard time falling asleep, I followed him and saw how he wrote something on a paper and then stuck it between the pages of our “antique” Tanya. He poured his supplications out in one *pidyon nefesh* after another.

My grandfather didn’t last long during the forced “galus” in Leningrad. I imagine that over there, as was his wont, he made a dismissive motion with his hand and said firmly, with his usual smile, “Nu, enough! We must move on,” or “Nu, who knows,” and returned to town. Elul was approaching and he wanted to spend the Yomim Nora’im with the Jews of the town.

As I mentioned, during those terrible days of persecution, they did not arrest a single religious person in our town. Nevertheless, the paralyzing fear grabbed us by the throats night after night. In cities and towns there were still waves of arrests and who knew what would occur tomorrow in our corner of the country?

I remember what a wise person in our town said: By the rabbi returning during the government imposed “days of awe,” he breathed new life into the Jewish Holy Days of Awe.

## JUDAISM UNDERGROUND

Some years had already passed since they closed the last shul in town. It had been turned into a warehouse and the shul’s benches had been moved into the only bathhouse in town. When my grandfather left town the daily minyan in Rabbi Reuven Karasik’s house ended. However, throughout this period of time, a secret minyan on Shabbos still took place in the home of Rabbi Benzion Robinson whom I’ve

place, where yeshiva bachurim stayed and where they spent the fiery Yomim Tovim of Chassidus. There, in his “shed,” Zeide-Rav built the secret mikva.

This could not be done in the house of the rav. The gentile landlord lived in the house and too many eyes watched what took place there. It was very crowded there too. Rabbi Benzion had a private house where he lived with his children’s families. Before the revolution he had a large yard where he had begun building another large house. After the communist revolution they took the larger portion of the yard along with the building that was in mid-construction.

In any case, the Robinson

“When the Jews of the town passed by those red houses, it was always while casting them a hasty sideways glance and quietly wishing for them to sink into the ground.”

written about before.

Rabbi Benya Robinson was an outstanding person. He was hartzig, a Chassid suffused with yiras Shamayim who did good deeds. As was already related, during those awful days of spiritual destruction, when only a few families out of millions of Russian Jews observed Judaism together with all their family members, he married off his daughters to the best bachurim in Yeshivas Tomchei T’mimim. His son, Rabbi Moshe was one of the most outstanding, refined and well known heads of the yeshiva and even “merited” to sit in prison together with his talmidim when they were caught learning together.

Rabbi Benzion’s house was the “holy of holies” of the town. It is where the secret minyan on Shabbos and Yom Tov took

house camouflaged the minyan with a thousand disguises. Those few chosen Chassidim as well as yeshiva bachurim, quietly sneaked in, in such a way that other Jews had no idea that the minyan existed.

## ZEIDE’S FATEFUL DECISION

Upon his return, Zeide-Rav decided that on Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur there had to be a minyan for other Jews as well, despite the lurking danger and all the fear and warnings.

I don’t remember precisely when Zeide and Bubby decided to have a minyan on Rosh HaShana in their house, but I remember this:

One night, a few days before Rosh HaShana, I saw two men

Continued on page 37

# THE STAFF OF AHARON

By M.E. Gordon

**I**t all started with a Big Bonus drink. Bassie, Shuly, Chanaleh, and Itty were in the kosher pizza shop. They had barely begun to eat, when Bassie realized that they had forgotten to order drinks. “I’m going to the counter to get a Big Bonus – they’re offering a large drink for the price of a small one. Should I get one for each of you, as well?”

“I’d love one,” said Shuly. “Get me orange flavored.”

“Cola for me!” added Chanaleh.

“I’ll take a Diet Lemon, but do you want me to come and help you carry them back?” Itty was always the considerate one.

“No thank you, Itty. I’ll ask them to put the cups on a tray. It’s no problem.” Bassie smiled and went to buy the drinks.

On her way back, Bassie had to pass a table of rowdy girls who were making a lot of noise. She didn’t know any of them well, but felt a bit wary when she saw them staring at her, whispering and giggling. What she did not notice, however, was that one girl stuck out her foot, just as she was passing their table. Bassie tripped and the four drinks went flying. The uproarious laughter from the nearby table rang in Bassie’s ears as she landed face first onto the floor. Before she could get up and salvage her dignity, the laughter was joined by angry shrieks.

“Look what you did, you clumsy thing! You ruined my outfit!”

It seems that the drinks had spilled on one of the plotters. Bassie rose from the floor only to face a furious girl about to attack her.

“OUT OF MY SHOP! I WILL NOT ALLOW THIS BEHAVIOR IN MY PIZZA SHOP!” Boruch Hashem, the shop owner had intervened. “OUT, OR I WILL CALL THE

POLICE!” He made sure that the rowdy girls understood that he meant them. Having no choice, they left quickly, but not before muttering threats under their breath in the direction of Bassie and her friends.

The shop owner went out of his way to be nice to the four girls, personally bringing new Big Bonus drinks, and refusing payment for their pizzas. “I’m sorry that you had such an unpleasant incident in my store. Those girls....I shouldn’t even have let them in. I pity their poor parents. I know some of their families...the nicest of people....I just hope those girls one day realize how awful they are acting.”

The girls were a bit shaken, although they did calm down somewhat by the time they left the store. Unfortunately, there was good reason for worry.

It was a few days later, as Bassie and Chanaleh were walking to school together. Three familiar looking girls came purposely marching towards them. They walked arm in arm, taking up the whole sidewalk. Bassie and Chanaleh tried to detour around them, but there was a busy road on one side, and prickly bushes on the other.

“Please let us go past,” pleaded Chanaleh, “or we’ll be late for school.”

“Better late than never!” came the answer, reeking with false sympathy.

After a few frightening moments trying to side-step their tormentors, Bassie and Chanaleh tried turning back towards home. At this point, the three tough girls grabbed Bassie’s schoolbag and threw it over the prickly bushes. They then shoved Bassie and Chanaleh into the bushes and ran off.



**“As a teacher of 13 year olds, I can assure you that angry words and threats usually have the opposite effect on this age group.”**

By the time the two victims retrieved the schoolbag and reached the school building, class had started. They went to the office to explain their tardiness, but their scratched and tear-streaked faces told the story for them. The secretary wanted to call their mothers to pick them up, but the girls insisted that they wanted to stay in school. They did agree, however, that an arrangement be made for a ride to and from school. This way they could avoid meeting those rough girls again.

At lunchtime, Shuly and Itty sat next to Chaneleh and Bassie, who told them the whole sordid story. "I actually think I know one of those girls who attacked us today," Chaneleh suddenly admitted. "I thought I recognized her in the pizza shop, but I wasn't sure, until I saw her again, today."

"So what are you waiting for – let's tell our parents!"

That evening, four girls and four sets of parents sat together to discuss the two incidents, and possible strategies.

"I know one of the girls, in fact I think she's the ringleader," offered Chaneleh. "Do you know Sarah, who lives across the street from Aunt Esther?"

"Let's tell the police!" demanded Bassie.

"Or her school principal"

suggested Shuly.

"One minute," cautioned Chaneleh's mother. "If it's the girl that I think you mean, her family is going through a very rough time right now, and I wouldn't want to cause them more problems."

"But it's their daughter who's causing them problems, not us!" protested Shuly's father.

"What about our daughters' safety? Doesn't that come before anything else?" insisted Bassie's mother.

"Perhaps there is a way that we can ensure our daughters' welfare without causing trouble for Sarah. Maybe we can somehow convince her to improve her behavior..." reasoned Itty's father.

"Maybe we should frighten her and her friends with a stern warning!" This was from Bassie's father.

"I don't think that will work," said Chaneleh's father. "As a teacher of 13 year olds, I can assure you that angry words and threats usually have the opposite effect on this age group."

"I have an idea," said Chaneleh's mother. "My sister Esther is very close to the family. She has helped them out many times, and even the girl in question knows that Esther truly cares about them. Perhaps if she'll speak to Sarah, without

anger, the girl may listen."

"I like that suggestion," agreed Itty's father. "It's like what the Rebbe said about Aharon's staff that turned into a snake, but only swallowed the Egyptian's staffs after it turned back into a staff. When it's necessary to counteract the negative in someone, it should not be done with anger like a hissing snake, but rather with the calmness of the staff of Aharon, pursuer of peace."

All agreed that it was worth a try. They could always take stronger action later, if Esther didn't succeed.

The next evening, Chaneleh's Aunt Esther came to Bassie's house with an apologetic Sarah at her side. "I'm sorry that I've been nasty to you and your friends. I'm telling my friends that they should leave you alone, too."

"It's very brave of you to come and apologize," said Bassie. She suddenly had an idea. "I have a 'two for the price of one' coupon from the ice cream store. If you want to meet me there tomorrow, we could have an ice cream each. Okay?"

Sarah looked relieved. "Okay, but only if I can buy you a Big Bonus Drink."

*The above story is fictional.  
The lesson is based on Likkutei  
Sichos vol. 26 p. 49-58.*

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## Continued from page 35

from the former shul sitting at the table. Zeide welcomed them and asked, "What do you have to say on the eve of the new year?"

They looked at one another and then both looked at Zeide and they stammered, "Yes, yes, Shana tova, may we merit a good year, but ..."

Zeide knew what they wanted

to say but didn't have the courage to utter. He said to them, "You probably want to know whether there will be a minyan on Rosh HaShana. Certainly, G-d willing, there will be a minyan." Their faces lit up and they asked, more confidently, "Where?"

Zeide smiled and pointed downwards, "Here, here in the house."

"Here?" they said in unison. "At the rav's house? But ..."

This was also happy news for me, but a bit frightening as well. I quickly became absorbed in my imaginings about a minyan in our house. And so, I don't remember what Zeide said to them afterward before they got up, smiling, and with many good wishes.





# ‘Perhaps, nevertheless, G-d is to be found in the world?’

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by Menachem Ziegelboim

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## PART I

He wandered about for years but could find no peace. From time to time he would go to the court of the Alter Rebbe and would join the outstanding students and hear the Rebbe’s teachings. He would stay there for a while, and then, just as he had arrived suddenly he would suddenly disappear. People knew nothing about him except for his name, Shlomo Feigen.

Occasionally his mysterious personality would be a topic of conversation among the students who tried to understand what he was all about. Despite their speculation, nobody got to the bottom of it.

Who was Shlomo Feigen?

## PART II

The sound of Torah hummed in the bastions of the misnagdim.

Topping the list of such yeshivos were those in Shtetl and Vilna, where hundreds of students sat, budding scholars, who delved deeply into the sea of Torah. These yeshivos produced Torah giants who possessed outstanding intellects. All respected them, and their names were praised by one and all.

At a meeting that took place one day among the roshei yeshivos and leaders of the misnagdim, they made a weighty decision. They would send some of their choice students to the universities in Berlin and Paris so that they could master science and philosophy. Their goal was to establish a new generation of Jewish leaders.

It was known and accepted that just as great Jewish leaders throughout the generations — such as Mordechai, the leaders of the Sanhedrin, the Torah Masters

and Leaders in the Diaspora — were knowledgeable in the secular disciplines, their languages and sciences, and even knew magic, they too had to select their best students and send them off to obtain a secular education.

A few dozen of the best students were chosen and were sent to Berlin and Paris. The names of these students were mentioned reverently by the other yeshiva students, and their teachers derived great nachas from them.

One of those students was Shlomo Feigen, one of the best of the best.

## PART III

Shlomo Feigen and his friends spent a few years at the universities. At first, their Torah study took precedence and they

studied secular studies on the side, but as time went on they longed to delve into those subjects which had been off-limits to them all those years, and they threw themselves into their secular pursuits.

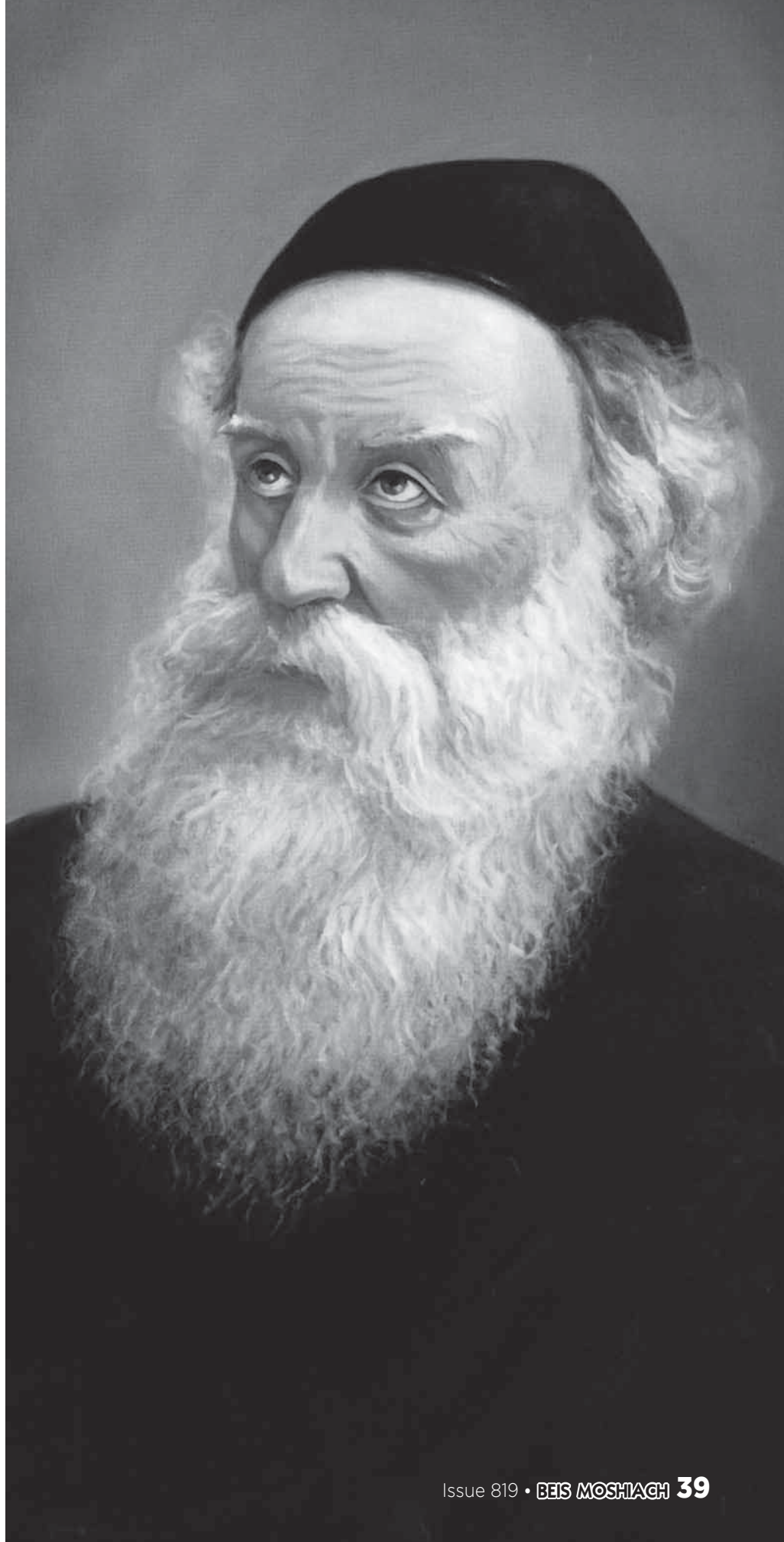
With time, some of them disregarded Torah and mitzvos. The Satan fought with them and spread his net to trip them up, and he enjoyed a great measure of success. Within a few years, nearly all of them had left Judaism behind. These students were mocked by the “Berliners,” and were spoken about in the chassidic courts. The roshei yeshivos were humiliated and didn’t know where to turn to bury their shame.

Some of those students found no peace of mind. They decided to search for a new path in life. They wandered off and became acquainted with the ways of life of other communities and groups.

Two of those students ended up in Liozna, at the court of the Alter Rebbe. Since they were open-minded, they didn’t fear entering the chassidic world in order to become better acquainted with it from within, despite the hatred they had been inculcated with in their celebrated yeshivos. These two students eventually became ardent chassidim of the Alter Rebbe and took an honored spot among the chassidim. They were Rabbi Moshe Meizlish and R’ Pinchas, author of Seifer HaBris.

#### **PART IV**

Shlomo Feigen wandered about too, both within chassidic courts as well as, l’havdil, within the realm of heresy and haskala (the so-called Enlightenment). Now and then, he also tried his hand at business.





One day he arrived at the Alter Rebbe's beis midrash in Liozna. He was alone, dusty, wore long hair, and carried a walking stick in his hand. There were many such individuals in those days, so he didn't draw much attention. He sat quietly among the talmidim and listened to them learn, but he quickly felt the need to show off his learning prowess. As soon as he did so, all eyes were upon him and the talmidim realized there was more to him than met the eye.

He remained in the Alter Rebbe's beis midrash for a few days without anybody knowing who he was and what he was

Rebbe meant. The Rebbe knew who this man was, what his goal was, and where he stood in G-d's world.

Shlomo Feigen was called into the Rebbe's room. He entered the Holy of Holies and closed the door. The Rebbe gazed upon him, deep into his soul, then the Rebbe's voice broke the silence.

"You are accustomed to wandering, to being one day here and one day there. Therefore I ask that when you reach Karlin, you should go to R' Shlomo the Tzaddik, and listen to what he has to say."

The Rebbe said nothing

listened, he could hear the tzaddik walking about in his room, from wall to wall, in great emotion. From time to time, short phrases could be made out, but Feigen couldn't fathom what had caused this great turmoil.

As he stood there trying to figure it out, the door suddenly opened and R' Shlomo of Karlin approached him hurriedly. His face burned with holy fire and his entire body shook in fear. He fixed his gaze upon Feigen and in a thundering voice he said, "Yungerman, yungerman, perhaps, nevertheless, G-d is to be found in the world?"

Feigen hadn't even digested what the tzaddik said, and the tzaddik had returned to his room and slammed the door. Feigen stood there thunderstruck. With pounding heart and in a turmoil of emotion, he continued to wait.

Apparently the tzaddik hadn't calmed down. He continued to walk back and forth in his room, and choked syllables could be heard every so often. It sounded to him like the threatening rumbles of a volcano about to erupt.

The Rebbe emerged from his room and painfully called out to Feigen, "Young man, listen well! Think, perhaps, nevertheless, G-d is present in this world?" and he returned to his room, though the storm hadn't died down; it just grew stronger by the minute.

Feigen had nearly mustered up the strength to get up and leave, when the door opened for the third time and the blazing image of the tzaddik stood before him in all his glory. His eyes shot forth arrows of both strength and compassion. "Ah young man, perhaps, nevertheless? Perhaps still and all there's a Master of the world Who is to be found in



**His face burned with holy fire and his entire body shook in fear. He fixed his gaze upon Feigen and in a thundering voice he said, "Yungerman, yungerman, perhaps, nevertheless, G-d is to be found in the world?"**

about. He would disappear every so often and then return and join the chassidim, then disappear again. He joined in the farbrengens in the evenings, listening and sometimes contributing. This they knew about him – that he was an outstanding scholar.

One day, as the Alter Rebbe sat with the greatest of the chassidim and the exceptional talmidim and said maamarei chassidus regarding the importance of mayim acharonim, a disparaging sound could be heard from the end of the table. All eyes turned towards Shlomo Feigen. A mocking smile still lurked on his lips.

The Alter Rebbe's face grew serious, he sighed, and then said in a low voice, "A worm eats at him from within." The few who heard this understood what the

further, and Feigen nodded his consent and left the room. He realized that the Rebbe's request was not just a suggestion but an order, one which he would understand only afterwards. Since he was curious, and wanted to learn, he took up his bundle and left for Karlin, to the holy Rebbe, R' Shlomo.

It took a few days before he arrived at the home of R' Shlomo of Karlin. The servant sized him up, and since he didn't notice anything unique in Feigen that was different than the dozens of other Jews who wandered about in those days, he gave him an appointment to see the tzaddik.

At the designated time, Feigen waited in the antechamber before the tzaddik's room. He was still deep in thought when he heard a noise within the inner room. It aroused his attention and as he



this world?”

Shlomo Feigen was no fool, and he realized that he hadn't been sent to distant Karlin for naught, but to hear these words. He understood that this was the message that the Rebbe in Liozna had wanted him to hear.

However, the words didn't manage to penetrate his heart. Shortly thereafter, Feigen left the path completely, and in an act of chutzpa, he converted, throwing away a life of Torah and Judaism. Indeed, the Alter Rebbe had predicted his fate when he said, “A worm eats away at him.”

Feigen quickly acclimated to his new life, and made it in the world of academia in Petersburg, the capital. His mighty mind and his lightening-quick grasp, aroused the wonder of the Russian scientists and philosophers, all the more so because he was a converted Jew, something which raised his prestige ten-fold among his new friends. Nobody doubted the fact that honor and glory within the Russian government were guaranteed him. Indeed, some time later, he was given a position as minister of transportation.

## PART V

Many years passed. The chassidic movement grew and spread, attracting tens of thousands of Jews in Russia, Galicia, and throughout Eastern Europe. Even the misnagdim strongholds fell one after the other, and thousands of Torah scholars who sat in the best yeshivos, joined the ranks of the chassidim. The black stain in the history of these yeshivos was nearly forgotten.

The Alter Rebbe had returned his soul on the night of Chaf-Daled Teives 5573, and was



“At first, their Torah study took precedence and they studied secular studies on the side, but as time went on, they longed to delve into those subjects which had been off-limits to them all those years, and they threw themselves into their secular pursuits...”

buried in Haditch. The golden chain of Chabad chassidus had continued with R' Dov Ber, the Mittlerer Rebbe, who expanded

upon the teachings of his father.

Things were fine until one day when it was learned that the Russian government wanted to



build a railroad line which would divide Russia in its length and breadth, to benefit millions of citizens. The news was fine in itself; it was just that the iron tracks would cut through the large cemetery in Haditch. This meant they had to remove the remains of those buried there, including the Alter Rebbe, something which was awful indeed.

The chassidic leaders and elders convened to discuss what to do. One of those present said that perhaps it was worth approaching the Minister of Transportation to request that he change the plan. When the young

R' Moshe set off, with the blessings of his fellow chassidim accompanying him on his way. R' Moshe knew that apostates usually tormented their former brethren. In addition, Feigen had converted out of anger and disappointment, and who knew what he could do?

Surprisingly, the minister was willing to meet with him, and this information was conveyed sooner than expected. With a heart pounding in nervousness, R' Moshe entered the opulent room of the minister in the capital city of Petersburg. The Minister of Transportation welcomed the old Chassid warmly, and with great

the great tzaddik. It would be a privilege for me to protect his honor and his peace, as is fitting. Don't worry. When the plans come to my office, I'll make sure to adjust them so that they won't go through the cemetery in Haditch."

Tears came to R' Moshe Vilenker's eyes, tears of emotion and thanks. He warmly shook the minister's hand, and was about to get up when the minister took his hands and motioned to him to keep sitting. The minister's smile disappeared and was replaced with a grave look.

"Moshe, do you remember the farbrengens at the Rebbe's court? The nights we sat together with the others and spoke about chassidus? If so, I request of you that if you've come here already, that you remain with me and that we farbreng together, like in the good old days."

The wise eyes of the old Chassid looked into the eyes of the minister sitting opposite him. As a veteran Chassid of the Alter Rebbe, knowledgeable in the Tanya, he knew the secret of the Jewish soul which flashed within. He knew that even if it seemed as though the neshama was extinguished like burnt-out coals, a wind could bring it to life again.

A servant was sent to buy mashkeh un farbaisien (liquor and refreshments), and the two men sat and discussed chassidus together, like in the good old days.



**Shlomo Feigen was no fool, and he realized that he hadn't been sent to distant Karlin for naught, but to hear these words. He understood that this was the message that the Rebbe in Liozna had wanted him to hear.**

ones of the group raised their eyebrows in wonder, their elders told them the story of Shlomo Feigen, the lamdan-meshumad (scholar-apostate), who had come to the Alter Rebbe. "Who knows, maybe he'll remember the Rebbe and he'll be moved to do something about this."

They resolved to follow through on this plan and the job fell on the shoulders of the old Chassid, R' Moshe Vilenker, who had known Feigen and had even struck up a friendship with him.

respect he offered him a chair. R' Moshe didn't know whether the hearty welcome was artificial and would be followed by abuse, but his heart told him that he stood a chance at succeeding in his mission.

When the minister heard the request of the chassidim, his eyes lit up. A broad smile rose to his lips, and he warmly placed his hand on those of R' Moshe. In an emotional voice, somewhat choked, he said, "It would be my great honor to do something for

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