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EARTHQUAKES, UPHEAVALS, AND THE ERA OF MOSHIACH

These radical upheavals, these tumultuous changes, which have a direct impact on the majority of the world's population, are taking place in silence and tranquility, something that has no precedent in the entire history of mankind!

Translated by Boruch Merkur

CONFOUNDED BY MY "RADICAL" CLAIM

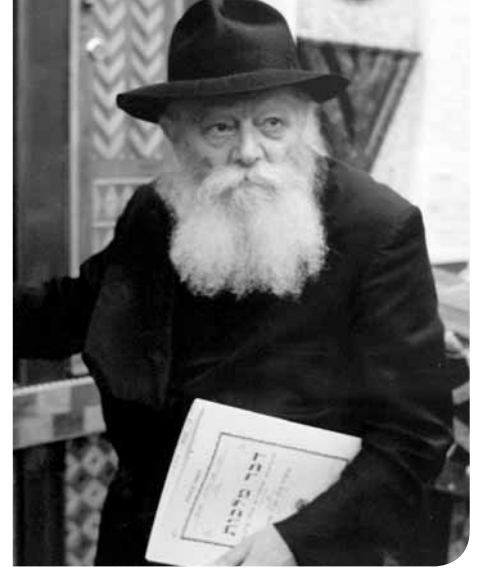
The emphasis on the refinement of the world as a preparation for the Messianic Era is something that is (not only "mentioned in the Torah portion" but is) openly visible throughout the world these days.

To preface: There are those who are confounded by what is being spoken about of late. Namely, that we are presently in the Era of Ikvisa D'Meshicha, at the end of the exile. These people ask: "What is taking place that supports this claim? The world is carrying on as usual from year to year!" But in fact it is the greatest wonder that they don't consider the nature of current events unfolding in the world, events that are readily observable and well covered by the media!

In the latter period (beginning with recent years and increasing with the passage of time), upheavals are taking place across the globe, events that are transforming the political

landscape from one extreme to the other. It is only with the benevolence of G-d that these revolutions are silent – that is to say, without war and bloodshed, may G-d preserve us – to the extent that daily life (commerce and the like) goes on as usual in these places, as if everything were operating as normal. But the fact is that revolutions are taking place in each of these countries on a national level, internal upheavals that are being negotiated through diplomacy.

First off there is Russia (the country the Rebbe Rayatz, leader of the generation, came from, together with his students and emissaries). The seventy-year rule of this powerful and dreaded regime instilled fear in all of its citizens, to the extent that even for just criticizing the government the consequence would be exile to an uninhabitable land (such as Siberia). However, the governing party, all of a sudden, in a very short time, underwent a radical change (enacted by those at the top political positions), and this



change spread to other countries of the same ilk.

Similarly regarding China, which has in recent years undergone a transformation in its domestic policy as well as its foreign policy. The same is true of India, for its longstanding heads of state were swiftly replaced. Likewise with regard to the upheavals in several other countries across the globe, including "iyei ha'yam," "islands of the sea" ["these are the Greek Islands" –Rashi on Yeshayahu 11:11], though there is no need to elaborate at length about this matter, as it has become widespread public knowledge.

The fact is that we are speaking about upheavals in nations that are heavily populated, revolutions in governments and regimes whose authority extends to billions of people across the globe, affecting the majority of the world's population!

A GREAT WONDER THAT THIS IS NOT UNIVERSALLY RECOGNIZED

The "miracle" is this: It is a great wonder that people don't pay any attention to these cataclysmic changes, in the spirit of the verse, "Ein baal ha'nes makir b'niso" (a person

doesn't perceive the miracle done for him)." These radical upheavals, these tumultuous changes, which have a direct impact on the majority of the world's population, are taking place in silence and tranquility, something that has no precedent in the entire history of mankind!

Typically, regime change is accompanied by prolonged war and bloodshed, disrupting normal life, bringing in its wake ruin and destruction, may G-d preserve us. There is no need to search extensively through the annals of the history of previous generations for examples, for in this very generation we have seen the incredible destruction of the Second World War, may such horror never recur.

However, in recent times, even greater upheavals are taking place, affecting the majority of the world, and with G-d's kindness, they are transpiring without wars and without bloodshed, G-d forbid, but amidst quietude and tranquility.

Moreover, it is apparent that these upheavals taking place in our times are (not only concerning human affairs but are) also in connection with the rest of G-d's creations: the animal, plant, and mineral kingdoms. I am referring here to the rash of earthquakes that have taken place recently, in a short span of time, and are presently continuing in various places in the world (including this nation). But with the kindness of G-d, the number of victims has been minimal, especially when

“The “miracle” is this: It is a great wonder that people don't pay any attention to these cataclysmic changes, in the spirit of the verse, “*Ein baal ha'nes makir b'niso* (a person doesn't perceive the miracle he encounters).”

compared to similar events that took place earlier.

HOW IS THIS RELEVANT TO US?

To explain the connection of the above to the Jewish people: (For at first glance, political upheavals that take place across the globe (without any direct connection to the Jewish people) are not of interest to Jews, whose job it is to study Torah and fulfill Mitzvos.)

a) Recognizing the greatness of G-d and offering praise and expressing appreciation for His great benevolence. For, in addition to the greatness of G-d that is visible in the framework of nature – as it is written, “The heavens recount the glory of G-d, etc.,” “when I see Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and stars that You have established” – G-d's miracles further emphasize His greatness, in a more pronounced way. In our case, this applies to the radical upheavals across the globe taking place amidst quietude and tranquility, a miracle of such enormity that these occurrences are only within the power of the Alm-ghty

Himself, Who is omnipotent. Thus, we must thank G-d for His great kindness, for how much more is praise and thanks incumbent upon us for these great miracles when even for natural conduct we must thank Him daily. (And certainly, involvement in Torah study and the fulfillment of Mitzvos does not detract at all from contemplating the greatness of G-d, and praising and thanking Him for His tremendous kindness.)

b) An increase in faith in the coming of Moshiach and the anticipation of his imminent arrival, “Every day I await his arrival,” for the revolutions taking place in the world are signs cited in the Midrashim of our Sages, of blessed memory, regarding the era of Ikvisa D'Meshicha, the stage immediately preceding the redemption. Indeed, seeing these upheavals in our times serves as an addition confirmation that we are presently in the final moments of Ikvisa D'Meshicha, and immediately Moshiach Tzidkeinu will arrive.

(From the address of Shabbos Parshas Toldos, 4 Kislev, 5750, muga)

ADD IN ACTS OF GOODNESS & KINDNESS
TO BRING MOSHIACH NOW!

LIFE AS A YOUNG BOY IN THE UNDERGROUND YESHIVAS OF SAMARKAND

Another chapter from the memoirs of R' Hillel Zaltzman. In this installment, he tells of R' Moshe Chaim Cohen (Saidov), who was a student in the secret yeshiva in Samarkand. * A portrait of daily life in Soviet Russia from the perspective of a religious boy from the local community.

Prepared for publication by Avrohom Rainitz



Young Moshe Chaim with his father Gavriel

When I wrote my memoirs for *Beis Moshich* about the secret yeshiva in Samarkand, I asked my friends and acquaintances, especially those who learned with us at that time, to tell me what they remembered. I wanted to record their memories to round out the fascinating history of the secret yeshiva of Samarkand. I stressed that whatever I wrote was just what I knew firsthand, but surely there were other stories and events that could be related from the perspective of other talmidim.

A short time later, I had occasion to speak with R' Moshe Chaim Cohen (Saidov) regarding my articles for *Beis Moshich*. I remember Moshe Chaim as a responsible, older boy. This was not because I didn't know him as a child, but because he was one of those children who was unusually mature at an early age.

He was very well liked, and had outstanding middos, and was considered a clever child. He did things out of a sense of kabbalas ol and was very modest.

It turned out that, having been one of the talmidim in the secret yeshiva in Samarkand, he enjoyed reading my articles. They transported him back to the special Chassidishe atmosphere of that time. He told me that someone once asked him why this series of articles was necessary, and whether anyone found it interesting. R' Moshe Chaim told me that his response was that many Chassidim enjoy reading and hearing about those days. To illustrate this point, he told how he once went with friends to the Catskills and on the long trip told them some anecdotes of life in the underground yeshiva and in Samarkand. They were so enthralled that, when they



Young boys who attended the secret yeshiva in Samarkand:
Sasson and Simcha Shakarov, Bentzion Pil, Herschel Lerner, Aharon Makovetsky, and others

arrived at their destination, they asked whether he could join them on the next trip so they could continue hearing his stories.

I was happy to hear this and I said: The story of our secret yeshiva is comprised of hundreds of small stories, like a puzzle with hundreds of pieces. In my series of articles I constructed the frame of the puzzle, but there are many pieces missing. Would you fill in your share of the puzzle?

R' Moshe Chaim agreed. However, I had to chase him for a few months because by nature he is reticent and doesn't like publicity. We finally sat down together and the following are the wonderful stories he told.

KEEPING SHABBOS ON THE JOB

R' Moshe Chaim's father, R' Gavriel Saidov, was a biology

“His father was not pleased by this, not by the chazanus, not by the camera, and not by the violin. The boy tried to convince his father of the importance of the camera, saying he would be able to photograph maamarim that were not in print, but R' Moshe did not accept these rationales. The debate ended when the camera and violin disappeared in the outhouse.

and chemistry teacher, and his mother was a dentist. At first, R' Gavriel studied medicine. However, in his second year of school, when he had to dissect cadavers, he remembered that he was a Cohen. He asked his father what to do and his father referred him to a rav. When he went to the rav, he was taken aback to hear that he certainly could not come in contact with the dead. Although he was a simple Jew, that was enough for him, and

that was the end of his medical training. Then he decided to become a teacher. In those days, the teaching profession was considered as respectable as the medical profession.

Once he started working as a teacher, he had to contend with the issue of observing Shabbos. His brother, R' Yehuda Saidov, shliach in Netanya and spiritual leader of the Bucharian community there (I will write about him separately), told of a

brilliant “educational exercise” that Gavriel did in order to keep Shabbos.

Since he taught in the upper grades, he knew he would not be able to hide from his students the fact that he did not write on Shabbos. Instead, he told them that he wanted to develop their self confidence and therefore, once a week, he would choose one of them to be the teacher. He would supervise and guide the “teacher in training.” Naturally, the one day a week he did this was on Shabbos. He made the simple calculation that in a class of forty students, he had enough “teachers” for nearly all the Saturdays of the school year.

The students loved the idea. His fellow teachers, some of whom were rabid anti-Semites, realized that it was Gavriel’s way of avoiding Shabbos desecration, and they decided to inform on him to the Education Ministry. One Shabbos, without prior notice, a supervisor from the ministry came to observe him. He entered the classroom and sat in a corner and observed. He was so enthused by Gavriel’s unique teaching method that apparently he forgot what he had been told, namely that it was solely for the purpose of Shabbos observance. At the end of the day, he shook Gavriel’s hand warmly, and said he wanted to copy this ingenious idea in other schools.

This story demonstrates that when a Jew truly wants to keep Shabbos, he is helped from above, and heaven sends him unusual ideas so that even non-Jews end up offering him thanks.

YOUR CHILDREN SHOULD BE LIKE HIM

Speaking of R’ Moshe Chaim’s father, I remember that

during the sheva brachos of his parents, the father of the kalla, R’ Refael Chudaitov, came to the old city where the chassan lived. When he saw me walking by, he grabbed me and said, “You’re coming with me to the sheva brachos.” Nobody could escape R’ Refael’s firm hand, surely not the thin child I was at the time.

When I arrived at the home of the baalei simcha, R’ Refael sat me next to him. He did not urge me to eat since he knew that the children of Chassidim were taught not to eat anything outside their homes. He just held out a cup of mashke and asked me to say l’chaim. He downed a cup and said to his new son-in-law and daughter, “Make sure you have children like him.” Boruch Hashem, R’ Refael’s bracha was fulfilled and all of R’ Gavriel’s children are religious.

NIGHTTIME ADVENTURE

The Russian propaganda machine constantly reiterated that the government cared for its citizens and every citizen who completed university was referred by the government authorities to a job. The job could be anywhere in the vastness of the Soviet Union, primarily in places far away where there was a dearth of certain professionals. This is how R’ Moshe Chaim’s parents, Gavriel and Yeshua Saidov came to settle in a tiny town by the name of Tchileg, not far from Samarkand.

The Jewish community, if it could be called that, consisted of six families. Since Gavriel came from a religious family and his wife Yeshua was the daughter of R’ Refael Chudaitov, the young couple did their best to keep Torah and mitzvos even in this forsaken town.

There was no mikva and a trip

had to be made to Samarkand each time. Among the few residents of Tchileg there was one who knew sh’chita, but Yeshua did not rely on him. Every Sunday, which was market day, she would travel to Samarkand to buy a chicken and bring it to the shochet in Samarkand to shecht.

Sometimes, she would send her son, Moshe Chaim, to the shochet. In the atmosphere of fear prevalent at the time, the shoctim were afraid to shecht for someone not of Anash. Moshe Chaim fondly remembers how my father, R’ Avrohom Zaltzman, and R’ Chaim Zalman Kozliner, would warmly welcome him, even if it was late at night, and would shecht for him. It once happened that those shoctim were not available and Moshe Chaim returned home, mission not accomplished. His mother told him there was another Lubavitcher shochet and he should go to him. That shochet did not know Moshe Chaim, and when Moshe Chaim asked him to shecht his chicken, the man screamed at him, “What do you want of me? I am not a shochet!” and chased him away with a stick. The downtrodden boy went to another shochet who shected the chicken for him.

CHASSIDIC LIFE IN HIS GRANDFATHER’S COURTYARD

When Moshe Chaim turned 12, his grandfather R’ Refael visited his little town and told his parents that before his bar mitzva he should go to Samarkand and learn Torah, to prepare for his bar mitzva. “Fortunately,” said Moshe Chaim, “my first teacher was R’ Binyamin Malachovsky. He taught me alef-beis and how to read as well as a little Tanya. I also had R’ Moshe Nisselevitz

as my Tanya teacher. R' Berel Yaffe, the Boroshensky family, the Nisselevitz family, and the Malachovsky family, lived in my grandfather's courtyard, and naturally, I was greatly influenced by the Chassidic atmosphere."

Young Moshe Chaim became good friends with R' Moshe Nisselevitz's children, Lazer and Chaim. When his father came to Samarkand to visit him, he saw how happy his son was in the new Chassidishe environment. He was inspired by his son's enthusiasm and decided to try and find work in Samarkand, so he could move his family there. In 5719/1959, the family moved to Samarkand.

Moshe Chaim remembers an incident that took place while he lived in his grandfather's courtyard, which demonstrated to him the power of a Chassidic education. His friend Lazer Nisselevitz was gifted and could sing beautifully. He was particularly good at chazanus, especially the t'fillos of the Yomim Nora'im. He also enjoyed photography and when he was able to save up some money, he bought a camera and a violin.

His father was not pleased by this, not by the chazanus, not by the camera, and not by the violin. The boy tried to convince his father of the importance of the camera, saying he would be able to photograph maamarim that were not in print, but R' Moshe did not accept these rationales. As a mechanech and a person with long-range vision, he saw it for the slippery slope it was. The debate ended when the camera and violin disappeared in the outhouse.

Lazer was very upset over his losses. As it is, his childhood was difficult and frightening with every knock making him run for



Left: Lazer Nisselevitz; Right: Aharon Podel, in Samarkand

a hiding place since he did not go to school. If a supervisor or any stranger showed up, it was dangerous to be seen walking around the yard. Now, his father had buried his treasures in the sewage.

Moshe Chaim, who was a witness to these goings-on, was very impressed by the Chassidishe chinuch that was quite apparent in R' Moshe's son. For despite his great disappointment, he loved and respected his father and listened to him.

In the period after the Six Day War, along with the tremendous spiritual awakening that swept the Jewish people in the Diaspora, including the Jews of the Soviet Union, the political climate changed. Many Russian Jews received permission to emigrate and they went to Eretz Yisroel.

At the end of the 50's and the beginning of the 60's, we would carefully choose secret places for the bachurim to learn, after

assessing the trustworthiness of the people who lived there. These locations were top secret so that even the parents did not know where they were. By the end of the 60's it was altogether different. We accepted more students and opened new places to learn, and took people as melamdin whom previously we would have been very wary of, or they would have been afraid to have anything to do with us.

In 5728, R' Moshiach Chudaitov went to his brother-in-law Gavriel and said: You have a big, separate yard with a large house and another small house in the yard. We'll pay you rent and the children will go to you to learn Torah. You are a teacher, and your wife, my sister, is a dentist, and no one will suspect that they are learning Torah on your property.

The truth is, Gavriel had all the reasons in the world to refuse. As a teacher in a government school, if they would have discovered that secret Torah

learning was going on in his house, he would have lost his job. However, since Gavriel greatly respected his brother-in-law, he agreed, and only asked that the children not walk around in the street and that they not leave the house during the day.

Slowly, the number of students grew to ten and more. So that the neighbors wouldn't notice suspicious traffic around the house, we decided that it was better if some of the students would sleep there and wouldn't be going in and out every day. Thus, R' Gavriel's house turned into a yeshiva with dormitory facilities. Among the students who learned there at this time were: Shlomo Chai Niasoff, today the spiritual leader of the Bucharian community in Boro Park; Nechemia Ledaiov and his brother; Yitzchok Payezkov; the Melayev brothers; the sons of Bechor Molekandov; Bechor Pinchasov; the son of Zalman the bus driver and others.

Despite the precautionary measures taken, it once happened that the neighbors noticed too many boys going in and out of the house. They asked Mrs. Saidov why so many children were visiting them and she cleverly responded that since she did not allow her children to go to other people's homes, their friends came to them.

Their teacher was R' Dovber Robinson. R' Moshe Nisselevitz told R' Moshiaich that it occurred to him that R' Berel Robinson would make a good teacher. However, when R' Moshiaich suggested it to him half a year earlier, he was afraid to even discuss it and refused to listen further. A half a year later, R' Moshe asked R' Moshiaich to speak to him again. R' Moshiaich spoke to him and convinced

him that nobody would know about it and he would get a good salary. R' Berel said he had to think it over, and a few months later he said he would do it and he became their melamed. Even after we all left Samarkand, the learning continued in R' Gavriel's courtyard with the older bachurim teaching the younger ones.

FINAL ACT

Not far from the Saidov home was another branch of the secret yeshiva. It was in the home of R' Yosef Yechovov, the son of R' Moshe Yechovov. R' Moshe was one of the bachurim sent by R' Simcha Gorodetzky to learn in Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in Poltava, who had the "good fortune" to die a year before his fellow T'mimim were arrested under Stalin and sent to Siberia. R' Betzalel Schiff rented an apartment from R' Yosef after he got married. A while later, a class was opened in R' Betzalel's home which he taught. Yitzchok Payezkov, who came with his brother Shimon from nearby Katta-Kurgan, also slept in R' Betzalel's house.

There was an interesting, though sad, story with the Payezkov brothers. Their father, Rachamim, was a very simple Jew who wanted, with all his heart, for his children to learn Torah. He once met R' Refael Chudaitov, who would occasionally travel in the towns around Samarkand, and asked him to make sure that his sons learned Torah. R' Rachamim and his sons went to Samarkand and R' Refael asked us to accept his children into the secret yeshiva. At first, we were very apprehensive about accepting the children of this unfamiliar villager, but Rachamim stubbornly insisted.

Ultimately, we could no longer refuse him, and his two boys remained in Samarkand.

R' Rachamim happily returned home. Upon arriving home he had a heart attack and died. After ensuring that his sons were set up in a yeshiva, it was as though his task in this world was complete. The two brothers learned Torah and eventually became G-d fearing shochemim. Today, R' Yitzchok Payezkov lives in the United States and markets kosher meat products to Eretz Yisroel.

WHEN THE RUSSIAN POLICEMAN BEGAN RECITING KADDISH

R' Moshe Chaim recounted a frightening story:

Back then, nearly all the boys used bicycles to get around. I remember that when R' Mendel Futerfas arrived in Samarkand, he found it odd to see the chevra riding around on bikes. He called them "Bicycle Chassidim." R' Betzalel Schiff would also ride a bike and one time, he was in an accident and broke his foot. He was in the year of mourning for his mother at the time, and since his foot was in a cast, he had to have a minyan in his house so he could say Kaddish. Naturally, the young bachurim helped him out, especially for Mincha and Maariv.

R' Bentzion Robinson once went by bike to daven Mincha at R' Betzalel's house. He tied the bike to a tree near the house and went inside. A few minutes later, a local policeman who was passing by saw the bicycle on the street, unsupervised, and he decided to ask to whom it belonged.

At precisely that moment, they were all standing and



Gavriel Saidov as a teacher
in a Russian public school



R' Gavriel Saidov today, treasurer and askan in the Chabad shul in Netanya,
with his grandson, Refael Tzemach, the son of R' Moshe Chaim Cohen

davening Shmoneh Esrei. They heard the knocks at the door and immediately knew it was a stranger. They usually had a secret way of knocking, but this was ordinary knocking that did not stop. One of the little children, who did not know about secret knocks, opened the door. As Moshe Chaim walked back at the conclusion of Shmoneh Esrei, there was the policeman!

The policeman asked, "Whose bicycle is near the house?" but immediately was silenced by the odd sight of ten men standing and swaying. After a moment he said, "What is this? A meeting?"

R' Betzalel went over to him and said, "As you can see, I broke my leg and they came to visit me."

It was a flimsy excuse but he had to say something. In the meantime, the policeman went over to the table that had Siddurim piled on it and began to leaf through them. He opened a Siddur, from left to right, of course, and found the first page

(actually, the last) with Kaddish Yasom in transliterated Russian letters. He began reading it without understanding a word of what he was saying. After he read a few lines he stopped and asked, "What does it say here?"

They told him that it's a prayer that is said when a relative dies. You could see on his face that he was afraid of the dead, and he abruptly closed the Siddur and put it down. In the meantime, two elderly men in the house left, and R' Betzalel called the policeman over to the side, gave him a bribe, and sent him on his way.

BAR MITZVA IN KUTAIISI

When R' Moshe Chaim attends bar mitzvahs' nowadays, celebrated with great pomp in beautiful halls, he cannot help but contrast them to his own bar mitzva:

"It was in the summertime. My mother's feet hurt her and the doctors recommended

that she travel to Tskaltubo in Georgia. My parents went there and took me along. The climate helped improve her health and she decided to stay longer than planned. Since my bar mitzva was approaching, my father took me to Kutaisi. There, he took me to shul where I had my first aliya to the Torah. Then my father served some l'chaim to the people and that was my entire bar mitzva celebration.

"I had studied the maamer of the Rebbe Rayatz entitled 'U'va'u HaOvdim B'Eretz Ashur' back in Samarkand, but I had no opportunity to say it since my bar mitzva was in Kutaisi, far from all my friends in Samarkand before whom I could *chazer* the maamer without fear, and who would understand it."

SURPRISE IN THE MATH TEACHER'S HOUSE

Moshe Chaim went to public school #37. It was a top school, attended by the children of the

“I knocked at the door and to my utter surprise, there was my math teacher! I nearly fainted. I said, ‘Excuse me, sorry, I must have made a mistake,’ and I turned to go, but he invited me in and said, ‘You did not make a mistake. You came to the right address. It was I who asked that you come here.’”

social elite in Samarkand. Not all who wanted to attend the school were accepted. It was only thanks to his job as a teacher that his father was able to register him there.

The math teacher was R' Betzalel Chodus (Russified form of the original name Chodosh), the son of R' Yerachmiel Chodosh, one of the original T'mimim in Lubavitch. He was a very tough teacher, which is why most of the students did not like him, including Moshe Chaim. Moshe Chaim knew that he was Jewish, but did not know if he had any connection to religious life.

“It was a year after my bar mitzva,” said Moshe Chaim, “and my uncle, Moshiah Chudaitov, told me that someone was sitting Shiva and needed a minyan for davening and Kaddish. I asked him who the person was, but he merely gave me the address and asked me to go early in the morning, before school. I couldn't refuse my uncle, so I went to the address he gave me. I knocked at the door and to my utter surprise, there was my math teacher! I nearly fainted. I said, ‘Excuse me, sorry, I must have made a mistake,’ and I turned to go, but he invited me in and said, ‘You did not make a mistake. You came to the right address. It was I who asked that you come here.’”

“After davening, he asked me to come again the next day. The minyan, as I said, took place

before school. After the davening, I had to run home to get my briefcase and then rush to school to get there on time. It was cold outside and it was hard for me to run back and forth. I figured, since my first class was math, it wouldn't be so bad if I arrived late. I walked slowly and got to school a half an hour late.

“When I walked into the classroom, the teacher looked at me as severely as always and asked, ‘Why are you late?’”

“I said I had gotten up late. To my surprise, he did not accept this excuse and asked me again, ‘Why are you late?’ I was 14 years old and I was embarrassed to be questioned in front of the entire class. I looked at him and said, ‘Alexander Pavlovitch, if you ask me one more time why I am late, I will tell you the truth!’”

“Of course this frightened him and he said, ‘Okay, just sit down and then we'll see.’”

“After class, he came over to me, put his hand around my shoulders in a friendly manner and said, ‘You realize that as a teacher I had to ask you why you were late.’”

“Then, as though to placate me, he said, ‘Tomorrow there will be a quiz’ and he told me what material it would cover.”

LOSING A TOOTH FOR SHABBOS

“After my bar mitzva, I decided that from then on, I had

to keep Shabbos 100% no matter what. I began avoiding going to school on Shabbos, each time with another excuse. I managed to get a doctor's note that I was sick on a few occasions. R' Shmuel Levin's mother, the daughter-in-law of R' Eliyahu Paritcher, was a doctor. She gave me these notes. I was learning with her son Shmuel at the time, in our underground yeshiva.

“One time, I was in the house of my uncle Bechor, who was a psychologist. I saw a prescription pad with the pages already stamped, and decided to take it, thinking they would serve me well. Indeed, one time, it came in handy.

“On Lenin's birthday, the school dedicated the day to working. It usually entailed cleaning the school yard and the street all around. They always did this on Shabbos. That particular Shabbos, I figured I could go to school as always, because I would not have to write. I would go outside with everyone and nobody would notice when I left. When the school day began, the math teacher surprised us with the announcement that whoever did not pass the last test, should remain in the classroom. Of course, nobody wanted to remain in the classroom. The teacher took out a list of names and began announcing the ones who did not pass the test and read my name. I told him I had passed it, but he said, ‘Don't argue with me. I told you to stay, so stay!’”

“I didn't know what his intention was. I had never gotten any favors from him. I had no choice and so I remained in class with another six students who hadn't passed the test. After a few minutes he came over to me and said, ‘You can go home,’ and I breathed a sigh of relief.

"After a few months went by in which I did not attend school on Shabbos, it was noticed. They probably knew the reason, but nobody asked me. Although my father was very afraid, because he was a teacher and knew what the consequences could be, he supported me.

"It happened one time that I had no excuses left. I went to school and sat at my desk and did nothing. The teacher Alexandra Alekseyevna asked me why I was sitting there and doing nothing. I told her that I had a toothache and I wanted to go home. She was an anti-Semite and she said, 'We'll go down to the basement where the school dentist is.' I told her that my mother is a dentist and why should I go to some other dentist, but she insisted and said, 'No. You will go with me to our dentist.' And we went downstairs.

"The dentist was a young, Jewish, Bucharian woman who knew my mother, and she really didn't want to treat me. But she was afraid of the anti-Semitic teacher, and so she told me to take a seat. She asked me what happened and I said I had a toothache, pointing at a tooth. The teacher stood between us and told the dentist, 'Check his tooth and see whether there is a problem.'

"She checked the tooth and although she saw no problem, she didn't want to say I was lying, and so she said that she saw an inflammation. The cruel teacher told her to take the tooth out. I gazed at the teacher and she gave me a knowing look, and the dentist and I did not know what to do. The teacher said once again, 'If the tooth hurts, take it out!'

"I said to her: My mother is a dentist and I want my mother to

COULD WE HAVE DONE MORE?

Sometimes I sit and think about our work to spread Judaism in Samarkand and I ask myself, did we do enough, or could we have done more?

In hindsight, I see that after Stalin's death they hardly ever arrested anyone for spreading Judaism. Yet, we constantly felt the KGB's eyes on us. They would come and check the residence ledgers and did other things to instill dread of the authorities, but they did not cause us any actual problems.

I remember how frightened we were when R' Mendel Futerfas came. A short while after he arrived, when someone came to Samarkand whom we suspected was following R' Mendel in order to report to the secret police, we became even more scared. However, they did nothing and arrested no one. Even when they called one of us to the KGB offices and let him know that they knew about us organizing secret Jewish schools and that we held a farbrengen in honor of 12 Tammuz, they released him and did not call him again. We were terrified and thought that it wasn't for naught that they kept us under surveillance.

After all this, I torture myself by thinking: Why weren't we a bit more daring? Why didn't we establish a half-official yeshiva so talmidim could attend from near and far? We could have been mekarev hundreds of boys! Of those we *were* mekarev emerged thousands of Chassidic families!

Each time, I console myself with the thought that only now, with the perspective of fifty years, can I see that it was safer than we thought. However, at that time, when we were living there, the fear was so great that even to do what we did, required great strength and commitment.

decide what to do with the tooth. The teacher did not relent but said once again, 'No. The dentist here should remove the tooth or we can all go to the principal!'

"I was afraid and did not know what to do. I didn't know whether going to the principal would be better and so, having no recourse, I said to the dentist, 'Fine, take it out.'

"I thought that when the teacher saw that I agreed with her, she would leave me alone, but she ordered the dentist to take out the healthy tooth. She had no choice and she removed the tooth, without anesthesia.

"When I went home and told my mother what happened, she nearly killed me. I could understand why she was upset, but I had no choice.

"I had some unpleasant

episodes with my tzitzis too. According to the law, every pupil had to receive immunization shots for all kinds of diseases. A nurse once came to school to give the vaccines. I was wearing tzitzis with the strings hidden. I was afraid of her reaction when she would see them, and so I began folding them up towards my upper back. The nurse noticed something and when she came to me she saw the tzitzis. I was very afraid. Fortunately, she bent over and whispered to me something in Bucharian which I did not understand, and gave me an encouraging smile."

SAYING GOODBYE

"When I turned 15, my uncle Moshiach Chudaitov helped me transfer to a school for working youth. Although I was too young

“I thought that when the teacher saw that I agreed with her, she would leave me alone, but she ordered the dentist to take out the healthy tooth. She had no choice and she removed the tooth, without anesthesia.”

for this school, he got a note from a doctor saying I was very weak and I could only attend school a few days a week. That solved my Shabbos problem.

“When I went to the new school for the first time, I noticed that most of the names on the honor roll were of Jewish students like Moshe Lerner, Yaakov Lerner, Tamar Robinson, and others. All of Anash who studied there were outstanding, while the rest of the students didn't put in much work.

“A school for working youth was different than a regular school. In any other school, the students were afraid of the teachers; over here, the teachers were afraid of the students. Although the name of the school

was ‘for working youth,’ the students were mostly young adults who had been released from prison. Most of them were thieves and hooligans. The government was interested in educating them, so they put them into a program that combined academics and work for a few days a week. The academics did not interest them and only the Jewish students put in effort. This is why all the teachers and the administration greatly admired the Jewish students who knew the material well.

“When we received permission to leave Russia, everybody in school knew that I was leaving, since some of the forms I needed in order to apply for a visa had to be brought from

school. In the two weeks before we left Russia, I was busy getting ready to go and did not attend school. Right before we left, I decided to go to school to say goodbye to my classmates. When I arrived, they were in the middle of a lesson with a particularly anti-Semitic teacher. When she heard I was leaving for Eretz Yisroel, she considered me a Zionist traitor, and when she saw me enter the class she yelled, ‘Get out of this classroom!’

“I said, ‘I just came to say goodbye!’ But she yelled again, ‘Get out!’

“One of the students, a former inmate whom I had regularly helped with his homework, stood up and ordered, ‘Everybody, leave! Say goodbye to Misha and then come back to class.’

“It was very moving when all the students walked out of the classroom to say goodbye to me. We hugged and they all wished me a good trip and then returned to class.”

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ב"ה

TIME TO TUNE IN!



By Rabbi Akiva Wagner

The following story was told to me by my brother Rabbi Yaakov Wagner, who heard it from Rabbi Shmuel Lew, who heard it directly from the *Baal HaMaaseh*:

A young man – we’ll call him Morris Cohen (not his real name) – studied at Yeshiva University and received his rabbinic ordination (smicha) there. As an official Rabbi, he received an offer to lead a community in the small town of B., in the mid USA. Morris moved to B. and began performing his new duties with enthusiasm, meeting with much success. However, as time passed, he found his enthusiasm waning. It was not only his enthusiasm towards his job that faded; in fact, he was beginning to find himself uninspired about his Yiddishkait altogether. By and by, he started entertaining doubts about some of the fundamental concepts of Emuna, and he was very troubled about these thoughts.

Morris didn’t know where to turn. He definitely did not see himself anymore as worthy of being a Rabbi, and he was beginning to question whether or not he was a properly believing Jew. He was afraid to discuss his issues with any of his mentors or teachers from YU, because

he feared that if they knew what was going on in his mind, they would immediately (perhaps justifiably) revoke his smicha. He was embarrassed to confide in any of his family members, and he felt that his colleagues would either not understand him, or were worse off than he was.

Contemplating his dilemma, he came to the conclusion that the only one to whom he could turn for help is the Lubavitcher Rebbe. Encouraged by the very idea, he immediately telephoned the *mazkirus* (the Rebbe’s secretariat). He did not tell them his name (and although it’s likely that not many of you remember this, there was a time when there was no such a thing as caller ID), introducing himself merely as a Jew from B. who would like to speak to the Rebbe.

The Rebbe’s secretary consulted with his calendar, and informed Morris that he would have an appointment on a Tuesday night, at 1:00 a.m., in three months. Morris was shocked. He didn’t believe that he could survive another three months! He tried to impress upon the mazkir the urgency of the matter, explaining that he was in a dire situation, and needed help with *s’feikos* in *emuna*. Taken aback, the secretary asked him to

wait a moment.

A moment later, the mazkir was back on the phone, with the following message: “The Rebbe said to tell you that in your city, in B., there is a Rabbi Morris Cohen. You should go and speak to him, and he will be able to provide you with help for all of your problems!”

Morris was flabbergasted! Firstly, how did the Rebbe even know that he existed? Moreover, the Rebbe had confidence in **his** ability to provide guidance to a wayward Jew! That was enough to give him the jolt he needed and set him back on track.

Subsequently, Morris did meet with the Rebbe a number of times. He went on to accomplish great things, and he attributed them all to the Rebbe.

We often feel lost and confused, and we feel desperate for guidance and direction. What we too often fail to recognize, however, is that the answer, can usually be found within our own hearts. Instead of searching the world over for the perfect mashpia/counselor/guide/shrink, we would do well to pay attention to the call of our own neshama. Deep within us, unencumbered by the yoke of materialism and worldly

“Morris was shocked. He didn’t believe that he could survive another three months! He tried to impress upon the mazkir the urgency of the matter, explaining that he was in a dire situation, and needed help with s’feikos in emuna.

pursuits, it possesses a clear and undistorted vision that has the ability to set us back on track, were we only to tune into it.

Probably the most suitable method to become in tune with that part of ourselves is through *Avodas HaT’filla*. Instead of searching outside of us, we ought to take advantage of the ideal opportunity for introspection, which is during davening, when practiced properly. It is the prime time for turning our sights inwards, and hearkening to the yearning of our G-dly soul. Especially when prefaced by the proper study of Chassidus, each person for the amount of time that he knows is demanded of him, it is then that the words of davening can really proclaim their intended message loud and clear.

Perhaps, however, there is yet another message that can be derived from this story: When you or I are faced with problems, they seem very daunting. Yet, we can gain the right perspective by imagining ourselves answering someone else who has the same questions. This is because in truth we **do** know the answers, and this becomes evident when we change positions from the one asking to the one answering [frequently, when a bachur approaches me with troubles, I ask him what he would respond to his camper/mushpa etc. if approached with the same question]. Thus, by imagining ourselves in the position of the responder, we should be able to

then provide those same answers – the answers of our neshama – to ourselves.

Or, in other words, the “Morris Cohen” with the questions and the doubts can get help from the “*Rabbi Morris Cohen*” with the clarity and certainty.

But there is a further point to the story. Even though it is true that the answers to our difficulties lie within ourselves, this is something that is brought to light by the Rebbe. For that is the purpose, the mission, of a Rebbe: to help every Jew tune in to his inner self, to his G-dly neshama. So, our first step is to strengthen our *hiskashrus*, our connection, with the Rebbe. Then we can depend on the Rebbe’s help to get the much-needed guidance from our neshama.

A group of college students were once in *yechidus* by the Rebbe, during which the Rebbe spoke to them, and following which they had the opportunity to ask questions. One of them asked the Rebbe, “*Rabbi*, what do you do for a living?”

The Rebbe responded, “You know that every house gets heat and light through electricity. Where does the electricity come from? Near Niagara Falls there are generating stations, which take the tremendous energy from the currents, and transform it into electricity. This is then brought via electric cables to every city. In every city there is an electric company, from where the electricity is then sent

to the various neighborhoods. Then there are smaller wires that bring the electric force into each individual home.

“However, even after the electric power enters a home, the home may still be enveloped in darkness. It is necessary for someone to flick the switch, in order to transform that electricity into actual light.

“The same is true,” the Rebbe continued, “with every soul. There is an ‘electric generator’ in heaven, the root of all souls, which generates tremendous G-dly force. This is then contracted and brought down, until it is directed into every Jewish soul. Every Yiddishe neshama is in possession of this tremendous force that can serve as a source of warmth and illumination in his life. However there is a need for the person to do something – to flick a switch – to actually take advantage of this potential. My job,” the Rebbe concluded, “is to guide people and assist them in flicking their switch!”

The best source of both light – to dispel the darkness and doubts that occasionally assail us – and warmth – *varemkait* and inspiration to imbue our *Avodas Hashem* with life and vitality – are within us. With the Rebbe’s assistance and guidance, we can tap into that resource.

* * *

This Shabbos is Mevarchim Chodesh Kislev, Chodesh HaGeula, a month that is very connected with P’nimius HaTorah. It is a time to reflect on what P’nimius HaTorah is. It is not a collection of kabbalistic secrets from somewhere in the seventh heaven. It is the p’nimius, the essence of the Torah, and as such has the ability to reveal the p’nimius of our neshama.

Therefore, if we want to take proper advantage of P'nimius ha'Torah, our involvement with it can't be in a detached way, but must involve our self, our neshama.

It is significant that unlike Sivan, the month in which we received the Torah in general, which is the third of the summer months, Kislev, the month of Rosh Hashanah of P'nimius HaTorah, is the third month of the winter, the *Yemos HaGeshamim*. Rain, in contrast to dew, does not originate from above, from heaven. Rather, there is a rain cycle, in which the water evaporates from the ground, and condenses etc., until, ultimately,

it falls back down in the form of rain (as the Pasuk says "אִדּוּ יַעֲלֶה מִן הָאָרֶץ").

Rain symbolizes showers of G-dly blessings that result from, and are in proportion with, the avoda of us human beings who dwell on the earth. Chassidus helps reveal the illumination that originates from within us, and this is dependent on the effort we put in to working on ourselves and within ourselves.

As we prepare to enter the special month of Kislev, beginning with the special Yom Tov of Rosh Chodesh Kislev, it would do well for us to remember that the solution to all of our difficulties is in ourselves.

Through learning Chassidus, Darkei HaChassidus and Avodas HaT'filla, we are able to remove the subtle blemishes from deep within us, and create a brightly lit path that will bring us to our own geula, as well as to the general geula, immediately!

L'chaim! May we use the power of P'nimius HaTorah to reveal the P'nimius HaNeshama of each of us, and may the Oibershter reveal the p'nimius of the entire universe, B'Geula HaAmitis V'HaShleima through Moshiach Tzidkeinu Teikef U'miyad Mamash!!!

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



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USING THE POWER OF LOVE ON SHLICHUS

By Rabbi Yaakov Shmuelewitz

Shliach, Beit Shaan



R' Dunin with a mekurav

The Rebbe Rayatz tells us in HaYom Yom that the Baal Shem Tov's Ahavas Yisroel was beyond imagination. He goes on to quote the Maggid, who said: If only we could kiss a Seifer Torah with the same love that my Master kissed the children when he took them to cheider as a teacher's assistant!

Since we were given this information, obviously it's meant

to be a lesson to us to increase in love for our fellow Jews. From the stories of many shluchim, one can glean that the more Ahavas Yisroel they have, the more successful they are, as we see in the following story.

The story is told about R' Reuven Dunin a"h that when he once approached someone and asked him to put on t'fillin and the man refused, R' Reuven burst

into tears. This so discomfited the man that he said, "Okay, I'll put on t'fillin! You don't need to cry."

R' Reuven said to him, "I'm not crying because of you. I'm crying about myself. I am sure that if I had greater Ahavas Yisroel in my heart, you wouldn't have refused my request. I'm crying over why I don't have enough Ahavas Yisroel."

THANKS TO A NICE ATMOSPHERE AT A MELAVEH MALKA

Y. B. is a successful shliach in a big and challenging city. It took a long time for Y. B. to go from being the coordinator of a branch of Hanoar Haoved Vehalomed (a Socialist youth group) 25 years ago to becoming a Chassid, lamdan, and shliach. This is how it happened:

Y. B. grew up as a normal secular youth in his home town of Teveria. He found his "shlichus" after his army service in the Tnuat Hanoar Haoved Vehalomed. Among other things, he was one of the main organizers of the peace marches held by the political left against the war in Lebanon. He rose in the ranks until he became the coordinator of the branch in Tzfas.

To his good fortune, Y. B. had an uncle who was a mekurav to Chabad. As soon as his uncle heard that his nephew was living in Tzfas, he begged him to visit the Chabad community. Y. B. told him that religious people did not interest him and he had no reason to visit the Chabad community. His uncle told him that a wonderful young man had recently joined the community in Tzfas, by the name of Ofer Maidovnik, and it paid to meet with him. He said that every Motzaei Shabbos there was a community Melaveh Malka and he should give it a try.

After a number of reminders and nudging, and feeling bored one Saturday night, Y. B. figured it wouldn't hurt him to spend the evening with some religious guys from Chabad. He prepared many questions about religious people and then headed over to the Chabad neighborhood, intending to debate whoever was willing to talk to him. "I'll show them how mistaken they are, those religious folk."

He arrived at the farbrengen, ready to do battle, but there was no battle to fight. The Chassidim welcomed him warmly, "What will you drink? What can we give you to eat? Make yourself comfortable!"

Y. B. felt so comfortable that it seemed a shame to ruin the pleasant atmosphere with questions. The questions seemed superfluous anyway. Instead, he heard some nice niggunim,

stories of Chassidim, said l'chaim, and heard divrei Torah. The evening ended and Y. B. left with the feeling that he'd like to visit again. He went back time and again. Each time, he thoroughly enjoyed himself and learned new things. Suddenly, it seemed completely natural to put on a kippa. He also grew a little beard, put on tzitzis, and started keeping Shabbos.

The Chassidim got to know the dynamic young man who showed up Motzaei Shabbos and on other occasions. They heard about his youth training and then someone suggested that he work in his free morning hours as a counselor at a yeshiva in Tzfas. Quite ironically, Y. B. worked as a madrich in the Chabad yeshiva in the morning and as a madrich in the Noar Haoved Vehalomed in the afternoon. Later on, he left his work in the youth movement and combined being a madrich in the yeshiva with learning.

Parenthetically, when I went to learn in the Chabad yeshiva in Tzfas in Cheshvan 5745, I became good friends with Y. B. and he invited me to a meeting with old friends at the commune of the youth movement. We went there and spoke with them about the Rebbe and Judaism.

Y. B. immersed himself in his learning, and within a short time he went on K'vutza where he learned with tremendous diligence, received smicha and now is mekarev others. All thanks to some pats on the shoulder and

the Ahavas Yisroel that he felt at a neighborhood Melaveh Malka.

A LESSON IN AHAVAS YISROEL

Recently, I heard from a number of friends that they were told by their doctors to refrain from eating sweet things due to their high blood sugar levels. For some of them, this means a major change in their way of eating, times of eating, etc.

One day, I met my teacher, the mashpia Rabbi Moshe Orenstein of Tzfas, and we began talking about cutting down on sugar. He had also heard about this from some of his friends and he shared a lesson that he learned in avodas Hashem from diabetes:

This illness has been known for 1,500 years. The doctors back then did not have the knowledge or means to do blood tests in a laboratory. In the past, doctors would have to examine the patient's urine to determine his sugar levels and what treatment was needed. If a human doctor is willing to deal with such things in order to heal his patients, how much more should we, the mashpiim, rabbanim and shluchim, be willing to deal with the less than pleasant issues of our mushpaim and our talmidim. We shouldn't complain about why we need to deal with these lowly matters. In order to heal a Jew b'gashmius, and all the more so b'ruchnius, we need genuine Ahavas Yisroel.

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MINNESOTA: OPEN HOUSE SHLICHUS

When my wife and I arrived in Minnesota, we did not know why the Rebbe had sent us here. I told my wife about the period of time in which I was involved in hachnasas orchim and the Rebbe's frequent and profuse extolment regarding the work of hosting guests. We came to the conclusion that the Rebbe wants us to continue in this vein.

By Menachem Savyon

Beis Moshiach is pleased to present a new column entitled, "life on shlichus." Each column will feature a different shliach relating shlichus, hashgacha pratis and personal stories from life on shlichus. All shluchim are welcome to participate by writing to shaliach770@gmail.com.

The Chabad house in Minnesota recently dedicated a new building for outreach work with the Hebrew speaking public. The plan is for the center to service the dozens of Israelis who live in the area for t'fillos, shiurim, farbrengens and communal



Shabbos meals. Rabbi Yaakov Abuchatzera (grandson of the Baba Sali, Rosh Kollel of "Eshel

Avrohom" in Ramle) was present, as was the mashpia, Rabbi Moshe Orenstein of Tzfas.

The spotlight this week is on Rabbi Aharon Maimon, who was sent to Minnesota by the Rebbe eighteen years ago. R' Maimon comes from a religious background and was raised with *emunas tzaddikim* (belief in holy men). Although his family had no knowledge of Chabad Chassidim or of the Rebbe, R' Aharon learned of the Rebbe when he was twenty and he attended Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in Tzfas.

He subsequently married and began looking for a job. Many offers came his way including

enticing, financially lucrative ones. R' Aharon refused to accept a single offer without getting the Rebbe's consent. He sent all offers to the Rebbe but the answer he received made him change direction and become a shliach.

R' Maimon tells us of his visit to the Twin Cities:

A few years after I had studied sh'chita, I went to Minnesota in order to supervise a line of kosher sh'chita. I was asked to examine what was going on in the slaughterhouse, the kashrus standard, how the work was done, etc. and to report on it. When I returned to 770, I submitted a report.

Some time afterward, I received some job offers. Rabbi Hillel Pevsner (a"h) of France asked me to travel to France to supervise a local slaughterhouse. My wife had opened a successful business for fashion design and thought I should join her in the business. My friends were running a hairdressing business that brought in thousands of dollars a week! Then I got the offer from Minnesota. I submitted a letter to the Rebbe and asked what I should do. I described all the options and asked the Rebbe to tell me what to do.

That was in 5753/1993 and the Rebbe had nodded his head when the secretary read the Minnesota option. I didn't need more than that. Not long afterward, we moved to the Twin Cities.

We began our shlichus work in our home and throughout the years that is how it remained. That is, until this summer, when we moved the programming to a new building. We focus our attention on local Israelis who work at kiosks in malls. During

22 YEARS OF WAITING

In 5748, the year after we married, we went through a tragic incident with the birth of our first child. After that, we had no additional children. We were heartbroken by this and immediately afterward we went to the Rebbe. At "dollars" I wanted to pour out my bitter heart to the Rebbe and ask for a bracha for children. However, when I passed the Rebbe I was shy and tonguetied. I found myself outside a moment later.

Then R' Groner came out and called my name. I went back inside and the Rebbe, as though reading my thoughts, gave me another dollar and gave me a blessing for children.

When my wife passed by the Rebbe, she asked for a bracha for a son. The Rebbe told her, "male children." Many years passed since then and we did not see the fulfillment of the Rebbe's bracha. We thought that perhaps we had become unworthy in the interim.

After 22 years of waiting, davening, hope and emuna, the unbelievable took place. A year and a half ago my wife gave birth to a healthy boy. We named him Menachem Mendel. . .



“I don't remember the precise wording but it was something like: “Yashar ko'ach for doing this wonderful work.” When the Rebbe looked at me, I moved to the side. I was embarrassed and could not gaze upon the Rebbe's face.

a regular season there are 70-100 Israelis who come to work here. We began inviting them to Shabbos meals, shiurim in Tanya, and shiurim in inyanei Moshiach and Geula. Kosher barbeques are very popular.

One of the special things about our work is that we enjoy the participation of the Chabad community in all of our activities. It's a small community, just fifteen families, but all of them, without exception, invite guests for the Shabbos meals. Israeli tourists, Jewish tourists from all over the world, those who work at kiosks in the malls, all of them

love accepting invitations for Shabbos meals.

IT ALL BEGAN WITH HACHNASAS ORCHIM

R' Maimon's home is wide open, 24/7. He learned this from Rabbi Moshe Yaroslavsky a"h, the one who started the Eshel-Hachnasas Orchim organization. In his own words:

In 5747 I worked along with other bachurim for the Eshel organization. Many guests came for Tishrei and they needed places to stay and food to eat.

Back then, R' Moshe



various activities, he wiggled out of it with sundry excuses.

One day, my wife and I went shopping for a baby carriage. We still did not have children but we decided to make the purchase as a “vessel” for the Rebbe’s bracha (see box). We went to a store in the local mall and made the purchase. On the way out we met a group of young men working at kiosks and decided to invite them to a farbrengen barbeque at our home.

They said they had to get permission from the manager. “Speak to Maimon and whatever he says, goes.”

I called him and to my surprise, he willingly agreed. Within a short time we had a grill set up with plenty of mashke and we sat down to farbreng. At some point, Maimon stood up and began viciously attacking Judaism and religious Jews. The truth is I looked forward to his leaving.

By the end of the evening, or more accurately put, towards morning, he asked me whether he could stay at my house until his partner came to pick him up. Of course, I agreed. It was only after everybody else had left and we began to schmooze that I got to know him. He had grown up on a HaShomer HaTzair kibbutz and was raised on anti-religious sentiments. That’s when I understood his behavior that evening and his earlier avoidance of us.

As soon as we began talking on a personal level, he opened up and asked me dozens of questions. Time passed quickly and it was morning. I told him I was going to daven Shacharis and if he wanted to continue the conversation afterward, he could join me for davening. He agreed!

Since then, he began visiting



Yaroslavsky did a tremendous amount for the guests. His concern and devotion are indescribable. When you saw this older man running the intricate logistics of Eshel, you couldn’t help but be amazed. This made a tremendous impact on me. Till today, I don’t understand how we worked sixteen hours a day without pay. We were only four bachurim and we sat every night with dozens of boxes of vegetables, peeling and cutting for hours. We devoted ourselves to this work and were happy to work on behalf of the Rebbe’s guests.

At the end of Tishrei, R’ Yaroslavsky took us to the Rebbe for a bracha. We stood next to the Rebbe’s room and when the Rebbe arrived he blessed R’ Yaroslavsky and us. I don’t remember the precise wording but it was something like: “Yashar ko’ach for doing this wonderful work.” When the Rebbe looked

at me, I moved to the side. I was embarrassed and could not gaze upon the Rebbe’s face.

When my wife and I arrived in Minnesota, we did not know why the Rebbe had sent us here. I told my wife about the period of time in which I was involved in hachnasas orchim and the Rebbe’s frequent and profuse extolment regarding the work of hosting guests. We came to the conclusion that the Rebbe wants us to continue in this vein.

We began looking for Israelis to invite for Shabbos meals. We prepared kosher sandwiches for them to eat at work and invited them to kosher barbeques with my wife handling the material provisions.

IGNITING A JEWISH SOUL ON THE GRILL

At some point, we met a fellow by the name of Maimon Ben Ezra. At the time he was the manager of a company that sold baby carriages in the Twin Cities and he had fifty guys working for him.

We got to know him through his many employees and invited him for a Shabbos meal in our home, but he politely refused. Whenever we invited him to

us regularly whether for a Shabbos meal, a farbrengen, or a shiur. He eventually became a baal t'shuva and he now lives in Europe and works in a Yeshiva. You would not recognize him as the same guy. He lives the life of a Lubavitcher Chassid.

By the way, my decision to invite the group that evening was spontaneous; I hadn't planned anything. Boruch Hashem, as a result of that invitation another Jewish soul became close to Judaism and the Rebbe.

A PERMANENT CHABAD HOUSE

In 5763 we graduated to more official programming. We started arranging bigger events like a huge Purim party, Pesach s'darim, and big farbrengens. Last year, we invited all the Israelis to our house and over 80 came!

“After 22 years of waiting, davening, hope and emuna, the unbelievable took place. A year and a half ago my wife gave birth to a healthy boy. We named him Menachem Mendel for the Rebbe.

I think it was this type of shlichus that the Rebbe was referring to when he spoke to Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu zt”l when they met in 5752. The Rebbe then said, “Aside from this, there must be material good for the Jewish people also (and especially) due to their inherent quality which precedes Torah. Therefore, in Chabad we try to work for the good of the Jewish people, supplying them with all their needs, even physical needs, and not necessarily on condition that they study Torah, but because they are Jewish men and women; men, women, and children, whose existence

preceded the entire world, even the Torah.”

We started working on a Chabad house building that would host all the programs. After a lot of work over a period of years, we dedicated the new building, which was donated by Israeli businessmen. The new building has a big shul, a beis midrash for shiurim and for learning, and a hall for Shabbos meals and community events.

We hope that our efforts on shlichus will serve as the *makke b'patish* (the final blow, i.e. the final efforts) that will bring about the hisgalus of the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach immediately now!

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IT WAS ALL A TERRIBLE MISTAKE

Everything was going fine – until that bleak day when he received a telephone call with some terrible news. In an instant, his life of calm and serenity was transformed into a frightening roller coaster ride.

By Menachem Savyon

Translated by Michael Leib Dobry

INCREASING IN SPIRITUAL STRENGTH

Erez (not his real name) was a young Israeli from a good family, and like all his friends, he decided to take a trip to the Far East. He packed a large knapsack with as much as he could carry, and set out on a lengthy journey in search of the true meaning of life.

Nowadays, you can't go touring in India without visiting the Chabad House, and so it was with Erez. It was a cool evening and Erez bounced in just to get "a cup of tea." A fascinating class in Tanya was taking place at the time, and it quickly turned into a provocative discussion. The shiur was so interesting that Erez

"caught the bug" and simply couldn't leave.

At the conclusion of the shiur, Erez stayed for a while. He had just been introduced to a new and captivating source of knowledge, and wanted to explore the matter further. He had many questions and his perplexed soul was thirsting for answers. During the class, he had heard for the first time about the concept of two souls within every Jew, and was most intrigued.

Within a few days, Erez had "grabbed the opportunity" and his spiritual strength began to grow. The transformation within him started slowly but surely. It began with greater stringency in matters of kashrus, morning prayers, and more. After two

months of continual spiritual growth, Erez decided that the time had come to implement what he had learned. He would take the courageous step of registering to study in Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim and joining the Rebbe's army as a full-fledged Chassid.

Erez immediately began the process of putting these thoughts into action. He went to the nearest travel agency and bought a return ticket to Eretz Yisroel. Within a few days he was fully integrated into the yeshiva's baal t'shuva program and soon became a yeshiva bachur in every respect.

After two years of holiness and spiritual elevation, he made the decision to travel to Crown



Photo by Levi Yisraeli (illustration)

Heights and spend a whole year learning in the Rebbe's beis midrash – 770. Erez was overjoyed beyond description. You can just imagine after such a long and arduous journey, he had finally reached the pinnacle – an opportunity to go on 'k'vutza', where T'mimim devote most of their time to the study of the holy Torah. This is "dwelling in the House of G-d all the days of my life" in its most literal sense – the ultimate closeness to the Rebbe. With a feeling of great excitement and anticipation, Erez made his way to New York for a full year of studies in Beis Chayeinu, the happiest time in the life of any Chabad bachur.

A SERIOUS DIAGNOSIS

Everything was going fine with no problems on the horizon – until that bleak day when he received a telephone call with some terrible news. In an instant, his life of calm and serenity was transformed into a frightening roller coaster ride.

His father was on the line. After a few moments of pleasant conversation, he got right to the point. He heard what his father was saying, but it seemed as if he was talking about someone else. As he pressed the receiver to his ear, he felt momentarily as if he were being controlled by some imaginary force.

As if in a nightmare, he heard his father's pained voice

as he updated him on the recent medical examinations he had before leaving Eretz Yisroel. According to the test results, the doctors had revealed a malignant brain tumor *r"l*...

It all started about a year earlier. One day, Erez collapsed in the street and lost consciousness. His family doctor advised that he undergo a series of tests to check whether he might have epilepsy. For whatever reason, there was a delay in the test results. It turns out that the doctors were not certain that the findings were accurate, and it was only after a lengthy interval that they decided that this was apparently due to a malignant brain tumor.

Erez's heart was pumping

“The first thing he wanted to do was to scream – so loudly that it would shake the world at its very foundation. And he did scream – from the depths of his soul. WHY?! Ribbono Shel Olam, what have I done to deserve this? Where have I gone wrong?”

wildly, blood was rushing to his head, and he felt faint. He couldn't stand to hear any more and hung up the phone.

The first thing he wanted to do was to scream – so loudly that it would shake the world at its very foundation. And he did scream – from the depths of his soul. **WHY?!** Ribbono Shel Olam, what have I done to deserve this? Where have I gone wrong?

He went into his room with a feeling of terrible dread and shut the door behind him. At first, he still wanted to cry and scream over the painful blow he had just sustained. However, he found himself instead lying on the bed, staring at the ceiling, and doing absolutely nothing.

Another day passed and then another, and Erez began to sink into a severe depression. His life was suddenly engulfed by deep emotional bitterness, casting a serious cloud over the state of his physical and spiritual health. Things got progressively worse, and the situation became most unpleasant. He felt that he had lost the will to live a normal life.

RISING AGAIN

More days passed, and Erez was still secluded in his room. His fellow students immediately felt his absence, and after another few days, they decided to do something about it.

That afternoon, two T'mimim knocked on the door to his room.

At first, he didn't want to answer, but when the knocking persisted, Erez decided to go to the door. With a look of total rejection and without even the slightest smile, he opened the door for them.

“What happened?” his friends asked him.

“Nothing. Everything's fine,” he replied evasively.

Erez's “everything fine” sounded like anything but that. The bachurim would not relent and they urged him to tell them what the problem was. When he finally started to open up, he began to sob.

“Where is He? Where did He go? Why is He taking my life away?”

“I cast aside my entire life. I suffered endless ridicule and scorn from my peers... I left the warmth of my parents' home, I left all the friends with whom I had grown up, I gave up my academic studies and all the easily accessible pleasures of Israeli life – everything. Literally everything. And for what? To be a soldier of the Rebbe! To dedicate my life to the leader of the generation! Where is G-d in this whole story? Why has He abandoned me? Is this the thanks I get after all I have gone through?”

The bachurim who had come to see him were in shock. After hearing such a bitter tirade, they were speechless. Yet, after waiting for a few minutes, they began to give him some encouragement:

“What's the matter with you?”

Don't you understand that this is only a trial? If G-d has brought you to this totally illogical state of affairs, this can only mean that you are being tested at a very high level. What about everything we learned in chassidus about ‘And you shall love G-d...with all heart...and all your might?’”

After discussing the matter for another few minutes, Erez began to realize that his whole line of thinking had been wrong. How could he have committed such a sin for even a moment? How could he lose his faith in Almighty G-d? Everything derives from Him, including those things that we simply can't understand rationally. Gradually, he got a hold of himself, and he realized how improperly he had related to the entire situation.

After several days of seclusion in his room, he quickly ran with two of his friends to 770, and they sat down together to write a letter to the Rebbe. The Rebbe's reply appears in Igros Kodesh, Vol. 6, pg. 254:

Greetings and Blessing!

I have received his letter in the name of a woman requesting prayer and a bracha for her son...*sh'yichyeh*, who is not in a proper state of health, and when I am at the Tziyon of my holy and revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, of righteous memory, his soul rests in the hidden treasures of Heaven, may his merit protect us, I will mention him for a speedy recovery.

You need to inquire with his mother whether he was born in a state of purity, and if not *ch"v*, you should immediately let someone know, and you should also tell her that she should make certain that all the mezuzos in the house where the young man lives should be kosher. And he should wrap a

kosher mezuzah in three layers of paper or envelopes, one of which should be waterproof, and the young man should wear it (naturally, he should remove it when he goes to the bathroom or shower room, nor should he wear it on Shabbos or Yom Kippur). Similarly, she should check that the mezuzos in her own home are properly kosher and that [her son] should wear a tallis katan...and before candle lighting on Erev Shabbos and Erev Yom tov, the young man's mother should give one penny to the charities of Rabbi Meir Baal HaNes.

In addition, the Rebbe gave some advice: **And besides what is stated above, you have to ask a specialist in this field, as they have found ways in recent years that provide help in curing or easing the effects of epilepsy (falling disease) *r"l*, and there are surely doctors in Johannesburg [South Africa] who know about this. I hope to hear good news in the**

forementioned.

With blessing, the one waiting for good news.

Naturally, this strong and encouraging answer from the Rebbe reinforced his faith in G-d. He made a firm decision to fulfill the Rebbe's instructions with complete faith that his health would soon be restored.

That same day, he went together with his friends to a pious and G-d-fearing sofer in Crown Heights, and they told him about the Rebbe's answer. The next morning, Erez was already wearing a small mezuzah pendant around his neck, encased in three coverings (one waterproof), as indicated in the letter.

GOOD NEWS

About two weeks later, the telephone rang, and Erez's father was again on the line. Erez thought that his father was calling to urge him to return to Eretz Yisroel to begin treatment,

and he wasn't sure how to react.

However, to his utter astonishment, he heard his father say with undisguised glee: "Listen, Erez, there's been a terrible mistake. The doctors apparently got your test results mixed up with someone else's!"

The rest of the conversation continued with tears of happiness. Stunned beyond belief, he listened to his father's joyous tidings: "Your real test results arrived this morning, and it turns out that there's no sign of any tumor. However, the doctors do believe that it might be a case of epilepsy, and they suggest that it would be appropriate to undergo treatment with specialists in the field located in – **South Africa.**"

Amazingly, just as the Rebbe had said.

Today, Erez is a fine chassidic young man, married with several children (may they increase in number), and completely healthy. May G-d grant him a long and good life.

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TEACHING KRIA PART II:

APPLICATIONS

Applying the Sichos, Maamarim, and Igros cited in last week's installment, Rabbi Levi Goldstein demonstrates the advantages of using the seifer מבוא לקריאה, and explains the multi-part process necessary for successfully teaching reading skills to our children and mechunachim.

By Rabbi Levi Goldstein



Let us now examine our approach in teaching Kria to our children. This requires of us as educators and parents to understand the basic techniques that are permissible within the Al-Pi-Mesora framework.

To do this, we must turn to the experts in the field and draw a plan to successfully teach our children to read without confusing them or turning them off on ושלום, but rather, on the contrary, in a way that helps them become good and fluent readers, בעזרת השם.

The following is based on the advice, instructions and guidelines given by Rabbi Hodakov, ע"ה, as well as other sources.

It goes without saying that the following is contingent to the specific circumstances of the situation, namely the level of the child and his capabilities.

The basic guidelines are summarized as follows:

After the child has been taught and has mastered the Alef-Beis letters, and he knows their names as well as all the Nekudos by their names (Komatz, Patach etc.), he is ready for the second step: to combine letters with

Nekudos.

Parenthetically, the Rebbe writes¹ to a teacher: “One does not have to teach the child all the letters of the Alef-Beis before beginning to teach the child the Nekudos. Rather, once the child has learned several letters of the Alef-Beis, it is alright to begin teaching him Nekudos for those letters, as well as teaching him how to combine the letters with the Nekudos.”

“SOUNDS” OKAY?

Question: Do the letters of the Alef-Beis have sounds of their own (phonics) or not? For example, just as a teacher would teach the child “A as in Apple”, “B as in Boy,” can an Alef-Beis teacher say “Alef as in Esrog,” “Beis as in Bracha?”

Answer: No.

This is based on the Rebbe’s sicha² regarding the vowel sh’va:

“When the Sheva vowel is combined with a letter, it has a



definite sound. Take the letter א from the word בְּרָאשִׁית as an example.

“When one pronounces the word בְּרָאשִׁית, the only reason we are able to hear the sound of the letter א is because it has a שְׂבָא under it, [otherwise, we would not be able to hear the sound of the Beis].

“The explanation for this is as follows: When a Nekuda is attached to a letter, it serves the same function as the Neshama serves for a body. That is to say, just as before the Neshama enters the body the body is stationary and motionless, likewise a letter without a Nekuda is inaudible.

“In other words, the Nekuda causes the letter to move, so to speak, and become audible. Place a Komatz with an Alef – it becomes Aw; place a Patach with an Alef – it becomes Ah.”³

This means that we do not treat the Alef-Beis letters the same as we do the letters of the

“There is absolutely nothing to gain by pointing out that “Beis” sounds like “Boruch,” because just as the child hears the “Bhh” sound in the word Boruch, he equally hears it in the word Beis!

English alphabet, called phonics.

For example, the letter Beis alone without a Nekuda should not be pronounced as “Bhh,” for since it has no Nekuda, consequently it has absolutely no sound. It is only after it is attached to a Nekuda that it can be vocalized.

Thus, until the Beis is combined with a Nekuda, it only has a name – Beis – and nothing more.

Rabbi Leibel Newman (renowned expert in the field of Kria) added a deeper insight in this regard. It was pointed out earlier that learning the Alef-Beis is not merely a means to reach the goal of reading Lashon-

HaKodesh, but it is rather a goal for itself.

Likewise here: each and every letter of the holy Alef-Beis has its very own merit and value, namely their respective holy names, Alef, Beis etc.

This is unlike the individual consonant letters of the ABC, which are merely tools to create sounds for the vowels that follow.

Therefore, it is incorrect to show a child a picture of בַּיִת (house) and tell him that the sound of the letter א is like בַּיִת. Likewise, to tell a child named בָּרוּךְ that the letter Beis sounds like his name בָּרוּךְ is also erroneous, because the letter Beis, as all letters of the Alef-Beis, has no

“I can guarantee you that absolutely nothing was published by Kehos without having been checked over by the Rebbe beforehand (and by the Frierdike Rebbe in his times).”

sound!

It is only after the two individual objects (the letter and the Nekuda) are joined together, an audible sound is created.⁴

Furthermore, by pointing to a בּ and saying “this is the sound of Beis” is perhaps equivalent to sight-reading, namely, showing a child בּ and telling him to say “BAW” (not “Komatz Beis Baw”), which is the method of the maskilim, against whom the Rebbeim waged war, as we showed in the previous installment.

Let me add: Many senior mechanchim⁵ have added the following touch:

Besides all the above, there is absolutely nothing to gain by pointing out that “Beis” sounds like “Boruch,” because just as the child hears the “Bhh” sound in the word Boruch, he equally hears it in the word Beis!

Here it is imperative to give a fundamental introduction.

There are basically two distinct techniques in teaching “Komatz Alef Aw”:

1) The popular Shita:

- After teaching the child all the letters and Nekudos separately by their real names, the teacher shows the child a letter with a Nekuda underneath it. For example, the teacher shows him a א and tells him to repeat after him: “Komatz Alef Aw.” Then he shows him בּ and tells him to repeat after him:

“Komatz Beis Baw,” and likewise with all the other letters and Nekudos.

- Then the teacher trains him to merely whisper the words “Komatz Alef” and only say aloud “Aw” and the same with “Komatz Beis,” to merely whisper the words “Komatz Beis” and only say aloud “Baw.”

- Then finally, the teacher trains the child to skip out (or just think in the mind) the words “Komatz Alef” and “Komatz Beis” and just say “Aw, Baw” etc.

Now, this technique can be difficult and taxing on a child, and according to many expert Mechanchim, it may hinder the child’s development of reading skills. For at first he is told that “א” is three words: “Komatz Alef Aw.” Then he is told to whisper two of the three words and only say “Aw” aloud. Then, he is finally told that it is merely “AW.”

This can, indeed, be confusing and leave the child stuck with whispering at a later stage too.

2) The Shita of the מבוא לקריאה:

It must be prefaced that the only Seifer designed for teaching children how to read that was published by Chabad is the Seifer מבוא לקריאה.

In the introduction of the Seifer “עזר למבוא לקריאה” there are specific guidelines from Rabbi Hodakov on this topic as how to use the מבוא לקריאה in a most successful way.

It is also noteworthy to mention, that if anyone has encountered difficulties in using the מבוא לקריאה, it may very well be due to the lack of knowledge of the correct technique and Shita that was intended for the מבוא לקריאה.

Parenthetically, many Rebbeim report that they have used the מבוא לקריאה method for many years and have seen much success.

It must also be noted that based on the Rebbe’s words (cited in the previous installment) there is no need to rush so that the child should master the skill of reading quickly. The method of the מבוא לקריאה might indeed appear to be a דרך ארוכה וקצרה, a long but short road. It is a slower process; however it is also a very thorough approach. If we take our time, and do sufficient חזרה, we will be very successful.

The following is the technique of the מבוא לקריאה:

1) After teaching the child the letters and Nekudos separately, by their real names, the teacher shows the child the following three independent objects, in the same line and in sequence (from right to left): א , בּ , גּ .

2) The teacher then proceeds with the following three steps:

- Pointing to the א, the teacher says with the child “Komatz.”
- Next, pointing to the בּ, the teacher says with the child “Alef.”
- Then finally, the teacher points to the גּ and says with the child “Aw.”

Then the teacher does the same with all the letters and Nekudos.

In other words, the teacher does actually say with the child the three words “Komatz Alef

Aw,” but he does it in a sequence of three consecutive, distinctly written steps.

The advantages of the **מבוא לקריאה** method are:

From day one, the child is consistently saying the same thing. A Komatz is always called a Komatz, an Alef is always called an Alef, and most importantly the **א** is always “AW.” In other words, the child does not have to change his description of what the **א** stands for. **א** is not called “Komatz Alef Aw,” but rather “AW.” This is the same exact way he will read **א** throughout his whole life. This approach seems to eliminate the confusion of the three stages of first saying, then whispering, and finally thinking and skipping out the words “Komatz Alef.”

This Shita emphasizes and is more consistent with the Rebbeim’s Shita of separating the letters from the Nekudos! For in the *other* S’farim, they do not separate the letter from the Nekuda. They put it all – the letter and the Nekuda – together as one unit: **אָ בָּ גָּ** etc. They tell the child to read it as “Komatz Alef Aw,” “Komatz Beis Baw,” etc. This is not the case with the **מבוא לקריאה**, where each part is distinctly separated: **אָ אָ** etc.

Now, concerning the uniqueness of the **מבוא לקריאה**, I would like to share a few additional points:

About 20 years ago, Rabbi Shmarya Katzen **שיחי** wrote a letter to the Rebbe, telling the Rebbe how he was told by friends that there are advantages in other S’farim over the **מבוא לקריאה**, so he asked whether it would be alright for him to change from **מבוא לקריאה** to another Seifer.

The Rebbe answered: **קדימה לא לשנות**, meaning that the Rebbe prefers that he should not change to other books.

I once asked Rabbi Hodakov about the Alef-Beis script that is printed on the inner cover of the Kehos writing book (replaced today by another one). I questioned whether this specific script was chosen randomly, or if it was checked over by the Rebbe. His answer was as follows: “In order to answer your question, I will have to search through the archives, which is quite difficult to be done presently. However, I can guarantee you that absolutely nothing was published by Kehos without having been checked over by the Rebbe beforehand (and by the Friedlike Rebbe in his times).”

In light of the above, one may rest assured that the same applies to the **מבוא לקריאה**.

The technique and method of the **מבוא לקריאה** (versus others) is consistent with the Rebbe’s Horaa mentioned earlier, that once the child has learned several letters of the Alef-Beis, we may begin teaching him Nekudos for those letters, as well as teaching him how to combine the letters with the Nekudos.

I would like to conclude with some final thoughts:

1) Some teachers express some difficulty in using the **מבוא לקריאה** due to the fact that it is very concise. It does not provide sufficient exercises, and for some Nekudos, it is lacking the 3-step procedure. This might be due to the financial constraints in the days when the **מבוא לקריאה** was printed.

There is however a solution to this: the **“עזר למבוא לקריאה”**,

which compliments the **מבוא לקריאה**, provides sufficient pages for practice etc. (available in Judaica book-stores).

2) Assuming that a specific child is unfortunately not capable, for whatever reason, to handle the method of learning of “Komatz Alef Aw,” “Komatz Beis Baw,” and needs to go straight to **אָ בָּ גָּ**, one must obviously ask a Chassidishe Rav and Mechanech what to do.

A suggestion (contingent on the Rav’s P’sak): As an introduction to his learning, at least have the child verbalize all the names of the Alef-Beis and the names of the Nekudos while showing them to him. Thus, this child too will benefit from all (or at least most of) the special advantages that a child receives by learning it the proper way, namely the K’dusha of the holy letters and Nekudos that enters into the child only when he actually verbalizes the holy names of the letters and Nekudos (as explained at length in the holy letters and Sichos cited to in Part I of this series).

1) Shaarei Halacha U’Minhag, Vol. 3 page 194.

2) Hisvaaduyos 5742 page 2197.

3) Perhaps this explains why we say “Komatz Alef Aw,” the Nekuda before the letter, and not the reverse as in “Alef Komatz Aw,” because the Neshama, which is the main thing, must obviously come first. (RLG)

4) The same applies to all the Nekudos, which serve as the Neshamos of the Letters. For example, Komatz alone is not “AW.” It is rather only named Komatz. Once it is combined with a letter it makes an audible sound.

5) Amongst them: my father Rabbi Yosef שליט”א Goldstein and others.

THE BIRTHRIGHT IN THREE STAGES

By Rabbi Heschel Greenberg

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



HOLDING ON TO THE HEEL

This week's parsha features the birth of Jacob. It seems that everything about his birth was unusual. To begin with, his mother Rebecca's pregnancy was a difficult one. She was baffled by the way the children were struggling within her, and she sought Divine guidance as to what was going on. She was told that she was carrying twins who would become the progenitors of two nations that would be engaged in a perennial struggle.

And then another strange thing occurred. When her twins were finally born, Jacob was holding on to Esau's heel. For this reason, the Torah tells us that he was named Jacob, because the name Jacob contains the word heel (*eikev*) in it.

Why was Jacob holding on to Esau's heel? And why was that significant enough that he was named Jacob? And why whenever we refer to Jacob we are always reminded that he held on to Esau's heel? Why is that fact so crucial for us to remember?

Rashi seems to have anticipated these questions and provides us with a Midrashic explanation, which, Rashi states, is consistent with the simple understanding of the text:

"He [Jacob] was holding on to him [Esau] to prevent him [from being the first born]." Rashi then goes on to explain

that in truth Jacob was conceived first. But Jacob also wanted to be the one to emerge first, so he held on to Esau's heel.

In a separate comment Rashi provides the reason why the Torah emphasizes that he held on to Esau's "heel." It is to indicate that it will be the descendants of Jacob who will take away Esau's descendants' power at the end [heel] of their rule.

Rashi's comments need to be clarified. We still cannot fully understand why Jacob had to hold on to Esau's heel to establish his birthright. If Jacob was actually conceived first then he was in reality the first born. And if that does not suffice, and to be called the first born one must emerge first, how did holding on to Esau's heel change the fact that Esau emerged first?

ESTABLISHING BIRTHRIGHT: TWO SYSTEMS

Whenever we consider the degree to which one aspect of a process assumes overriding importance (birthright) over other aspects there are two ways it can be determined.

The first is to see where and when the idea, person or event originated, to trace the process back to its conception. The other system is to see what is the dominant reality now.

For example if there are two competing ideas about our course of action and we want to determine which idea should take precedence, it is reasonable to prefer the idea that arose in our thoughts first.

Another example would be ascribing credit for an accomplishment. Do we assign credit to the one whose idea it was? Or do we acknowledge the one who actually implements the idea.

In the realm of Jewish "outreach" we often hear the debate as to who should get the credit for bringing someone close to Jewish observance: the one who got them interested initially or the one who spent time and expended much effort in translating that original spark of interest into a roaring flame of passion?

In short, in all areas of life we can discern two competing considerations: Do we give precedence to the conception of an idea or process or do we give precedence to the actualization of that seminal idea?

Upon reflection we can say that this was the crux of the dispute between Jacob and Esau concerning the birthright. Was Jacob the first born because he was conceived first or was it Esau who was first to emerge? Who was right?

It seems incredible that on

the face of it Esau was justified in claiming that he was the first-born. If that were not the case and Jacob was truly the first born because he was conceived first why did Jacob have to purchase the birthright from him, as recounted in this week's parsha? That he had to purchase the birthright indicates that even Jacob knew that Esau was truly the firstborn!

Moreover, in Jewish law there is no question that when there are twins, the distinction of the first-born is always given to the one who emerges first, regardless of who was conceived first.

SANDWICHED

To resolve this uncertainty of the order of the brothers' birth Jacob held on to Esau's heel. In doing so Jacob was predicting that in the end of days—known as the “**heels** of Moshiach”—Esau's power will end and Jacob will be on the ascendancy. In this way, Jacob was providing a counter argument to Esau's claim of the birthright. While it is true that the one who emerges first is the firstborn, this is only accurate because in our world of action we must go by the reality we can see. Ideas come and go. We must be governed by the reality that goes beyond the stage of theory and that endures, at least to the extent that we can observe.

But with regard to Jacob and Esau, Jacob was not only the “first in thought” and conception; Jacob would also ultimately hold on to and bring an end to the heel of Esau. Jacob would supersede any temporary supremacy of Esau based on the here and now.

So while Esau had the advantage of the present reality, Jacob's claim to the birthright was based on the fact that his

“ In the realm of Jewish “outreach” we often hear the debate as to who should get the credit for bringing someone close to Jewish observance: the one who got them interested initially or the one who expended much effort in translating that original spark of interest into a roaring flame of passion?

reality “sandwiched” Esau's reality. To Jacob belonged the beginning and the end. This reality is reflected in each of his two names, Jacob and Israel. Jacob signifies the heel and end and Israel contains the word “*rosh*-head.” Jacob was head and heels over Esau.

ULTIMATE TRUTH

Esau still had one advantage. There is a third element in determining the designation of the firstborn. In terms of the here and now Esau was indeed the first-born. Conception is only a potential state. The future decline of Esau was for G-d and prophets to determine, but at the time of their birth everyone knew that Esau emerged first and was legitimately the first born.

Jacob, by purchasing the birthright from him, acquired that third element as well. Now Jacob was the first born on all three counts: he was conceived first, he held on to the heel of Esau, meaning that he will outlive Esau's power and will gain preeminence in the end of days, and now he also had purchased the temporal benefit that Esau then still enjoyed.

The Jerusalem Talmud explains that the word *emes* (truth, the trait that is associated with Jacob) comprises the first (*aleph*), middle (*mem*) and last letter (*Tav*) of the Hebrew

Alphabet. Truth is thus defined as something that is consistent from the beginning through the middle to the end. Jacob, the paragon of truth, was first in conception, will enjoy preeminence in the future, and when he purchased the birthright from Esau, he was also in possession of the distinction of being the firstborn in the middle.

MOSHIACH: PAST, FUTURE AND PRESENT

When G-d created the world He first conceived of a world in which His essence and the goodness that flows from it would pervade all of existence. As our Sages comment on the words that appear in the beginning of Genesis, “And the spirit of G-d hovered over the face of the waters” explaining that it refers to the “spirit of Moshiach.” In the words of the Talmud (Sanhedrin): “The world was created for Moshiach,” suggesting that G-d's original thought in the process of creation is a Messianic world. He envisioned a perfect world, a world where Jacob will no longer be dominated by Esau. Esau will then recognize, respect, and cherish the special relationship G-d has with the Jewish people—their birthright. And, as a result, all of the evil associated with Esau will cease and the world will give way to its original plan as

Continued on page 41

THE REBBEIM'S PREPARATION OF THE WORLD FOR MOSHIACH



PART IX * THE REBBE

By Rabbi Gershon Avtzon

Dear Reader sh'yichyeh:

This week is Shabbos Mevarchim Kislev. In the Lubavitch calendar, this is the Shabbos of the Annual Kinus HaShluchim. Thousands of Chabad emissaries from all over the world unite in the home-base – 770, Beis Chayeinu – to strengthen each other in accomplishing their mission of getting the world ready for Moshiach.

Among many other topics, they will be having in-depth discussions of the last Sicha that the Rebbe spoke to the Shluchim (Chayei Sarah 5752) in which the Rebbe said, “The most recent innovation in the work of Shlichus is to receive our righteous Moshiach with the true and complete redemption. Indeed, the preparation for the coming of our righteous Moshiach is the most all-

encompassing aspect of Judaism and includes all the other points and details of our Shlichus. It is the gateway through which all aspects of the Shlichus enter and rise.”

It is only fitting that we learn about the soul of the shlichus body: the seventh Lubavitcher Rebbe, universally known as the Rebbe.

The Rebbe was born in 1902, on the 11th day of Nissan, in Nikolayev, Russia, to the renowned kabbalist, Talmudic scholar and leader Rabbi Levi Yitzchak and his wife Rebbetzin Chana Schneersohn. Rebbetzin Chana (1880-1964) was known for her erudition, kindness and extraordinary accessibility. Her courage and ingenuity became legendary when during her husband's exile by the Soviets to a remote village in Eastern Russia she labored to make inks from

herbs she gathered in the fields so that Rabbi Levi Yitzchak could continue writing his commentary on kabbala and other Torah subjects. The Rebbe was named after his great-grandfather, the third Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch, with whom he shares many characteristics.

In 1929 the Rebbe married the Friedrike Rebbe's daughter, Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka, in Warsaw. On Monday the 28th of Sivan 5701 (June 23, 1941), the Rebbe and the Rebbetzin arrived in the United States. They had been miraculously rescued, by the grace of Almighty G-d, from the holocaust. In 1950, after the passing of his father-in-law, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, the Rebbe reluctantly ascended to the leadership of the Lubavitch movement, whose headquarters were located at 770 Eastern Parkway in Brooklyn, New York.

Soon Lubavitch institutions and activities took on new dimensions. The outreaching philosophy of Chabad-Lubavitch was translated into ever greater action, as Lubavitch centers and Chabad Houses were opened in dozens of cities and campuses around the world.

“If we would begin to describe in detail all the activities the Rebbe does to bring the Sh'china into this world, we would have to write an entire series of books. In this article, we will outline some of the general activities initiated by the Rebbe.

The vision of a world of Moshiach and how to bring that time to a reality is deeply ingrained in everything the Rebbe does. In one of his letters (Igros Vol. 12 pg. 414), he describes his vision as a little child "...When I was a young child – even before the age of cheider – I already began to visualize the way the world will look like in the Messianic era!"

In his first Maamer (*Basi L'Gani 5711*) the Rebbes says: "This is what is demanded and expected from the seventh generation – starting from the Alter Rebbe – to bring the Ikar Sh'china back to this world with the coming of Moshiach!"

If we would begin to describe in detail all the activities the Rebbe does to bring the Sh'china into this world, we would have to write an entire series of books. In this article, we will outline some of the general activities initiated by the Rebbe.

1) The Rebbe encouraged all Chassidim – and the entire Jewish nation – to encourage all Jewish people to start doing physical, practical Mitzvos. These 10 campaigns known as Mivtzaim have revolutionized the Jewish world.

2) The Rebbe has sent hundreds of full-time emissaries known as Shluchim to communities all over the world to bring the light of Torah to every Jew. Today, there is no Jewish community without a Chabad center. This is in addition to the Lubavitch programs that send rabbinic students world wide to reach out to individual Jewish people wherever they may be.

3) The Rebbe encouraged Chassidus to be translated and be made available to all Jewish people. He encouraged the use of advances of technology – radio, satellite etc. – to be used as tools in spreading Judaism and Chassidus.

“The vision of a world of Moshiach and how to make that a reality is deeply ingrained in everything the Rebbe does.

4) The Rebbe brought Chassidus down to the level of children. He led many children's rallies personally and founded many organizations and projects for children. Most notably, these include the international Tzivos Hashem organization, the Children's Seifer Torah program, the Lag B'Omer children's parade and many more activities.

5) The Rebbe re-initiated the campaign of spreading the 7 Noachide laws amongst the gentiles. This is based on the ruling of

Rambam (Melachim 8:10): "*Moshe was commanded by the Almighty [at Mount Sinai] to compel all the inhabitants of the world to accept the commandments given to Noach's descendants.*"

6) The Rebbe started the global campaign to bring Moshiach. He encouraged everyone to start learning the Torah sources that describe the era and coming of Moshiach. This, he said, is the "Direct Path" to bring Moshiach.

The Rebbe promised and told us as a prophecy that Moshiach is ready to come. We, the seventh generation from the Alter Rebbe, will be the first generation of Geula. The Rebbe will finish the work started by the founders of Chassidus, to bring the Sh'china back to this physical world for good.

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



MY LIFE IN MY FATHER'S HOME



The young Heishke, an only son, yearned to give nachas to his father, whom he loved, admired, and feared to no small degree. * And he waited longingly for the gift his father had promised him that came after a lengthy delay.

By Rabbi Yehoshua Dubrawski a"h

A FATHER'S REBUKE

In years gone by, nearly every child from a normal Jewish home believed that his father and mother were the best people in the world. In our modern day and age, most children become "wise" and know-it-all very early on, and at the earliest ages they start examining their parents objectively, looking at them askance. I looked at my father with a very subjective, childish outlook and to me it was assumed in the most natural way, that my father was the ultimate model of a genuine father. Since my father kissed and complimented me only on rare occasions, and he often rebuked me about why I did not daven properly and why I was lazy at my studies, I felt that if my father said something, then it must be so. I harbored heavy guilt feelings in my heart and was very fearful of my father.

The fear and guilt feelings were so terrible that as soon as my father tried testing me in the

Gemara that I learned, I began to bawl. Afterwards, I noticed that he looked at me with great compassion and a deep anguish, apparently since he saw how his only son was "blessed" with a deep inferiority complex. I would be even more upset when my father would say something like, "You know Heishke, I am not a psychiatrist but still, I think that a deep arrogance lies hidden in your tears that you need to break."

Still and all, I couldn't accept that my fear derived from my *yeshus*. I felt so lowly and broken — how did *yeshus* fit in here? Years later I realized that my father was quite correct. But I don't want to get into self-analysis here. My feelings of brokenness mainly came to the fore in later years when he was very sick. I was 12 and my father would be particular about not having anyone else but the two of us in the room and then he would call me to his bedside. "Sit near me, my son," he would say, and

he would take my hand in his and look at me warmly. It is hard to describe those powerful gazes, even though those eyes are still branded in my memory.

THE FINAL GAZE

My mother recounted for me how my father gazed upon his three children, looking at them for the last time. This was in Samarkand when my father was very sick, emaciated by starvation and disease and had to go to a government hospital. In those days, it was impossible to get into a hospital, as these were overcrowded with starving patients, refugees, and many others. My father got in through the *protektzia* of a Bucharian Jew.

It was an autumn morning. I slept in a child's bed and my two sisters slept in the same room in a single bed. I woke up as my father finished davening with a broken heart and a quiet tune. I was very frightened and fear clutched at my heart with iron

tongs.

I watched as my father folded his tallis and then looked at it for a long time. Then he said, “Nu, it’s time to prepare for the road.”

Then he went quietly over to my bed, did not say a word, just looked at me, and did the same with my two sisters. I closed my eyes and choked down my whimpers. When my father turned to my sisters’ bed, I opened my eyes and saw my mother standing in the doorway with her face in her hands. She walked with my father to the hospital. Two days later she returned home and in hysterical tears she said to us children, “Oy, Oy, children. You are orphans!”

My father died at the young age of 41, one year after my bar mitzva, in the second year of World War II. He belonged to a tragic generation; he suffered during World War I and the deprivations and persecutions of the Stalin years in Soviet Russia between the two world wars. In his youth, he went to learn in Yeshivas Tomchei T’mimim but could not remain there long. Due to the devastation of World War I he was drafted into the Red army although he did not tell us of his experiences as a soldier. He said it was a “chesed” that he was drafted as a soldier and wasn’t sent to Siberia for years.

WITH “HEMSHECH 5666”

My fear of my father was also due, in great measure, to knowing and feeling how great was his yiras Shamayim (fear of heaven). It wasn’t an artificial yiras Shamayim but was genuine and deep and we children could sense it. I did not know how to properly appreciate it and therefore I harbored tremendous feelings of guilt.

All week long he worked very hard and could rarely find the time to sit down and learn. This is why, on Shabbos, he could not bear to part from his copy of Hemshech 5666 (maamarim of the Rebbe Rashab that were said in the year 5666) with the nice binding and the colorful flowers. Why was it always samech-vov (‘66)? I don’t know. He learned with a sweet Chassidishe niggun that I heard only rarely.

My father never went to school and he never learned



He said it was a “chesed” that he was drafted as a soldier and wasn’t sent to Siberia for years.

accounting and yet, as far back as I can remember, he worked as the head bookkeeper in a shoe factory. Even during the years of persecution in Soviet Russia, he did not touch his long black beard and he did not even roll it up. I heard that among the cultured Christians of the time, they called him, “the bookkeeper with the long beard,” and said he was a very good bookkeeper. He had an unusually beautiful handwriting both in Yiddish and in Russian.

He often brought work home, and I could not take my eyes off his abacus. He would make calculations of hundreds and thousands as he moved the beads up and down as quick as lightening while barely looking at them.

My father, like most people, was very fearful of committing acts of “chaltura” (a degrading term for someone who acts beneath his station for purposes of personal profit – ed.) and stealing something from the despotic government (which all the factories and professional

federations belonged to). He didn’t do it for himself but he had to manipulate the accounts in order to hide the thievery of all the managers who stole left and right. “Management” greatly admired his work and they occasionally paid him with a “prize” of some kind for his “devoted work on behalf of the Soviet motherland.”

Although the town had a shoe factory, ever since I can remember there was never a single shoe to be found for any

amount of money in the few empty stores in our town. On that point, the red regime was adamant; none means none, and that is that!

MY BOOTS

The managers of the shoe factory decided to do my father a rare favor and provide shoes for the entire family. This was really good news and no small thing! My sisters clapped their hands – hooray, they would have new shoes!

I rejoiced more than the others since the factory managers had promised to make me boots. I found it hard to believe that this pleasure would be mine. First, as a nine-year-old child, it was an impossible dream to have boots. More than all else, it would be the height of fortune to be able to walk in the puddles and mud that our town was blessed with in abundance. Just one thought bothered me; how could I use my new, shiny boots in the deep mud when they would get filthy?

I counted the days and then the weeks after they measured

“I wore the boots that I could barely get on my feet and suffered agonizing pain with every step I took. At night, when I took them off, it felt terrific.

my feet. The entire family was already wearing their new shoes, all except for me. Every day I asked my father with words and glances what was happening with my boots and he said, “They are working on them.”

Then, one autumn night, my father returned from work with a large package under his arm and a big smile on his face. He did not wait for my questions but called out, “Guess what I brought.”

I did not dare utter the entire sentence, “Are they my...”

“Yes, yes, these are your boots.”

I played with my shiny boots for a long time and for some reason, I was afraid to wear them. My parents sat near me and waited for the moment when I would put them on to see if they fit. However, fear kept me from pulling them on my feet. And not for naught, since when I finally tried to put them on, I experienced “disaster.” With all my might I pushed my foot into the boot and – oy, oy vey, I felt my foot being squeezed so badly that it hurt!

I heard them asking, “Are they okay on you?” but if I told them the truth, that would be the end of my boots. I stammered, saying – probably, could be ...

I wore the boots that I could barely get on my feet and suffered agonizing pain with every step I took. At night, when I took them off, it felt terrific.

The next morning I looked at my boots for a while and then tried to put them on. With tears in my eyes I had to part with my beautiful, shiny boots. And the

reason that this happened? From the day they measured my feet until they actually got around to sewing the boots, my feet had grown.

They sold the boots on the black market and bought potatoes, onions, cabbage and other food items in exchange. All that I was left with was a disappointing dream.

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LEMON LESSONS

By M.E. Gordon

Eight year old Mushky put a big basket of lemons down on the kitchen table. “Mommy, look at all of these lemons! And I’ve picked only the ripest ones. There are tons more on the tree.”

“Thank you, Mushky. I think we’ll give the nicer ones to our friends and neighbors. Sheina, can you take out the citrus juicer and help Mushky make lemon juice?”

Soon the two girls were busy cutting lemons and juicing them. Mushky usually enjoyed her younger sister’s company. Sheina would always ask her such unusual questions and make interesting observations, but today she was very quiet.

“Why do you look so sad, Sheina? Does the lemon juice hurt your hands?” Sheina just shook her head and continued cutting

lemons.

“Come on, Sheina, nothing is so terrible that you can’t tell someone.”

“I...I...I just feel bad for him...it’s just not fair,” whispered Sheina.

“Who are you talking about?” Mushky had no idea what Sheina was referring to. “Who is it that you feel bad for?”

“Eisav.”

“Eisav who????”

“You know, Eisav from the parsha!”

Mushky was taken aback. She was used to Sheina’s unusual comments, but this one was the winner. “Eisav?? From the parsha???

Why

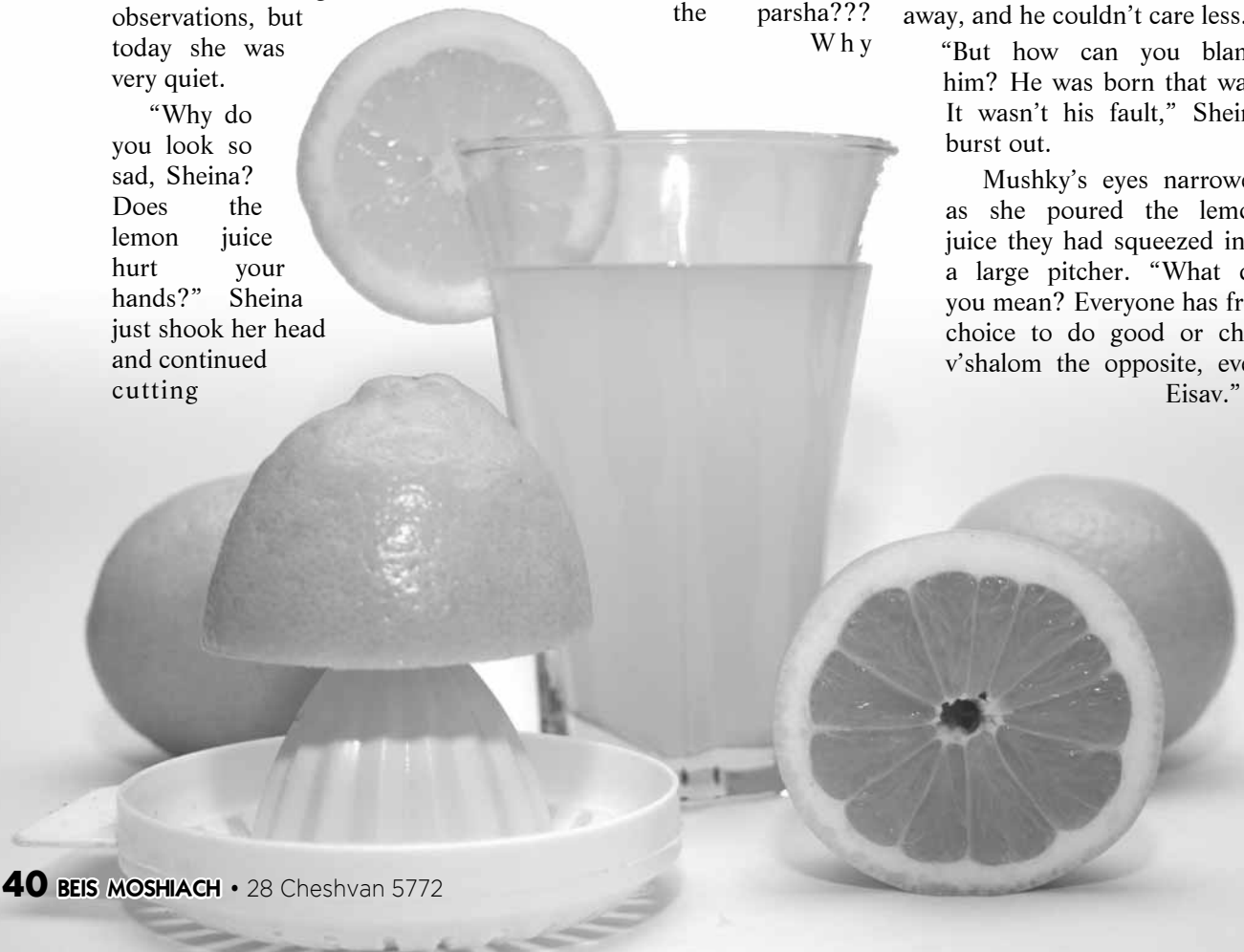
should you feel sorry for *him*?”

Sheina gave a little sigh. “It doesn’t seem fair. Yaakov is always the good one; his mother likes him better from the beginning. He ends up getting the birthright and the blessings.... while Eisav...”

“Hold on! Did you forget that Eisav willingly gave away his birthright for a bowl of lentil soup? And he did receive a blessing from his father as well. Besides, he was a pretty awful fellow. Did you know that the day he sold his birthright he had committed the worst possible sins? Everyone else in the family was mourning for his grandfather Avraham, who had just passed away, and he couldn’t care less.”

“But how can you blame him? He was born that way! It wasn’t his fault,” Sheina burst out.

Mushky’s eyes narrowed as she poured the lemon juice they had squeezed into a large pitcher. “What do you mean? Everyone has free choice to do good or chas v’shalom the opposite, even Eisav.”



“Uh-uh,” Sheina shook her head. “Even before he was born Eisav was drawn to evil ways. Whenever their mother Rivka would pass the Yeshiva, Yaakov would push to be born, but when she passed the place of idol worship, Eisav would push to be born. Eisav was already programmed to be wicked before his birth. What free choice did he have? It’s really not fair!”

Mushky swallowed and gathered her thoughts before answering. She knew that her sister was a sensitive soul and a deep thinker. This issue really seemed to bother Sheina, and Mushky hoped that Hashem would help her find the right words to explain what she had just learned in a sicha from the Rebbe.

“Sheina, you are such an amazing and caring girl. Your sympathy in this case however, is misplaced. Eisav did have free choice, and he is to be held responsible for his terrible misdeeds. There are two paths

to serving Hashem. One is the service of the “exalted” person who is born with a natural tendency to learn and do good deeds. The second path is the service of the one who has to constantly fight the Yetzer Hara. Just because Eisav was drawn to the house of idol worship before he was born, doesn’t mean that he was doomed to enter it. He only had to exercise his free choice, and not follow his inclination. That way he could have given Hashem great nachas.”

“So you are saying that Eisav could’ve been as great as Yaakov?”

“Yes. Ideally Yaakov would serve Hashem by learning Torah, and Eisav would serve Hashem by dealing with worldly challenges. Unfortunately Eisav chose to serve his Yetzer Hara instead. Yaakov, who was the ‘dweller of tents,’ now had to take on his brother’s role in serving Hashem as well, and become a ‘man of the field.’ The world is like a field, where the work may be difficult,

but fruitful.”

“So is that why Yaakov had to take the birthright and the blessings instead of Eisav?”

“Exactly, he needed these to do the job that Eisav rejected. When Yitzchak asked for ‘mat’amim’ tasty foods, he was referring to the two ways to serve Hashem. Some food tastes good the way it is, and some food is originally bitter, but with a bit of effort can be made delicious.”

Mushky added sugar and water to the pitcher of lemon juice, and mixed it well. “Here, Sheina, taste some lemonade.” They each took a drink of the sweet and delicious liquid.

“Amazing how such bitter lemons can turn into such a sweet thirst quencher,” said Sheina. “You know, Mushky, I don’t feel bad for Eisav anymore. He was such a....such a.....such a lemon!”

The story is fictional. The theme is based on Likkutei Sichos vol. 20, p. 108-115.

Continued from page 33

conceived by its Creator.

It is therefore clear that the beginning is about Messianic perfection and the end is the full materialization of that plan. What is lacking temporarily is the world the way as it is today, where Jacob is still affected by the challenge posed by the various Esau’s of the world.

Our mission now therefore is to “buy the birthright” from Esau in a figurative sense. This means that we should live our lives now as we imagine we will live our lives in the imminent Age of Redemption. We should recognize that the Jacob aspects of our lives are the dominant ones and cease according primacy to material aspirations. In the Rebbe’s words, “We should live

with Moshiach.” It does not suffice to believe in his imminent arrival and the complete Redemption that will occur. The challenge today is for us now to create that link between the original idea conceived by G-d and the concretization of the ideal in the future world of perfection by living that way right now.

THE FEMININE ERA

By Rabbi Yisroel Harpaz

Women are the barometers of existence. At the exodus from Egypt, at the flourishing of Jewish scholarship in the time of the Second Temple, at the nexus of the Jewish spiritual renaissance in Eastern Europe under the most unlikely conditions, women played indispensable roles in instigating the revolutions that shaped our people. When our women are on fire, we can expect that an era of warmth and inspired living is on the horizon. When women are, for whatever reason, left out in the cold, then we have only the bitter dead of night to look forward to. In this way, the health and destiny of any culture or social milieu is intimately tied to the way it views and treats its women.

This truth is something that Judaism has always embraced. The Talmudic Sages in their wisdom instruct men to honor their wives more than themselves. Why? Not only because it is simply good marriage advice, but because women have something that men don't have. Women have a natural reservoir of innate wisdom and spiritual sensitivity within them that even the most gifted man spends a lifetime learning to acquire. By honoring one's wife, one becomes privy to this wisdom.

And what have we, the predominant culture called modern society, done with this feminine energy? The feminist

movement, in its ideal state, tried to harness this energy and bring it to the forefront of human consciousness. It failed, not because women lacked the vigor to make the necessary changes, but because society was neither ready nor willing to receive it. Feminism failed because it fell into the trap laid by the patriarchal institutions it set out to confront: You want a piece of the pie? Well, this is a man's game, and if you want your share then you're going to have to play like a man.

So women went to work and accepted the premise of equality at the expense of their femininity; the feminist revolution agreed to follow the rational socio-economics of the (male) material world, even going so far as shunning those women who chose not to participate. This is the story of how the women's movement gave in, and we all somehow convinced ourselves that everyone won. Women proved that they could be like men. Are we supposed to be impressed? Are we supposed to be satisfied? Like an inner voice that wants – that needs – to be heard, feminine energy needs to find expression in order for this world to be complete.

This is emblematic of the slavish, exile mentality – living in a spiritual state where you are estranged from your true self, but convince yourself that

it's okay. And how much more heartbreaking that the tragic effects of this self-deception are felt to this day in the dissolution of the family, the disillusionment of our youth and the general state of chaos that permeates the world. But lest we become pessimistic, we should recognize that out of darkness comes the greatest potential for light; in a global culture increasingly devoid of real direction and meaning, the truth becomes all the more apparent when we are confronted with it.

Redemption – the opposite of exile – means the freedom to be your real self, to let your inner light shine. The purpose of existence is for us transform the world using the unique talents that we each have within us. The women's liberation movement merely traded the oppression women faced for the oppression men face, a mass prisoner transfer from one jailhouse to another. Instead of transforming the world, women allowed themselves to be transformed by it. True liberation means to free the energy within you from the shackles of bodily servitude, and let it make its own unique contribution to the transformation of the world into a spiritual, utopian place we can comfortably call home.

And who is better suited to awaken this inner spiritual sensitivity than the woman, whose very voice inspires transcendence. And since it is the words spoken from the heart that penetrate the heart and transform the listener, who better to spur the spiritual revolution we desperately need than women, who excel at speaking from the warmth of the heart's depth.

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