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THE TURNING POINT TO THE REST OF THE YEAR

SICHOS IN ENGLISH



6TH DAY OF MAR-CHESHVAN, 5750

1. The Shabbos in which we read the Torah portion Noach is always the first Shabbos of the month of MarCheshvan. In a way, this signals the real beginning of the year, since Tishrei is a “general” month, a month of preparation for the year. MarCheshvan, therefore, has a unique status, since it is the first of the “regular” months of the year. For this reason, today is the proper time to set the pattern for G-dly service throughout the year — especially for the Shabbosim of the year.

The Torah gives clear directions regarding conduct on Shabbos in *Parshas VaYakhel*. The opening words of the *parasha* (“*VaYakhel Moshe*” — “Moshe gathered”) are explained in the *Midrash*: “In the entire Torah from beginning to end, the only *parasha* which begins with the word ‘*va’yakhel*’ is this one...in order that all future generations should learn to gather congregations every single Shabbos; to enter the houses of learning to study and to teach the Jewish people words of Torah.”

From that time on, Shabbos was established as the proper occasion (in the words of the Alter Rebbe in *Shulchan Aruch*), “To teach the people

G-d’s laws and to expound upon words of Aggada, in order to put *yiras Shamayim* in their hearts.”

Now is, therefore, the time to stress this practice which was instituted by Moshe Rabbeinu — that wherever in the world Jews might live, they should gather together on Shabbos to learn Torah and help each other advance in Torah and *mitzvos*.

Since today is the sixth of MarCheshvan, the lesson is all the more appropriate. Those in *Eretz Yisroel* would normally pray for rain immediately after Succos, but they delay doing so until the seventh of MarCheshvan. The reason for this is that only on this day did those who made pilgrimage to the *Beis HaMikdash* for Succos finally return home. Rain was, therefore, not requested, since this would inconvenience the travelers in their journey.

From this we see that up to (and including) the sixth of MarCheshvan, the Jewish people are still connected with the service of Tishrei. The real service of a Jew in the world first begins on the seventh of MarCheshvan. The sixth of MarCheshvan, therefore, denotes the turning point from the holy service of

Tishrei to the regular service of the rest of the year.

The sixth of MarCheshvan (in the yearly cycle), therefore, bears strong resemblance to Shabbos (in the weekly cycle). In Tishrei (and until the sixth of MarCheshvan) and on Shabbos, a Jew is immersed in *mitzvos* and an atmosphere of holiness. The goal of this infusion of holiness is to bring it into one’s regular everyday conduct and affairs in the days and months that follow.

The idea of gathering Jews together is also similar in content to that of Tishrei and Shabbos. Jews are spread apart in order for them to fulfill their mission in purifying the world; each in his particular portion (*chelko ba’olam*). When Jews gather together, on the other hand, it is usually for something involving Torah or *mitzvos*. We see this clearly in Tishrei, when Jews gather in synagogues and houses of study in much greater numbers than during the rest of the year. By 1) gathering together and 2) doing so on Shabbos, an even stronger influence of holiness is drawn into the rest of the week.

It might seem that this stress on the group tends to nullify in a certain way the importance of the individual.

In reality, though, the opposite is true. The group is only complete when each individual is fulfilling his personal objectives.

We can see this clearly by taking group prayer as an example. The primary *mitzva* of prayer is for each individual to ask for his own personal needs. Only when each one is stressing his “individuality” does the congregation become a true group.

In this way, the true essence of the individual — the level of *yechida* of his soul — becomes revealed. On the other hand, the *yechida* is equal by each and every individual. We, therefore, see that the revelation of the *yechida* simultaneously stresses

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service of Tishrei.***

both the individual and the group.

This revelation of the *yechida* is directly connected with Tishrei, which contains Yom Kippur, the day of five prayers (including *Ne'ila*) on which the fifth level of the soul (the *yechida*) is revealed. A similar revelation is present every Shabbos, as we see from the fact that Yom Kippur is called “*Shabbos Shabboson*.”

According to this, we see that even an individual who is all alone can accomplish an internal “gathering” on Shabbos. By “gathering together” and revealing all the qualities of his soul, he will eventually be able to reveal the level of *yechida*, which, as mentioned

above, is the point of these gatherings. And since Divine providence has placed him in a situation where it is impossible for him to actually gather together groups of Jews, it must be that G-d has given him the ability to accomplish this on his own.

On the contrary: for some people, it is easier to dig down deeper into the soul and reveal one’s *yechida* when there is nobody else around to disturb. And since he has been placed in a situation where it is impossible to gather together a group, he must have the abilities to reveal this *yechida* on his own.

2. The abovementioned is also closely connected with this week’s *parasha*, *Parshas Noach*. As the Alter Rebbe explains in *Torah Or*, Noach corresponds to the concept of Shabbos. This is readily seen from the *Targum* on the verse, “And He rested (*va’yishbos*) [on the seventh day]” — “*v’nach*.” We see the same idea regarding the ark of Noach, in which all the animals were gathered together. Furthermore, the peaceful coexistence that took place in the ark resembled the Messianic Age, which results from the manifestation of the level of *yechida*.

And just as with the gathering we do every Shabbos, the ark was just a preparation for the service of G-d that was to follow, as Noach was commanded, “Go out from the ark.” This corresponds to the individual service that takes place after Shabbos, after Tishrei, and after the gathering has dispersed. This idea is also expressed in the *parasha* we begin reading at *Mincha*, *Parshas Lech Lecha*.

G-d’s commandment to Avrohom to leave his homeland (*lech lecha*) really applied to his entire family and all who accompanied him. It was nevertheless expressed in singular form (*lech lecha*), in order to stress the tremendous importance of the

service of the individual.

With all this in mind, we can clearly understand why the seventh of MarCheshvan is the proper time to request rain. Rain comes about through the prayers of man, as we see from the verse (Gen. 2:5), “...and all the wild plants had not yet sprouted, because G-d had not brought rain on the earth and there was no man to work the ground.” As Rashi explains, the reason there was no rain was because “there was no man,” and therefore, nobody to pray for rain. Once Adam did so, then, “A mist rose up from the earth, and it watered the entire surface of the ground.”

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In this (“rose up from the earth”) we also see the idea of man’s service, an “arousal from below,” in contrast with G-dly revelation, an “arousal from Above.” This is indeed the difference between rain, which requires human prayer, and dew, which comes “from Above” without human request. Our request for rain (which, as we have explained, is an “arousal from below”) therefore begins on the seventh of MarCheshvan, which marks the beginning of man’s individual service of G-d throughout the year.

This also explains the difference

between the mention of rain on Shmini Atzeres (“*mashiv ha’ruach u’morid ha’geshem*”) and the request for rain on the seventh of MarCheshvan (*v’sein tal u’matar*).

Shmini Atzeres is still in the month of Tishrei, and the idea of transforming the world through our individual service has not yet begun in full force. For this same reason, our mention of rain on Shmini Atzeres is done with the congregation, in the *Musaf* prayer.

This gives the strength for our personal, individual service in the world beginning with the seventh of MarCheshvan. At that point we begin, in our own individual prayers, to begin to actually request rain.

3. The practical lesson from the abovementioned is as follows. Since today we stand on the threshold of

the “regular” months of the year, we should make strong resolutions to institute and strengthen the gathering of groups on Shabbos wherever possible. This should be publicized as widely as possible.

As many people as possible should be involved, and the effects should be visible during the days of the week which follow. Nigla and Chassidus should be learned, especially in areas pertaining to the particular time of the year. Resolutions should be made regarding *shiurim* during the week, regarding the meticulous practice of *mitzvos* (*kiyum mitzvos b’hiddur*), and in Torah, *avoda*, and *gmilus chassadim* in general.

And this should not end with the group gathering, but continue individualized care directed towards

each man, woman, and child. The responsibility for this individualized attention lies both on the one who has gathered everyone together (the *rav*, etc.) and even more so, on the people who have participated in the gathering.

This should all be done in the spirit of “Noach,” which is translated as “pleasantness.” Things should be approached in a peaceful way and in a way that people are drawn close. This can be done effectively through *farbrengens*, which bring the tremendous joy and the ability to break through all boundaries.

And all this should bring about the fulfillment of G-d’s promise to *Avrohom* to give his descendants the land of all 10 nations, including Keini, Kenizi, and Kadmoni, with the immediate arrival of Moshiach.

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WHO ARE YOU, NOACH?

BY RABBI ELAZAR KENIG



First he's described as a tzaddik and Tamim, but then he's described as "believing and not believing" – will the real Noach please stand up!

We notice an interesting personality in Parshas Noach. At first the *parsha* describes a very lofty man indeed, one whom the Torah describes as, "*ish tzaddik tamim*" (a righteous, perfect man) – not just a *tzaddik*, but a *tamim*, the peak of perfection. But then Rashi says that Noach believed and didn't believe. His *emuna* in Hashem wasn't at all firm, and it was only when the water forcibly pushed him into the *teiva* that he entered it.

It's difficult to picture such an individual, a man who built a *teiva* for 120 years but then at the critical moment he suddenly retreated, and only when "his suit got damp" and the water literally pushed him, did he agree to enter the *teiva*.

It turns out that all those 120 years of *emuna* were not years of perfect faith, for "he believed and didn't believe."

What's going on here? What does

it mean to believe and not believe? How could such an elevated person such as he wait for the rain to come before entering the *teiva*?

* * *

The Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach

Noach's z'chus is openly stated and Rashi brings it himself, but suddenly a sour note is interjected which views Noach negatively. Why is this explanation brought when there's a positive approach we can take?

shlita asks yet another question on this *parsha*. Rashi notes that there are two ways of looking at Noach's righteousness. One approach views him in a praiseworthy manner, saying that in a generation of righteous people Noach would certainly have been a *tzaddik*, while the other looks at him negatively and says that he was a *tzaddik* in his generation, but if he would have lived in other generations, his righteousness would have paled in comparison to other *tzaddikim*.

This is most surprising for we know that the Torah always tries to judge everyone favorably, even when it's difficult to find mitigating circumstances, and here we have just the opposite. The *z'chus* is openly stated and Rashi brings it himself, but suddenly a sour note is interjected which views Noach negatively. Why is this explanation brought when there's a positive approach we can take?

The answer is that neither one of the explanations reflects negatively on Noach, *ch"v*. The explanation that sounds negative only means to say that a Jew in our generation who would act like Noach, wouldn't be much of a *tzaddik*. Noach did the

right thing when he *davened* and worried only about himself. His generation didn't have any merits which he could have used to pray for them.

Moshe Rabbeinu, on the other hand, was able to *daven* for the Jewish people by depending on *z'chus Avoseinu*. Noach couldn't do this. Therefore there's a negative interpretation, not on Noach personally but on this approach, which for our times is inappropriate.

This is Noach's *z'chus*, and this is what Noach wants us to know, that we should know that we can't conduct ourselves in this way.

We know that we are called "believers, children of believers," something which expresses the uniqueness of our *emuna*. We find that gentiles also have a certain level of *emuna*, but its flimsiness is readily apparent. Even Noach, who was a *tzaddik* and Tamim, built the *teiva* only out of "*safek pikuach nefesh*" (a possible danger to life). So that at the moment of truth, he still didn't enter it. He didn't have perfect faith that the flood would actually take place.

When he actually saw the water, then he believed. And for this he is called a *tzaddik* and Tamim because for a *Ben Noach* this level of *emuna* is fine. But a Jew, a believer and child of believers, can't suffice with this level of *emuna*. The *emuna* of a Jew is perfect, and this is why we are called "believers."

It is interesting to see this throughout our history, starting from Avrohom Avinu, who was known for his iron faith in Hashem, under all circumstances, and specifically when things looked the opposite of what one would expect. Hashem promised Avrohom that life would be good in Eretz Yisroel, yet suddenly there was a famine. It was this which brought out Avrohom's great *emuna* to the point that when we stress Avrohom's

good qualities it's not his *chesed* that stands out, nor anything else, but his simple faith. "And he believed in Hashem, and it was considered righteousness for him."

In later stages the same story repeats itself. Hashem promises *Geula* to Moshe Rabbeinu and what happens? Moshe says: From when I went to Pharaoh to represent You, things only got worse!

Sounds familiar, doesn't it? That's the point – the *emuna* of a Jew is *davka* when everything seems to be

The guest was amazed by the simple faith of this Jew and again, we could stop here and talk about the great emuna he had, but chassidim always emphasize that his emuna is most clearly seen when he refused the first offer...

going wrong.

This trait was obvious among the righteous women in Egypt, who believed when living through the most difficult circumstances. Miriam's name points to truly bitter times for the Jewish people, yet the faith of the women remained strong.

When Shlomo HaMelech dedicated the Beis HaMikdash he made a surprising request. Whoever thought the Jewish people, the Chosen Nation, would have

protektzia, were in for a surprise. In his *t'filla*, Shlomo asked that when a gentile came from far away to check out the G-d of the Jews, as it were, Hashem should grant the gentile's request so that all the nations of the world would know G-d's name. Of all people, it would be a *goy* whose prayers would be readily answered.

The reason for this is very simple. A *goy* who comes to the Beis HaMikdash is certainly equipped with basic *emuna*, for if not he wouldn't bother investing the money and effort in coming. It's very important that his request be heeded because otherwise his *emuna* won't last. A *goy* believes when he sees, otherwise he rejects, as Rashi says there.

This is what "he believed and didn't believe" means. He believes when he sees it right there in front of him, otherwise he doesn't believe. Thus, Noach was considered a *tzaddik* because more couldn't be expected of him. But Jews can be treated based on their merits because they're made of other stuff and their *emuna* is not based on success in the stock market, for example, for their *emuna* is there no matter what. This is the *emuna* of a Jew, and this is what is expected of a Jew.

Rashi describes Noach as being "*m'ktanei emana haya*" (of little faith), because he had the *emuna* of a *Ben Noach* but not that of a Jew. A Jew is not *m'ktanei emana*! This is what is meant in the "*Ani Maamins*" when it says that we believe with *emuna shleima*. Not *stam emuna* but *emuna shleima*!

There's the well-known story of the man who came to the Baal Shem Tov who wanted to learn about *emuna*. The Baal Shem Tov sent him to visit a certain inn. At first the inn seemed like any other inn, but one day a messenger from the squire came with a hammer in hand, and he banged on the table with it. To

the guest's surprise, the innkeeper explained that this was the signal from the squire that the time had come for him to pay up what he owed him.

"Do you have the money?" asked the guest.

"No," said the innkeeper.

"So what'll you do?"

"I trust in Hashem to help."

When the knocks came again, the innkeeper left the inn and headed in the direction of the squire's mansion. The guest watched in amazement. We could stop the story here and point out the great *emuna* in Hashem that the innkeeper had, but the story isn't finished.

As he walked to the squire with not a cent in his pocket, a wagon stopped nearby and a prominent person alighted. He approached the innkeeper and began negotiating with him. When he didn't get the deal he wanted, he walked away. A few minutes later the man returned

and tried to bargain once more. This went on until the innkeeper was satisfied.

The guest inquired as to what that was all about and was told that the man wanted to pay in advance for a deal but the amount he had offered was lower than what the innkeeper needed to pay the squire, and so he had refused. When the man returned, he raised the price until it reached the sum the innkeeper needed, and that's when he clinched the deal.

The guest was amazed by the simple faith of this Jew and again, we could stop here and talk about the great *emuna* he had, but *chassidim* always emphasize that his *emuna* is most clearly seen when he refused the first offer. The innkeeper was certain that Hashem would send him the amount he needed, even when it didn't seem to work out. And his *emuna* was so strong that he wasn't willing to accept anything less than the full amount he required. The *emuna* of a Jew.

* * *

We are now at the beginning of a new year, and as Jews, as *chassidim*, and *chassidei Chabad*, we were raised on *emuna shleima*. We have the *emuna* of *chassidim* who say *l'chaim* when the Rebbe promises, without waiting to see it work out first.

Let's arm ourselves with this lesson from Parshas Noach, and be *mezakeh* Noach with the fact that we learn from him how the *emuna* of Jews is different. And in that *z'chus* and through our *emuna p'shuta* in the words of the Rebbe and his *nevua*: *hinei zeh Moshiach ba*, that we are the generation of *Geula*, and immediately *mamash*, the Rebbe will lead us to our land, we will merit the immediate *Geula* so that the new year begins with *Geula*.

It was in the merit of *emuna* that our ancestors were redeemed from Egypt and in the merit of *emuna* that we will be redeemed.

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YOU CANNOT REMAIN GOATS!

*What do we take with us from the month of Tishrei and what message ought we to convey to those who didn't merit to visit 770? * Rabbi Yisroel Halperin, shliach and rav in Hertzliya, in a farbrengen in 770 with members of the K'vutza from Hertzliya right before they returned to Eretz Yisroel.*

With the close of Tishrei ends an important cycle in the Jewish year, a period of elevation and spirituality and the receiving of *giluyim* and great light. If this is so for every single Jew wherever they might be, it's ever so much more significant for those who had the privilege of spending the month with the Rebbe MH"M, "seeing and being seen."

There's the famous Midrash about Shmini Atzeres which the Rebbe quotes in some *sichos*. The Midrash brings a *mashal* of a king whose beloved son comes to visit for a few days. Before he leaves for home, the king asks him to remain one more day.

"Come, let us partake of

whatever we find (leftovers from the earlier feasts), for parting from you is difficult." This is what Hashem says after the seven days of Sukkos. He asks His children to stay one more day: Shmini Atzeres.

The Rebbe asks: If it's difficult for the king to part from his dear son, what will pushing it off accomplish? On the contrary, every additional day they spend together will make parting that much more difficult!

The Rebbe explains that we must, therefore, say that this additional day – Shmini Atzeres – actually minimizes the sadness of parting.

The *chassidic* explanation for Shmini Atzeres is that "atzeres" is from the root "atзира ו'כליטה" (to stop and absorb). On this day, all the *hamshachos* and loftiest of *giluyim* which a Jew merited in Tishrei are absorbed in the most inward manner. When *giluyim* are absorbed, they remain eternal and so it turns out that there is no separation from the king after all.

How is this relevant to us? When we reach the end of Tishrei, everybody who had the privilege of being with the Rebbe knows that if he returns home exactly the way he left, he missed the boat. There's no question that just being with the Rebbe accomplished something in a *makif* (surrounding, superficial) kind of way, but in order for things to be absorbed there's a need for *avoda*.

What is the *avoda* that makes this happen? "Atzira and *klita*." First of all, everybody needs to sit down by himself and review in his mind what he experienced while being with the Rebbe. He must recall every detail starting with the trip to 770 and ending with the trip home. He must remember the tiniest and seemingly picayune details, because

everything a Jew experiences with the Rebbe is holy of holies.

Then it's necessary to internalize the high points, the declarations of *Yechi*, the *t'kios*, Napoleon's March on Motzaei Yom Kippur, the *Hakafos*, etc.

With the conclusion of the *avoda* of "atzira and klita" of Shmini Atzeres, he needs to move on to Simchas Torah. The *avoda* of Simchas Torah is associated with making good *hachlatos*. Whoever had the *z'chus* of being in 770 has to ask himself: how am I different after being with the Rebbe?

The change ought to be an essential change. A change in level means minimizing the negative and increasing the positive, while an essential change means that even the good that was done until now is "bad" compared to the new level he is now on. Those infinite *kochos* that the Rebbe gives in the month of Tishrei are what enable such a change to take place.

In the time of the Rebbe Rashab there was a period in which the *hanhala* of Tomchei Tmimim didn't allow the *bachurim* to go see the Rebbe on his way to the *mikva*. But there were those who *did* see the Rebbe – who? The goats that grazed along the road.

One time, during a *farbrengen*, the question arose: Which is preferable, to be a *talmid* of the *yeshiva* who doesn't see the Rebbe or a goat that sees the Rebbe? It was proposed that it was better to be a goat, for the main thing is seeing the Rebbe.

A *mashpia* got up and said: "It's true that the goats see the Rebbe but they remain goats! You must see the Rebbe, but you cannot remain goats!"

All those who were able to spend Tishrei with the Rebbe must remember that they have a great

A mashpia got up and said: "It's true that the goats see the Rebbe but they remain goats! You must see the Rebbe, but you cannot remain goats!"

responsibility. They must sit down again and prepare "wonder pills," spiritual vitamins, to give to those who didn't get to visit the Rebbe.

These pills must be strong and

direct so that when someone asks: How was it with the Rebbe, he won't mumble or stammer, nor will he give a long speech. He needs to prepare a succinct response to all the questions which will strengthen the *hiskashrus* of the questioner as well as the one who answers.

We must know that only if we work on ourselves and invest *kochos* to internalize what we received in Tishrei will we merit that throughout the coming year we won't be separated from our source of life, *ch"v*, but we'll continue to be connected with our father, our shepherd until the *hisgalus*, may it be immediately!

*Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu
V'Rabbeinu Melech HaMoshiach L'olam
Va'ed!*



RABBI SHNEUR ZALMAN GURARY, A”H: MINISTER OF THE COURTYARD

BY AVROHOM RAYNITZ

News of the sudden passing of one of the *ziknei rabbanei Chabad*, Rabbi Shneur Zalman Gurary, spread quickly in Crown Heights, even though he passed away on Rosh HaShana. R’ Gurary served as the chairman of the board of directors of Yeshivos Tomchei T’mimim, was one of the directors of the Kehos Publishing House, was appointed by the Rebbe MH”M to lead the Vaad Aguch HaOlami, and was utterly devoted to the Rebbeim throughout his nearly 92 years.

On Erev Rosh HaShana he went, as is customary, to the Ohel, where he had a heart attack and collapsed. Members of Hatzala quickly took him to the hospital where doctors tried to save his life. On Shabbos, the first day of Rosh HaShana, he passed away.

Thousands of people, residents and guests, attended the funeral which took place Monday morning, Tzom Gedalya. During the funeral, the *menahel* of the Chevra Kadisha, Rabbi Berel Lipsker, read a portion of the will in which R’ Gurary asked that all those who *toiveled* or had benefit from the *mikvaos* that he built in Crown Heights, say at least four Mishnayos *l’ilui nishmaso*, until the end of the *Shiva*, and ten Mishnayos until the end of the year.

The funeral passed 770 on the way

to the cemetery of Agudas Chabad in New York where R’ Gurary was buried near the Ohel. The *gabbai* of the Chevra Kadisha, Rabbi L.Y. Shapiro, asked that R’ Gurary demand from Heaven, in the name of all *chassidim*, and as he did in his lifetime, that we merit the immediate *hisgalus* of the Rebbe MH”M.

A SPECIAL CLOSENESS WITH THE REBBE RASHAB

R’ Shneur Zalman was born to his distinguished parents, R’ Nosson and Esther Gurary, in Kremenchug on the first night of Chanuka 5672 (1912). He learned with the *chassid* R’ Yisroel Neveler, who was a private tutor for the Gurary family. At age 4, he had the privilege of seeing and being blessed by the Rebbe Rashab on Erev Yom Kippur 5677, in the resort town of Slaviansk.

In the winter of 5680 the Gurary family had to flee Kremenchug for fear of the approaching Bolsheviks. The entire area was extremely tense because of the battles between the various factions. In addition to this, famine, freezing cold, and epidemics felled numerous people. Yeshivas Tomchei T’mimim, which had moved to Kremenchug only three years earlier, also breathed its last in this city before moving to Rostov.

The roads were dangerous and the only means of transportation available to the Gurarys was a freight train. They headed east towards Rostov, where the Rebbe Rashab’s household had moved four years earlier. In order to protect themselves from troops on the road, they hired soldiers to accompany them.

Shneur Zalman, the youngest of the family, was nearly eight years old when he and his family moved to Rostov. Memories of their flight and the terrors of the trip to Rostov were engraved in his memory.

R’ Nosson had *mesirus nefesh* in educating his children. He sold diamonds belonging to his wife and paid a *melamed* with the money, two or three eighths of a pound sterling. This was during a famine, and the *melamed* was able to support his eight children comfortably while others went hungry.

On Yud-Tes Kislev 5680, a few days after they arrived in Rostov, R’ Zalman was present at the Rebbe Rashab’s *farbrengen*. The Rebbe sat not far from the door which connected the *staloveh* (the dining room) and the *kabinet* (the Rebbe’s room). The room was full and R’ Zalman didn’t enter by way of the door which everybody used but from an inner hall of the house. Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah, a”h, let him



in from the hallway to the *kabinet* and from there to the *staloveh*.

When R' Zalman walked in, he was very close to the Rebbe. He went over to his father who sat on the side of the Rebbe and since the Rebbe only wore a *yarmulke* on his head, without a hat, he didn't recognize him at first and he asked, "Which one is the Rebbe?"

Maybe the Rebbe heard the question, for he immediately asked him to say *l'chaim* (with the Rebbe Rashab, it was customary to say *l'chaim* only when the Rebbe asked for it, and this was considered a special *kiruv*).

A few months after the Gurarys' arrival in Rostov, the Rebbe Rashab passed away. R' Zalman wasn't allowed to attend the funeral, but he remembered everything that took place before and after the funeral. On Motzaei Shabbos, a few hours before his passing, the Rebbe asked those around him, "*Nemt mich in zal vellin mir zain in einem*" (Take me to the *zal* (from the bedroom to the *yechidus* room) and we'll be together).

When R' Zalman recently visited Rostov, he pointed out exactly where the Rebbe's bed was when he passed away. He said that on Shabbos morning, some *chassidim* came to his parents' house in order to take a good bed for the Rebbe.

One of the experiences he had with the Rebbe Rashab took place on one of the Shabbasos after Pesach. That Shabbos, R' Zalman went to *daven* without his father, who didn't feel well. The Rebbe asked how his father was, and then, when he saw young Zalman walking around during *Krias ha'Torah*, he told him to take a Chumash and to stand near the table during the *kria*.

ON THE KNEES OF THE REBBE RAYATZ

In 5681 (1921), R' Zalman's father passed away and the Rebbe Rayatz took responsibility for raising him. His *melamed* was the *chassid* R' Moshe

Rosenblum, a secretary of both the Rebbe Rashab and the Rebbe Rayatz. The Rebbe Rayatz once told Rabbi Yaakov Landau to test R' Zalman. R' Yaakov tested him in the Rebbe's house, in the dining room, in a room which had a door that led to the Rebbe Rayatz's room.

R' Yaakov walked around during the test and passed the door many times. R' Zalman didn't know that the Rebbe was sitting in his room and listening to the test. After the test the Rebbe said they should switch *melamdin* since this *melamed* only taught *b'kius* and not *b'iyun* (superficially and not in depth), and that R' Yechiel Kamisar should be his *melamed*.

The Rebbe Rayatz showed an especial fondness for R' Zalman, and one Simchas Torah during the *farbrengen*, the Rebbe put him on the lap of Zalman (the son of Falik) Gurary, who was himself a youth at the time. Zalman couldn't hold him that long, and the Rebbe took him and put him on his own lap.

The Rebbe's plate had meat and *tzimmes*. The Rebbe took water and poured it into the *tzimmes* in his plate and then fed it to R' Zalman. R' Zalman didn't like it and the Rebbe said, "*Es un brech, vestu blaiben a chassid*" (eat and throw up and you'll remain a *chassid*).

CONCERN FOR THE SMALLEST DETAILS

In 5682-3 (1922-3), his sister Leah married Rabbi Eliezer Karasik. The Rebbe Rayatz attended the *Kabbalas Panim* and R' Zalman accompanied the Rebbe. When they arrived at the hall, the Rebbe said our custom is not to eat at the *Kabbalas Panim*. Years later, R' Zalman said that he saw in the Rebbe's diary from the wedding of Rebbetzin Shaina that the Rebbe Rayatz said the same thing, but he qualified it and said that *mechutanim* (relatives) don't eat.

In 5682, R' Zalman attended the

wedding of the Rebbe Rayatz's oldest daughter with his cousin, R' Shemaryahu Gurary. R' Zalman was one of the few *chassidim* who attended all three of the Rebbe's daughters' weddings.

When the Rebbe Rayatz left Rostov for Leningrad in 5684, the Gurarys followed. In Leningrad there was no *melamed* for R' Zalman and the Rebbe Rayatz sent him to Nevel, to the *chassid* R' Meir Simcha Chein. He sent a letter to R' Chein in which he asked him to secure a *melamed* for R' Zalman.

R' Chein didn't find a private *melamed* in Nevel and he tried to get R' Zalman into Tomchei T'mimim in Nevel. At first the *hanhala* didn't want to accept him since he was too young, but then the Rebbe sent his secretary, R' Chatshe Feigin, to make sure he was accepted. Until he entered the *yeshiva*, R' Chein learned with him. Among other things, they learned the introduction to *Imrei Bina*, a long complicated piece with deep *chassidic* ideas.

In 5685, the Gurarys moved to Poland and R' Zalman attended Tomchei T'mimim in Warsaw. At that time he received letters from the Rebbe in which the Rebbe guided him in what to learn, etc. Among other things, the Rebbe told him to study *Derech Chaim* of the Mittlerer Rebbe. Out of concern for his *chinuch*, the Rebbe dealt with the smallest details, and once even told him to learn *dikduk* (grammar) in order to improve his writing, and to improve his handwriting.

In the summer of 5687 (1927), when he was fifteen, R' Zalman had appendicitis, and the doctors said he needed an operation. He told the doctors that he couldn't have the operation without his Rebbe's approval, and since the Rebbe was in jail at the time and he couldn't consult with him, R' Zalman told the doctors that he couldn't be operated on. They didn't operate and R' Zalman miraculously

recovered without an operation.

R' Zalman made great efforts to be with the Rebbe in Riga for Rosh HaShana 5689. Despite the financial difficulties and the hardships entailed in obtaining travel permits, R' Zalman managed to be with the Rebbe for Tishrei. From that year until this one, R' Zalman spent every Rosh HaShana with the Rebbeim, except for Rosh HaShana 5690 (1930) when the Rebbe Rayatz was in America, and Rosh HaShana 5700 (1940) when the Rebbe Rayatz was in bombed out Warsaw and R' Zalman was in Riga.

In Kislev 5689 (1929), R' Zalman attended the wedding of the Rebbe MH"M and Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka.

When the Rebbe Rayatz was about to travel to Eretz Yisroel, the Rebbe left the city before Shiva-Asar B'Tammuz in order to begin his trip before the Three Weeks. R' Zalman joined the Rebbe on his trip outside the city.

A SPECIAL SHLICHUS

In 5691 (1931), the Rebbe Rayatz devised a plan to expand the network of Chabad *yeshivos*. R' Zalman Gurary was picked for this special *shlichus*. He traveled to check out the *yeshivos* in various cities in Vohlin, to strengthen the learning of *chassidus* in towns, and to found new *yeshivos* in appropriate places.

Before leaving on this mission, the Rebbe called him to a *yeichidus* and said, "When sending an emissary, the *chochmas* [i.e., the successes] are the *shliach's* and the stupidities are associated with the one who sent him. Don't do anything foolish so that it won't be attributed to me.

"And what is your *shlichus*? Your *shlichus* is to make *chassidim*. How do you make *chassidim*? When the *shliach* himself is a *chassid*, then he can make *chassidim*."

In the course of this *shlichus*, R' Gurary received detailed instructions in dozens of letters from the Rebbe

(that were printed in the Rebbe Rayatz's *Igros Kodesh*, vol. 11, and more recently in volume 16).

R' Gurary sent dozens of letters to the Rebbe in which he gave detailed reports of his work. Copies of these letters, which were kept in the Rebbe's archives, were recently returned to R' Gurary's possession and he gave them to *Beis Moshiach* for publication.

R' Gurary's *shlichus* extended to other towns and continued into 5692. Copies of letters to the Rebbe from this

"When sending an emissary, the chochmas [i.e., the successes] are the shliach's and the stupidities are associated with the one who sent him. Don't do anything foolish so that it won't be attributed to me."

period were also kept and they will be printed, G-d willing, in the near future. While on this *shlichus*, R' Gurary gave many *shiurim* in *nigleh* and *chassidus*, and he met with many *g'dolei ha'rabbanim* and *roshei yeshivos*. After concluding this *shlichus*, he returned to Warsaw where he served as *maggid shiur* in the younger level of Tomchei T'mimim. At this time too, the personal relationship he had with the Rebbe was apparent, for the Rebbe was personally responsible for his salary.

MINISTER OF THE COURTYARD

In 5692, R' Gurary attended the wedding of R' M.M. Horenstein and Rebbetzin Shaina (may Hashem avenge their blood). The wedding took place in the summer yet it rained throughout the *bakeken*, and it was very dark. Years later, R' Gurary said that he noticed that the Rebbe looked extremely gloomy and he was very shaken.

When he was in the town of Druzkenik (a resort area) on the border of Poland and Lithuania, the Rebbe Rayatz stayed in a hotel and needed a *minyán*. It was R' Gurary's job to find a *seifer Torah*, however, in this particular town there was only a Torah which had the words "*ptzua daka*" written with the letter *Hei*, which is not the *minhag Chabad*.

R' Gurary asked the Rebbe, through Rashag, *a"h*, what to do, and he was told that our tradition has it that the Alter Rebbe once stayed in a city where there were only *sifrei Torahs* written with a *Hei*, and he read from them or went up to the Torah when he was called.

While there, R' Gurary took care of the Rebbe's household's needs, and had the privilege of the Rebbe bestowing upon him the nickname, "*Minister D'vara*" (Minister of the Courtyard).

WITH THE REBBE RAYATZ IN WARSAW

When the Rebbe Rayatz arrived in Warsaw they had to find a bakery in order to bake matzos. R' Gurary was one of the main people involved in this. At first they found a bakery in Otvotsk, but while koshering the oven a fire broke out and burnt the oven. Then they found a bakery in the nearby town of Parnitsh, but there were many *rabbanim* and *Admurim* in Parnitsh, and it was almost impossible to bake matza on Erev Pesach because there were many who wanted to do so.

R' Gurary asked the Rebbe what to do, for we have the custom of baking matza on Erev Pesach after *chatzos* (noon). The Rebbe said that they could bake before noon, and this is what they did.

The Rebbe asked R' Gurary to build a model of the Beis HaMikdash out of wood. There was a Jew in Warsaw who had made a model of the Beis HaMikdash, exactly as the Gemara describes it, and the Rebbe wanted R' Gurary to do the same. Since he didn't want people to come to him with complaints that he hadn't made it properly, and since the cost would be high and if he didn't make it precisely he thought the Rebbe would have complaints that he wasted money, he sought all sorts of excuses, saying he wasn't capable of doing it, etc.

The Rebbe said, "I'm teaching you *Orach Chaim*, and you're teaching me *Choshen Mishpat*..." (i.e., I'm guiding your spiritual life, and you respond with monetary considerations).

The Rebbe once traveled to visit his uncle, R' Moshe Horenstein, *a"h*. At the entrance there stood an old *chassid* by the name of Shimon Greenberg. The Rebbe told him to stay near the door, while he asked R' Gurary to join him on the trip. This was remarkable, the Rebbe taking R' Zalman who was a *bachur*, while the old *chassid* was left near the door. The Rebbe explained that he was taking R' Zalman because he was afraid that if he left him near the door he would steal his manuscripts.

When the Rebbe arrived in Otvotsk, R' Gurary was appointed as *gabbai* responsible for allowing people in for *yechidus*. Most people lived in Warsaw and they would come in the evening in order to see the Rebbe for *yechidus*.

They *davened Mincha* in the front room and didn't say Tachnun. The Rebbe asked R' Gurary why they hadn't said Tachnun, and R' Gurary answered that when the Rebbe came it's Yom Tov,

and on Yom Tov you don't say Tachnun.

The Rebbe said: "I understand that when the Rebbe comes you don't sin, but that you don't say Tachnun when the Rebbe comes, that I don't understand."

The Rebbe once took R' Gurary for *Kiddush Levana* so that he could say "*shalom aleichem*" to him. There were many trees in Otvotsk and the Rebbe looked for a place to be *mekadesh* the *levana* without standing under a tree. While walking, the Rebbe tripped over a wire fence and nearly fell. Afterwards, the Rebbe gave R' Gurary money to buy *mashke*, so that the *chassidim* could *farbreng* (about the miracle that had happened).

While in Otvotsk for Pesach, there was not a large crowd for Pesach. Among the guests were only the Rebbe's relatives, R' Gurary, his friend R' Meir Glazman, *a"h*, and Feivel Greener, *a"h*. Before the meal, the Rebbe's grandson told everybody where to sit, as the Rebbe had instructed him, on the right or left, near or far. The guests were called "the Rebbetzin's guests."

R' Gurary was embarrassed to eat in front of the Rebbe and so he refrained from eating. Seeing this, the Rebbe told the story about R' Yekusiel Liepler, about the Tzemach Tzedek sending him matza Erev Pesach, which he ate before *b'dikas chametz* because he thought the Tzemach Tzedek had sent the matza in order to help him with his *avodas ha't'filla b'arichus*. The Rebbe Rayatz concluded the story by saying that from this we see that when the Rebbe gives, you take.

PUBLISHING "HA'TAMIM"

At that time, R' Gurary was responsible for publishing the Torah journal called *HaTamim*. A large portion of the Rebbe's writings about the *g'dolei ha'chassidim* were printed in *HaTamim* thanks to R' Gurary, who would go to the Rebbe and say they

didn't have material for the publication, and then the Rebbe would sit down and write.

R' Gurary put a lot of work into *HaTamim*. After the journal appeared, some of the elder *chassidim* complained about it. His own brother, R' Hershel Gurary (may Hashem avenge his blood), apparently also dissatisfied with the journal, went to the Rebbe with his complaints, and the Rebbe said, "You don't know how many *baalei t'shuva HaTamim* has made."

THE REBBE RAYATZ SAVES R' ZALMAN AND HIS KALLA

A *shidduch* was suggested to R' Zalman in 5699 (1939) with Rebbetzin Chava, the daughter of the Kapishnitzer Rebbe, *z"l*. The Rebbe Rayatz was in a resort near Riga at the time and the Kapishnitzer Rebbe went to visit him with his daughter. The *Admur* asked the Rebbe whether R' Zalman was a *talmid chacham*.

The Rebbe answered: "By us, a *talmid chacham* is something different. But in the simple understanding of the term, he is a *talmid chacham*."

The *Admur* asked whether R' Zalman was a *yerei Shamayim* and the Rebbe said: "I hold of his *yiras Shamayim*."

The Rebbe Rayatz, who was favorably impressed by the *Admur's* daughter, wrote to the Rebbetzin that it was apparent on her face that she was from a family of *Admurim*, and he spoke highly of her. The Kapishnitzer Rebbe, who was on his way to America, left his daughter in Riga and the Rebbe instructed his *chassidim* to take care of her.

The *shidduch* was finalized before Pesach and the *tenaim* took place in the home of R' Mordechai Cheifetz. The Rebbe told R' Zalman to buy an expensive ring for the *kalla*. Since he didn't have the money, the Rebbe gave him a large sum to buy a suitable ring. The Rebbe even asked him to show him the ring before giving it to the

kalla.

At this time, R' Gurary wanted to return to Warsaw but the Rebbe said no. Even before Pesach when he wanted to celebrate Yom Tov with his mother in Warsaw, the Rebbe didn't give him his blessings. When he told the Rebbe that he wanted to go for Pesach since he didn't eat out of his house on Pesach, the Rebbe said: "Will you always be able to eat at your mother's house?" This question seemed enigmatic at the time, but a few months later, with the outbreak of World War II, when his mother was killed, it was understood.



Rabbi Gurary (left) giving a shiur in Warsaw

The Rebbe didn't let him go to Warsaw for Shavuot either. He told him to ask his father-in-law to arrange entry permits to the U.S. for him and his kalla. After months of trying, his father-in-law succeeded in obtaining the permits, and in Kislev 5700 (1940), R' Gurary and his kalla arrived in the U.S.

News of the Holocaust, which was decimating European Jewry, began to seep through and R' Gurary realized that the Rebbe had prevented him from traveling to Warsaw and had sent him to the U.S. in order to save his

life.

Upon arriving in America, R' Gurary put in tremendous efforts to saving the Rebbe Rayatz. He got large sums of money from his father-in-law and sent it to the Rebbe to cover the expenses of the trip and to pay for entrance permits.

MENACHEL OF TOMCHEI T'MIMIM

After he married, R' Gurary lived with his father-in-law on the East Side of Manhattan. It was at this time that he asked the Rebbe two questions. The first one was whether he should recline

while attending his father-in-law's seider since his Rebbe was the Rebbe Rayatz and not his father-in-law. His second question was whether he could use aspirin on Pesach since he suffered from migraine headaches.

The Rebbe answered: "Self honor and self love has a limit. He shouldn't recline, and he shouldn't use the aspirin."

When the Rebbe Rayatz founded Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in America, he appointed R' Gurary as a teacher in the yeshiva, and told him to move to live near the yeshiva. Before Pesach the

Rebbe told him: "Since I told you to leave your father-in-law's house, it's my responsibility, but you should go to your father-in-law for Pesach. If you think you can't eat there on Pesach, I'm telling you that if I'd be there, I'd eat there!"

R' Gurary continued to stand and think about it and the Rebbe said: "If you think I don't know, and you know more than me, I'll tell you again – if I'd be there, I'd eat!"

At that *yechidus* the Rebbe told him to help his wife. When she lived with her father she had help, but now, living near the yeshiva, there was no one to help her. In connection with this the Rebbe told him that in his youth his father (the Rebbe Rashab) would rock his carriage while holding a *maamer chassidus*.

R' Gurary had a *yechidus* in which the Rebbe said sadly, "Why don't we see the *v'niflinu* by us [i.e., that we are not more refined]?" R' Gurary was upset that the Rebbe was pained by this and he said: "I don't know why we don't see it, but others do see it in us, and they treat us with respect."

The Rebbe was very happy to hear this and his spirits were uplifted. Later on the members of the household asked R' Gurary what had happened during the *yechidus* to bring about such a change in the Rebbe's spirits.

When Tomchei T'mimim was first founded in America, it had a Vaad which consisted of Rashag, R' Shmuel Levitin, R' Yisroel Jacobson, R' Eliyahu Yachil Simpson, R' Mordechai Mentlik, and R' Gurary. R' Gurary asked the Rebbe in *yechidus* which member of the Vaad he should listen to.

The Rebbe said they should listen to R' Shmuel Levitin because he wasn't involved in politics. R' Gurary looked at the Rebbe in astonishment (speaking wasn't possible, only looking) and the Rebbe said: "He ought not to be involved in politics."

R' Gurary received dozens of letters

AN ABOUT-FACE – FOR MOSHIACH

In more recent years, R' Gurary would speak a great deal about faith in what the Rebbe said. He would always quote from the Haftora of Rosh HaShana, the day of his passing, which describes the strong faith Chana had in the promise of the *navi*. The following is an excerpt from an article R' Gurary wrote for our publication for Yud-Alef Nissan:

In the story of Shiras Chana it says that Eli HaKohen who was a *navi* gave her a *bracha*, “*u’paneha lo hayu od*” (her countenance was no longer the same). Why add that final comment? What relevance does it have to the *bracha* Eli gave her? It already said, “and the G-d of Israel should grant your request that you asked of Him.” So it’s clear that his *bracha* would be fulfilled as all words of a *navi* are fulfilled?

The answer is simple. The *bracha* of a *navi* is fulfilled but there can be obstacles and delays. Therefore, in order for Eli’s *bracha* to be fulfilled without obstacles and delays, there had to be a “vessel” for this, and the vessel was *emuna* and *bitachon* – “Her countenance was no longer the same.” If instead of her former bitterness she felt joy, to the point that her physical countenance reflected her *simcha* and *bitachon*, this itself is a vessel for Eli’s *bracha* to be fulfilled “below ten handbreadths,” as indeed happened.

Chana’s prayer was special and the Gemara learns many *halachos* from her *t’filla*. It wasn’t merely a personal prayer but something that pertained to future generations. From this story we learn that in order for a *bracha* from a *tzaddik* to be realized, we need the vessel of faith. This is the *avoda* of our times “and her countenance was no longer the same.” *Emuna*.

I heard a story from the *chassid*, R’ Moshe Leib Rodstein, that once a woman came to R’ Mendel Horodoker to ask for a *bracha* for a child. R’ Mendel told her: “If you will accept my *bracha* in such a way that you feel your hands moving [i.e., that you feel as though you are holding the baby and rocking him], I will bless you.” When she said she would, he blessed her, and his *bracha* was fulfilled. Her *emuna* wasn’t way up there in the seventh heaven; it was palpable. And it was this that made her a vessel to see the fulfillment of the *bracha*.

In our generation we see how the Rebbe’s words were

“on the mark.” On many occasions the Rebbe told us that “our generation is the last generation of *Galus* and the first of *Geula*,” and so we need to believe this with simple faith.

When the Raza (the brother of the Rebbe Rashab) was asked to be *rebbe* after the passing of the Rebbe Maharash he said: “Everything has an intermediary. Between a wealthy man and a poor man is a man of average means. Between a wise man and a fool there’s someone in between, etc., but between a *rebbe* and a thief there’s nothing in between, either you’re a *rebbe* or you’re a thief [i.e., a thief, who is *gonev daas* – he fools people].”

The same is true with the *emuna* in what the Rebbe said, there’s no partial belief. Either you believe or *ch”v*...

The fact that much time has elapsed and we still don’t have the true and complete *Geula* (and there are various questions), should not cool off our *emuna* that Moshiach is coming today.

Chazal tell us about the generation that left Egypt that they were a *Dor Dei’a* (a generation of knowledge) who saw G-dliness, as it says regarding *Mattan Torah*, “You saw that I spoke to you from the heavens.” Yet the moment their figuring didn’t work out right, they made the Golden Calf. We are a reincarnation of that generation and we have to correct what they did

wrong and stand strong in our faith that it will be as the Rebbe said, and *hinei zeh ba teikef u’miyad b’poel mamash*.

In the famous *sicha* of Ko’ach Nissan 5751 the Rebbe said, “I did my part” and now it has been given over to us. After the Rebbe testified that he did everything he had to do, what are we supposed to do?

In my humble opinion what’s required of us is pure faith in what the Rebbe said – that our generation is the last generation of *Galus* and the first of *Geula*. The knowledge that Moshiach is coming immediately ought to be so real to us to the point that “her countenance was no longer the same,” as with Chana.

Furthermore, when we know that what the Rebbe said about *Geula* was said as a prophecy, our *emuna* and *bitachon* ought to be even stronger, for the words of a prophecy are fulfilled.

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and responses from the Rebbe in connection with his work in the *yeshiva* (most of them were printed in *Igros Kodesh*).

R' Gurary collected *maamud* money (money for the Rebbe's household). He once brought the Rebbe a *chassid* of his father-in-law. This *chassid* gave the Rebbe a nice sum of money. The Rebbe blessed him with long life, and explained that the meaning of *arichus yamim* is days and years full of Torah and *mitzvos*, like it says in the Zohar on the *pasuk*, "and Avrohom was old, coming in days," which means "full days."

This *yechidus* took place before Pesach. That summer, the *chassid* was very sick. He was given medication but they didn't realize he had appendicitis which put his life in danger. In many *shuls* they said T'hillim for him, and he was miraculously healed.

R' Gurary told the Rebbe MH" M that the man had miraculously recovered as a result of the *bracha* the Rebbe had given him. He said that at the time the Rebbe had blessed him he had wondered why the Rebbe was giving a young person this *bracha*, and now he understood. The Rebbe MH" M told this to the Rebbe Rayatz who said: "I didn't openly think of that, but all things are in *yechida*."

When first coming to America, R' Gurary began having kidney problems. The doctors wanted to remove one kidney and he consulted with the Rebbe. The Rebbe told him if Hashem gave man two kidneys it means he needs them, and he said he shouldn't have it removed.

R' Gurary listened to the Rebbe and despite the fact that he suffered a great deal for years, and he needed to be treated for it, he didn't have the kidney taken out for many years. He was prepared to suffer, the main thing being listening to the Rebbe.

In the winter of 5705 (1945), the Rebbe's health was precarious. After he

recovered somewhat, the doctors said he could receive some of his closest people on condition that they didn't talk to him and that he was careful not to get excited.

On Tuesday, Motzai Asara B'Teives, the *ziknei rabbanei* and *chashuvei Anash* entered the Rebbe's room for the first time. R' Gurary was among the closest *chassidim*.

The Rebbe asked R' Gurary: "How is your health?"

R' Gurary didn't know what to do because he had been warned not to



Rabbi S.Z. Gurary standing (far left) as the Rebbe Rayatz entered a hall for a dinner

talk. He said: "It was agreed that we wouldn't talk."

The Rebbe said: "But I'm asking!"

R' Gurary had no choice and he told the Rebbe that he suffered terribly from kidney stones and the doctor said he needed an operation.

The Rebbe said: "Tell the doctor you don't need an operation. Drink a cup of milk every day and sometimes

you can eat herring – but not like most people eat herring – and you'll be fine!

(Afterwards, R' Gurary went to a doctor and the doctor examined him and said he didn't see any kidney stones!)

At the end of the 1940's, the Rebbe told him to go into business. He did very well, though in this too he didn't make a move without asking for and receiving a *bracha* from the Rebbe.

THOUSANDS OF ANSWERS AND RESPONSES

After the passing of the Rebbe Rayatz, R' Gurary became *mekushar* to the Rebbe MH" M heart and soul. The fact that he had been very *mekushar* and close to the Rebbe Rayatz, didn't affect his *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe.

It's impossible to write about the special connection R' Gurary had with the Rebbe in one article, not even in a series of articles. R' Gurary wrote to the Rebbe nearly every day about what he had done that day, and everything he did was with the Rebbe's *haskama* and *bracha*. The letters and responses he received from the Rebbe over the years number in the thousands! Yet we can't get away without writing anything, so we'll describe a few incidents and in the future, G-d willing, there will be a series of articles which will describe the special connection between the Rebbe and R' Gurary.

UTTER DEVOTION TO THE REBBE'S MOSDOS

When the Rebbe MH" M first refused to accept the Chabad leadership, R' Gurary asked the Rebbe for a *yechidus*. The Rebbe smiled and said: "What, you're also one of those?"

R' Gurary said: "With *chaya* and *yechida* (the transcendent levels of the soul through which a Rebbe bonds with *chassidim*), you don't play around."

The Rebbe became serious and accepted him for *yechidus*.

At this time there was a special Vaad that worked on things having to do with the new *nesius*. R' Gurary was a member of this Vaad, and he recently related that the Vaad was established at the initiative of the Rebbe MH"M, who called the members of the Vaad and appointed them to the task.

R' Gurary devoted himself to getting the Rebbe to accept the *nesius* in all matters. When he saw that the Rebbe was not allowing the *chozrim* into his room after the saying of a *maamer*, as all the previous Rebbeim did, he entered for a *yechidus* and asked the Rebbe why they didn't do *chazara*.

The Rebbe explained that the previous Rebbeim were precise in their wording and only the Mittlerer Rebbe was not so exacting in the words but in the *inyan*. I too, said the Rebbe, am not precise in my words, so there's not much need for *chazara*.

R' Gurary's devotion to the Rebbe's *mosdos* was limitless. He got many other wealthy people whom he knew from business to contribute to the Rebbe's *mosdos*. He himself gave tens of millions to the Rebbe's *mosdos*. He was a member of the *hanhala* of Kehos, and thanks to him, this *mosad* is one of the most illustrious *mosdos* of Chabad in recent decades. Hundreds of *sifrei maamarim* of the Rebbeim were printed in the last fifty years. R' Gurary paid for most of them to be published. The Rebbe referred to this a few times, even at public *farbrengens*, saying what a great *z'chus* it was to pay to have *s'farim* printed.

On Simchas Torah in one of the early years of the Rebbe's *nesius*, R' Gurary said to the Rebbe that since Simchas Torah night is considered an auspicious time in Lubavitch (it was the time the Rebbe Rashab blessed all the *bachurim* who needed an exemption from the Russian army), he was asking the Rebbe that he have the *z'chus* to have a *yechidus* each year on Simchas Torah night and be blessed by

the Rebbe.

The Rebbe agreed on condition that R' Gurary keep it a secret so that others wouldn't be jealous. Every year, on Simchas Torah night, he would have a special *yechidus* with the Rebbe.

One Simchas Torah, R' Gurary had a terrible kidney attack. The doctor said he had to go to the hospital for an operation. R' Gurary's daughter, Mrs. Esther Sternberg, who was a little girl at the time, ran to the Rebbe's house to ask for a *bracha* for her father.

The Rebbetzin opened the door and when she heard what was going on she went upstairs to the Rebbe to

Why do you care if the chassidim say the Rebbe is Moshiach? It was always that way, as brought in the Gemara, that talmidim would say that their teachers were worthy of being Moshiach.

ask for a *bracha*. The Rebbe said he should go to Dr. Seligson. The little girl said: "But my father already saw a doctor, and the doctor said he has to go to the hospital!"

The Rebbetzin told the Rebbe what she said and the Rebbe said: "Nu, if they already asked a doctor, they should do what he said."

When the girl returned home and R' Gurary heard that at first the Rebbe had said they should consult with Dr. Seligson, he decided not to do

anything without Dr. Seligson's approval.

When Dr. Seligson arrived he said the situation wasn't that bad and he could wait until after Yom Tov. A few hours later the stone passed and the next day R' Gurary was in his usual place, selling *Hakafos* on behalf of Merkaz. When they told the Rebbe that the stone had passed, the Rebbe said: "Nu, I said they should listen to Seligson."

R' Gurary had a special *chassidic* cleverness. In one of the early years of the *nesius* the Rebbe returned from the Ohel after sunset, not having *davened* Mincha yet. The Rebbe asked R' Gurary: "When is sunset this time of year?"

R' Gurary answered: "Five minutes after the Rebbe finishes Mincha!"

The Rebbe smiled and was pleased and went to *daven* Mincha.

IN BUSINESS WITH THE REBBE'S GUIDANCE

In 5718 (1958) the Rebbe was *menachem avel* the Kapishnitzer Rebbe when he sat *Shiva* for his brother. On this occasion, the Rebbe said that Jews ought to be rich. The Kapishnitzer Rebbe disagreed on account of the temptations associated with riches. In the end, the Rebbe managed to get him to agree that his son-in-law, R' Gurary, be rich.

Rashag once asked R' Gurary to take him to wealthy people he knew from business dealings in Brazil. R' Gurary said he would do so, on condition that he got the Rebbe's *haskama*, and he also wanted the Rebbe's *bracha* for doing so.

Rashag went to the Rebbe and got his *haskama*. After Rashag returned from Brazil, R' Gurary had a *yechidus* and began asking for *brachos* for his business. The Rebbe stopped him and said: "Now you need to ask for *brachos* for *chassidische* children."

In the early years of the *nesius*, the



Rabbi Gurary in front of 770 in the early years

government demanded a large sum in unpaid taxes. R' Gurary lost the first court-case and he decided to appeal. After the appeal, the government offered a compromise, that he pay a somewhat lesser sum.

He didn't know what to do, whether to insist on not paying anything or to accept the government's compromise, for if he didn't accept it he would have to pay the full amount.

He asked the Rebbe who told him to open a Chumash and look at the first Rashi he saw. He opened a Chumash B'Reishis to the beginning of Lech Lecha and looked at Rashi on that page, but didn't see an answer to his question.

He went back to the Rebbe and said he didn't see an answer. The Rebbe opened the Chumash and showed him that Rashi at the beginning of the sidra says, "u'becha chosmin" (literally, and we sign with you), an indication that he should agree to the offer.

Once, a friend offered him a real estate deal that entailed neither an investment of money nor any work. It would just be pure profit with no risk. He wrote to the Rebbe about it and the Rebbe chastised him and wrote: "What connection do you have with real

estate? What do you understand about it? Why do you need more *pizur nefesh* (distraction)? You have enough without it."

R' Gurary went back to the partner and told him what the Rebbe had written and said he would listen to the Rebbe. At first, the person said he wouldn't do the deal, but a third partner in the business convinced him that the answer was only for R' Gurary and not for him. Afterwards, he told R' Gurary that he regretted getting involved in the deal since he had a lot of anguish over it and many problems because of it.

STRENGTHENING THE NEIGHBORHOOD

At the end of the 60's when the Rebbe urged the strengthening of the neighborhood, R' Gurary was one of the main people involved in doing so. He bought houses and shuls that were about to be sold to gentiles and even announced to *Anash* that whoever bought a house would get \$5000 from him as a loan with easy terms. At a time when a house in Crown Heights cost \$15,000, this was a large sum.

In later years, he had *mikvaos* built and thousands of people enjoy the use of these *mikvaos*. The *mikva* on the

corner of Kingston and Union, which is used by thousands of T'mimim and guests, is free. All expenses are paid for by R' Gurary.

The directors of *mosdos* in the neighborhood knew that they could always be helped by R' Gurary in difficult times. He both lent and contributed huge sums of money. He had a particular fondness for the United Lubavitcher Yeshivos (he was chairman of the board), and in recent years he devoted himself to saving it.

He had a private *gemach* and lent large amounts of money to thousands of *Anash* for long periods of time.

He was especially fond of guests, and he supported the Hachnasas Orchim organization. In addition to the *mikva* on Union-Kingston, he allowed Hachnasas Orchim to use his apartments for guests, and hundreds of guests enjoyed their stay there, around the year.

AN ETERNAL Z'CHUS

Just as the Rebbe Rayatz called him "Minister of the Courtyard," the Rebbe MH"M appointed R' Gurary as the one responsible for all his household expenses and anything connected with the Rebbe and Rebbetzin's medical needs.

On Chaf-Beis Shevat 5748, a few hours after the Rebbetzin passed away, the Rebbe called R' Gurary to his room at home and with a serious look told him that the *z'chus* of being the one primarily involved with the *nifteres* (deceased) would stand by him and his children and grandchildren till the end of time.

R' Gurary was once involved in building a *sukka* for the Rebbe, and among other things, he needed to be sure that they could sit in the *sukka* without any *halachic* questions arising. For this purpose, he trimmed the trees at 770 that lined the way you go to Tashlich.

The Rebbe asked him how he

could cut the trees and R' Gurary wrote to the Rebbe that in *Shulchan Aruch* it says that only fruit trees may not be cut, but barren trees may be cut. The Rebbe said that when being involved in the needs of the public, one must have *yishuv ha'daas* (presence of mind), and in this matter it says in *Seifer HaChinuch* that it's forbidden to cut trees because it causes pain to the residents of the city, and by cutting the branches he caused pain to those who live in the house.

As someone alert to the Rebbe's needs, R' Gurary came up with the idea of building a special place for Tashlich near 770 to save the Rebbe the bother of walking to the park. After receiving the Rebbe's consent and blessing, he brought people to dig behind the building and they discovered a spring under 770. From there, the water flows into the special structure used for Tashlich.

Before Rosh HaShana, the Rebbe gave him various instructions in connection with Tashlich – that there should be trees around it and fish. Every year, the family made sure to bring fish. By the way, it is from this spring that they draw water for *mayim sh'lanu* for Pesach.

When the Rebbe wanted to point out a particular thing but didn't want to do so at a *farbrengen*, he would call R' Gurary to a *yechidus* and have him convey his message. An example: In the early years the Rebbe stayed in the *sukka* while people said the *bracha* on the Rebbe's *minim*. Then the Rebbe told R' Gurary he didn't want to take the time, and could he arrange something.

R' Gurary arranged that R' Meir Harlig would take the *minim* from the Rebbe, thus saving the Rebbe precious time. Aside from this, dozens of *horaos* and *hanhagos* were transmitted through him over the years. In connection with the *bar mitzva* of his sons, and later when they married, R' Gurary received instructions and *hanhagos* from the Rebbe.

In later years, R' Gurary was the *shliach* of *Anash* to give the Rebbe the *Pa'N klali* and to bless the Rebbe on his birthday, Yud-Alef Nissan.

ASKANUS WITH PRIDE

R' Gurary's connections with *g'dolei ha'Torah* of all backgrounds were utilized by him to transmit the Rebbe's views to various groups. He also served in an important role in the Agudas HaRabbanim, one of the most important Jewish organizations in America in those days, and practically speaking, he served as the Rebbe's representative. Many instructions to the organization were conveyed by him.

He was in constant contact with R' Chadakov, who conveyed to him the Rebbe's instructions. It often happened that the Rebbe came on the line while they spoke and told R' Chadakov what to say to R' Gurary.

R' Gurary was one of the distinguished Lubavitch *askanim*, to the point that it could be said that there was almost nothing that he wasn't involved in, with the Rebbe's guidance. He had a special relationship with the Rebbe and when he experienced a difficult period in his life, the Rebbe said that he thought of R' Gurary every few minutes and every little while he asked about him.

In 5745 (1985) the Rebbe appointed him as a member of the directorship of the board of Agudas Chassidei Chabad. In this role he received dozens of instructions in connection with the court case for the *s'farim* which took place at that time and regarding *askanus* in general.

R' Gurary fiercely and proudly protected the *kavod* of Lubavitch and its *mosdos*. When certain groups were jealous of the Rebbe's G-dly success and tried to cause trouble for Chabad, it was R' Gurary who didn't flinch before anyone when it came to the Rebbe's *kavod* and with his characteristically *chassidic* strength and

his special channels, he succeeded in silencing them.

It's important to note that in addition to his business dealings and his *askanus*, he had set times for learning. He gave two Gemara *shiurim* every day in *shul* at 5:30 a.m. and at 8 at night. In more recent years when his medical condition made it difficult for him for him to walk to *shul*, he held the *shiur* in his house.

HIDDUR MITZVOS TO THE POINT OF MESIRUS NEFESH

R' Gurary had an especial fondness for *hiddur mitzvos*, regardless of the cost. He sought after *sandakaus* (the one who holds the baby at the *bris*), and he was willing to pay for the *bris* in exchange for being allowed to be *sandak*.

Many *kollel* members who didn't have the means to pay for a *bris*, would give him *sandakaus* in exchange for his paying all expenses. Even in recent years when it was hard for him to be *sandak* due to his health, he insisted on performing this *mitzva* at any price. In the *sicha* of Acharei-K'doshim 5745, the Rebbe praised R' Gurary's *hiddur* in this *mitzva*.

He once had to undergo a prostate operation which entails *halachic* questions. Since he knew the Rebbe's view – to try and refrain from having this operation done – he told the Rebbe in *yechidus* that he was ready to go with *mesirus nefesh* in this matter.

The Rebbe said this is not one of the three *mitzvos* for which one must have *mesirus nefesh*. R' Gurary still insisted, and said that he had heard from the Rebbetzin that during the war the Rebbe had had *mesirus nefesh* even for things for which we are not required to have *mesirus nefesh*, like for *chalav Yisroel* and *esrogim*.

In the end, the Rebbe agreed that he shouldn't do the operation. Towards the end of the *yechidus*, R' Gurary thought that maybe it wasn't right for him to insist, and he asked the Rebbe



whether he didn't do the right thing.

The Rebbe said: "We already agreed."

Miraculously, R' Gurary didn't suffer from this for many decades!

When the Rebbe announced the *mivtza'im*, R' Gurary devoted himself to each *mivtza*. When the Rebbe announced *Mivtza Bayis Malei S'farim* (a house full of Jewish books), he bought enormous amounts of *s'farim*, among them expensive and rare ones, and adorned his home with them.

He was one of the main people involved in building and expanding the Lubavitch Library. He was a member of the building committee and aside from his personal contributions, he also got his friends to contribute towards the expansion of the library.

In 5748, when the Rebbe asked that *s'farim* be sent to the library, R' Gurary told the librarians to come and see his collection and to take anything the library didn't already have. They

took nearly 5000 *s'farim*!

After announcing the *takana* of learning Rambam daily, R' Gurary was careful to learn the shiur in the morning. He would say that despite it being *nigleh* (which is not customarily learned before *davening*), since it was the Rebbe's *takana*, it ought to be fulfilled in the morning.

STRENGTHENING THE EMUNA IN THE REBBE MELECH HA'MOSHIACH

R' Gurary was one of those who led the way in spreading the *b'suras ha'Geula* and the *goel*. With a special *chassidishe chayus*, he conveyed the belief in the Rebbe as Melech HaMoshiach.

He once related the turning-point for him, when he realized that the Rebbe wanted his identity as Moshiach to be publicized. It was 5737 (1977), when those who instigated quarrels with Lubavitch tried to focus attention on Lubavitchers' belief that the Rebbe

is Moshiach in order to intensify the fires of *machlokes*.

A group of *askanim* thought of taking certain steps to quiet things down. Among the *rabbanim* was R' Gurary who contacted R' Chadakov in order to discuss the matter with him. R' Chadakov, by nature, avoided any publicity of the belief that the Rebbe is Moshiach, and he agreed with what R' Gurary said.

As they spoke, R' Gurary heard a cough on the line which indicated the Rebbe was listening. It was quiet for two minutes and then R' Chadakov returned with a completely different opinion.

R' Zalman, he said, why do you care if the *chassidim* say the Rebbe is Moshiach? It was always that way, as brought in the Gemara, that *talmidim* would say that their teachers were worthy of being Moshiach.

R' Gurary immediately realized that the sudden change in R' Chadakov's

opinion resulted in what the Rebbe had told him, and so he had changed his own opinion from one extreme to the other.

Excited by what the Rebbe had said, R' Gurary called one of the secretaries and asked him to buy a bottle of mashke and to *farbrenge* about the great *gilui* (revelation) they had merited that day when the Rebbe expressed his view that *chassidim* ought to publicize that the Rebbe is Moshiach.

From then on, R' Gurary was one of those who led the way in spreading the *b'suras ha'Geula* and the *goel* and was a speaker at gatherings to strengthen this belief.

In the 90's, after the great *hisorerus* following the Rebbe's *sichos* on *Geula*, R' Gurary would speak warmly about the new era that we are in, the era of the *hisgalus* of Moshiach, and about the meaning of "Yechi ... Melech HaMoshiach *Lolam Va'ed*" in the Rebbe's presence. He urged people to use this great opportunity properly to publicize the *b'suras ha'Geula* to the public.

R' Gurary supported the ads in the papers announcing the identity of the Rebbe as Moshiach and encouraged people to increase their good deeds in order to be *mekabel* Moshiach. When people complained about these ads, he asked R' Groner to ask the Rebbe about this again and to write down the



R' Gurary receiving a dollar and a *bracha*

answer. This is how the Rebbe's view supporting these ads came to be publicized.

In recent years, after Gimmel Tammuz, R' Gurary continuously encouraged *Anash* in this, and emphasized the belief in the realization of the Rebbe's prophecy. He would say, "*k'mofes hayisi l'rabbim*" – that he, who

saw how everything the Rebbe promised over the years had been fulfilled, could say with utter certainty, from personal experience, that all the prophecies would be fulfilled.

In all his speeches in recent years, he mentioned the *emuna* of *chassidim* in the Rebbe as Moshiach, and would conclude his speeches with "Yechi."

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IT'S HIS INYAN

It's 105 years since Kuntres Heichaltzu, which addresses the importance of brotherly love, and so we present a letter that R' Avrohom Pariz sent to the residents of Kfar Chabad in which he denounces machlokes and ill-will in general, and in Kfar Chabad in particular. The letter was originally written in Yiddish and is freely translated. The message certainly applies to the headquarters of Melech HaMoshiach – Crown Heights.

To my dear brothers...

Shalom u'v'racha,

Kfar Chabad is not like all other *k'farim*. All other villages are formed when a hundred or so people get together and build a *k'far*. The *k'far* is their business, for their personal interests, and therefore they have the right to choose people that will work on developing the *k'far* based on their interests.

Kfar Chabad is another thing entirely. It's not a personal matter, but something general. And not something general that is comprised of parts, but general in essence. It is the channel by which the *hafatzas ha'maayanos* is transmitted. The one who founded (and is now building) the *k'far* is (not the people in the *k'far* but) an individual who is actually "general in essence." He is Yisroel and Yisroel is he, it is with his *kochos* and for the purpose stated above. In other words, Kfar Chabad pertains to all Jews.

The people, may they increase, who live in Kfar Chabad, merited a great *z'chus* as a *chesed-chinam* (unwarranted kindness) that *hafatzas ha'maayanos*, which is one of the wondrous matters of *birurim*, passes

through them. But for that very same reason the responsibility they have is even greater than anybody else's, because they must rise above their personal lives and mobilize for the welfare of all. That means that even

If you're really good friends, if you care about some deficiency, you have to write about it to our father shlita [i.e., the Rebbe] who will do what is necessary. It is his inyan, not ours.

when it causes damage to one's finances or body and soul, *r"l*, it is forbidden to think about this. One may only think about the welfare of all, precisely as one worries about

one's own life, *mamash!*

Then one is considered a resident of Kfar Chabad.

If one doesn't care about the welfare of all, at least as much as he cares about his own welfare, then he is a disembodied limb, and worse – betrays the goal and the Jewish people.

This is a brief introduction to what I want to say to you. As I heard, there are people who undermine and murmur and speak *lashon ha'ra* about members of the *vaad*. Aside from the fact that all that they imagine to be deficiencies are actually great advantages in this very matter, we also see that those who repeat this *lashon ha'ra* are people who never had leadership positions, especially not in general matters concerning the *k'far*. For Kfar Chabad is not only separate from the entire world, but it's something that is far more elevated than the world, etc.

Aside from all this, each person, big or small, old or young, *chassid* or *lamdan*, who speaks about this is subjective, whether grossly so or more subtly so. Some speak out of *sinas chinam* (unwarranted hatred)

that so-and-so shouldn't be on the *vaad*, to the point that some can't even look to see how, *baruch Hashem*, the *k'far* is blossoming – may it continue to blossom. Simply out of jealousy and hatred, they can't see it.

This is the Satan that is enclothed in them. Nobody catches on to the fact that this is the way things are, and nobody stops to think where this has taken us.

If you're really good friends, if you care about some deficiency, you have to write about it to our father *shlita* [i.e., the Rebbe] who will do what is necessary. It is his *inyan*, not ours.

If you have really written and haven't received a response, you think you fulfilled your obligation by writing, and since you didn't receive an answer you think: "Rebbe, you don't tell us what to do ... so we'll take it into our own hands."

I am telling you *kinderlach*, that the promise of "I will remove the spirit of impurity from the earth" hasn't yet been fulfilled, and so it's very possible that the conduct of the "left side" will succeed, *ch"v*, and for the present you'll be successful in what you want.

I'm telling you: I am not envious, not of you and not of those that get schlepped along with you. I hope to Hashem, who is the Merciful One,

that He have mercy on you and it won't succeed. For your own good!

But *kinderlach, kinderlach* ... it would be far better if you stopped yourselves, for then not even one flaw would remain in you.

In short: there's a *baal ha'bayis* of this *bira* (palace)! *Gevald, gevald, Ribbono shel olam*, how long will You be concealed? *Kinderlach, kinderlach*, have mercy on yourselves and on us all. Run away from *shitos* like these, and *shalom al Yisroel*.

May you all be well – you, your wives, and your children. Healthy physically and spiritually.

A. Pariz

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THIS WEEK TEN YEARS AGO: SUMMING UP AN INCREDIBLE YEAR

BY MENACHEM BEN ELIEZER

*This week, ten years ago, my year on K'vutza 5753 was over. As opposed to all the years prior to it, this year was unique in that there were giluyim on the one hand, and pain on the other. The predominant feeling was one of uncertainty. Every t'filla, every time the Rebbe came out, was sudden. It was a year in which many things were innovated in Lubavitch. * This diary was written from the perspective of the end of the year, and it refers to the innovations and the special experiences. * Part 2 of 2*

A SUKKOS OPPORTUNITY MISSED

Now, at the end of the K'vutza year, I'm reminiscing about the days of Sukkos and Simchas Torah at the beginning of this year. When I think about those days and what happened then, it's hard not to be amazed by

the uniqueness, or better put, by the history that was made at that time.

I imagine the research of a historian who is surveying the Tishrei in Lubavitch from the Alter Rebbe's day till now. There's no question that Tishrei 5753 was one of the most unusual Tishrei for many

reasons, because of the *giluyim* and enormous *simcha*, as well as the great pain we experienced. Despite all the *simcha*, it wasn't Tishrei 5752 or 5751 or 5750, etc.

This topic came up many times in conversations that I had with members of the previous K'vutza. There's no question that the *giluyim* of this Tishrei were like food after a prolonged hunger, which makes the food more tasty and sweet. Still...

On the one hand, we were pleasantly surprised to see the Rebbe time and again, this being after a long period of time in which we hadn't seen him. On the other hand, it wasn't in the way we wanted to see the Rebbe. Then again, they reported a marked improvement in the Rebbe's health, and we were thrilled to see the Rebbe. But each time was painful, because we didn't want to see the Rebbe in this way.

I remember a vort I heard at one of the *farbrengens*, though I don't remember which *mashpia* said it. *chassidim* came for Tishrei all the

years, and when they were asked why they came, they answered in astonishment: What kind of question is that? We come to see the Rebbe blow the *shofar*, to see his holy visage during the March of Yom Kippur, to receive *lekach* from his holy hand, to say the *bracha* over the Rebbe's *minim*, and above all else, to witness the *giluyim* of Simchas Torah. Indeed, all these things were *giluyim*.

Today, however, continued the *mashpia*, a *chassid* comes for Tishrei without knowing what it is he'll see, but by coming he receives the Essence. The Rebbe doesn't blow the *shofar* and he doesn't dance the

time and hadn't hurried home to eat. Suddenly it was announced from "up there" that the Rebbe *shlita* was coming out for a *farbrengen*, downstairs, in another minute.

Even in the early days, after being with the Rebbe for a year, this would be greeted with great surprise, but at that time, when seeing the Rebbe was a rare and special event, people suddenly saw the Rebbe near them, face to face. The crush was tremendous (to the point of danger). The Rebbe sat at his usual place at the long *farbrengen* table and waited for the *tzibbur* for about 15 minutes. There was pandemonium and

there!

When you remember the fact that we had hardly seen the Rebbe before this, and certainly not this close up, you can imagine how shocked the Tamim was. He yelled excitedly, "Wow, Moshiach is being *misgaleh!*" The Rebbe heard him and nodded his head, smilingly, in agreement.

Nobody dared to try and understand why the Rebbe had come down and what the meaning of this *farbrengen* was. I went back to where the *bachurim* were eating and as always, every detail was dissected. Someone mentioned the story of the Arizal and his *talmidim* who missed out on an auspicious time for the *hisgalus* of Moshiach for lack of understanding of what was expected of them, and other stories in that vein in which it was understood in hindsight that the Satan had interfered with all his might in order to confuse people and to disturb them in their *avoda* of revealing Moshiach.

Still and all, there's no doubt that this *yom segula* – Chag HaSukkos – is an auspicious time to get things "moving," and as the Maharsha writes about (P'sachim 5:1) "In the merit of three "*rishon*" (firsts), they merited three *rishon* ... and the name of Moshiach" – that in the *z'chus* of the third thing, "and you shall take on the first day [of Sukkos]," that the Jewish people joyfully fulfill the *mitzva* of taking the lulav, they merit the name of Moshiach, "whose name is Menachem, for he will comfort us and make us rejoice as the days of our affliction."

It was the work of Satan and we didn't merit to see him fully revealed on that day.

"AND YAAKOV WENT ON HIS WAY"

Tishrei was over and the guests packed and left. I was happy to be with sixty other *bachurim*. That's



Hakafos. The Rebbe doesn't *farbreng* and the Rebbe doesn't distribute *lekach* and dollars. But if you come to the Rebbe you come to see the Rebbe, as he is. Essence. As *chassidus* teaches, the Essence is far higher than *giluyim*.

Another incident I mustn't skip in this diary is the special *farbrengen* that took place on the second day of Sukkos when the Rebbe *shlita* suddenly came out to the big *zal* for the *farbrengen*. It was in the afternoon, and everybody was in their homes or *sukkos*, and the big *zal* of 770 was left to the *ovdim* and a few others who were taking their

unbelievable crowding. The Rebbe waited (apparently) for quiet, but due to their enormous surprise people couldn't control themselves.

Then, what happened happened, and the Rebbe indicated that the *farbrengen* was over and he was going back upstairs.

They said that one of the T'mimim had been *davening* and hadn't heard the announcement that the Rebbe was coming downstairs. He was immersed in his *davening* and when he suddenly noticed the activity around him he looked up and saw the Rebbe *shlita* sitting

when I felt so good, as in, “they are all leaving and I will remain here with the Rebbe for a full year, how happy am I.”

THE WINTER MONTHS 5753

The Yomim Tovim were over and winter began. It was hard to get into the new routine in Chovevei Torah. Sometimes thoughts wandered to home and family, friends, the neighborhood, and the *k'hilla*.

It was very, very cold. They said that they hadn't had such cold in years. It snows a lot, covering the city in a sparkling white blanket. On two occasions there were blizzards. Yet there were things that were heartwarming, and how!

I don't think I experienced anything as powerful as this in my two decades of life on earth. It was the Kinus HaShluchim. Three days of workshops and catching up with friends and colleagues. These days are deeply engraved in my memory. Since the events of the Kinus are well known, I only jotted down some points that I saw and thought about.

One of the most important things that took place at the Kinus was at Mincha, seemingly a typical Mincha in which the Rebbe *davened* with the *tzibbur*. After the Rebbe went inside, the secretaries came out and announced that the Rebbe would accept people for *yechidus*! If you weren't there at the time, you couldn't understand.

The large numbers of *shluchim* passed by the Rebbe. This was the first time since Chaf-Zayin Adar I that the Rebbe began seeing people for *yechidus*. First of all, there was the excitement over the fact that we had gotten back something from the past. Secondly, now it was possible to pass by the Rebbe before traveling abroad, to camp, as guests, *chassanim*, *kallos*, *barei mitzva*, and for birthdays. This was sorely lacking in the previous half a year. You can

imagine how someone felt when he wanted to travel to Eretz Yisroel and there was no one from whom to receive a *bracha* of, “*fahr gezunterheit*.” There was nobody from whom to physically part, as *chassidim* had always done.

I saw the *shluchim* when they emerged from this *yechidus*. I also saw a *shliach* standing off to the side and crying. I don't know exactly what he saw there, how the Rebbe sat, how the Rebbe looked, etc., but I know that in the previous year he heard *sichos kodesh*, and received dollars. This year walking past the Rebbe had to suffice.

Another picture etched in my mind is when I saw the directors of Chabad houses in Eretz Yisroel sitting at a separate workshop and heatedly discussing how to publicize Moshiach's identity. There were many opinions and lots of suggestions, but the atmosphere was good. I thought to myself how amazing it was that the discussion centered on the topic of “publicizing that the Rebbe is Moshiach in the most effective manner,” since up until a few months before it had been in the realm of wild fantasy.

THE GREAT YUD SHVAT

In Lubavitch of the 7th Generation there were a number of extraordinary Yud Shvats: 5710, 5711, 5730, 5750, but I think that the diamond in the crown was on Yud Shevat 5753. I think that this year closed a certain circle that had opened in 5710-5711. I was privileged to be present on this wondrous day, as part of the *K'vutza*.

On Yud Shevat this year took place one of the most unique events that ever happened in the Rebbe's *chatzar* [description in previous *yoman*, in issue 432]. It gave me much food for thought. Above all else, I knew that Yud Shevat 5753 would be remembered for years to come.

As I write and sum up for myself those harsh winter days, it's important for me to refer to certain interesting experiences that only in hindsight, at the end of the year, can be summed up and described in their totality.

The Rebbe's “coming out” during the winter months had many ups and downs. There were weeks when the Rebbe didn't come out at all, neither for Mincha nor for Maariv (except for a very few times). The atmosphere in 770 was pained. It wasn't that people, *ch”v*, made peace with the situation, but 770 went into a rut of depression. There was nothing to wait for. You hardly heard the questions: When did the Rebbe come out? Did the Rebbe encourage the singing?

When we had our break we went to eat and rest and then back to learning. When guests from the outside came, nobody wanted to tell them, “Listen, it doesn't look like the Rebbe will be coming out for *davening*. I don't know if it pays to wait around or not.” And our hearts...

On the other hand, there were some wonderful weeks in which the Rebbe came out every day for Mincha and Maariv, twice a day. How happy we were on those special days. Everything revolved around the Rebbe. When we went to eat we knew we had to be ready to jump back to 770. When we went to rest, we made sure that someone stood guard and ran back and told us when *davening* was. In the small *zal* upstairs they always sat ready to hear the agreed-upon knock that the Rebbe was going out for *davening*. 770 was alive and bubbling.

Many guests came and filled every possible spot in a pyramid and all around it. We would grab places and prepare benches. Even when we were deeply involved in our learning, we knew the Rebbe would be coming

out momentarily. Even store-owners would look outside every so often to see whether people were running towards 770.

We *talmidim* of the *K'vutza* learned in Chovevei Torah, and so it often happened that when the alarms went off we would run through the streets in the snow, being careful not to slip. The feeling was: Now we will *daven* with the Rebbe! How many days did I wait for this, to be with the Rebbe!

It often happened that while I stood in my place in the southern

Yud-Tes Kislev, Purim, and other special days. Since there are so many I can't write about them all, so I have only chosen those few points that seemed most interesting to me.

A HEALTHY AND HAPPY SUMMER

I thought about the special things that took place in the summer, in Nissan, and Pesach. The Rebbe came out the first night of Pesach for "*Sh'foch chamas'cha*" (Pour out Your wrath). The Rebbe had his *seider* alone. The Rebbe came out for a few minutes of the *Seudas Moshiach*.



pyramid waiting for the Rebbe to come out, I thought to myself about the early days of the *K'vutza* back in Elul. Who would have believed then that there would be times that the Rebbe would come out twice a day and would encourage the singing of "*Yechi*" with his holy head and hand? *Ashreinu!*

I more or less summarized what took place that winter. Naturally there were endless incidents, news of what was going on with the Rebbe, *farbrengens* and events that took place in 770, Chanuka, the Satellite,

These incidents come to mind, but what shall I write about them? What was special about them?

In those days I wrote down some thoughts and feelings. I reread them and found them pleasing. Here they are:

IN ANTICIPATION OF AN ENCOUNTER!

We stood there, a huge throng. By "there" I mean under the focal point of "*Beis Rabbeinu Sh'B'Bavel*" – facing the illuminated window. We stood there: *baalei battim*, young scholars,

T'mimim, boys and girls. Women crowded together in back and we all waited.

It was the night of 16 Nissan, the second night of Pesach, at 9:30. It was cold outside and a breeze blew down Eastern Parkway and chilled the waiting crowd. We were all waiting for the Rebbe to come out for "*Sh'foch Chamas'cha*." The custom is for everybody to go to the door of the house with a lit candle in order to greet Eliyahu HaNavi. The Rebbe did this, too, and naturally an encounter of this sort aroused the curiosity of *Anash*.

This year we also waited, knowing that the night before the Rebbe had come to this main door at around this time. Our cheeks were red as we looked expectantly, ready to jump when given the signal. Even our hats were wrinkled because of the crowding. It was 9:30 when the main door of 770 opened and one of the secretaries came out and said, "Unlike last night, the Rebbe *shlita* is not going out."

The tension dissipated instantly and we were left deflated and terribly disappointed. We had so yearned to see the *goel* meeting with the *mevasser ha'Geula*, for then we would already have a Pesach in *Geula*.

MOTZAEI ACHARON SHEL PESACH

The first half of Nissan flitted by, then came Pesach and the hopes and the crowding, maybe this year would bring the long-awaited *chiddush*. The "*Chodesh HaGeula*" – that's what everybody calls it. And when Nissan came around we thought that its title should be practically realized. Therefore our hopes were high and our anticipation was even greater when Pesach began and replaced the mundane and gray days that preceded it. But, Pesach passed and still...

Chol HaMoed was over and then

it was Shvii Shel Pesach. If we waited for Nissan and the “Time of our Freedom,” our hearts were even more full of hope now. There’s no more auspicious time than Acharon Shel Pesach in order to captivate the heart of a Jew, whose entire being yearns for the *hisgalus* of Moshiach.

An orange sun shone over New York and Eastern Parkway was bathed in light. Everybody hastened towards 770 to get a seat for the Seudas Moshiach, the highlight of the Yom Tov. Everybody was carrying a package of matzos and wine. Would today be the day?

We thought: the signs *Chazal* give were realized! *Tzaros* have intensified! The two thousand years of Moshiach are nearly over! The prophecy and *b’sura* happened! So now, in the month of *Geula*, on the festival of our freedom, on Acharon Shel Pesach, in the evening, which indicates the end, hasn’t the time come? And we ran more quickly towards 770.

“The Rebbe’s coming out,” echoed around the room. We climbed up on the benches and began singing, the song surrounding us all like waves in the sea, “*Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu V’Rabbeinu Melech HaMoshiach Lolam Va’ed!*”

The curtain moved aside and the Rebbe looked at us and we gazed upon him as the song of “*Yechi*” reverberated and the Rebbe encouraged the singing with nods of his head. The “Niggun Of Three Movements,” “*Keili Ata.*” The heart yearned, eyes gazed yearningly, maybe ... perhaps ... But suddenly the dream came to an end, the hand motioned and the curtain moved back into place. The *klipa* rebelled once again and covered over the “and it will be revealed before the eyes of all flesh.”

The gray and ordinary days returned and with them a renewed hope. Will he come today? Yes,

today!

I finished copying these lines into my personal diary. All those “days of *Geula*” I kept thinking and asking myself: How did half a year go by so quickly? It was only yesterday, yet six entire months went by!

HOSHANA SHALOSH SHAOS – THREE HOURS OF PANIC

I’ll long remember those terrible hours, hours of inner fear, of tension and anticipation, of palpable pain. Those hours of emotion and confusion, chaos and lack of knowledge, as to what was going on with the Rebbe.

We were five people in the large *zal* of 770. There was nobody but us in the *shul*. It was during a break in the afternoon. I was schmoozing with someone and it was peaceful and quiet which is a rarity in 770. Suddenly I heard a sound on the microphone used inside 770. I realized that someone was about to announce something.

I couldn’t identify the one who said that the Rebbe’s condition had suddenly taken a turn for the worse, and that T’hillim should be said. One of the five people in *shul* was Rabbi Marlow, a”h, head of the Crown Heights *beis din*. He was known as a quiet and unemotional person. I watched him pacing the *shul* quickly and then suddenly take a T’hillim. A moment later he grabbed someone by his lapel and told him to go stand as *chazzan* to lead us in T’hillim with a *minyán*. I began to panic, too. The news hadn’t registered earlier.

Another moment went by and the beepers went off and 770 was full within a quarter of an hour with hundreds of *bachurim* and *Anash*. They all said T’hillim brokenheartedly. Thoughts raced: It wasn’t enough that lately the Rebbe came out to the *davening* with difficulty that the situation had to

get worse? I knew that if this was announced in the middle of the day, something not-good had happened. It had to have been something important to shake us up in this way. It wasn’t just Crown Heights that was affected, but Chabad around the world.

Near me sat a *bachur* who was bent over his T’hillim. Every so often he burst into a choked sob. I shivered. I didn’t know what to think anymore. Everything went around in circles: the news, the people, the running. We were overtaken by fear.

In the meantime, an ambulance got as close as possible to the entrance to 770. They took a stretcher in and the secretaries ran here and there. Dr. Tishholtz and other doctors came. Fortunately I sat in *shul* and said T’hillim, thus I was spared these scenes.

While reciting T’hillim, we heard the sound of the microphone once again. This time I identified Rabbi Groner’s voice. He repeated the first announcement and briefly described what was going on. He concluded by asking people to continue saying T’hillim because the situation was very serious. He burst into tears and had a hard time finishing what he was saying. Only with difficulty did he say “through much T’hillim we will merit to see the Rebbe in a manner of ‘a king in his glory shall you see.’”

The atmosphere in 770 reached panic levels. The wailing was terrible. Everybody knew that if the secretary couldn’t contain his pain, who knew what would be?

It was first three hours later that things became clearer. The ambulance returned to its place and the secretaries were calmer. You could see that the pressure on the doctors had diminished. The news was that the Rebbe had improved and there was no need to take him

to the hospital.

For a long time the Rebbe hadn't responded to various questions he was asked and this made them think that he had had another stroke. At a certain point when it was decided that the Rebbe would be taken to the hospital, the Rebbe refused three times. The Rebbe began reacting to what was going on around him and even asked that they bring him letters.

It was another event I experienced in Beis Moshiach, an unusual event. I don't think I'll forget those difficult, terrifying hours, three hours that seemed like eternity.

I don't know how to sum up the summer. Was it a happy one or a sad one? There were ups and downs, happy days, and unhappy days. It definitely wasn't a "healthy and happy summer," as the Rebbe always blessed.

THE END OF THE YEAR

This was definitely a difficult year, a year of changes, a year of disappointments and expectations, a year of hope and pain. From the perspective of a *talmid* on *K'vutza* who saw how, over the years, the *talmidim* of *K'vutza* merited *sichos*, *maamarim*, *farbrengens*, *t'fillos*, dollars, answers and responses; years of *simcha* and an abundance of *giluyim* – oy what a year we had.

But like everything else, here too the good and bad were mixed. The Rebbe once told President Shazar when explaining why he wanted a *bachur* to stay with him for a full year, that a *bachur* that experienced a year in 770, upon returning home would always remember how Rosh HaShana with the Rebbe was, how it was on Chanuka and Purim, on Yud-Tes Kislev, Tisha B'Av, the entire cycle of the year.

It can definitely be said that it was specifically this year that a

talmid who came to learn on *K'vutza* had the opportunity to take in a great deal of *yiras Shamayim*, *hanhagos tovos*, proper *t'filla* and learning, and the main thing: *Chassidishkeit*. I think that the force of circumstances pushed those who were here for a year to be *mekushar* to the Rebbe with "thick ropes" in a way that could not be severed. Specifically because of the fact that times had changed and there was no set time for *t'fillos* and nobody knew what would be and when, a *bachur's* thoughts throughout the day were



focused on the Rebbe and related matters.

When would Mincha be? What about Maariv? A *bachur* who wanted, for example, to go shopping outside of Crown Heights, did so under duress, and while he was away he was anxious throughout and he wondered, "Maybe the Rebbe came out now?" "Maybe I missed out on a *t'filla*."

And even when outside the neighborhood there were the constant questions about the Rebbe,

how was he feeling, does he come out, does he give dollars, when will he receive people again, etc., and this is because Jews in New York are very interested in how the Rebbe is doing.

Even the running and the constant alertness have become routine. All thoughts revolve around the Rebbe. The tiniest bit of information from the holy of holies becomes the topic of the day. What did the Rebbe do? What did the Rebbe say? What did he hint at and what was his answer?

You had to see the excitement of the *bachurim* when we got the two edited *maamarim*, the excited looks when the Rebbe *farbrenged* (five times) and this was *davka* because there weren't lots of *farbrengens*, *maamarim*, and *sichos*, regular *t'fillos*, *yechiduyos* and many *other minhagim*. I think that this year was an "advanced workshop" for *chizuk* of *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe.

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A few days ago I joined a *farbrengen* of a well-known *mashpia*. It was late at night and the *mashpia* was in the middle of speaking. His heart had opened up and he spoke with a *koch* and from his heart. He said: "None of us knows what took place this year. There were many *giluyim* but also many *hesterim*. There were many hours of *simcha*, but also times of sadness. Nobody can understand what took place this year. Everything was beyond our ken. Why did the Rebbe decide to come out on Rosh HaShana? What did he want during those six hours on Yud-Tes Kislev? Why were there times the Rebbe came out and other times he didn't? It's all beyond us.

"I think that the Rebbe is simply sitting and waiting for something. The Rebbe wanted certain things from the crowd. What? Nobody knows. But the Rebbe definitely wants something!"

HA'RAV HA'GAON SHMUEL ELIYAHU, CHIEF RABBI OF TZFAS,
IN AN EXCLUSIVE BEIS MOSHIACH INTERVIEW

THE BEST POSSIBLE GUIDE IN OUR GENERATION

INTERVIEWED BY SHAI GEFEN
TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY, TZFAS

*Great confusion and deep perplexity confronts wide cross-sections of world Jewry. What is demanded of us in this new year? What is the message that we must take from all that is happening around us? What is the meaning of all these difficult things? * Beis Moshiach proposed these and other questions to HaRav Shmuel Eliyahu, Chief Rabbi of Tzfas, and received some razor-sharp instructive answers on all the burning issues that face us today. * Free translation.*

We have just reached the onset of the new year. People are seeking to find their way back to the true path.

Indeed, we see that thousands of non-religious Jews want to get closer to Judaism and come to Tzfas to absorb the holiness. Just an hour ago, I was at the Abuhav Synagogue, where a large group from Tel Aviv had arrived. Just last night, students from a non-religious school came wanting to learn more about Judaism. Tomorrow, I am scheduled to speak

at state-run schools where they want to listen and develop greater awareness.

However, the truth is that even observant Jews need to do *t'shuva*. A prominent rabbi from B'nei Brak once told me that when the religious do *t'shuva*, then the rest of the people will follow suit in large numbers. The problem is that when they talk about the need to do *t'shuva*, they think about the other person, and not themselves.

HaRav Eliyahu, the people of Israel living in the Land in Israel went through a difficult year from both a security and an economic point of view, coupled by additional efforts to downgrade the Jewish atmosphere of Eretz Yisroel. How would you appraise this past year?

Shana (year) comes from the word *shinui* (change). In my opinion, the changes we are having are important and essential, albeit painful. These changes are occurring perhaps a bit too slowly, but they are bringing the Jewish people to the start of the realization that we are truly living in the generation of Moshiach, and all the things that are happening are simply the pains prior to his arrival. It's just a pity, however, that it comes through the legs, as it were, instead of what we can understand through our heads. Nevertheless, it is known that the Redemption is compared to a birth. Just as with a birth, there are those who are born headfirst, and others who enter the world feet-first, so too, we find in the Redemption-birth of *Am Yisroel*.

I believe that during the last year we learned a great deal of things. Everyone now understands that it is impossible to get anywhere along a

highway that bypasses G-d

Alm-ghty and His Torah. G-d firmly established and wrote in the Torah how to act, how Eretz Yisroel should be, what should be done with the Arabs, and how to guard the Holy Land from those who wish to destroy us. Everything is written in the Torah in a manner of "He looked into the Torah and created the world." But what can you do? We try to be clever, to be more "merciful" than G-d, to think that there are other ways. Eventually we understand the hard way that there is no other road for us to take. Everyone is coming to the clear and unambiguous conclusion that the only path is the one according to what is written in the Torah.

Can we understand from the Rav's words that there is a division between the religious and secular communities?



G-d forbid. The problem is not only to be found in the secular community, but also, and mainly, in the religious community. Everyone is familiar with those religious figures who call themselves *chareidim* to the word of G-d and are stringent in the fulfillment of all the *mitzvos*. Yet, these same people allow themselves to pass over dozens of explicit passages in the Torah that speak about the fact that this is G-d's land – He gave it to us, and we have no right to compromise on it. These are matters that are not subject to debate, as G-d wrote them in His Holy Torah. However, regrettably, they know this and yet they conduct themselves in an entirely different manner. On this point, I think that this past year has taught us many lessons.

I notice that the Rav is focusing specifically on the problematic issue of Eretz Yisroel. Why?



The Rebbe was not afraid of any leader – not the President of Israel or even the President of the United States. He could not be bought with money or promises. Everyone, whether he is a Lubavitcher chassid or not, must learn this from the Rebbe. The Rebbe is the best possible guide in our generation on this subject.

The Rebbe spoke about Redemption in the simplest possible terms, not in the abstract. Redemption means that G-d reigns over the world, as we say in the *malchios* from the *t'filla* of Rosh HaShana regarding His sovereignty over all and the Divine sovereignty that will be revealed in the world for all to see. This is what will happen at the time of the Redemption. Reaching such a state is achieved along the path of the Torah, the path of Yerushalayim, and the path of *Am Yisroel*. Thus, the Rebbe spoke so much about the problem of Eretz HaKodesh, and saw this as the central motif to all of *Am Yisroel's* problems. We clearly see that the issues of the coming of Moshiach and *shleimus ha'Aretz* are connected and interwoven with one another.

We can understand the depth of the matter from another angle. When we contemplate who are those that are fighting in their desire to give over everything to the Arabs, we see that these are exactly the same people who are trying to uproot religion, bring Reform Judaism into the fold, and flood the land with gentiles. The Rebbe sees the full picture in its truest sense, a picture that reflects the entire process of Redemption. *T'shuva*, Eretz Yisroel, and Moshiach are all connected.

Why is this so?

The Torah tell us that when Yaakov Avinu dreamt about the ladder and G-d appeared to him, Yaakov Avinu said, "How fearful is this place. This is none other than the House of G-d, and I did not know [it]." This is not understood: How could it be that after fourteen years of Torah study, Yaakov Avinu did not know that this is the House of G-d? The answer is simple: He knew that there is a G-d in the world, but he did not know that G-dliness could be revealed specifically in such a place.

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The world recently commemorated the tenth anniversary of the Oslo Accords, which have brought blood, fire, and destruction in their path. The Jewish people have endured some very difficult years in which more than a thousand have been killed and tens of thousands have been wounded. This situation has brought feelings of tremendous despair and dejection. Where is all this taking us?

An integral part of the Exile is that *Am Yisroel* is meant to serve as a parable among all the nations, as we read in the Torah in Parshas Ki Savo. On the other hand, part of the Redemption is that *Am Yisroel* is found on a much higher level than all other nations. Those who wish to delay the Redemption are those who have no problem with the fact that *Am Yisroel* is despised and humiliated, and that the name of Israel is desecrated in the world. This is part of the Exile. Yet, anyone to whom the honor of Israel is precious in his eyes will also fight for the honor of *Am Yisroel*. The Prophet Yechezkel said that the honor of *Am Yisroel* is as the honor of G-d Himself: "For Your name will be called upon Your city

and Your people."

When *Am Yisroel* is being slaughtered and bound by Arab murderers, this is a *chillul Hashem* beyond all proportion. The Redemption will be a *Kiddush Hashem*, and this is the essence of the struggle. It must be stated clearly: Moshiach and the Redemption is not just a matter of crying out for Moshiach. The Rebbe demanded that we see it and feel it. It's impossible that someone will come and say that the Rebbe speaks about Moshiach, but I still live on Planet Exile. If the Rebbe said, "Humble ones, the time of your Redemption has arrived," this means that we must go out of Exile! The seeing must be in accordance with the reality, and the reality is Redemption.

How do we do this?

I say to our community of Torah-observant Jews: We must know that everything the Rebbe said is literal and concrete truth. All we have to do is open our eyes and clean our glasses in order to see it. As the Rebbe said to my father and teacher at their last meeting some twelve years ago, the Redemption is here and we only have

to open the door and drag it in.

This *avoda* is no joking matter. Each one of us must widen his horizons and see everything as the Rebbe does. Anyone who contemplates the Rebbe's *sichos* sees how the Rebbe demands that we raise ourselves above the limitations of the Exile and live our daily lives in a manner of Redemption. Thus, the Redemption can be expressed even in the small steps of our daily lives.

A Lubavitcher *chassid* must certainly strive to see the Redemption as the Rebbe does, and then he will understand that this is the true great reality. The very fact that the Rebbe requested this means that it has relevance to each and every one of us.

It is no secret that many within the religious and *chareidi* communities do not have an orderly doctrine on all the pressing issues of the day. We find great confusion due to the situation facing us today. Why is this and from where does it stem?

We need to know from where we came and where we are going. The start and the finish of the course must be clear to us, so that the only question that remains will be: What do we do in order that the Redemption will come now, immediately, in a manner of *achishena* (in an instant)? The question is not, *ch"v*, if the Redemption will come or not, or if G-d will fulfill His word. This is already an established fact. The question is what do we do now to hasten the process of Redemption.

If someone does not know that the bottom line is the Beis HaMikdash will be rebuilt on the Temple Mount and there will be no more mosques there, then it should come as no wonder that this situation brings confusion and despair. This confusion brought those people to sign agreements that are against the Torah and against G-d. However, when we see things in a manner of

“not one of Your words returns unfulfilled,” one can not get confused since the direction in which we are striving is quite clear.

The Rebbe always said that the *rabbanim* and other *halachic* authorities must stand on the frontline of the fight for Eretz Yisroel and express their protest openly.

There is good reason for this, as Eretz Yisroel and Moshiach are not two separate matters; they are understandably tied to one another. The Rebbe spoke about “the lights of Tohu in the vessels of Tikkun,” meaning that the highest possible lights must reach specifically the lower vessels of Tikkun. Therefore,

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the *avoda* of bringing Moshiach and the Redemption is firmly connected with Eretz Yisroel. The struggle for Eretz Yisroel is essentially a more general struggle – for the holy life of the land, of the Torah, of everything.

However, it seems that it's all going downhill, due to all the confusion. We hear people – even in our own ranks – who are suddenly saying that perhaps we have to make some compromises. The main thing is that there should be quiet!

Despite all this, I believe that we are marching in the right direction.

Yesterday, a prominent left-winger told me that they thought that things would be much better, but now it is quite apparent that this is no longer possible. Such words are being uttered today by many among the left. They have finally come to the understanding that their idols of gold and silver have disappointed them. However, they still don't know what the correct path is. Yet, in contrast to the past, when they seemingly had their own path, it has all been shattered. This is an important stage in their realization that their false Messianism in the form of “peace” has been smashed to pieces. Now, they must come to recognize the path of the true G-d.

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The brutal terrorist attack on Bus #2, which was on its way back from the Kosel to the *chareidi* communities in Yerushalayim, has brought *rabbanim* and other Torah leaders to make a *cheshbon nefesh*. How does the Rav view this matter?

People always tell us that we have to do *t'shuva* due to these terrorist attacks? Why do we have to do *t'shuva*? For the sins that we committed that caused the attack to happen! For example, when we gave them weaponry and authority, we also gave them strength and courage. These are the sins that are written in our Holy Torah and the *Shulchan Aruch*. The same person who compiled the *Shulchan Aruch* on the Laws of Shabbos and Prayer also brings there that it is forbidden to hand over weapons and land to gentiles. The same G-d that said “Guard the day of Shabbos and keep it holy” also said “Have no pity on them.”

We most definitely should do *t'shuva* for this. If we gave a weapon to a murderer and he then went out and killed a Jew with it, *ch"v*, we have to do *t'shuva*. We must not forget that the terrorist that murdered the

soldiers at Tzrifin had been released just two weeks earlier during the *hudna*. Those who supported the release of terrorists during the *hudna* must do *t'shuva*, even including those who call themselves Torah observant. I don't want to talk about Shas, which voted to give weapons to murderers and also supported their release and bringing them here from Tunis.

This is a real *cheshbon nefesh* that must take place in response to the recent terrorist attack, and in general, due to what has happened over the past ten years since the Oslo Accords. What do these Jews think – that they will be forgiven in Heaven?

After the terrorist attacks in Emanuel and Chevron, we heard *rabbanim* come out and say that the residents of these cities must be evacuated from there, and now, it has even reached Yerushalayim...

I want to tell you something in my role as Chief Rabbi of Tzfas. When the British left Eretz Yisroel, there were 1,600 Jews remaining in Tzfas among 50,000 Arabs. The British suggested to the Jews that they leave and move to Tel Aviv for their own safety. They warned them that the Arabs would massacre the Jews. However, the Jews of Tzfas refused to evacuate. Not a single one of them agreed to leave this city, including women, children, and the elderly.

A month later, when the Arabs were already certain that they were going to take possession of the Jewish homes and property, and had even divided them among themselves, they all ran away and left the houses filled with tremendous wealth behind them. They simply ran away.

Pauji A-Dura, an elderly Arab who was the regional military commander in the city during those days, gave the reason for all this. Two years ago, he came on a visit to Tzfas, and he was asked: If they had so many

weapons, why did they run away?

“When we saw the Jews' faith,” he said, “in that they were unwilling to leave, we understood that G-d was with them. After a month, when we saw that we could not succeed in breaking them, we realized that it was a pity to commit suicide, so we got up and left.”

An Arab said this, not me...

This reminds us of what is written in Torah, “And all the nations of the earth will see that the Name of G-d is called upon you, and they will fear you.” These people believed in G-d with complete faith, and this caused the Arabs to run away. I suggest that if some of the *rabbanim* of our generation were living in those times, they would have told them to get up and leave for reasons of *pikuach nefesh*. However, since there were no such *rabbanim* then who sought to weaken them, they reacted in a true and correct fashion out of the faith that the Torah demands. Even today, we must strengthen and encourage the settlers and not weaken them, *ch”v*.

Why is there an aura of silence among the *rabbanim*, specifically when they must be the ones to go before the masses and sound the *shofar* on all the communal matters that face us today?

A prominent rabbi once told me that he keeps all the *mitzvos* except for “Have no fear before any man.” This is a *mitzva* that is extremely difficult to fulfill.

In general, the *rabbanim* need to take the Rebbe as a living example on how to fulfill the *mitzva* of “Have no fear before any man.” This is the Rebbe's true greatness. The Rebbe was not afraid of any leader – not the President of Israel or even the President of the United States. He could not be bought with money or promises. Everyone, whether he is a Lubavitcher *chassid* or not, must learn

this from the Rebbe. The Rebbe is the best possible guide in our generation on this subject. This includes not being afraid of the State Attorney General. A Jew must say what is written in the Torah in a clear and loud voice, a smile on his lips, and *ahavas Yisroel* in his heart.

Is the Rav alluding to the plans to put him on trial over what he said against terrorists and the Arabs at the Tzfas Regional College following the terrorist bombing at Meron Junction?

In the meantime, they are checking over what I said. They have tried to file charges, but they have seen that they have no case. They have tried to frighten me on this matter with investigations and accusations, and I pray that I will not fail to withstand this test of fear.

I would remind you that they filed charges against HaRav Druckman of Kiryat Motzkin when he said that Arafat is a murderer, and later tried to take him to court over it. Do you understand the kind of “world of lies” we live in? Call the biggest murderer a murderer, and the judicial system says that's incitement!

I say to all *rabbanim*, especially Chabad *rabbanim*: You cannot lose from the truth! There are those who try to frighten people and say that if you tell the truth, you'll lose your job. It is known that the Rebbe said that money accepted to remain silent is essentially money soaked in Jewish blood. The Rebbe not only said this; he even screamed against those people who tried to silence protest against those things that were the very apple of the eye of Judaism.

Torah says that G-d does not accept bribery. Would anyone ever think that G-d would take a bribe? However, the interpretation is when we give, as it were, G-d spiritual things in order to compromise on something else. In this regard, we must know that it is impossible to buy off G-d.

What is the role of the *rabbanim* during this pivotal time?

The *rabbanim* must stand at the forefront of the struggle. The voices of *rabbanim* must be heard on every issue of concern. They must be the vanguard before the rest of the people. I always say to all of them, not just to Chabad *chassidim*, what did the Rebbe mean in his address of the 28th of Nissan, 5751, “Do everything you can to bring Moshiach Tzidkeinu?”

We must adopt the Rebbe’s approach in all matters. We must take something specific from the Rebbe’s directives, not just simple things such as not eating wet matza on Pesach, but more essential subjects, such as, “Have no fear before any man.” If we act in this manner, the High Court will be afraid to harm the very apple of the eye of Judaism, and thus we shall prevent harsh attacks against the Jewish faith, which are regrettably happening today.

There is a gnawing feeling of concern regarding the religious issues that the Rav has mentioned. For example, the prime minister made a most serious statement at the induction ceremony of the new chief rabbis of Israel regarding the issue of greater lenience on the approval of conversions. Similar declarations have been heard which lead to the judiciary’s intervention to the detriment of religion.

The situation is most difficult, and everyone sees it. You mentioned the prime minister’s harsh words, and to our regret, they did not elicit a strong response, merely a weak voice of protest.

We all remember how the Rebbe

spoke so clearly on these matters. I am sad to say that there are *rabbanim* who have said regarding themselves, “What? I should speak on such a political matter that will only arouse fiery opposition against me?”

This is not a question of politics. The Rebbe dealt with everything – not just pure words of Torah, but also those issues of prevalent concern in modern Israeli society, whether in connection with the people of Israel or the Land of Israel. The Rebbe always spearheaded these efforts.

On the issue of “Who is a Jew” it is quite clear today that all the



screaming from Reform Judaism was totally baseless. After everything that they did with the Neeman Commission, they still have no foothold whatsoever in religious matters in Eretz Yisroel. They account for no more than two-thousandths of a percent, and their efforts to penetrate Israeli society have failed. If they have any strength, it’s only in the High Court. Thank G-d, the High Court does not yet decide spiritual matters in this country, nor does it determine whether it is permissible or forbidden to do *t’shuva*.

* * *

Everyone is talking about the budgetary cutbacks due to the serious recession in the economy. How does the spiritual leadership deal with this?

There is a worldwide recession, part of which seriously harms the Israeli economy, and especially the Torah world. This is for a good reason, since the struggle waged by the forces of impurity in the world are directly centered upon holiness.

It’s no coincidence that those who wage war against holiness concentrate specifically on the settlers and see them as a danger of the highest order. They always seek to cause harm to those who lead the charge and sanctify His Holy Name. Thank G-d, despite all this, they are getting stronger and better developed in both quality and quantity – more holiness and more Torah. Especially today, people are getting stronger, going to *mikveh*, etc. I also see this in the area of Torah study here in Tzfas. The level of spiritual strengthening is very high.

How is it possible to explain that on the one hand, we see people getting much closer to *Yiddishkeit*, while on the other hand, there is a sharp distancing and alienation from a very wide cross-section of the population?

This is a complicated process. There is a tremendous thirst for Judaism within a sizable portion of the community at large. But there are also people within our own ranks who have succeeded in creating intense hatred for Torah, due to their actions against others. Such change didn’t sprout up out of thin air.

Is the Rav suggesting that part of

the religious community is possibly responsible for this?

Not possibly; definitely. (Laughs) I don't know why everything in this interview brings me back to the Rebbe. However, even on this matter, everyone sees today how much the Rebbe was right in his amazingly unique approach on how to relate to other Jews. The Rebbe looks upon every Jew with such a loving eye. He would always speak about reaching out to Jews, and not about "bringing distant Jews closer." This itself had a tremendous effect on Jewish outreach.

We act as if we are the *tzaddikim*, while the others are undesirables. Anyone who looks at a Jew through such glasses causes grave consequences, and we all pay the price for what happens as a result.

I say again: we must adopt the Rebbe's approach. This doesn't mean simply to dance and yell, "I am a *chassid* of the Rebbe," but to act accordingly. Let's take an example from the Rebbe's conduct during his famous Sunday dollars distribution. This was a phenomenon of amazing and wondrous proportions. Surely, the Rebbe had good reasons why he did so. In fact, in my humble opinion, this lies in stark contrast with one of the greatest *chillulei Hashem* that exists among *rabbanim*, those who receive a salary for their work yet they go out and accept a fee for weddings, *bris milahs*, and speeches. It's due to great *chillulei Hashem* of this type that people are constantly screaming that the religious engage in extortion.

The Rebbe gave people all his time, giving out *tz'daka* on every possible occasion. The Rebbe is a leader who gives and gives, bestowing an abundance of *brachos* and salvation to all that come. We must learn to hate undue profit, to give to others beyond limit and measure. Such acts require much

depth and thought, and I am not just speaking in practical terms, but also from the point of view of our holy Torah. A Jew, especially a *rav*, must be one who gives.

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How does the Rav view Chabad activities in the world? Tzfas is home to one of Eretz Yisroel's largest Chabad communities.

I may not be considered a Chabadnik, but I feel that I am one of them. I love the Rebbe from the depths of my soul and I relate to his *chassidim* with much affection, because they really do such true and proper things.

Did the Rav have the privilege of being with the Rebbe?

When the religious do t'shuva, then the rest of the people will follow suit in large numbers.

I had the great privilege to be with the Rebbe during a three-hour *yechidus* in 5749, together with my honored father and HaRav Avrohom Shapira. During that meeting, the Rebbe told them to make a *beis din* and obligate Moshiach to reveal himself. They indeed did so.

That *yechidus* in which I was honored to be present was a magnificent event that was simply not of this world. The Rebbe's *sicha* sounded like a regular conversation between three people. However, when I look back fifteen years, I notice that this marked the start of intense activity for the Redemption which the Rebbe affected in the world. To what can this be

compared? Sometimes, we see a slight turn along a road and think that it has no meaning. But when we check the map, there is room to say that this essentially marked a change in course and direction.

I see that meeting with that special *beis din* established for the Redemption as a turning point. From that moment on, tremendous activities towards the Redemption began in Chabad and the religious world in general.

There are those who say, "Why do we have to do things to bring Moshiach? Let's sit and wait patiently for Moshiach, and when he comes, he comes."

This is a grievous error, for the Rebbe does not see things this way. On the contrary, the Rebbe has constantly pushed for people to request and demand the Redemption, and we see that this approach is working. This is what truly brings other Jews closer to their Judaism, since they know and feel that there will be a Redemption, and there is what to prepare for and to expect. Indeed, we can see clearly that what the Rebbe said is materializing now.

When we look at matters inwardly, not just superficially, and we will see the true reality, not through radio or television, it becomes clear how each day we are progressing towards the Redemption. Once we understand this, we will be much happier and serve G-d with greater joy.

The Prophet says, "My salvation is soon to come and My righteousness is to be revealed" and "not one of Your words returns unfulfilled." The time has come for us to see this clearly and speedily.

I want to wish all the readers a good and sweet new year, and that we should merit salvation in our time and for all time.

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