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WHEREVER A JEW IS FOUND

SICHOS IN ENGLISH



SHABBOS PARSHAS EMOR; 17TH DAY OF IYAR, 5750

1. This week's Torah portion begins: "Tell the priests, the children of Aharon, and relate to them..." Our Sages, noting the apparent redundancy of the commands, "tell" and "relate," explain that the verse is intended, "to charge the adults with [the education of] the children."

This provokes a question: Since the education[256] of children is of fundamental importance to the future of our people as our Sages declared, "If there are no kids, there will be no goats," why is the education of our children not mentioned immediately after the giving of the Torah? Why is its mention postponed until the middle of the Book of VaYikra and, even then, it is not mentioned in the context of a matter of general relevance, but rather in regard to the laws of the priesthood?

These questions can be resolved within an explanation of the connection between the content of this Torah portion and the time of year when it is read. Parshas Emor is always read in the month of Iyar which is distinguished by its connection to the mitzvah of counting the Omer. Every day of this month is associated with this mitzvah. [The association of this

mitzvah with Parshas Emor is further emphasized by the fact that the mitzvah of counting the Omer is related in detail in this Torah reading.]

The counting of the Omer is associated with education as emphasized by the fact that it commemorates the preparation ("education") of the Jewish people to receive the Torah. The exodus from Egypt can be considered as the "birth" of the people and the seven weeks that followed a period of preparation as the Jews waited anxiously, counting the days until they received the Torah. Each year, this sequence is repeated, "advancing higher in holiness," revealing deeper dimensions of the Torah, until ultimately, "a new Torah will emerge from Me," in the Messianic age.

Chinuch, education, is not only relevant in the initial stages of one's service. On the contrary, as a person grows and advances from level to level he must "educate" himself to prepare to reach the higher rung. This concept is alluded to in the counting of the Omer which: a) begins after Pesach, i.e., after the Jews have taken a leap forward in the service of G-d; b) counts the days with cardinal numbers rather than ordinal ones, i.e., rather

than say, "Today is the second day..." "Today is the third day..." and the like. We say, "Today is two days to the Omer," "Today is three days..." indicating that each day includes within it the service of all the previous days and then, contributes a further dimension of growth itself.

The counting of the Omer is also related to the concept of Jewish unity. The "seven perfect weeks" of the Omer alludes to achieving perfection among the categories of the Jewish people alluded to by the seven branches of the Menorah which reflect our seven emotional qualities. During this period, all these seven categories must be perfected until they "shine." (S'fira which means "counting" also means "shining.")

This concept is also related to the month of Iyar, whose Hebrew spelling serves as an acronym for the names Avrohom, Yitzchok, Yaakov, and Rochel, the four figures who have endowed their spiritual heritage to the totality of the Jewish people.[257]

This high level is also reflected in the expression our Sages use to communicate the obligation to educate our children, l'hazhir g'dolim al ha'ktanim. L'hazhir also means "to shine," i.e., these efforts will add

shining light to the entire Jewish people, both the parents and the children and reveal their essential positive qualities.

This is also related to the name of the parsha, Emor which can also be interpreted to mean “grant praise and distinction” as in the verse: “You have granted praise and distinction to G-d today.”[258]

An added dimension to the above is contributed this year by the fact that Shabbos Emor falls on the day preceding Lag B’Omer. The 49 days of the counting of the Omer are associated with the refinement of our seven emotional characteristics. Each of these seven characteristics is included with the others and thus, each day of the Omer is connected with a specific quality. In this context, Lag B’Omer is connected with the quality, Hod sh’b’Hod.

In his Siddur, the Alter Rebbe explains that Hod sh’b’Hod concludes the counting of the fundamental emotions; the remaining qualities are external and do not relate to the essence of the emotions. Thus, counting Hod sh’b’Hod[259] completes the primary aspects of the service of counting the Omer.

Thus, Lag B’Omer is connected with the holiday of Shavuos, the culmination of the counting of the Omer and the day which commemorates the giving of the Torah. That connection can be explained as follows: Lag B’Omer is the yahrtzeit of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai who revealed the teachings of P’nimius HaTorah. Furthermore, he brought about the nullification of the factors which separate between the reveal aspects of Torah (Torah law) and these teachings.

The revelation of the teachings of P’nimius HaTorah was the goal of the giving of the Torah as evident from the fact that, at the giving of the Torah, the entire Jewish people witnessed the revelation of G-d’s chariot, Maaseh

Merkava. This subject is explained and clarified so that it can be understood and internalized[260] in the teachings of P’nimius HaTorah.

In this context, the present day, the 32nd day of the Omer, is also significant. 32 is the numerical equivalent of the Hebrew word, “lev,” meaning “heart.” This word also shares a connection to the Torah which begins with the letter Beis and ends with the letter Lamed. Similarly, its date, the 17th of Iyar is significant. 17 is numerical equivalent to the Hebrew,

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“tov,” meaning “good.”[261]

Based on the above, we can understand the initial question: Why was the obligation to educate our children not mentioned directly after the giving of the Torah. As explained above, in their statement, our Sages used the “I’hazhir,” which means “to shine,” rather than another term meaning “to educate.” This implies that the goal is also to make the children who receive the education shine. Therefore, this does not apply in the

initial stages of their education, but only after they have begun elevating themselves and are seeking to reach a level of completion.

To put it in other terms: The obligation to give children the basics of education is self-understood and does not require a commandment from the Torah.[262] The command the Torah feels that it is necessary to relate—the obligation to educate one’s children until they shine—cannot be communicated at the outset and is mentioned only after one has begun one’s service.

There is a deeper lesson that can be derived from the words “emor” and “v’emarta” (meaning “tell” and “and you shall relate”). Significantly, though they are separated in the verse, Rashi mentions them directly after each other to imply that they are a single concept, i.e., the efforts of the adults to educate the children is not separate from their own service, but rather, an extension of it. It is not that in addition to their own service, they also educate their children; but rather the adults and the children are united in a single service. Similarly, each one of the adults service is complete to the point that it extends beyond himself and has an influence on others as well.

Furthermore, just as the adults exert a positive influence on the children, this activity has an effect upon them causing them to “shine.” This comes about because the unity of the adults and the children draws down a light that transcends totally the differences between adults and children.

The above is reflected in the Jews’ efforts in “educating” the world (i.e., the world can be considered as a “child” when compared to the Jews who are like “adults”). The Jews must “polish” the world until it shines. This, in turn, will draw down a higher light for the Jews themselves.

There is also a mystic dimension to

this concept. The word “emor” (tell) is an acronym for the Hebrew words meaning, “fire, water, and wind,” three of the four fundamental elements of existence. The word “amarta” contains these three letters, but also contains the letter Tav, which reflects the S’fira of Malchus, which is associated with the element of earth. Emor, however, does not allude to the element of earth because earth is included in the other three elements, fire, air, and water. This can be seen from the fact that when water is boiled, a residue of earth remains.

These concepts are reflected in our behavior, “fire, water, and wind,” refer to our potentials for wisdom, understanding, and emotion. Exercise of these potentials alone is not sufficient and it is also necessary to add, “earth,” malchus, which refers to expression to others. This expression, however, is not an independent entity, but rather an extension of one’s inner qualities. Through this expression a greater and more encompassing light is generated.

There is a unique connection of the above to Lag B’Omer. Lag B’Omer, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai’s yahrtzeit, is associated with the unity of the Jewish people. Thus, Rabbi Shimon is well-known for his interpretation of the verse, “How good and how sweet it is for brothers to sit together.”[263] One of the most complete expressions of this unity is the establishment of oneness between adults and children, two opposites. For this reason, Lag B’Omer is celebrated by activities with Jewish children.

2. The above concepts are enhanced by a teaching of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai in the fourth chapter of Pirkei Avos.[264] That teaching states:

Rabbi Shimon states: There are three crowns: The crown of Torah, the crown of priesthood, and the crown of kingship. The crown of a good name surpasses them all.

This raises an obvious question. Why doesn’t the Mishna mention four crowns, including “the crown of a good name”?

The concept can be explained as follows: Torah, priesthood, and royalty refer to internal qualities within an individual’s personality. The “crown of a good name” refers to one’s activities with others. Rabbi Shimon explains that “crown of a good name” is not a separate entity, but rather an extension of the other three crowns. Our work

Chinuch is not only relevant in the initial stages of one’s service. On the contrary, as a person grows and advances from level to level he must “educate” himself to prepare to reach the higher rung.

with others has to be viewed, not as a different service, but as a continuation of one’s personal efforts of refinement.

This is alluded to by the terminology used by the Mishna. The Hebrew expression translated as “surpasses them all” literally means “ascends upon them,” i.e., when one has carried out the services of Torah, priesthood, and kingship, then sharing one’s qualities with others brings about a new crown which is higher than the other ones.

This is also connected to Rabbi Shimon’s stress on the oneness of the Jewish people as reflected in his explanation of the verse: “How good and how sweet it is for brothers to sit together.” This verse also relates to the unity between the Jews and G-d for “brothers sitting together” can refer to G-d and the Jews.[265]

The above sheds light on a statement of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai:

Come and see how dear Israel is before the Holy One, blessed be He, wherever they were exiled, the Divine Presence was exiled with them.... When they will be redeemed, the Divine Presence will accompany them.

The intent of this statement is that the unity between G-d and the Jewish people is not for the sake of an external purpose, but rather a natural, innate bond. Accordingly, wherever Israel is found, the Divine Presence accompanies them.

In this context, it is worthy to contrast the manner in which this statement is quoted in the Talmud and in the text, Ein Yaakov. There are two primary differences: a) Ein Yaakov lists several different exiles which the Jewish people were forced to undergo, while the Talmud’s text is far more concise. b) Ein Yaakov spells the name Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai with an Alef, while the Talmud omits that letter.

The differences can be explained based on the differences between the nature of the two texts. Ein Yaakov was intended for people on a low level of knowledge, while the Talmud can be studied only by those on a more advanced level. Therefore, to emphasize the oneness of G-d with the Jewish people on all levels, the Ein Yaakov mentions all the places to which they were exiled.

It also includes a Alef because the Alef is the key to redemption. The only differences in the Hebrew words for “exile” (gola) and “redemption” (geula) is an Alef. The Alef stands for Aluf

shel Olam, G-d, "the L-rd of the world." It is the revelation of G-dliness which transforms the exile into redemption.

The lessons from Parshas Emor mentioned above should motivate us to invest more energy in the unity of the Jewish people and in education, teaching young children, and also teaching adults, spreading forth the wellsprings of Chassidus, the legacy of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, outward. Similarly, efforts must be made to educate gentiles and train them in the performance of their seven mitzvos.

In particular, the day of Lag B'Omer should be used to organize gatherings and parades to stress these objectives. May these parades inspire us to continue to "proceed from strength to strength." And may we merit that in this "year of miracles," and in preparation to the year 5751 whose Hebrew letters serve as an acronym for the phrase meaning, "May this be a year when 'I will show you wonders' ", the fulfillment of the prophecies "I have found David, My servant, I have anointed him with holy oil," which will bring about "Blessed be the L-rd forever and ever."

NOTES:

256. The concept of Jewish education is associated with the Tanya. Indeed, the second

portion of Tanya begins with the passage Chinuch Kattan which focuses on the verse, "Educate a child according to his way." Indeed, the Alter Rebbe considered beginning the Tanya in its entirety with this portion.

In this context, it is worthy to mention the importance of printing the Tanya in every Jewish community throughout the world. Though over 3000 such printings have been made, it is necessary to make additional printings, particularly in those communities which have been established recently. These efforts can be associated with Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai's statement: "Come and see how dear Israel is before G-d. Wherever they have been exiled, the Divine Presence was exiled with them."

257. When spelled with a single Yud, the name Iyar serves as an acronym for the Hebrew words meaning, "I, G-d, am your healer." The words that precede this phrase, "all the sickness which I visited upon Egypt, I will not visit upon you," indicate the manner of G-d's healing. A doctor cures a patient who becomes sick; G-d prevents sickness from occurring. This reflects the complete level of health and perfection which will be enjoyed by the Jewish people.

258. Our Sages connect this expression with the concept of unity explaining, G-d told the Jews: "You made Me a unified entity within the world, I will make you a unified entity within the world."

259. The S'fira Hod sh'b'Hod is also connected to Parshas Emor. Hod means "glory" and thus, related to the dimension of Emor "granting praise and distinction."

260. The concept of internalizing the teachings

of P'nimius HaTorah is alluded to the verse associated with the revelation of the Divine chariot at Mount Sinai "And they saw G-d and ate and drink." The commentaries explain that the internalization of the vision of G-d's chariot affected the people to the extent that they were satisfied as if they had eaten and drank."

261. When combined the two words are numerically equivalent to 49, the number of days of the counting of the Omer.

262. This concept is, however, also related in the Torah. When describing Avrohom, the Torah mentions that he would "command his descendants and household after him."

263. This is also reflected in the fact that Rabbi Shimon was one of the students of Rabbi Akiva. Rabbi Akiva is known for his statement, "Love your fellowman as yourself," is one of the great general principles of the Torah."

264. The fact that this is the fourth chapter of Pirkei Avos is significant. As explained above, the number four is associated with expression beyond oneself. This is also alluded to in the opening Mishna of the chapter, "Who is a wise man?..." That Mishna mentions four qualities: wisdom, might, wealth, and honor. The first three are qualities which relate to a person's own achievements while the fourth concerns the manner in which others relate to him.

265. There is also an aspect of education in this relationship. The Jews can be considered as children as it is written: "Israel is a youth; therefore, I love him." G-d involves Himself with the training of every Jew, elevating him until he shines. This effort elevates, not only the level of the Jewish people, but also adds praise to G-d Himself, as it were.



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ALWAYS BEFORE ME

BY RABBI YOSEF YITZCHAK OFEN
MASHPIA, YESHIVAS TORAS EMES, YERUSHALAYIM,
AND YESHIVAS CHASSIDEI CHABAD, TZFAS

TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY



In recent years, particularly since Gimmel Tammuz, chassidim, mashpiim, and friends of Lubavitch throughout the world, continue to believe that despite this tremendous lack of revelation, the Rebbe's life continues eternally, united in body and soul. Yet, there are those who ask: What's the point of emphasizing this over and over again? Don't we already know that the tzaddik's life is primarily a spiritual life of love and fear, while his physical life is secondary in nature? Excerpts from a chassidic farbrengen.

Chassidim have always shown respect and appreciation to simple Jews no less than to those of greater prominence. Chassidim have also refrained from expressing unnecessary honor or favoritism to Torah scholars.

There have always been chassidim who were expert in both nigleh and chassidus, great rabbanim and mashpiim who

possessed great *yiras Shamayim*. However, they were always treated equal to everyone else, without consideration to rank or stature.

For example, there is the well known chassid R. Dovid Tzvi Chein. R. Dovid was extremely learned and a great talmid chocham, who performed mitzvos with the utmost precision and devotion, and possessed all those rare qualities

that come with such conduct. Yet, chassidim used to call him Hershel Tchernigover, not even R. Hershel, and needless to say, not "HaRav" or "HaRav HaGaon"... There were many other chassidim like him, who in other circles would be accepted and treated as kings. However, in Lubavitch, they were looked upon just as anybody else.

The Rebbe MH"M once explained this approach. At first glance, the Rebbe asked, how does this fit in with the halacha that we must display admiration and honor for Torah scholars? Is it possible that for generations chassidim have conducted themselves in a manner that was not in line with *Shulchan Aruch*?

However, the Rebbe explained, since a true chassid constantly lives with his Rebbe, as if he is always standing before him, therefore, he is simply unwilling to give any additional honor to anyone else, as prominent as that person may be. A chassid has only one thing – the Rebbe – and nothing more. This is how a chassid lives, and thus, it would never enter his mind to show too much respect to anyone other than the Rebbe.

The Rebbe adds that such conduct is not a contradiction to the halacha of honoring Torah scholars. On the contrary, it has an explicit source in the Written Torah:

When Uriah was sent by Dovid HaMelech to Yoav, he was punishable by death in saying, “my master, Yoav,” in Dovid’s presence. This was considered as rebellion against the king, which is punishable by death. Since Dovid was the king, Uriah had no right to bestow honor upon anyone else by calling him “my master”; there is only one master.

For this reason, a chassid does not give unnecessary honor to Torah scholars, great as they may be. This is because a chassid lives with his Rebbe at every moment, as if he is literally standing in his presence. He is unable to address someone else with titles of respect. In the eyes of a chassid, the Rebbe is the very top!

This is how the Rebbe perceives the concept of *hiskashrus*, a connection by which a chassid knows and feels that the Rebbe stands before him at every moment and thus, everything that he does is based upon the weight of his connection with the Rebbe.

For this very reason, the Rebbe instructed a number of people who wrote to him about problems in their *avodas Hashem* to keep a picture of the Rebbe Rayatz in their pocket. Whenever their *yetzer ha’ra* started inciting them, they should look at the Rebbe’s picture, and imagine that the Rebbe is looking at them.

Of course, this does not negate the fact that the Rebbe looks at us even we are not facing his picture; the Rebbe does not need a picture. However, the picture helps the person by reminding him that wherever he goes, he feels and knows “*az er kulti*” (that he is watching)...

In other words, this means that the connection that is demanded from every chassid towards the Rebbe is not just another spiritual concept – something lofty and supernal. It is a connection that must be instilled in a chassid’s personal life, accompanying him at every step of way – every day, every hour, every minute.

SOUL IN BODY

This will help us to understand another point: chassidus always places an emphasis upon the leader of the generation, a person who

Since a true chassid constantly lives with his Rebbe, as if he is always standing before him, therefore, he is simply unwilling to give any additional honor to anyone else, as prominent as that person may be.

lives in that generation in this world, **soul in body**.

In recent years, particularly since Gimmel Tammuz, chassidim, *mashpiim*, and friends of Lubavitch throughout the world, continue to believe that despite this tremendous lack of revelation, the Rebbe’s life continues eternally, **united in body and soul**. Yet, there are those who ask: What’s the point of emphasizing this again and again? Don’t we already know that the *tzaddik*’s life is primarily a spiritual life of love and fear, while his

physical life is secondary in nature? All *tzaddikim* are called “living” even after their passing, since their main existence is in the life of the soul, not the body. If so, why is it that when we speak about the leader of the generation, we constantly seek to emphasize his life specifically as a soul within a physical body?

The explanation for this is as follows: It is known that the most important function of the leader of the generation is to connect the physical world with spirituality. For this reason, more than any other *tzaddik*, he engenders a far greater emphasis upon his existence as a soul within a body. But there’s something else besides this: this emphasis specifically has relevance to us, the Rebbe’s chassidim. When we know that we are talking about a connection with a living person in a physical body, the connection is something else entirely. The connection is more internal, and thus, it demands much more. If the connection were only to the Rebbe’s spiritual existence, it would be far less internal, less essential and more *makif’dik* (encompassing).

It’s true that the spirituality is found everywhere in equal measure – above and below. But after all, we are human beings, and when we talk about a living person in a physical body, it speaks to us more and is more real.

Since this is our intention, therefore, the true expression of a chassid who believes that the Rebbe is *chai v’kayam* is when it relates to him internally in a fashion that moves him accordingly. This is the way of true *hiskashrus*, which touches the person and instills within him this inner feeling.

In effect, this is what Chabad chassidus has demanded throughout the generations – not just to be satisfied merely with *makif*, but to

feel and to live with everything that we do from the depth of our very existence, to be permeated with our belief in a manner that doesn't penetrate just our t'filla and our Torah study; even when we are walking along the street, our *hiskashrus* to the leader of the generation remains constantly instilled within us.

HOW DO WE GREET MOSHIACH?

If we find all this to be true in relation to *hiskashrus* in general, then today, when the whole world is ready for the Redemption and the only thing that remains is to greet Moshiach, it is clear that preparations to greet the Rebbe MH"M must also be along these lines – in a deeply heartfelt manner that will accompany us at every moment of our daily lives.

On Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sara 5752, at the last International Shluchim Conference that we were privileged to hear the Rebbe MH"M, the Rebbe said that we must proclaim that the *avoda* in *shlichus* now is to greet Moshiach Tzidkeinu. This means that every detail must be instilled with one central point: how it brings us to greet Moshiach Tzidkeinu.

In other words, it can be said that up until Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sara 5752, we were fulfilling mitzvos, davening, and learning Torah in order to cleave to G-d and draw down greater spirituality. While the *avoda* has not changed – the Torah is still the same Torah, and the mitzvos are still the same mitzvos – nevertheless, since that Shabbos, the *kavana* has changed. Today, every action that a Jew does revolves around this one objective: *Kabbalas P'nei Moshiach Tzidkeinu*.

The *avoda* of elevating the sparks has been completed, and the world has already reached a state of

Redemption. Today, we are no longer required to break ice in search of hidden sparks; *avodas Hashem* is now expressed primarily in preparing the vessels for the world's present-day situation. Moshiach is here, doing his *avoda* in this world, and at any moment, he will be revealed in all his glory – **whether we are ready or not**. From our point of view, the only question

While the avoda has not changed – the Torah is still the same Torah, and the mitzvos are still the same mitzvos – nevertheless, since that Shabbos, the kavana has changed. Today, every action that a Jew does revolves around this one objective: Kabbalas P'nei Moshiach Tzidkeinu.

is: How will **we** appear when we greet him? Will we be fitting vessels or *ch"v* the opposite?

What does it mean “to greet Moshiach Tzidkeinu”? The Alter Rebbe writes in *Tanya* (Ch. 37): “And this ultimate purpose, the fulfillment of Moshiach and *T'chiyas HaMeisim* – the revelation of G-d's Infinite Light in this physical world

– is dependent upon our actions and our *avoda* during the entire time of the Exile, as what brings the reward for a mitzva is the mitzva itself. For through its fulfillment, the person draws the revelation of G-d's Infinite Light down from Above and enwraps it in the physicality of this world, something that was originally in the realm of *Klipas Noga*, and received its vitality from there.”

By its very nature, the world opposes G-dliness – both the greater world and the smaller world, man. Each of them hides the revelation of G-d's Infinite Light. The ultimate objective is to instill this light specifically in these worlds. This will be realized in its most absolute form at the imminent arrival of Moshiach, when there will be the fulfillment of, “And the glory of G-d will be revealed and all flesh will see that the mouth of G-d has spoken.” Then, G-dliness will be felt in Creation, not as a separate entity, but as something literally united with the Creation.

Since we have to prepare ourselves to greet Moshiach, it must be done in an appropriate fashion: A Jew must examine all of his thoughts, words, and actions to see if they are proper vessels for the revelation of G-d's Infinite Light in the world, or *ch"v* if they impede it. This is how we prepare ourselves to greet Moshiach – starting from “*Modeh Ani*,” continuing with one's conduct throughout the day, and concluding with the *Krias Shma* said at bedtime. Any alternative form of preparation is merely imaginary.

There is a chassidic saying in relation to the opening paragraph in *Shulchan Aruch*: “Be as strong as a tiger...as mighty as a lion to do the will of your Father in heaven” – how can a person want to be as mighty as a lion in the morning, when he goes to sleep like a dog?

Similarly, we find in our discussion: When we go to sleep as chassidim, reciting the nighttime Shma with a true cheshbon nefesh of “regret over the past and acceptance of the future” in the clear knowledge “*az mahrgen vet main gahr andersh*” (that tomorrow will be totally different), then even if Moshiach Tzidkeinu comes in the middle of the night, we’ll be ready to greet him, arising as strong as lions, with joy and gladness of heart.

ACCEPTANCE OF HIS SOVEREIGNTY

The Rebbe MH”M says that the revelation of Dovid Malka Meshicha has already taken place. What must happen now is only the acceptance of his sovereignty by the people themselves.

Sometimes we accept his sovereignty with great enthusiasm and much singing, but out of all the fervor, we tend to forget whose sovereignty we’re accepting. Thus, in all the excitement, we allow ourselves to act in contradiction to our faith. Similarly, we find in the Gemara, where it speaks about the thief who davens to Hashem that he should succeed in his theft. It sounds perhaps a bit ridiculous, but sometimes, this is exactly what happens to us.

There is no question that “Yechi” must be declared with extra special enthusiasm with all the shturem, as the Rebbe said in the sicha of Beis Nissan 5748, “the proclamation of ‘*Yechi HaMelech Dovid Malka Meshicha*’ must be made specifically with the greatest possible alacrity, which is connected with joy and vitality.” However, after all is said and done, we must always remember “*Chabad mahnt p’nimius.*” Chassidus demands from every Jew that in addition to his actions, in addition to his external enthusiasm,

he must live with these matters internally. This is the whole reason why chassidus came into the world – to bring inner vitality, the soul of everything, into Torah and mitzvos, and into man and the world.

Thus, when we proclaim “Yechi Adoneinu,” we must contemplate the content of this proclamation, which comes to express the bittul that is demanded from each of us towards the king. By proclaiming “Yechi HaMelech,” we are declaring that we do not have any independent existence; our entire



existence is nullified to one point alone: the will of the king.

When we seriously consider what we are saying, our conduct will be entirely different. Then, just as we are repelled by someone who loudly declares that he is nullified to the king while at the same time he does things that demonstrates the exact opposite, we are equally repelled by actions, words, and thoughts that are totally unbecoming for what is expressed in the proclamation of “Yechi.”

In Lubavitch, there were goats that were found regularly in the Rebbe Rashab’s courtyard, and had the privilege of seeing the Rebbe every day as he entered and left his house. Naturally, it is impossible to compare these goats to any other goats in the world, since they had the *z’chus* to see the Rebbe... Yet, with all the great qualities and virtues that these goats merited, they never became human; they always remained goats.

The same thing can be said about our situation: We can be chassidim of the Rebbe, totally connected to him, looking at the Rebbe, talking about the Rebbe with the utmost enthusiasm, and still remain goats... There’s no *chochma* to having *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe and staying a goat. True *hiskashrus* demands an inner shift. When we speak about the Rebbe and Moshiach and it touches our heart, this brings change to our conduct as well.

TO LIVE AND TO ENLIVEN

Chassidus brings two explanations on the pasuk “He speaks His words to Yaakov and His laws and statutes to Yisroel”: 1) First, G-d fulfills the mitzvos, and this gives Jews the strength to fulfill the mitzvos; 2) When Jews fulfill the mitzvos, this has an effect Above so that even G-d fulfills the mitzvos, as it were. As brought in the bar mitzva maamer, “*Isa B’Midrash T’hillim,*” when Jews put on t’fillin, this causes G-d to put on t’fillin.

The same can be said of us: When we live with the subject of Moshiach as it should, we will feel the days of Moshiach in which we find ourselves today. This will cause G-d to live with Moshiach, and He will fulfill the ultimate purpose for which all worlds were created: the complete revelation of the Rebbe Moshiach Tzidkeinu, immediately, mamash, NOW!



BY TAMMY HOLTZMAN

*Lag B'Omer was a particularly noteworthy holiday for the Mittlerer Rebbe. They went out to the fields ... and saw many miracles. Most of the miracles had to do with children, and people looked forward to Lag B'Omer the entire year. * Many miracles regarding children also took place with the Rebbe MH"m. * A selection of stories heard from Rabbi Leibel Groner, presented for Lag B'Omer.*

ANOTHER CHILD REMAINS IN MY POCKET

One year, on Lag B'Omer, the Mittlerer Rebbe blessed those who needed a yeshua. One of the chassidim who needed a bracha didn't make it on time because of inclement weather that impeded his traveling. He finally showed up the next day and went to the Rebbe, fearing that he had missed the auspicious moment.

The Mittlerer Rebbe humorously remarked, "I still have a child left in my pocket out of all the children that I distributed yesterday. I bless you with this child." And that year the chassid had a child.

The Rebbe spoke about these miracles, and chassidim understood that Lag B'Omer was an auspicious time for asking for blessings for children from the Rebbe. Over the years, many people took advantage of this special time to ask for brachos for children.

We asked Rabbi Groner about this and he had many stories to tell us:

I knew a couple who had been married for eleven years, and every Lag B'Omer they asked the Rebbe for a bracha for children. The Rebbe blessed them each year but they still had no children.

In the twelfth year, the grandfather approached the Rebbe on Lag B'Omer

and said that all the requests from previous years were not answered and the couple still didn't have children. The Rebbe said, "Really? So they should have a child!"

A year later their daughter was born, and since then they had more children.

NUMEROUS BLESSINGS

One year, a group of women who didn't have children, traveled to the Rebbe from Eretz Yisroel. On Lag B'Omer they waited for the Rebbe, and when he left the mikva they asked him for a bracha. The Rebbe gave each one of them a coin for tz'daka and blessed them. That year, every single one of these women had a child.

THE POWER OF TWO WORDS

Rabbi Groner continues to relate:

A chassid from another chassidic group who did not have children went to all the admurim and rabbanim he knew and asked them for brachos. They all blessed him but he still did not have children.

One Lag B'Omer he went to the Rebbe and asked for a bracha. The Rebbe said just two words, "*b'karov mamash*" (really soon). That year his daughter was born.

"Just look," said this chassid, "They all blessed me with many

lengthy brachos, and it didn't help. Here, with only two words, I had a child."

THE LAST MINUTE

Even without a connection to Lag B'Omer, there are many stories of people who were blessed and had children. Many of them received a bracha at "dollars," or at "kos shel bracha," or in letters.

Rabbi Groner remembers that a number of years ago he was invited to farbreng in a certain city. The crowd was religious, chareidi, but definitely not chassidic. The farbrengen went on into the night and the crowd asked specifically for stories.

One of the participants stood out in that no matter what topic of chassidus Rabbi Groner explained, he raised questions and expressed doubts. At about two in the morning, this man got up and told his own story.

For many years, he and his wife did not have children. They went to doctors and explored all possibilities, until even the doctors threw up their hands in despair. The couple went to roshei yeshiva and many rabbanim and asked for brachos, but they still had no children.

The couple had a Lubavitcher cousin, and after much nudging on his part, and when they felt the situation was hopeless, they agreed to write to the Rebbe. They received a response, which said, "check t'fillin and mezuzos. I'll mention it at the tziyun."

They checked the t'fillin and mezuzos, and to their surprise, they found they needed to be fixed. But even after fixing them, they didn't have children.

They went to another doctor, who tried a new treatment. Then, when the Rebbe was distributing kos shel bracha, the Lubavitcher cousin asked the couple whether, when it was his turn, he could ask for wine and a bracha for them. The couple refused, saying, "if we weren't helped until now, maybe it's a decree from Heaven." They finally

agreed that their cousin could ask for a bracha for them.

When it was the cousin's turn, he presented two cups and asked for a bracha for the couple. The Rebbe blessed them and the cousin said, "They already received brachos but still haven't had a child."

The Rebbe said, "If so, they should have a child."

Hearing this, the husband asked his wife to stop the medical treatment and to rely solely on the bracha. The woman refused. Only after much importuning did she agree to stop the treatment, but she said this was for three months only. At the end of the three months, she would continue the treatment.

At the end of the third month she realized that she had no need for further treatment and she gave birth some time later to a daughter.

The audience at the farbrengen was amazed by the man's story and asked, "Why, if you personally experienced this miracle, have you been skeptical about everything Rabbi Groner said?"

"Oh, that's just because I wanted to get him to explain things more deeply!"

ANOTHER BROTHER OR SISTER

Sometimes the Rebbe advised couples to adopt a Jewish child as a segula for having a child of their own. Naturally, this entailed consulting with a rav about all the halachic issues involved. Apparently, the mitzva of giving a loving home and family to a child who needs one makes an impression in Heaven and helps people have children of their own.

In one case, says Rabbi Groner, the couple began the adoption process, as the Rebbe had suggested, and while it was still in progress, the woman was surprised to discover that she was expecting a baby. She excitedly called the secretariat to tell them the good news, and to ask whether she should continue the adoption proceedings.

Rabbi Groner asked the Rebbe, who said, "Why shouldn't their baby have a brother or sister?"

The couple adopted a boy and have a beautiful and blessed home.

AN AMAZING STORY OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE

Here's a story that I heard from my brother-in-law, Rabbi Shmuel Krauss [contributor to *Beis Moshiach*]:

"I give a class to a group of women. One woman was married a number of years and had no children. This was brought to my attention one time when I was speaking about brachos from the Rebbe, and the woman said she needed a bracha.

"On Lag B'Omer, I reminded myself of this couple and

(Continued on page 15)



Photo: Eli Yona

THE REBBE ON LAG B'OMER

SICHOS IN ENGLISH

UNITY IN DIVERSITY

Lag B'Omer is a day of rejoicing on which Jews celebrate their unity by gathering Jewish children together. Significantly, it is the yahrtzeit (the anniversary of the passing) of the great Talmudic sage, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, whose teachings highlighted the concept of unity by drawing attention[267] to the verse, "How good and how pleasant it is for brothers to sit together." [268]

Unity stems from shared roots, as with brothers who are bound together because they "share" the same father. Although they lead separate and sometimes very divergent existences, their fundamental common identity remains.

This concept is reflected in the vision of the prophet Zachariah in which the menorah symbolizes the Jewish people. [269] The candelabrum which extends in seven branches symbolizes seven different paths of Divine service. Yet it was made of a single piece of gold, [270] indicating that the Jewish people remain one unified entity despite their different qualities.

Difference need not lead to division. On the contrary, true unity comes from a synthesis of different—and even opposite—thrusters. Thus, we see that the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob represented different approaches to Divine service—Abraham represented the love of G-d; Isaac, the awe of G-d; and Jacob, the harmony between these opposites. Yet together, they established the one and unique spiritual heritage of our people.

This unity has a broader scope, encompassing all of mankind - non-Jews and Jews. Indeed, it extends beyond the human realm to include the totality of existence, since we all are G-d's creations. [271]

BROTHERLY OUTREACH

Our awareness of this fundamental oneness affects our relations with our fellow men and the world at large. The various differences between people are thereby overshadowed by what is common to all of us. Therefore, a person need not feel "threatened" by the difference between him and others. Instead, he should reach out to him with love and seek to help him. Should he see an undesirable quality, rather than reject his colleague, responding with negative feelings, his feelings of compassion should be aroused and he should try to help him correct his fault, thus allowing the oneness between them to be complete.

This is one of the meanings of Tz'daka, which properly signifies "righteous behavior". [272] Tz'daka does not mean merely giving a charitable donation to a needy person, but rather offering another all the assistance that is necessary,

be it material or spiritual, thereby removing the factors which may disrupt the unity between individuals or between nations.

HARMONY IN THE COSMOS

This approach is the key to peace and unity in the world at large. G-d has provided ample and abundant blessings in the world He created "with kindness, love and mercy." He has called on mankind to emulate these qualities by sharing G-d-given benefits with others, helping them materially and spiritually.

Recognizing the abundance of G-d's blessings and man's role in their preservation and appropriate use will remove the basis for strife and division among nations. Once mankind realizes that G-d has provided abundance for everyone, there will be no motivation for war or even strife.

Indeed, adopting this approach adds to the blessings G-d grants in the world at large and avert the "need" for Him to use temporary measures—earthquakes and the like—to remind us of His constant presence and His control. [273]

Similarly, this approach will refine the world and hasten the coming of the era which will express its ultimate state of perfection, when "One nation will not lift up a sword against another, nor will they learn war any more." [274] This unity will be extended even beyond the human realm, spreading into the animal kingdom, as it is written, "A wolf will dwell with a lamb and a leopard with a kid." [275] Indeed, it will encompass every aspect of existence.

THE FAMILY AS A CHAIN

The goodness and blessing which G-d grants will be reflected within the personal "world" of each individual, and in particular, in what is the most important wish of each man, his home and his family, so that he will derive genuine nachas ("pleasure") from his children and grandchildren.

Judaism has always emphasized the importance of the continuity of tradition, denying the justification for a gap between generations. Rather, every family—be it Jewish or non-Jewish—should be an integral entity, communicating and passing down true values from generation to generation.

Indeed, we are beginning to notice in the world at large a restoration of communication between generations, a realization of the great resource we have in our parents and grandparents. This awareness enables the present generation to transmit the knowledge, experience, and values of the past to the future.

(Continued on page 16)



I wanted to ask them to put a letter into the *Igros Kodesh*. Since I didn't have a personal relationship with them, I asked a mutual friend, who was especially close with them, to tell them to write to the Rebbe.

"At the end of the day, I called the friend and asked him whether he had done as I had asked. He apologized, saying he had forgotten, and that he was uncomfortable about it.

"I felt that time was slipping away and I didn't want this opportunity to be lost. Having no other choice, I called the couple myself and got an answering machine. As a last resort, I left a message.

"I stammered a bit because it was really not an easy thing to do, but I had done what I could, and Hashem would do His part. To my surprise, the woman called back shortly thereafter and wanted to know exactly what I had in mind, since she didn't understand my message.

"I explained and she readily agreed to write to the Rebbe. I explained the importance of writing on Lag B'Omer, before sunset, which was rapidly approaching. Soon she and her mother came to my house. Her mother was impatient and she decided to open the *Igros* even though she hadn't written a letter. The daughter, however, sat and wrote.

"The mother opened the volume and cried out in surprise. She didn't say what her question was, but the answer fit whatever she had asked. Then the daughter put her letter into the volume, opened the volume and read the answer. She

couldn't understand it because it said, 'If, by accepting the teaching position she'll be strengthened in all matters, she should take the position, and may it be with blessing.'

"She was disappointed, but I explained that sometimes, even if there wasn't an explicit answer, the bracha was given.

"On her way out, she suddenly stopped and said that she had actually gotten a job offer to be an assistant teacher. She didn't need the job but had thought of taking it anyway to keep herself busy.

"I was excited, says Rabbi Krauss, since now I understood that she had indeed gotten an answer. I advised her to make a commitment to something, to strengthen some area of Yiddishkeit, and to take the job.

"After she left, my wife and I wondered which school could have

RABBI SHIMON BAR YOCHAI GIVES BRACHOS FOR CHILDREN

In the Midrash Shir HaShirim Rabba, chapter 1 it says:

A woman from Zidon who was married for ten years without having children, went to Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai [wanting to divorce, though otherwise (besides the problem of not conceiving), they had a harmonious marriage]. He told them: just as you married with a feast, so too, you should divorce with a feast.

They made a celebration with a great feast and he drank too much. At some point the husband said to her: My child, take whatever your heart desires from this house and take it back with you to your father's house.

What did she do? After he fell asleep, she told her servants: carry him on his bed to my father's house.

When her husband awoke, having slept off the wine, he said: My child, where am I?

She said: In my father's house.

He said: Why am I in your father's house?

She said: Didn't you tell me this evening to take whatever I desired and to go to my father's house. There's nothing I desire more than you!

The next day they went to Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, who [after hearing what had happened] no longer wanted them to divorce. He stood and prayed for them, and they had a child.

CHANGE OF REGIMES

This process of communication is the essence of education. It has been the positive force shaping the progress of civilization throughout history. Similarly, it is the desire for an environment conducive to education that is at the core of the turn of events which we have witnessed in the past months, and which are characteristic of this unique year, 5750, a “year of miracles”. [276] Regimes based on an educational system which employed force and fear to transmit their values have given way to a system which allows for an environment conducive to the natural motivation for development possessed by every child.

Through the establishment of an environment of warmth, love, joy, and disciplined freedom, we will enable all children to develop their G-d-given potential without intimidation or hindrance by fear and inspire them to dedicate themselves to a life of positive activity, spreading good throughout the world.

THE MEANING OF A PARADE

The essential aspect of a parade is the expression of pride in one’s beliefs and values and provides an opportunity to demonstrate it to others. In a parade, furthermore, one does not stand still, indicating each individual’s need to continually proceed further in positive activities. The main participants in this parade are children, who reflect the concepts of progress and growth more noticeably than adults. Each year, and even each season of the year, their bodies grow. This physical growth should be accompanied by spiritual growth, which in turn, should be reflected in changes of behavior, in an increase of good deeds.

Joining in this parade are representatives of the city, state, and national government, indicating that they share the desire to spread love, brotherhood and peace. This is further emphasized by the manner in which they have participated—by sending also bands—for music spreads happiness and encourages communication and peace. This will be accomplished by encouraging education—in particular, by promoting the observance of the seven universal laws commanded to Noah and his descendants, and by spreading the practice of Tz’daka, righteous and charitable conduct.

ELEVATING MATERIALITY

To inspire these activities, a special silver coin has been minted in connection with this occasion, to be distributed to all the participants. In the Holy Temple in Jerusalem and in its service, silver and other material goods were used to create a dwelling for G-d. In a larger sense, the totality of our involvement in the material world should be dedicated to this purpose. [277] This coin will serve as memento of this occasion and inspire us to use money, and all other material objects likewise, for good purposes, and, in particular, for Tz’daka.

May all these activities lead to the revelation of the ultimate good within the world, the realization that “everything was created for His glory.” [278] This will herald the coming of the age when “G-d will reign forever and ever” [279] — with the coming of Moshiach, who will bring the complete and ultimate redemption. [280] May it be imminently, Amen.

(Lag BaOmer, 18th Day of Iyar, 5750)

NOTES:

267. Zohar III, 59b.

268. Psalms 133:1.

269. Zachariah ch. 4.

270. See Exodus 25:31-40 and commentaries for a description of the menorah.

271. Furthermore, as quoted in Tanya, *The Gateway of Unity and Faith*, Chapter 1, the Baal Shem Tov explains that creation is not a one-time event of the past, but a continuous process. At each moment G-d is bringing our existence into being anew.

272. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. II, p. 210.

273. This address was delivered some six weeks before the recent earthquakes in Iran. [Translator’s note.]

274. Micah 4:3.

275. Isaiah 11:6.

276. For the date of this year 5750 alludes to the phrase, “This shall surely be a year of miracles.”

277. The above concepts are reinforced by one of the fundamental points of Chassidic philosophy which teaches that the world is essentially good. Other approaches teach that one has to fight against the world to improve it. In contrast, Chassidic philosophy trains us to appreciate the good in the world and use it—and all the world—for positive purposes.

278. Avos 6:11.

279. Exodus 15:18.

280. The Messianic redemption is also associated with Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, for it is through the teachings of his classic text, the Zohar, that “Israel will be redeemed from exile in mercy” (Zohar III, 124b).

made her that offer. There aren’t too many schools in our area. The only religious school is one in which my wife works, and then there is a secular school. We knew that the religious school wouldn’t hire her because although she was traditional, she

didn’t cover her hair and didn’t carefully follow the laws of tznius.

“The next day we were surprised to see that the woman had been accepted by the school my wife teaches in, as an assistant to my wife! Her regular assistant had left and the

new assistant was this woman.

“In order to comply with the school’s conditions, she committed to covering her hair.

“This all took place on Lag B’Omer 5758. On Pesach 5759, the woman gave birth to a boy!”

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THE GAON AND KABBALIST: RABBI MORDECHAI ELIYAHU SHLITA

From Shemen Sasson Meichaveirecha

BY RABBI SHALOM DOVER HA'LEVI WOLPO
TRANSLATED BY ALEXANDER ZUSHE KOHN



PART I

Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu was born in the Old City of Jerusalem in the month of Adar, 5789 (February-April, 1929), to his father, the *gaon* and kabbalist Rabbi Solomon Eliyahu *zatzal*, author of *Kerem Shlomo*. The latter passed away when his son was only eleven years old. But despite the poverty and hardship, young Mordechai applied himself to the study of Torah, day and night, lingering in the shadows of the Jerusalemite Torah sages, Rabbis Ezra Etya and Tz'daka Chutzin *zatzal*. He also studied by the *gaon* Rabbi Yitzchak Nissim *zatzal* to be a rabbinical judge, and indeed, became the youngest rabbinical judge in Israel. He served as a rabbinical judge in B'er Sheva and then Jerusalem.

In Nissan, 5743, (March-May, 1983), Rabbi Eliyahu was elected chief Sephardic rabbi of Israel. In this post, which he occupied for the next ten years, he became renowned as a mighty *gaon* in all areas of Torah – both the revealed and esoteric dimensions. In his pleasant manner, he taught Torah to the masses in his community in Jerusalem, and to many other

communities he visited throughout Israel and the rest of the world. He also served as head of a [rabbinical] court in Jerusalem.

Rabbi Eliyahu *shlita* authored *Darkei Tahara*, and other halacha *s'farim*, as well as scores of halachic responsa, which he publicized in the halacha journal, "*Rulings of the Rabbinical Court.*"

"We sat by him, and saw that no secret escapes him. Quite literally, his understanding of the Talmud, the codes, and also the esoteric matters, is exceedingly profound. He is literally the master of the house of the Zohar."

Many Jews flock to Rabbi Eliyahu's home every morning to resolve complex halachic issues, and the *gaon* answers them with joy and a pleasant countenance. Hundreds of men of all ages stream to his lectures, where he inspires them to increase their Torah study, do T'shuva, and prepare to greet Moshiach.

"AS WATER REFLECTS A FACE BACK TO A FACE, SO ONE'S HEART IS REFLECTED BACK TO HIM BY ANOTHER"

The honorable *gaon* is one of the extraordinary people of our generation. Yet despite his great knowledge of halacha and kabbala, and his familiarity with all the Torah leaders of the present and past generations, Rabbi Eliyahu's self-nullification to the Nasi of our generation is as thorough as a true chassid's, and the extent of his faith in *tzaddikim* is awe-inspiring.

Rabbi Eliyahu visited the Rebbe a number of times. Some of the long conversations between them – containing some amazing concepts in halacha, Kabbala, chassidus, Divine service, public leadership, and so on – appear in *B'tzel HaChochma*, and in

Seifer HaSichos 5752.

Whenever he attends a Chabad Torah gathering – where he is always an honored guest – Rabbi Eliyahu eloquently expresses his great admiration for the Rebbe and his holy activities. An entire book can be compiled of the *gaon's* addresses on this topic, but even the short quotes we present below serve to paint a majestic and vivid picture of the Nasi of our generation.

The Rebbe, likewise, related to Rabbi Eliyahu in an exceptional manner. It was enough to look at the Rebbe's eyes as he watched the satellite hookup of Rabbi Eliyahu lighting the Menorah in the plaza of the Kosel,¹ to see the Rebbe's great love and admiration for the *gaon*. Likewise, when Rabbi Eliyahu entered the Rebbe's room for an audience, the Rebbe welcomed him with exceptional honor, and outstanding love. Indeed, the Rebbe expressed his great respect for Rabbi Eliyahu on many occasions.

THE FIRST VISIT: 5744

Early Monday morning, Rosh Chodesh Kislev, 5744, (November 7, 1983) Rabbi Eliyahu and his companion, the *gaon*, Rabbi Avrohom Shapira *shlita*, entered the Rebbe's room. The following is a synopsis of the issues discussed during that meeting:

* Our forefather Yaakov left the land of Israel; this was a descent for the purpose of an ascent. * Rashi says, "The Nasi is everything," but the Rambam says, "He is the heart of the entire congregation of Israel." * The humility and resolve of Moshe Rabbeinu. * Rejection of the opinion that Moshe was born with a negative nature. * The greatness of the teaching that "the house became entirely filled with light" when Moshe was born. * Chassidism's explanation of the verse, "For I pulled him out of the water." * Democracy does not

exist in the Torah. * *Tzaddikim* say *Vidui*² because they are intertwined with the Jewish people. * For whom are the customs of the Arizal? * Is it permissible to change from *Nusach Ashkenaz* to *Nusach Sefard*? * If an individual is permitted to pray in his customary *nusach* when he prays in a synagogue that recites a different *nusach*. * Why the *Eitz Chayim* concludes with the subject of exile and the forces of evil, instead of with the customary "positive subject." * Explanation of the Sages' teaching, "The Torah that a person studies in this world is vanity compared to the Torah [insights] that Moshiach will [reveal]. * The virtue of a Jewish gathering – "When you cry out, your gathering will rescue you."³ * Anticipating Moshiach in a manner reflecting the verse, "For Your salvation do I long, O G-d!" * Discussion of the Ben Ish Chai's teaching that in the future we will offer up all the [Musaf] sacrifices of the Roshei Chodoshim that have passed. * The priestly blessing in lands other than Israel. * Explanation of "May G-d lift His countenance to you." * The mistake yeshiva's nowadays are making by not covering a lot of ground in their Torah study.

They also talked a lot about the importance of studying the Torah's inner dimension in the era directly preceding the coming of Moshiach.⁴ In this regard, they touched upon the following issues: * The only ones who withstood the challenges of [Soviet] Russia were those who had studied in chassidic yeshiva's. * Just as the restriction against issuing halachic rulings before the age of forty does not apply nowadays, so does the restriction against studying Kabbala at a young age not apply nowadays. * The Gra's⁵ teaching that it is impossible to know halachic rulings without having studied the Torah's inner dimension. * Our forefather Yaakov studied Kabbala at night. * The Rebbe requested of the

chief rabbis that they issue a proclamation encouraging the study of the Torah's inner dimension.

Towards the end of their meeting, the rabbis noted that it was getting very late, to which the Rebbe responded, "It's not so terrible. After all, it is written, "The night shall shine like the day." The Rebbe then excused himself before those present, saying that he wished to speak with the rabbis privately. The private discussion that ensued lasted about forty-five minutes, and when they were done, the Rebbe escorted them until the entrance to "Gan Eden HaTachton."

After the private audience with the Rebbe – the first of many for the Sephardic chief rabbi – Rabbi Eliyahu expressed his awe of the Rebbe on many occasions:

NO SECRET ESCAPES HIM

"We sat by him, and saw that no secret escapes him. Quite literally, his understanding of the Talmud, the codes, and also the esoteric matters, is exceedingly profound. He is literally the master of the house of the *Zohar*." (Interview with *Kfar Chabad Magazine*, issue #123, Teives 5744.)

HIS FACIAL EXPRESSION IS LIKE AN ANGEL OF G-D'S

"The Rabbi [i.e., Eliyahu], spoke about the great persona and holiness of the Rebbe *shlita* – how he is proficient in all areas of Torah, and in all that transpires in the Holy Land. He spoke primarily of how the Rebbe's facial expression literally resembles that of an angel of G-d. The rabbi said: 'Fortunate is the generation that has merited such a leader. This merit stands in good stead those students who were fortunate enough to study in the institutions under the Rebbe *shlita's* leadership.' (Quote from newspaper review of Rabbi Eliyahu's visit to the Lubavitch institutions in Paris, Adar

5745 / February-March, 1985.)

I SAW THAT HE IS HIGHER THAN AN ANGEL

“The *Gemara* says that if someone is like an angel of G-d, seek Torah from his mouth. Indeed, before I visited the Rebbe I considered him to be [like an angel]. But today, after I visited him, **I saw that he is higher than an angel.** For the Rebbe does not wait for [the masses] to seek Torah from his mouth, but instead, devotes himself with self-sacrifice to disseminate the Torah outward, with ever increasing strength, with ever increasing light.” (Yud-Tes Kislev celebration, *Kfar Chabad*, 5746 / December 2, 1985)

FORTUNATE ARE THE STUDENTS

“Since the time I merited to meet with the Rebbe in a private audience last year, I am at a loss for words to

describe the majesty of his holiness, and his great splendor in all areas of the Torah and in his devotion on behalf of the Jewish people. Through my visits to his Chabad institutions – which are incredibly numerous and of outstanding caliber, may there be more of them – I am able to say: “Fortunate are you, O students, in meriting to study in the institutions under the holy leadership of the Rebbe *shlita*. (During a visit to the Lubavitch institutions of Montreal, Shvat, 5745 / January-February, 1985).

THE SECOND VISIT: 5746

Together, Rabbis Eliyahu and Shapiro visited the Rebbe again on twenty-seven Adar II, 5746, (April 7, 1986), Since this meeting took place between the holidays of Purim and Pesach, their discussions focused mainly on relevant topics.

Purim issues: Explanation of the

terminology employed in the teaching “Torah study is interrupted for the reading of the Megilla.” Was Achashverosh a wise king or a foolish king? Since “the hearts of kings are in the hand of G-d,” do kings not possess free choice? The commandment to remember Amalek applies to Jews as individuals, whereas the commandment to annihilate Amalek applies primarily to the king, who is required to do this himself, and to instruct the masses in this regard. Diverse customs concerning the reading of the *Haftora* for Parshas Zachor. The prophet Shmuel’s love for his fellow Jew, as it concerned his relationship with Shaul. The close proximity between the two Redemptions [of Purim and Pesach.]

Pesach issues: * Explanation of the Sages’ teaching that the Children of Israel were circumcised on the night of the Exodus – circumcision must be performed in the daytime! *



Is it possible to say that the Jewish people fulfilled their obligation to offer the Paschal sacrifice through Moshe Rabbeinu's offering? * Explanation of the Sage's teachings regarding Moshe's statement, "At about midnight." * Is it possible to say that at the time of the Exodus, Jerusalem was already holy? * How did our forefather Avrohom build an altar on Mount Moria, which belonged to the Canaanites at the time? * Explanation of the Rambam's version of the Hagada text – i.e., "In panic we fled from Egypt." * In the future Redemption, "you will not leave hurried, nor will you go in flight." * The wonder in the fact that during [the second stage of] the plague of Darkness, when the darkness was tangible, the Jewish people were able to see the objects in the homes of the Egyptians. * Did Moshe Rabbeinu reach the fiftieth Gate [of Understanding]? * How wondrous it is that the "babies and sucklings" saw the Divine presence at the Splitting of the Sea. * The need to arrange public Pesach *seiders* in the land of Israel.

In connection with the Rambam's birthday on *Erev Pesach*: the Rebbe explained that the statement of the Rosh, that "one should not issue halachic rulings directly out of *Seifer HaRambam*," bears no relevance to the daily study of Rambam, because the purpose of this study is not to arrive at halachic rulings, but rather, to unite in the study of the entire Torah. The Rebbe also explained the meaning of the terms *Chochma*, *Bina*, and *Daas*, which appear at the beginning and end of *Yad HaChazaka*.⁶

Some aspects of halachos connected with the Holy Temple were discussed: The manner in which the Tetragrammaton⁷ was pronounced and heard in the Holy

Temple. Varying customs regarding the *Shliach Tzibur*'s⁸ kneeling and prostration during *Kor'im*.⁹ The manner in which the phrase "*Kodesh LaHashem*"¹⁰ was written on the *Tzitz*.¹¹ Was Moshe's entry into the Holy of Holies accompanied by the offering of special sacrifices? The status of the Temple Mount today, insofar as it concerns the prohibition against going beyond a certain point.

Regarding the imminent Redemption: [The Talmudic teaching], "Three things come *B'hesech HaDaas*."¹² The lesson derived from the teaching of the Sages that when the Divine Presence did not descend [upon the Mishkan]



the first few days of its existence] the Jewish people "were embarrassed"; in exile, every Jew is embarrassed and anguished over the fact that Moshiach did not yet arrive; thus, every Jew must request and demand of G-d that Moshiach should come immediately. Will G-d build the Third Temple, or will Moshiach build it? The Rambam's view that [when Moshiach arrives] "the world will continue to function in its [natural] manner" neither contradict the teaching of the Sages that "the barren trees will produce fruit," nor the [Divine] promise that "I will annihilate evil animals from the earth."

They also discussed the following

topics: The difference between angels and souls. The concept of "standers and goers" as it pertains to souls. The power that G-d gave the Jewish people to rise above the Throne of Glory. "You have conquered Me, O children, you have conquered Me." "I toiled, and I found" – a finding who's value surpasses the toil. The priestly blessing [is recited in] the "*Ahava*" blessing. Establishing the daily "time table" in the North and South poles, according to the opinion of the Baal HaMaor. The Alter Rebbe's statement in the second edition of his *Shulchan Aruch*, that auspicious times and Supernal unifications transcend time, but are revealed below [in the physical world] in accordance within the timeframe of each and every place. The law concerning the *eiruv* in the Old City [of Jerusalem]. Sounding the Shofar on Shabbos in Jerusalem. Explanation of the Rogotchover's statement that Moshe's sighting of the moon was an "imaginary vision." Explanation of the Sages teaching that "[Studying] a Torah subject requires clarity."

There were many other occasions in which the *gaon shlita* expressed his inner feelings [about the Rebbe]:

(To be continued.)

NOTES:

- 1 Western Wall.
- 2 A weekday prayer, where one confesses one's sins.
- 3 Isaiah 57:13.
- 4 I.e., *Ikvessa D'Meshicha*.
- 5 The Vilna Gaon.
- 6 The Rambam's code of Jewish law. (Also called *Mishneh Torah*.)
- 7 I.e., Y-H-V-H, G-d's ineffable Name.
- 8 The one who leads the prayers. (Sometimes called "the Chazan.")
- 9 I.e., Bowing down in the Temple on Yom Kippur.
- 10 "Holy unto G-d."
- 11 Kohen Gadol's headplate.
- 12 I.e., unexpectedly.

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שדה תעופה

חתונות

הובלות קטנות

THE CHASSID WHO INSPIRED MOSHIACH & SCIENCE RESEARCH

BY PROF. SHIMON SILMAN, RYAL INSTITUTE AND TOURO COLLEGE

Part 2

On the 13th of Iyar this year we observed the 52nd yahrtzeit of Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib Schneerson, the youngest brother of the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach. Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib was the chassid whose life and work inspired Moshiach and science research and the establishment of the RYAL Research Institute on Moshiach and the Sciences. In honor of his yahrtzeit we present this series of articles discussing his life and work, emphasizing those aspects which continue to inspire and influence Jewish scientists to this very day.

Last week we mentioned that Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib was known for a unique style of learning. We now attempt to analyze this particular method of learning and research, beginning with a story:

It is told in the name of Rebbetzin Chana that one time an excited discussion took place in her home in Yekatrinslav between her husband – Rabbi Levi Yitzchok, the Rebbe Melech

HaMoshiach and Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib, on a certain topic in Chassidus (known as “Mah u’Ban”). The intense discussion continued for weeks. At every opportunity it was the main topic of discussion. Once, after it had been going on for a few weeks, Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib remarked, “Until now we have just been talking around the issue. What about the essence of ‘Mah u’Ban?!’”

Rebbetzin Chana noted that each of the participants expressed his opinion in his own terminology – Rabbi Levi Yitzchok in the terminology of Kabbala, the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach in the terminology of Chassidus, and Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib in the terminology of *Chakira* (logical analysis).

It is interesting to note that, on occasion, the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach has referred to a concept as it is explained in all three of these methods of analysis. For example, in the Sichah of 6 Tishrei (the Yahrtzeit of Rebbetzin Chana), 5742 (1981), the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach said, “As it is explained in Kabbala and in Chassidus and in the books of *Chakira* that the fact that an object has ten aspects indicates the completeness of the thing...” From this we see, firstly, that each of these three methods has its place in the study of Torah and that, furthermore, the three methods complement each other.

CHAKIRA, KABBALA AND CHASSIDUS

We can gain a fuller understanding of what *Chakira* is and its role in learning by comparing it to and contrasting it with Chassidus. We begin with a very interesting quote

from the Rebbe Rashab.

The Rebbe Rashab once said, “What do we want from Chassidus? If it’s the fear of G-d and good character traits, there is the book *Reishis Chochma*. If it’s Chakira, there are the books of the *Ramak* (Rabbi Moshe Cordovero, the great Kabbalist in the generation before the Ari Zal). But in Chassidus we want G-dliness and this can be found only in Chassidus.”¹

From the fact that the Rebbe Rashab suggested that what we may want from Chassidus is Chakira, we see that Chakira does in fact play a role in Chassidus. And from the fact that he says that Chakira can be found in the books of the *Ramak*, which are books of Kabbala, we see that Chakira plays a role in Kabbala. So let’s examine the relationship between Chakira and Kabbala, and the relationship between Chakira and Chassidus.

Kabbala was the method of learning of Rabbi Levi Yitzchok. In a letter which he wrote to the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach on 19 Kislev, 5691 (1930), he makes a very fundamental statement about Kabbala: “Kabbala is not comprehensible to the human intellect. It can only be learned in a manner of reception and belief.”² It has to be received from elsewhere and believed. This explains why it is called *Kabbala*, which means reception. (Through Chassidus, however, it becomes understandable to human intellect, as Rabbi Levi Yitzchok explains later in the letter.)

Chakira is the opposite of this. It starts with assumptions acceptable to human intellect – axioms – and builds on them using the methods of logical reasoning. Rabbi Levi Yitzchok writes about this too in another letter. This letter, dated 24 Teives, 5692 (1932) is addressed to both the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach and to Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib. (As we mentioned in RYAL’s biography, they were both in Berlin together at this time.) Rabbi Levi Yitzchok writes: “In mathematics,

and similarly in every matter of intellect, there must be two things: 1) The initial concepts and the assumptions which remain constant, for example, that the whole is greater than any of its parts. ... 2) All the theorems and results of mathematics are then built on this.”³ (He continues to explain that this is connected with *Mah u’Ban*: *Ban* is the axioms and *Mah* is the structure built on the axioms.)

What about Chakira and Chassidus? The difference between them is described in an entry in Melech HaMoshiach’s first book, *HaYom Yom* which identifies three types of wisdom: 1) The teachings of Musar which emphasizes the rejection of physical and material matters, 2)

Mathematics, more so than science in general, has this quality of discovering the underlying unity in Creation.

The wisdom of Chakira which emphasizes the advantage of the inner content and the spiritual both in intellectual and emotional matters. Chakira teaches one to be attracted to the spiritual rather than to reject the material. 3) The wisdom of Chassidus which teaches one to refine the material and combine it with the spiritual forging one unified entity in which the spiritual is in control. In this way both the material and the spiritual attain their full potential and achieve the purpose for which they were created.

Both the material and the spiritual were created by One G-d for one purpose which is to reveal the light of the holiness of G-d’s mighty glory.

Only when the material and the spiritual are unified do they fulfill this intention and attain their perfection.

THE LIGHT OF CHASSIDUS

Now that we have contrasted Chakira with both Kabbala and Chassidus, we should ask how Chakira, Kabbala and Chassidus are all connected.

The answer to this can be inferred from what Rabbi Levi Yitzchok writes (in the first letter mentioned above) about the relationship between Kabbala and *Nigleh* (the “revealed” part of the Torah – the Talmud, Halacha etc.) to Chassidus: “The union of these two lights [Kabbala and *Nigleh*] is the goal of the revelation of the light of Chassidus – that the hidden part of the Torah and its deepest secrets be understood in their full abstraction by the intellect just like the comprehension of the revealed part of the Torah.

This is in contrast to Kabbala which is not comprehensible to the intellect. Rather it is received in a manner of faith. The revelation of the light of Chassidus is a level which is higher than both Kabbala and *Nigleh* and therefore has the power to combine both of them together.”

Similarly, Chassidus is higher than both Kabbala and Chakira and unifies both of them. The Alter Rebbe says in *Tanya* that the questions raised in Chakira cannot be answered completely unless one uses the concepts of the Kabbala of the Ari Zal. This is what the Alter Rebbe himself did in developing Chabad Chassidus which unifies all other wisdom.

What then is the advantage of Chakira, the lower level method, especially as it pertains to our current era, the Era of Moshiach? Recall that the Zohar, quoted earlier in this series, speaks of revelations in both the sciences and in Chassidus, which prepare the world for the revelation of the absolute unity of Hashem in the Era of Moshiach. Chakira, which is

basically a scientific approach, begins with observations and axioms and then builds on them. It has the advantage of demonstrating unity in the world from within the created universe itself – in its own terms – rather than having it revealed from outside the order of creation, from above. It expresses the G-dliness taught by Chassidus in the worlds own terms. As the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach says,⁴ “The completeness of the intention of there being a *Dira Ba’tachtonim* (a dwelling for Hashem in the lower worlds) is that the revelation in the world be...from the aspects of the world.”

Mathematics, more so than science in general, has this quality of discovering the underlying unity in creation. As the famous 19th century mathematician Joseph Fourier said, “Mathematics compares the most diverse phenomena and discovers the secret analogies which unite them.”

“AN INDEPENDENT CHARACTER”

Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib, as a research mathematician, followed the course of Chakira to the ultimate. This can be seen from what the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach himself said about RYAL in a famous dialogue that took place some 20 years after Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib had passed away. The story follows:

One day back in 1975, the famous Lubavitcher mathematician, Professor Pesach (Paul) Rosenbloom received a call from Rabbi Leibel Groner, one of the secretaries of the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach, regarding a mathematical paper that the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach wanted Rosenbloom to look at.

When Rosenbloom received the paper and reviewed it, not knowing who the author was, he noticed something highly unusual for a mathematical paper. It had no references to other mathematical works (texts, journals etc.). In fact, it

had mathematical results that had been obtained by some of the great mathematicians of the 20th century – Frobenius and Perron – but in this paper these facts were proved using entirely different proofs. It was evident that the author was not aware of the proofs of Frobenius and Perron.

(Incidentally, this tells us the caliber of mathematician that Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib was. His level was comparable to that of these two great mathematicians.)

Because of this, Rosenbloom assumed that the paper was written by a Russian Jewish mathematician who had just come out of Russia and who did not have access to a research library, probably because he was in a prison camp or in exile.

At the farbrengen of 10 Shvat that year, Rosenbloom approached the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach and they discussed the mathematical paper. The following dialogue then took place:

Professor Rosenbloom: The report – the paper that you sent me... It needs an introduction. It needs references...

Melech HaMoshiach: But...the author is deceased. That means that if something can be done by someone else... I’ll be very glad to compensate someone capable of completing it. Maybe you’ll supervise his work...

Rosenbloom understood this to mean either another professor or a graduate student. But the paper was too advanced for any graduate student and he didn’t think that another professor would be interested in working on someone else’s paper. When Rosenbloom realized that the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach had a special interest in having the paper published he offered to do it himself:

PR: Well then, I can do it myself because I’ve done some work in this before...

MH”M: I was not willing to tell you who the author is [so as] not to influence you, but it was written by

my brother.

PR: I see... Evidently he had to work independently and he didn’t have any access to a library...

MH”M: He was an independent character. He was not willing to look at anything [rather] to write all on his own. Only after that would he look in a reference [to see] if someone else had explained the same thing... He was very jealous about his independence...and because of that the references are not [there].

Just how important is this quality of deriving results on one’s own and not depending on the work of others, to a research scientist? Or, how important is it to be an “independent character”? We can answer this question with a fascinating story from the life of one of the greatest research scientists of our time, Richard P. Feynman.

Feynman was a Jew from Brooklyn who became prominent as a physicist at a young age. He worked on the development of the Atomic bomb in Los Alamos during World War II, and afterwards was a professor at Cornell University and then at the California Institute of Technology (Cal Tech). He received a Nobel Prize in physics. He is considered by many to be the greatest theoretical physicist since Einstein.

In his autobiography, he talks about the research effort to find the laws of beta decay. He is describing his own involvement in the project. He begins by saying:

“At that particular time I was not really quite up to things...Everybody seemed to be smart and I didn’t feel I was keeping up.”

Then a discovery was made that the so-called parity law was violated in beta decay and there was a conference on this in Rochester, New York. The physicists Lee and Yang had delivered a paper at the conference describing their discovery that parity had been violated. Feynman attended the conference while staying at his sister’s

house nearby. He continues:

“I brought the paper home and said to her, ‘I can’t understand these things that Lee and Yang are saying. It’s all so complicated.’

“No,’ she said, ‘what you mean is not that you can’t understand it but that you didn’t invent it. You didn’t figure it out your own way, from hearing the clue.’ She told him to review the paper line by line, making sure that he understands it his own way. He continues:

“I took her advice and checked through the whole thing, and found it to be very obvious and simple.” In fact, in the process he had actually developed the theory a little further. It turned out to be even further than he thought as follow up experiments showed that his theory actually explained the remaining unanswered questions about beta decay.

“I had the whole theory!” he continues. “It was the first time, and the only time in my career that I knew a law of nature that nobody else knew...It’s the only time I ever discovered a new law.”

He concludes by saying, “Since then I never pay any attention to

anything by ‘experts’. I calculate everything myself.” An independent character?

It is not surprising, then, that in the Sicha of Shabbos Parshas B’Haalos’cha, 16 Sivan, 5750, Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib’s 81st birthday, the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach, speaks of the importance of accomplishing things through one’s own effort: “The foundation of serving Hashem is that it be through one’s own power.... As is well known, this is the purpose of the creation of man and having the Neshama descend into the body – ...to work and accomplish with one’s own power. Through this he becomes ‘a partner to Hashem in the act of creation.’ [The nature of a person is that he has true pleasure only when he attains a goal through his own work and effort, and not when it’s in a manner of ‘bread of shame.]]”⁵

INTELLECT AND BEYOND

The completeness of the revelation of G-dliness in the Era of Moshiach (as opposed to other eras in history when there were great revelations of G-dliness such as the time of Shlomo HaMelech – the first Beis HaMikdash) is that the revelation

will be seen from within the world itself (as opposed to being superimposed upon it from above, as it was in the time of Shlomo HaMelech). The Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach emphasizes this in the Kuntreisim of Kislev 5752: “It will be felt in every thing that its true being is G-dliness,” i.e. that “Hashem’s true existence is the being of everything that exists.”⁶

The ultimate purpose of Chakira, which starts from within human intellect and natural law and works from below to above, is to reach a level of understanding Hashem where it is known within intellect itself that Hashem is above intellect. The Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach explains this in a *Hadran* (review) on the Rambam⁷ as follows: “A knowledge...that Hashem is not limited to the definitions of intellect – and that this too should be known in an intellectual manner. The intellect itself should know and understand that it is created by Hashem, but that Hashem is not limited by it, *chas v’shalom*.”

In the terminology of Chakira: The ultimate purpose of the knowledge is that we cannot know You.” This will be attained completely in the Era of Moshiach when “the intellect itself will be permeated and filled with the knowledge of the level of G-dliness which is higher than the limitations of intellect.”

NOTES:

1 Seifer HaSichos 5704, p. 14. Quoted in Seifer HaToldos Admur Rashab, p. 381

2 Likkutei Levi Yitzchok, Igros Kodesh, p. 223

3 Likkutei Levi Yitzchok, Igros Kodesh, p. 250

4 Seifer HaMaamarim Meluket, vol. 6, p. 18

5 Seifer HaSichos 5750, p. 505. The brackets are part of the quote from the Sicha.

6 Seifer HaMaamarim Meluket, vol. 6, p. 54, 71. See the Kuntreisim of 19 Kislev and Chanuka for a detailed comparison between the Era of Shlomo HaMelech and the Era of Moshiach.

7 Toras Menachem – Hadranim al HaRambam v’Shas, pp. 108-111.



The tziyun of R. Yisroel Aryeh Leib

ADVICE IN VICHY

BY DANIEL GORDON



We know a few stories about the mesirus nefesh of the Rebbe to save other Jews and his punctiliousness in mitzva observance, kashrus, baking matzos, etc., in Europe during WW2. The story publicized here for the first time, gives us a glimpse of what the Rebbe's life was like under Nazi rule.

While hospitalized in Tel HaShomer hospital in Tel Aviv with a broken leg, Rabbi Yosef Friedland of Petach Tikva spent his free time making his way about in his wheelchair and asking people to put on t'fillin. Seeing the effort he made in this, many patients agreed to put on t'fillin even expressing their admiration for the work Chabad does around the world.

On one such occasion, R' Friedland met an older man by the name of Ezriel Tziferbersht, who lived in France during World War II. After the man put on t'fillin, he told the story about how he had met the Lubavitcher Rebbe while the Rebbe was in France.

* * *

Life for Jews in France from 1940 and on was terrible. France had been conquered by the Germans and the fate of French Jewry was sealed (see sidebar).

My grandmother Tzippora a"h, who was 82 and very religious, became sick with pneumonia. There were no antibiotics back then, and she needed to be hospitalized for at least two weeks. The country swarmed with spies and police who sought Jews in order to hand them over to the Nazis for a few francs (a considered sum during wartime).

It was impossible to obtain kosher food in the hospital, for this would certainly alert the staff to her being

Jewish. It was dangerous to bring her more than one meal a day, for fear that the staff would find this suspicious.

My grandmother insisted on staying away from the hospital because of the problem of obtaining kosher food and because of the danger. Her condition worsened and we couldn't think of a solution.

At that time, we heard that Rabbi Schneersohn was in a small village in an area under Vichy rule. We decided to travel to him and seek his counsel. We knew he was the son-in-law of the Lubavitcher Rebbe and that he was a wise and very special man.

We lived in the town of Chatelle, and we went to see Rabbi Schneersohn in the nearby village. We were very afraid to attract attention, especially around the rabbi's house, thus causing someone to report us. An official examination of our papers or the rabbi's would soon disclose that we are Jews. The ever present danger of being turned over to the Nazis loomed over us.

We approached Rabbi Schneersohn's house in the late afternoon. In order not to attract attention, we divided into two groups when we were still at a distance of a

few streets from the Rebbe. The first group went to his house and were warmly welcomed, while we, the second group, continued strolling around for an additional quarter of an hour before arriving at his door.

I remember that he had a private, one-storey house, isolated from the nearby houses. We knocked on the door and were led inside. We sat with the Rebbe, and my father, Shachna a"h, spoke to the Rebbe in French, explaining in great detail about my grandmother. My sister Chava added some points, and my grandmother told the Rebbe how she refused to be hospitalized despite her failing health.

Rabbi Schneersohn asked my grandmother some questions, and then turned to all of us and declared, "If she doesn't want to go to the hospital, she doesn't need to go." Rabbi Schneersohn blessed my

grandmother with a speedy recovery and long life, and blessed the entire family.

We left the way we had come, in two groups. A short time later my grandmother recovered completely. We heard that Rabbi Schneersohn and his Rebbetzin had left France for America. At precisely the same time, the situation in Chatelle deteriorated and our family had to split up. I went to the Sorbir Le Chataeu school feigning to be a gentile. My sisters were sent to a different school, 300 kilometers away, in Toulouse, while my parents were sent to a labor camp for three years until the end of the war.

With G-d's help, my entire family survived the war. My grandmother lived a long and healthy life to the age of 101, and never had to go to the hospital.

THE REBBE LIVING UNDER VICHY RULE

After France's defeat in World War II in Sivan 1940, Marshal Petain signed an agreement with the Germans, which said that southern France would remain independent with Vichy, a city in the center of France, its capitol. The Vichy government collaborated with the Nazis, breaking off ties with the Allies who fought the Germans. Thousands of Frenchmen were sent to labor camps and tens of thousands of Jews were handed over to the Nazis.

In 1943, the Germans broke the agreement and conquered the rest of France. An opposition movement to the Vichy government and the German conquerors arose, led by General De Gaulle. Towards the end of the war, France was liberated by the Allies, and the Vichy government and its supporters were declared traitors. Many of them were killed.

When World War II began, the Rebbe and the Rebbetzin lived in Paris, where the Rebbe served as liaison between the Rebbe Rayatz (who was in conquered Warsaw) and Agudas Chassidei Chabad in the U.S. Aguch worked to save the Rebbe Rayatz from the Nazis by appealing to the American government.

In Sivan 1940, when the Nazis conquered Paris, the Rebbe and Rebbetzin fled, a few days before Shavuos. They spent a period of time wandering through France until they settled for a year – Sivan 1940-Sivan 1941 – in Nice, which was under Vichy rule. The only thing the Rebbe had with him at the time were his tallis and t'fillin, which were kept in a small suitcase.



167 PARADES, 84,100 CHILDREN, 3,000,000 LIRAS

THE FIRST LAG B'OMER PARADES IN ERETZ YISROEL

BY DANIEL GORDON

*5740 (1980) was the first year that Lag B'Omer parades took place in Eretz Yisroel. The Rebbe asked for 60 parades and the organizers made 167 parades, with over 80,000 children. * Details and stories about that first year.*

According to some estimates, in recent years a quarter of a million children have participated in Lag B'Omer parades that take place in hundreds of locations around Eretz Yisroel, from Metulla in the north to Eilat in the south. Experienced logistics crews produce the parade emblems, the hats, booklets, cold drinks, and the various attractions.

Not too many people know how Lag B'Omer parades in Eretz Yisroel came to be. Just a few days before Lag B'Omer came the Rebbe's instruction to make parades. It wasn't like the concept of Lag B'Omer Parades was foreign to Anash and the T'mimim, for parades had started before then, at the beginning of the Rebbe's nesius. It's just that these parades took place solely at 770 and nowhere else in the world. Up until 5740, other activities had taken place on Lag B'Omer, such as those in Miron, with soldiers, and farbrengens. 5740 is the year that the Rebbe initiated Lag B'Omer parades around the

world.

It was only two weeks before Lag B'Omer 5740. Professor Branover returned from 770 to Eretz Yisroel with a mission. It's unlikely that even he realized that this shlichus was a historic Jewish precedent, and that it would turn into a huge annual phenomenon.

Before he left for the airport, the Rebbe told him to take 60 fifty-lira notes and to give them to anybody who organized a children's parade on Lag B'Omer.

This was most surprising, because parades such as these had never taken place in Eretz Yisroel. On the contrary, public spectacles such as a parade went against the chareidi position of isolating oneself from the street. The Rebbe blazed a new trail through the wall of Galus and brought Judaism to the outside, to the street, with a *shturem* the likes of which had never been seen before.

The Rebbe asked that parades

take place everywhere, in every country of the world, emphasizing that efforts should be made to organize at least 30 parades in every country to mark the thirtieth year since the passing of the Rebbe Rayatz. And that double that number of parades take place in Eretz Yisroel. The Rebbe said that in countries where it wasn't possible to organize that many parades, a few contiguous countries should band together to make 30 parades.

On Sunday, 4 Iyar 5740, the Rebbe sent 120 dollar bills for the organizing of 120 parades in the United States, with 30 dollars sent to each state in which 30 parades took place. The Rebbe added, "Those who will not organize parades should at least try to make parties." The Rebbe warned that the money should be given exclusively to those who organized parades – no fooling around. And if they didn't attain the goal, extra dollars were to be returned to the Rebbe. On the other hand, the Rebbe said that if there were more parades, he would send additional dollars.

This was the Rebbe's instruction: **"To try and see to it that not one Jewish child in our holy land be excluded from taking part in a parade."** The Rebbe sent out an answer to someone which said, **"may there be success, etc., and the merit of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai is certainly very, very great. I'll mention you at the tziyun."**



This campaign came as a continuation to the Rebbe's call, in the month of Nissan, to increase activities, under the slogan of, "He will return the heart of fathers through the sons." This was a new direction taken by the Rebbe for the purpose of increasing the influence of Jewish children and reaching their parents through them.

The day after Professor Branover arrived in Eretz Yisroel, Rabbi Moshe Slonim a"h organized an urgent meeting in Kfar Chabad. The purpose of the meeting was to get the Rebbe's plan off the ground, and the meeting was attended by about thirty askanim and shluchim.

They discussed all the details this undertaking would entail and resolved to do all in their power to make the parades a success. Yet

good intentions were one thing and action was another, and nothing got off the ground. Only nine days remained until Lag B'Omer and nothing had been accomplished.

Rabbi Yisroel Halperin, who had attended the meeting, went into Rabbi Slonim's office one day in order to be updated on the Lag B'Omer project. When he saw that nothing had happened, he proposed a practical and detailed plan to get things moving. Rabbi Slonim immediately appointed Rabbi Halperin to be in charge. Along with other helpers, he saw to it that the project finally got off the ground. Rabbi Yisroel Leibov a"h, director of Tzach and R' Nachum Cohen, director of Tzach activities at that time, were especially involved. They organized the project and the leaders of local parades and their

The Rebbe blazed a new trail through the wall of Galus and brought Judaism to the outside, to the street, with a shturem the likes of which had never been seen before.

helpers worked along with them. Rabbi Moshe Naporstek and Rabbi Shimon Beckerman were responsible for enlisting manpower.

It was at this time that Rabbi Nachum Cohen coined the phrase, “*Yachad Kol Yaldei Yisroel*,” which was accepted by the Rebbe. The Rebbe said a sicha at the Lag B’Omer parade in front of 770 and mentioned the new slogan a number of times.

Chabad in Eretz Yisroel at the beginning of the 80’s was small-scale. There were only about twenty Chabad houses, and these were scattered throughout the country, yet Rabbi Halperin was determined to make a big deal out of the parades, and to do it in an organized manner.

While a large crew worked against the clock, all talmidim in Chabad yeshivos were enlisted, as well as young men in kollel, and Anash around the country. With their help, teams were set up in every location around the country.

Starting up with the tinokos shel beis rabban is an attack on those whom Hashem testifies that they are His anointed ones: My anointed, “do not touch My anointed ones” – these are the tinokos shel beis rabban.

Every parade had its local appointee and over every few of these, there was a regional director. Every yeshiva had a bachur whose job it was to organize manpower in the yeshiva.

Manuals on how to successfully run a parade were printed. They contained virtually every possible problem that could arise as well as advice, solutions, and ideas to make things work out in the best possible way. Material was also printed for those who would be emceeding rallies.

The offices of the Reshet in Kfar Chabad and Rabbi Meir Friedman’s office in Beit Shazar were buzzing like beehives. It was there that all the action took place, with workers coming and going, lists made up, guidebooks composed, signs and other items made up for the children. It was from there too that tens of thousands of drinks went out to all the parades. Workers were given forms to write down the names of the participants for future reference.

On Shabbos, Parshas Emor, Erev Lag B’Omer, the Rebbe farbrenged and spoke almost entirely about Lag B’Omer and Rashbi. The Rebbe also spoke about the parades that would take place the next day, and asked that during the parades the children fulfill the three things on which the world stands: Torah, T’filla, and



The first parade in Petach Tikva.

The children are wearing the special Lag B’Omer emblem. On the left is Rabbi Boruch Shmuel Heishrik

Tz’daka. The Rebbe said they should be in touch with the children after the parades. The Rebbe also suggested that photo albums of parades around the world be published which would contain impressions and stories and would be printed in all languages that Jewish children speak: Hebrew, English, Russian, Persian, etc.

The Rebbe urged people to contribute towards the costs of these parades. The Rebbe ended the sicha with a request: **Everybody should come up with ideas and suggestions – the main thing (regarding the parades) being that a kiddush Hashem, a kiddush Am Yisroel, and a kiddush ha’Torah result, and they should all march with the children**



Entertainment at the first public Lag B'Omer event for children in Kikar Malchei Yisroel in Tel Aviv

to greet Moshiach Tzidkeinu and Rashbi among them and at their head.

The Rebbe even said some unusual things about the importance of being involved in these parades: **Each person has his heart's desires, specific and general, therefore he is told: in the merit of**

being involved with the children, may Hashem give you all you desire. Then the Rebbe said: **My revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, sacrificed his life and taught that each person in his four cubits should be involved in actual deeds, should not seek honor, etc. Those who worked until now with children, especially in activities to include boys and girls in the parade in honor of the celebration of Rashbi, should increase in this, so that the matter should be conducted with greater success.**

The organizers of the parades in Eretz Yisroel, who saw how highly the

Rebbe regarded it, weren't satisfied with making the sixty parades they were asked to make, but went all-out in order to reach every possible place, to please the Rebbe.

Despite the relatively short preparation time, they were very successful: 84,100 children participated in 167 parades that

took place throughout Eretz Yisroel, including Yesha and the Golan Heights!

They knew the exact number of participants thanks to the registration forms that were distributed beforehand, which the children filled out. This huge list of names came in handy a half a year later when the Tzivos Hashem organization was founded by the Rebbe on Sukkos 5741.

Israeli police required counselors in proportion to the number of children. This was hard on the counselors, who participated in at least three parades each! Everybody pitched in and many Anash and T'mimim discovered creative talents. In Nachalat Har Chabad, for example, a group of bachurim worked day and night to build a "mivtzaim train" 100 meters long; in Ramat Gan, the first Mivtzaim Tank in the country circulated and announced the parade. In Tel Aviv, a chassid rode a donkey and dragged a huge sign publicizing the parade, drawing a great deal of attention.

The organizers of the first parades decided to include settlements beyond the Green Line and sent a delegation of Anash to Gaza, where they took the children out to the street. In the north of the country, the shluchim in Tzfas organized six parades, including one in the Golan Heights. There was even a parade in Yamit.

An interesting thing happened in Kiryat Arba from which we can



learn how important the parades were to the Rebbe. Plans for the Lag B'Omer parade were hatched by the Nachshon family along with

chassidim from Kfar Chabad. These included Rabbi Yeshavam Segal and Rabbi Yosef Lebenharz. They planned on the parade leaving

Kiryat Arba for the M'aras HaMachpella in Chevron.

The night before the parade,

CHABAD'S DEMONSTRATIONS OF AHAVAS YISROEL

The parades enjoyed tremendous success and was reported widely in the media. It was a great novelty for Israelis, a huge demonstration of achdus and ahavas Yisroel. The following was written by Y.S. in *HaTzofeh*:

Orders from the Rebbe of the Chabad chassidim was enough to get thousands of students marching on Lag B'Omer, demonstrating the extent of *d'veikus* and enthusiasm that is capable of overcoming all difficulties and obstacles. All gates open before the goal that is infused with vision and a sense of mission.

It is no small matter to organize impressive parades within a few days, with materials, brochures, prizes, flags, and slogans. This kind of organization generally needs lots of manpower and a huge budget, as well as a great deal of preparation.

Chabad reached out to every Jewish child and succeeded in gathering thousands and tens of thousands of children at rallies and parades, who stood together in ahavas Yisroel.

* * *

Another interesting discovery was the tremendous response on the part of tens of thousands of students who were interested in participating in these parades. This is despite the fact that most of these children seemingly don't have a connection with tradition and their heritage. But if a spiritual and traditional idea is packaged in a modern way that suits the times, the accomplishment is quite impressive.

* * *

One can assume that if on Lag B'Omer, Chabad chassidim had gone to classrooms and told them about the plague that occurred because of baseless hatred and lack of respect for others, many of the children would have been angry about their free time being taken up with this, or would have tuned it all out. The idea of explaining things through rallies and parades, flags and slogans, through marching the length of the town, speaks to the younger generation. There's a chance that through the modern medium they'll absorb the spiritual content, which is about transforming Lag B'Omer into a day that symbolizes ahavas Yisroel, by whose light we will educate future generations and will be a source of pride for the youth from all walks of life.

* * *

This idea of getting through with positive messages to the student population, not being content to focus on the limited sphere of chareidi groups alone, is another novel breakthrough, which we ought to bless and support. How bizarre it is that specifically *roshei yeshivos* and *g'dolei ha'Torah* are the ones to criticize this powerful display of strength, the core of which is ahavas Yisroel. It has revived the spirits of hundreds of thousands of people, and has drawn them closer to their traditions and eternal values.

* * *

There's no greater mitzva than to encourage Chabad chassidim that their strength should grow, their might should increase, so they can intensify the glory of Torah with the same measure of devotion and beauty like the Lag B'Omer display this year.



Lag B'Omer rally in the center of Ramat Gan



The Lag B'Omer parade in Ramat Gan

terrorists carried out an attack in Kiryat Arba. The organizers didn't know whether it was appropriate to have a jolly parade when the town was in mourning. They sent this urgent question to the Rebbe who responded: **[The halacha is that] the dead is moved aside for the bride.**

The parade took place as planned and was very successful. Hundreds of children participated, demonstrating Jewish pride.

The first public Lag B'Omer event for children took place in Tel Aviv with great success. A few days before, May Day was celebrated by the socialists. As they did every year, they held a huge parade, which cut off all traffic on streets leading into Malchei Yisroel square in the center of the city. This posed a problem for the organizers of the Lag B'Omer parade, Rami Antian^a and Moshe Dickstein, because the police refused to close off the main

streets a second time within a few days.

Pleading with them didn't help, and so the organizers had two choices: They could hold the rally and parade in a less central location, in one of the neighborhoods of the city, or they could have a rally without a parade in the center of the city. R' Dickstein called the Rebbe and the Rebbe answered that they should make a rally in a central location.

Preparations for the rally began in earnest and signs were hung up all over Tel Aviv, announcing the big rally to take place on Lag B'Omer, and the magician and clown that would entertain the children.

A certain rosh yeshiva from B'nei Brak strongly opposed the parades. He wrote an open letter on which some other illustrious rabbanim signed too, and the letter was

posted in religious areas.

The letter called for a boycott of the parades, which he saw as degrading to the Torah. One of the things that particularly bothered him was the magician.

Chabad chassidim in Eretz Yisroel were not used to such provocations, and were divided in how to respond to it. Some thought they should tone things down and avoid strife, while R' Mendel Futerfas^a demanded that they continue their plans and carry them out with even greater enthusiasm.

The Rebbe said a sicha on Erev Shavuot that responded to the complaints of that rosh yeshiva: **Starting up with the tinokos shel beis rabban is an attack on those whom Hashem testifies that they are His anointed ones: My anointed, "do not touch My anointed ones" – these are the tinokos shel beis rabban.**



“Shma Yisroel, Hashem Elokeinu, Hashem Echad!” – Jews went and gave up their lives with this pasuk, and with these words they went from the World of Falsehood to the World of Truth. Jewish children proclaimed this pasuk on Lag B’Omer in public.

Rashbi instructed that we be happy on his day of rejoicing. All the more so not to interfere with his simcha!

The rally in Tel Aviv, like the other rallies around the country, was a great success and made a tremendous kiddush Hashem. About 5000 children from Tel Aviv packed Kikar Malchei Yisroel. The platform that had been prepared for May Day was where the emcee, Rabbi Tzvi Greenwald, stood and he elevated it to k’dusha. The Rebbe’s sicha at the Lag B’Omer parade in New York was broadcast live with the aid of large amplifiers. Picture it – about 5000 kids plus thousands of passersby, listening to a sicha in the hub of Tel Aviv. This was followed with a loud “Shma Yisroel.”

Immediately after Lag B’Omer, R’ Moshe Dickstein went to 770 with the possibility of returning before or after Shavuot. He handed in a note to the Rebbe, which said he was responsible for the rally in Tel Aviv and asked, “*ha’im hu ratzui*” (is he pleasing?), meaning if the Rebbe was pleased with him. The Rebbe crossed off the word “*ha’im* (is?)” and after the words “*hu ratzui* (he is pleasing)” the Rebbe added, “*u’maasav retzuyim* (and his deeds are pleasing).”

At the national headquarters they decided that before sunset that Lag B’Omer, they would send the Rebbe a complete rundown of their activities, with the place, name of the one in charge, and the number of children who attended. Each person in charge had received a form to fill out ahead of time.

INCOMPLETE REPORT

When it came to sending in reports about the parades to the Rebbe, one of the local organizers who successfully made a number of parades preferred sending in his own report. At the end of the day, Rabbi Halperin, along with Rabbi Avrohom Meizlich and Rabbi Yosef Lebenharz, sent in a report to the Rebbe. They did this by reading the list to the secretary (this was before faxes). Then they said that a certain person who organized parades in his area wanted to send in his report separately.

The Rebbe received this report immediately after delivering his Lag B’Omer sicha at the parade in New York. Twenty minutes later, Rabbi Efraim Wolf a”h called Lag B’Omer headquarters and asked them, on behalf of the secretaries, why the Rebbe hadn’t gotten the report from Eretz Yisroel.

The organizers realized that without that person’s report, their report was incomplete, and it was as though the Rebbe hadn’t received it. They called him up and he willingly supplied the details. They called the secretary again to give him the rest of the information and a short while later, R’ Wolf called to say that the report had been received.

Afterwards, he called the office in Kfar Chabad in order to have his information included with everybody else’s.

In the final moments before sunset, they finished compiling the data (see box) and the report was given by telephone to Rabbi Leibel Groner to be relayed to the Rebbe.

Immediately after Lag B’Omer, the Rebbe sent an additional 107 dollars for all the parades. Anash and the T’mimim had pulled together and had made the project a tremendous success, without rationalizations and without excuses. The expenditures had been astronomical, and Rabbi Yisroel Leibov, director of Tzach, had to make an urgent fundraising trip to the U.S. Journalist Y. Lev Ari wrote in *B’Reshet Chabad* that it had cost nearly 3 million liras.

As the Rebbe had told them to do, the organizers resolved to keep in touch with the children in order to keep up the positive influence on them. In the months that followed, a special team of teachers and students produced five colorfully

illustrated pamphlets with an educational message that was sent to the children in the mail.

The Rebbe expressed his opinion of the parades that year in a sicha on Erev Shavuot. The Rebbe spoke at length about how the custom of parades is based on *minhag Yisroel Torah hu* (a Jewish custom is Torah). He then went on to say: **“As they did this year ... with a greater commotion than last year, two years ago and three years ago, etc., the project was a success and it inspired both the children ... and the parents and the onlookers... The atmosphere of the world and even non-Jews ... were inspired and saw “that the name of G-d is called upon you.”**

* * *

This was the first Lag B’Omer parade and since then, every single year, Jewish children gather in every city, moshav and Kfar, and proudly express their connection with Hashem, and carry signs with messages of ahavas Yisroel and love for Hashem. In recent years, they have added signs that say “Ad Masai” and “Yechi.”

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The screenshot shows the website interface for Beis Moshiach. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for HOME, PDF VERSION, ARCHIVES, and language options (English/Hebrew). The main header features the Beis Moshiach logo, a bhTech advertisement, and the text 'Chabad World'. Below the header, there is a navigation menu with 'English Edition' selected. A banner reads 'Long live the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach forever and ever'. The main content area displays an article titled 'WE HAD NEVER HEARD IT LIKE THIS BEFORE' with a sub-headline 'Presented in honor of Tes Kislev, birthday of the Mittler Rebbe, and Yud Kislev, the day the Mittler Rebbe was released from jail.' The article includes a photo of a man in a hat. Other articles listed include 'FARBENGEN OF MASHPIM' and 'CHASDEI BRACHA: SPREADING JOY'. A sidebar on the left contains a 'Sections' menu with links to 'Dvar Mafkas', 'Farbengen', and 'Soleimus ha'broch news'. A right sidebar features an 'Archive' section with a dropdown menu set to '439' and an 'Advanced Search' button. The footer of the browser window shows the Internet Explorer logo and the word 'Internet'.

TEETER-TOTTERING ON THE EDGE OF THIS WORLD AND THE NEXT

BY NOSSON AVROHOM

*When the Rebbe attended the Sorbonne
University in Paris...*



Rabbi Ben-Tzion Partush

I heard this amazing story from Rabbi Ben-Tzion Partush of Paris at a farbrengen in 770:

"I heard this story firsthand, from Rabbi Yehuda Schwartz (who works at Rabbi Azimov's school in Paris) in 5755, at a farbrengen that took place in Beis Moshiaich located in Brodoloran in Paris, under the directorship of Rabbi Reuven Matusof."

Rabbi Schwartz once worked as a truck driver for the Orly company, a large company that imports kosher food from Eretz Yisroel and supplies it to many districts of France. The company was owned by Daniel Amram, a Lubavitcher chassid from Paris.

One day, as R' Schwartz was driving a truck, which had been purchased by the company as a second-hand vehicle two weeks earlier, he discovered that the brakes didn't work! He was terrified since he was coming up to a red light near a busy intersection. He had two choices, one worse than the other. He could continue moving forward and kill many people¹, or turn left towards the bridge and fall into the river.

In a split-second decision, he turned the wheel 90 degrees to the left and rammed into the side of the bridge. Hashem made a miracle for him and

although the truck broke the retaining wall, the truck remained suspended between heaven and earth, teeter-tottering one half over the water and the other half on the bridge. Emergency personnel worked for hours to extricate him from the truck.

The police immediately opened an investigation into the cause of the accident, and discovered that the brakes had been faulty for quite some time. They concluded that the owner of the company, Daniel Amram, had to

"The professor who was in charge opened the test envelope and to his amazement he saw that the pages were all filled in. He turned to Rabbi Schneersohn and asked him, 'How is this possible? It must be magic!'"

take responsibility for what occurred and pay all the damages as well as a hefty fine.

Amram was outraged by this. He said the fault was entirely upon the gentile who sold the company the truck two weeks before. The court heard his claim and called the gentile (a wealthy man about 80 years of age) to testify.

When the man saw the driver and the owner of the company dressed as chassidic Jews, he changed his tune. To the amazement of the judges and lawyers who represented both sides, he said: "The truth is that I have no problem hiring a top-notch lawyer who will win the case for me, but since I see who I'm dealing with, I refuse to prove my innocence. I agree to pay all the damages as well as the fine and the expenses of this case."

Silence reigned for a few moments. People waited expectantly to hear his terms, for they didn't believe that he had given up without a fight. When they realized that he was serious, the judges were so taken aback by his generosity that they waived the fine. All he had to do was pay for the damage that the truck had done to the retaining fence.

The man went further and when both sides left the courthouse, he asked Amram to take the truck to be fixed at

a garage near his home, with all the expenses paid for by him. This amazed people from the Orly company even more, but they kept quiet about it (not wanting him to change his mind).

Three weeks went by and Amram got a phone call from his office. The elderly gentile was on the line and he said that the mechanic had fixed the truck. He added that instead of Amram sending a driver such a distance on his own, since he was coming to Paris anyway, he would take the truck driver back with him to the garage.

This is in fact what took place. On his way home, the gentile picked up Yehuda Schwartz. The old man sat in the front near his chauffeur while Schwartz sat alone in the back. They had a three-hour drive ahead of them, and Schwartz took out a *Chitas* and began saying T'hillim.

About half an hour went by and then the man turned around to Schwartz and said, "You're a follower of Lubavitch?"

Schwartz was surprised by the question, but he answered Yes. The gentile asked, "How is Rabbi Schneersohn of New York?"

Now Schwartz was really taken aback. What did the man have to do with the Rebbe? He replied but could

no longer hide his amazement, and expressed his wonder to the old man. The gentile smiled and turned around even more, making himself comfortable. Then he said, "I'll tell you a story that will show you how great Rabbi Schneersohn is."

He was silent for a while, and then he related the following:

"It was during World War II. I was a young man and I refused to submit to the terrors of war. I decided that despite the crazy times we lived in, I would acquire knowledge that would help me for the rest of my life. I studied mathematics at the Sorbonne University in Paris.

"I became acquainted with Rabbi Schneersohn, who was in my class. I'll never forget his charm and incredible intelligence. He was a cut above the rest, and everybody admired him. During lectures, we never saw him looking at the lecturer, but into a book that was open his lap.

"During those difficult times, some friends and I would go out every Saturday night to local villages to buy food at cheap prices. On Sunday and Monday, we would sell the food to local peddlers. By doing this, we missed the major part of the week's lessons, since Monday was the first day of classes at

the university, and all the material that needed to be studied that week was taught that day.

"Each student took notes to remind him of what the lecturer had taught. Rabbi Schneersohn wrote out the lesson in detail, and Tuesday morning, when we arrived at the university, he would give us his notes so we could make up what we had missed.

"At the end of the semester there was a final and the students were extremely nervous. The professors in charge of administering the test estimated that it would take three hours to write down the answers, and in order that there be no complaints about time pressure, they set aside five hours for the exam.

"A half an hour went by and to the dumbfounded looks of students and teachers, Rabbi Schneersohn handed in his test paper and headed out. Some of those present, including professors, thought that he didn't know the material and that's why he handed in his test paper so quickly. It was particularly amazing since the test was several pages long and just jotting down the answers (without having to think) took a lot of time.

"The professor who was in charge opened the test envelope and to his amazement he saw that the pages were all filled in. He turned to Rabbi Schneersohn and asked him (in French), 'How is this possible? It must be magic!'

"Rabbi Schneersohn turned around to the professor, gazed at him for a second and then left without saying a word.

"Word about what had happened spread throughout the university and became the topic of the day among students and staff. Their incredulity increased even more when they examined his test paper and found it to be 100% correct.

"When the dean heard about this and how the professor had embarrassed Rabbi Schneersohn by saying it must have been magic, he asked the



professor to publicly apologize.

"A few days later, there was a ceremony with diplomas being awarded to those who excelled on the test. The professor approached Rabbi Schneersohn, gave him a diploma, and publicly apologized for shaming him.

"Despite his apology, apparently, his curiosity overcame him and he asked Rabbi Schneersohn, in front of the students, how he had finished the test so quickly. Rabbi Schneersohn smiled politely, accepted his apology, and in front of hundreds of students he said, 'The Jewish nation has the Talmud, and for the one who learns it, all the questions on the test are clear.'"

* * *

The old man finished his story and

added, "Now you can understand why I insisted on paying for everything. When I saw you, followers of Rabbi Schneersohn, I said to myself that I had

to express my gratitude for his help in my making up the work I had missed. I decided I would pay all the expenses of the accident."

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R' REFAEL NIMOTIN A"H

R' Refael Nimotin was born in 5668 (1908) to Shmuel and Itta Mera Nimotin, in S. Petersburg. His parents were instructed to live there by the Rebbe Rashab. His father served as a shochet and his mother opened a guest-house for chassidim who came to S. Petersburg on business. When the Rebbe Rashab and Rebbe Rayatz visited S. Petersburg they also ate with the Nimotin family.

R' Refael grew up in a wonderful chassidic atmosphere, with the great chassidim who visited his house. He also served as shamash to the Rogatchover Gaon, accompanying him daily from shul to his home.

When he grew older, his father sent him to the yeshiva in Nevel. At first, he didn't want to go, but he was convinced by Rabbi Boruch Shneur Schneersohn, who lived with them at the time. He went to Nevel with his brother, where he learned for a number of years by R' Avrohom Drizin.

When the Rebbe Rayatz lived in Leningrad (formerly S. Petersburg), R' Refael was with him the entire time, and even had a few yechidusin.

After the yeshiva in Nevel closed, he went to Vitebsk, where he learned with his grandfather, Rabbi Yehoshua Nimotin, who taught him sh'chita.

When his father was arrested, R' Refael had to work to support the family. In the year 5698 (1938), they arrested his father for the last time, and then they exiled his wife and R' Refael from Leningrad to a distant city, where they suffered greatly.

During the war, his brother-in-law, R' Chaikel Chanin, endangered himself and visited them a few times, bringing them food and money so they could survive. He later managed to smuggle them to Tashkent.

When Anash began leaving Russia, R' Chaikel suggested they join him, but they thought his father was still alive and they didn't want to abandon him in Russia. Unbeknownst to them, he had been killed immediately after he was arrested. They remained in Tashkent.

Some months later, he found out that the NKVD was searching for him. He left Tashkent, but when his only son was born, he returned to arrange a bris mila. That's when someone informed on him and he was arrested and sent to

Siberia for 22 years, under the most difficult conditions. He was not permitted to live in a house, but was forced to live in a pigsty. After a number of months, he was ready to give up struggling to survive the cold, but his friend, R' Shmuel Pruss, saved his life. R' Shmuel bribed the right people and brought him to another city where there were Jews. The people there were thrilled to host R' Refael since he was able to serve as their rav and shochet.

After Stalin died, R' Refael was permitted to return closer to his hometown, but he was still forbidden from living with his family. It was only at the end of the 50's that he returned to his family, a broken man. He was broken physically, but what was even worse was that his only son had not been educated in the ways of Torah and chassidus.

In the 60's, R' Chaikel Chanin began sending him packages to support him, and by instruction of the Rebbe he began to shecht. This entailed great mesirus nefesh on his part. He even trained new shoachim, including Rabbi Yitzchok Kogan.

R' Refael asked the Rebbe a number of times for permission to emigrate from Russia, but the Rebbe didn't let him go and even expressed surprise at the question.

In the 80's he became sick and needed an operation. This operation was not performed in Russia, and he presented a request to be allowed to travel as a tourist to the U.S. in order to have the surgery done there. When he arrived in N.Y. he was told by the

secretaries that the Rebbe said he should not have a private audience with him since this would be to his detriment and the detriment of our brethren still in Russia. The Rebbe said he would be with him in yechidus when he joined the farbrengen, and when the Rebbe gave him dollars, he blessed him with long life.

Fifteen years ago, he received permission from the Rebbe to move to Eretz Yisroel, but his problems were not over yet. His grandson had become bar mitzva and after tremendous effort, he had persuaded him to attend yeshiva. But the grandson was killed in a bombing of the #18 bus on Rechov Yaffo (may Hashem avenge his blood).

R' Refael passed away on 9 Nissan, a chassid, a Tamim, a true soldier of the Rebbe.



WE CAN'T ALLOW ANOTHER YAMIT

BY SHAI GEFEN

Editor's note: This article was written before the Likud vote on Sharon's proposal regarding the Gaza Strip, which took place this past Sunday. The message, however, continues to be relevant until we achieve the Rebbe's vision of a complete Eretz Yisroel, and the coming of Moshiach.

HOLY WAR!

On Sunday, registered Likud members will vote on whether or not to support Sharon's suicidal plan. Hundreds of thousands of Jews will be asked: are you in favor of the *Shulchan Aruch* or not? Are you prepared to shed more Jewish blood or have you had enough?

The Rebbe in his sicha to Moshe Katzav twelve years ago, said that merely talking about giving away land endangers the lives of millions of Jews. In fact, the Rebbe added, when believing Jews do this, it adds an element of *chilul Hashem*, which has no atonement, *r"l*. If 200,000 Jews (members of Likud), most of whom are traditional and believing Jews, vote against the Torah, the *Shulchan Aruch*, and Hashem, there is no greater *chilul Hashem* than that!

And this is in addition to the danger to the lives of millions of Jews. If Sharon wins this referendum, it will immediately increase the terrorists' desire to kill. We cannot allow this to happen. In a battle like this, the only

acceptable outcome is victory, and this must be clear to every single chassid who wants to fulfill what the Rebbe said.

"*Mi l'Hashem, elai*" (whoever is for Hashem, join me!). According to rabbanei Chabad, we must do everything we can to ensure that Likud members vote against Sharon's plan. We cannot shirk our responsibilities, especially when we have a great chance in succeeding.

THE OBLIGATION TO PROTEST

This might be the first time that every chassid can not only protest the giving away of land, but can actually influence the results. This time it is not about politics or wallowing in political mud; it's not about *NeTanyahu* or Peres, Sharon or Mofaz. This time we're all on the same black side, and we can make a difference when it comes to the most essential question that affects Jews in Eretz Yisroel.

This is why no chassid may remain aloof. If we don't put in the work, we cannot say our hands did not spill this blood. The day after the referendum, if Sharon wins by only 400 votes (which is possible), what will we say? How will we be able to look into the eyes of the children of the Cohen family? What will we say to Am Yisroel in Eretz

Yisroel? How will we be able to stand before the Rebbe?

The Rebbe constantly repeated the obligation to protest even when it's clear that it has no effect. This time though, we *can* make a difference; we cannot remain apathetic.

The classic example took place eight years ago when the difference between *NeTanyahu* and Peres began at 25% and victory seemed impossible. When Chabad got involved, the impossible happened. This time it is so much easier and so much more significant and critical. The questions that need to be addressed now directly affect lives! The essence of the question is really about whether or not millions of Jews will be abandoned.

This referendum will have repercussions and those who fought for the one who was supposedly "Good for the Jews," must get as many Likud voters to the polls. The Rebbe said it's the obligation of askanim to work strongly against the giving away of land. We must all work together to achieve victory. And a formal victory is not good enough; we need to have an **overwhelming majority** vote against the plan. Furthermore, any Jew who, G-d forbid, votes in favor of the plan, announces that "he had no share in the G-d of Israel," and this

is “denying Hashem and His Torah,” as the Rebbe said to Katzav.

EVEN IF IT HARMS HAFATZAS HA'MAAYANOS

In a sicha of VaYakhel-P'kudei 5740, the Rebbe said that even if the battle will harm hafatzas ha'maayanos, it must be fought anyway:

The issue of giving away land depends on nothing else – not on getting money for yeshivos, gaining honor, or on whether it will interfere with spreading the wellsprings and mivtzaim – the only question is: will “the country be easy for them to conquer?”

If so, according to all the experts, we may not give away anything. We must stand with weapons and defend all the territories. Since this is a clear p'sak din in *Shulchan Aruch*, there's nothing to argue about!

As to those people who are concerned about their mosdos, who stand off on the side – the Rebbe stated clearly that the money they get is dipped in the blood of Jews, and good chinuch cannot result from it. And today we can add that they won't even get money.

WHAT THE REBBE SAID ABOUT EXPELLING JEWS FROM THEIR LAND

Many people want to know the Rebbe's view about expelling Jews from Eretz Yisroel. The Rebbe said the following on Purim 5745:

Regarding the country of Egypt, Chazal say, “all kingdoms (exiles) are named after Egypt, because they are *meitziros* [from the same root as Egypt-Mitzrayim] Yisroel.” The same is true till today – everyone is aware of the persecution the Jewish

people suffered at the hand of the country of Egypt, including the most recent tzara, called the “Camp David Accords.” Since then, the conduct of “you have begun to fall before them” began, r”l.

At first, they returned parts of Sinai to Egypt, then the oil fields, and then they forced the Israeli army to expel Jews from Yamit! This was after the residents of Yamit were promised that they could live there forever, and invested blood and sweat, money and time, and most importantly, the residents invested their *faith* in the holiness of Eretz Yisroel and the holiness of all matters associated with it.

And this man himself made the promise – and he is the one who went back on it and ordered them to leave Yamit, and ordered the Jewish army to expel them, claiming it had to be done!

It goes downhill from there, with concession after concession, to the point that by behaving in this way they endanger the lives of Jews (even one Jew is an entire world).

Back to our topic – about Egypt – those people who caused these tzaras are the present-day leaders who try as best they can to continue along this path – whether in southern Lebanon, the Galil, etc. – to concede more land of Eretz Yisroel that was given to the Jewish people by Hashem in a miraculous manner. They merely search for the right words so that the public accepts it. (And just at they expelled Jews from Yamit, they can expel Jews from other places, etc., r”l – but one should not open one's mouth to Satan). And so too regarding Egypt – they seek ways to concede even more to Egypt.



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