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# HOW IS IT POSSIBLE TO STOP YEARNING?!

The entire time Yaakov was in exile, he knew that it was not his place, per se, and he proceeded without any interruption, making his way to his true place. Thus, the verse states, “*haloch halachta*,” using a repetitive expression, indicating that Yaakov did not view his traveling as a one-way trip out of Charan, focusing only on his redemption from Lavan, but as a continual journey, a non-stop round-trip, serving G-d even while in exile [*haloch*] as a preparation for redemption [*halachta*].

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Translated by Boruch Merkur

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## EMERGING FROM CHARAN WITH INTEGRITY INTACT

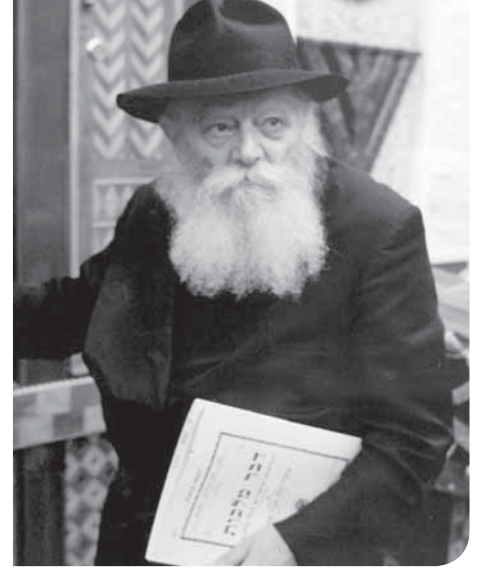
The departure of Yaakov from Be'er Sheva and his descent into Charan (“[the place that] arouses the anger of G-d”), the home of Lavan HaArami, alludes to the general concept of decent into exile. In the same sense, the redemption and ascent of Yaakov from Charan, upon his return to Eretz Yisroel – the Land of Israel, “the land of his father’s sojourning” – alludes to rising up from exile in the true and complete redemption.

From this it is understood that all the details of this week’s Torah portion connected with Yaakov’s residing with Lavan and his journey from there provide a lesson about the exile and redemption in our time.

The descent of Yaakov into the exile of Charan, in order to

stay with Lavan HaArami, was indeed a dramatic decline, to the point that it says in the Hagada that Lavan HaArami was worse than Pharaoh, King of Egypt, “For Pharaoh only decreed against the males, whereas Lavan sought to uproot the entirety [of the Jewish people].”

However, Yaakov’s descent was for the sake of a subsequent ascent, as related in the Torah portion, VaYeitzei. That is, not only was Yaakov not influenced from being there, in Charan – on the contrary; he emerged from their fully intact, “whole,” in the ultimate state of integrity, to the extent that it says, “the man [Yaakov] increased to the extreme.” In fact, he even managed to have an influence over the exile itself and over Lavan HaArami, bringing about their refinement. This concept is elucidated in *Toras Chaim*



(of the Mitteler Rebbe, whose redemption we are presently celebrating), where it interprets the verse, “And Lavan went and returned **to his place**” – Yaakov brought Lavan (from where he had been, a very lowly state, inferior to even Pharaoh) back to his [lofty spiritual] source and root, the level of *Loven HaElyon*, Supernal Whiteness.

Thus, “And Yaakov went on his way,” rising up from exile en route to Eretz Yisroel, “the land of his father’s sojourning,” “and he was met by angels of the L-rd.” This journey represents the unification of Eretz Yisroel and the Diaspora, the very purpose of descent into exile.

## LONGING TO RETURN TO HIS “FATHER’S HOUSE”

The above sheds light on the story in the Torah portion, VaYeitzei, as follows. Still, while he was in exile, with Lavan HaArami, Yaakov was in the state of, “you have gone, gone away (*haloch halachta*), for you longed, longed (*nichsof nichsafia*) for your father’s house,” words that Lavan spoke to Yaakov, indicated that Lavan himself detected where Yaakov’s heart had been. Namely, longing to return to his “father’s house.”

The entire time Yaakov was in exile, he knew that it was not **his place**, per se, and he proceeded without any interruption, making his way to his true place. Thus, the verse states, “*haloch halachta*,” using a repetitive expression, indicating that Yaakov did not view his traveling as a one-way trip [out of Charan, focusing only on his redemption from Lavan], but as a continual journey [a non-stop round-trip, if you will], serving G-d even while in exile [*haloch*] as a preparation for redemption [*halachta*]. Yaakov’s service in exile was itself a part of his journey to his true place, “the land of his father’s sojourning.”

And even before he arrived at “the land of his father’s sojourning,” he desired and yearned for it, “*nichsof*,” not just once – thereby fulfilling his obligation, as it were – but the entire time the redemption had not arrived, “*nichsof nichsafta*”!

### JUST GOING FORWARD TO THE REDEMPTION!

This provides us with a lesson regarding the present exile and redemption, a lesson that is in line with the teaching of the Alter Rebbe that one must live with the times, with the weekly Torah

“The entire time that we are in exile we must constantly be traveling, “*haloch halachta*,” to the redemption, not being put off by anything nor reckoning with any other consideration. We are not even threatened by such a formidable opponent as Lavan HaArami, who boasts an impressive pedigree – son of B’suel, son of Nachor, son of Terach, etc. We do not reckon with him or his arguments at all; we just going forward to the redemption!

portion, and in our case, Parshas VaYeitzei:

To be sure, the entire descent into exile, the doubled and redoubled darkness of exile, is for the sake of a subsequent ascent, in order to achieve the greater height of the true and complete redemption.

The entire time that we are in exile we must constantly be traveling, “*haloch halachta*,” to the redemption, not being put off by anything nor reckoning with any other consideration. We are not even threatened by [such a formidable opponent as] Lavan HaArami, who boasts an impressive pedigree – son of B’suel, son of Nachor, son of Terach, etc. We do not reckon with him or his arguments at

all; we just going forward to the redemption!

The entire time we remain in exile, our stance must be “*nichsof nichsafta*,” yearning for and desiring the redemption, utterly preoccupied with the thought: when will we finally merit the redemption?! And even after feeling this longing once, even to the point of soul expiration – if Moshiach still has not come, one mustn’t stop yearning. Rather, “*nichsof nichsafta*,” he continues to desire and yearn [as suggested by the repetitious expression]. As long as Moshiach has still not come, how is it possible to stop yearning?!

(From the address of Shabbos  
Parshas VaYeitzei, 10 Kislev 5746,  
bilti muga)

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



# MITZPEH AMUKA: ON THE SHLICHUS MAP

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The yishuv of Mitzpeh Amuka is known as a leftist settlement, even as anti-religious. People escape from the center of the country in search of a place like this. And yet, Rabbi Meir Wilschansky and Rabbi Yehuda Disraeli are reaching out successfully to the residents of the yishuv.

By Nosson Avrohom

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**O**n Rosh Hashanah two years ago, the shluchim who work at the yishuv of Mitzpeh Amuka, Rabbi Meir Wilschansky and Rabbi Yehuda Disraeli, were not in Tzfas. They asked me and another person from the community in Tzfas to go to the yishuv to make a minyan and blow the shofar.

It began to pour as soon as we started out, which considerably delayed us. We finally arrived and saw that the group there had been waiting for us, since they were short two men.

After Mincha, the gabbai came over to us and said, “You are not real Chabadnikim. Our shluchim come here on time even if it rains, even if it’s windy, and

even if dogs would be biting them on the way...”

We then understood what tremendous inroads the shluchim had made in this pastoral yishuv. As we walked among the homes of the yishuv after Mincha, almost everyone was willing to listen to the shofar. Many of them were raised to spurn the Torah, but despite this, the shluchim’s sincerity and persistence enabled them to have such an effect.

Mitzpeh Amuka is one of the most beautiful yishuvim in Eretz Yisroel, situated between Tzfas and Rosh Pina, about an hour’s walk from Tzfas. On one side, the Chula Valley, the Golan Heights and Mt. Chermom are spread in all their glory. On the

other side is the Biriya Forest and mountains. The magnificent view engenders a feeling of serenity. Surrounding it are circular footpaths that thread through the greenery and trails where you can ride horses or mountain bikes, all of which attract numerous tourists.

## FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH THE COMMITTEE

“Before we started this shlichus, we heard that it was considered an anti-religious yishuv that used to belong to the Labor movement,” said R’ Meir Wilschansky. “But when we actually started reaching out, we saw that it wasn’t as frightening as it was made out to be.



The shluchim farbrenging with residents of Mitzpeh Amuka

“We met people with warm feelings for Torah and mitzvos. Yes, there were some people who opposed us and asked us to leave them alone, but they were a small minority. Most of them are willing to listen. People today are realizing more and more that Judaism is not the exclusive province of one group or another, but belongs to every Jew.

“Shortly after my wedding about six years ago, there was a fellow by the name of Rabbi Eliyahu Segal living in Tzfas; today he is a shliach in Rishon L'Tziyon. He was the one to raise a commotion over the fact that in the vicinity of Tzfas, within walking distance, there are many yishuvim and moshavim that we

can reach out to, and since the community in Tzfas has so many talented Lubavitchers, we had a responsibility to visit these places.

“The two of us thought about which yishuv to adopt, and we decided on Mitzpeh Amuka. We drove over one day and began walking around. By Divine Providence, the first person we met was Efraim, a member of the yishuv's Vaad (governing committee). He invited us to come over later, and when we did, we saw that a meeting of the Vaad was taking place in his home. So we got to meet the leaders of the yishuv on our very first visit there.

“When he heard that we were Lubavitchers, he told us of his

own connection to Chabad. He was born in Hungary, and when he moved to this yishuv he wanted to build a round house made out of special stones. This was in 5747. He happened to read in the paper about the building being constructed for the Lubavitcher Rebbe in Kfar Chabad. He read about the special red bricks that the contractor imported, and he wanted them for his own house.

“He contacted the contractor who built the 770 replica, who told him that he had a few pallets of bricks left over. Excitedly, he bought the bricks which he later used to build his home.

“So this is his connection to Chabad. It's interesting how

sometimes a shliach goes to a yishuv and thinks his purpose is to inform the people about the Rebbe, and to his surprise he finds quite a few of them know who the Rebbe is and even have a connection with him.

“He helped us tremendously. There are also two women living here who are the daughters of the former mayor of Tzfas, who also used to be a Knesset member from the Labor party, Aharon Nachamias. Their father once had a yechidus with the Rebbe, during which he gave the Rebbe the key to the city of Tzfas. Mr. Nachamias was the only member of his party who did not follow the party line regarding the law of Mihu Yehudi, despite the party leaders’ demand that all members vote the party platform. He explained his vote as a promise he made to the Rebbe in yechidus.

“His daughters also feel close to Chabad and the Rebbe, despite not being religious. These families cooperate with us with everything. We read the Megilla for them on Purim and visit them before every holiday and give them holiday related gifts.

“We started our outreach with house calls, mainly asking to check mezuzos and explaining how they protect the home. Friendships developed from there.”

## NO EASY BEGINNING

R’ Wilschansky admits that it wasn’t easy at first. People were suspicious and did not understand why all of a sudden a pair of religious guys was knocking at their door. As time went on and they kept on visiting, not too many opponents remained.

“There are two or three homes that consistently reject our

overtures, but that doesn’t stop us from visiting before Yomim Tovim and offering them holiday-related items. It’s touching to see how those who initially opposed us due to ignorance are now cooperating with us.

“Last Shabbos, for example, we celebrated the bar mitzva of a boy from a family who at first refused to accept us and even greatly opposed our work. They wanted to celebrate their son’s bar mitzva in a shul in Rosh Pina, but the gabbaim there realized that the family would be coming to shul by car and denied their request for a reservation. When I heard about that, I informed them that Mitzpeh Amuka also has a shul and they can daven there with us, and that is what they did.

“Many of the people here are in the process of getting more involved in Judaism. There is a family by the name of Dorfman who is currently not religious, yet all the children are getting more interested in Judaism. At first it was the middle son. His first connection was through us, and then he continued his involvement with Hidabroot. The younger son followed suit, and later on we heard that the oldest son met up with the shluchim of the Rebbe in Australia.

“The fact that all the children are religiously involved is difficult for the parents to accept. At first, they opposed this new derech their children had chosen, and the relationships within the family were strained. Today, some time later, an amazing thing is happening. The parents went to India where the father took a managerial job at a company called Rafael in New Delhi. They live near the shliach, Rabbi Shneur Kupchik. The mother is an assistant in the Chabad

preschool there, and the father regularly attends all the shliach’s activities.

“One Erev Shabbos, I met one of their sons who told me that his father calls him now and then and tells him Chiddushei Torah that he heard from the shliach. This is the story of just one family, an entire family who is becoming frum, and you would have thought that there was no way this could happen.

“We sense that there is a movement towards tradition, and it’s getting stronger. When we visited a certain family, at first the father would argue with us about the truth of Creation and the truth of G-d’s existence. He knew of Chabad many years ago when he worked as a gardener for R’ Ofer Maidovnik, but that had no apparent impact on him and he remained estranged. Then he opened a successful garden furniture and wood-working business for gardens and wood construction. He was very successful until a wall that he built fell on his back, injuring him severely. It took three months for him to recover. We did not know about the accident, and when we showed up to visit him we found him lying in bed. We asked him what was wrong, and of course we suggested that he write to the Rebbe. Surprisingly, he agreed. He decided to buy t’fillin, which he puts on occasionally. He also committed to saying his perek of T’hillim and the Rebbe’s.

“Since then, he writes to the Rebbe before every move that he makes in his business life, although he still doesn’t go to shul. I later learned that he grew up in a religious home. His wife’s grandfather was a famous rabbi, and when one of the residents started the shul four years ago, his wife felt she should get involved.



She became the “gabba’it” until the present gabbai took over. Since then, they have koshered their kitchen, and their daughter is also very involved. She married a Mizrachi boy who is very close to Chassidus and to Chabad. Today the entire family is shomer Shabbos.”

R’ Disraeli tells us about another family:

“There is a couple we would visit before the holidays, and each time we went the woman would refuse to talk to us. ‘I’m in the middle of watching a program on TV,’ she would say, or ‘My husband isn’t home now.’

“Today, their son got a little more involved in Yiddishkait and married a girl from a traditional home. She recently asked us to kosher her kitchen, and she began attending shiurim at the Chabad house in Rosh Pina. Her husband comes to shiurim and the shul. He’s not embarrassed about walking out of there wearing a kippa.”

## A SERIES OF HASHGACHA PRATIS INCIDENTS

Despite all the nice stories, the work is challenging.

“Children’s rallies are not our strong point in a yishuv that doesn’t have many kids,” R’ Wilschansky explains. “On Shavuos a few years ago, we decided to make our first kinus anyway. That Yom Tov, there was a group of frum Jews at the yishuv from the Kupat Ha’ir organization in B’nei Brak who wanted to daven at the gravesite of Rabbi Yonasan ben Uziel for forty days in a row, and Shavuos was within the forty days. They rented rooms on the yishuv, and every morning they went to the gravesite to daven. They were a large group in black, and it made



Rabbi Disraeli (above) and Rabbi Wilschansky (below) farbrenging with residents of the yishuv



“I previously took a more cautious approach when it came to talking about Moshiach and Geula with newcomers, maybe because I didn’t ‘live’ with it enough myself. But since I’ve gone on shlichus, my view has changed. I see that not only doesn’t it push people away, on the contrary, it draws them closer.”

the locals very uncomfortable.

“We showed up in the afternoon and gathered the few children for a rally. In the

middle of the kinus, one of the children went out to call two of his friends who were not Jewish but Asians adopted by one of the

## TIPS FOR THOSE WHO WANT TO GO ON SHLICHUS

We asked R' Wilschansky and R' Disraeli to give some tips to readers who are interested in doing this type of shlichus.

"At a yishuv like Amuka, it's very important to make house calls," R' Wilschansky emphasizes. "At first we got the cold shoulder at many houses, but after repeatedly visiting, the reception was altogether different. At yishuvim like these, there is no sense in starting with rallies and events. That might be suitable for a city, but not for a yishuv. Here, people know one another, and the style of outreach must be more personal."

R' Disraeli spoke more about the shluchim and less about the location. He quotes the saying "two are better than one." "When you go with a chavrusa it gives you a better, more secure feeling. Furthermore, when you work alone you can find 101 reasons to justify why you are not consistent about going, but when you go with someone else, you are more committed."

"Another tip concerns consistency. People will learn that you are the ones to turn to and that you want to and are able to help them with anything related to Judaism. Don't anticipate successes every day; instead, work with kabbalas ol. Often you see results after a long period of hard work, and sometimes you will never know what you accomplished."

families here. When the parents realized where their children were, they raised a hue and cry as though missionaries had come to proselytize their children. Their shouting alarmed other families, and the yishuv was in turmoil. 'They are taking our children and brainwashing them and giving them prizes!'

"A few hours later, when we had already left for Tzfas, a few families joined forces and brought their dogs and blocked the gate of the yishuv so that the religious men from B'nei Brak could not enter. They couldn't tell the difference between us; to them, all Jews dressed in black are the same. Their ire was directed at the one family on the yishuv who had become baalei t'shuva, as though they were the reason for those 'threatening men' coming to the yishuv. The father called me after Yom Tov to tell me how they screamed at his wife and him, and they suggested that we keep a low profile for a while.

"We tried to clarify the

situation. The last thing we wanted was to direct a non-Jewish child towards Judaism. But all explanations fell on deaf ears.

"At this same time, the Vaad spoke about expanding the yishuv. Some of the residents wanted to include in their bylaws that this is a secular yishuv and religious Jews cannot buy a home here. We were surprised by their vehemence. We hadn't realized how far things had gone, and we wrote to the Rebbe. The answer we opened to was full of brachos and encouragement to continue the work and not to be afraid of anything that stood in our way.

"Some amazing hashgacha pratis incidents then took place, and instead of that incident turning things for the worse, it actually helped us, and a number good things resulted. First of all, when they blocked the gate to the entrance to the yishuv, all the owners of the rooms that the religious guys had rented protested, because this affected their livelihood. In the end, the

opposition wrote a letter of apology. In addition, one of the members of the Vaad who helped us a lot and was considering leaving his position on the Vaad, decided to remain in place until he could determine which way the wind was blowing, so that our outreach wouldn't be negatively affected.

"Rabbi Zajac of Brazil, who pays for the printing of the Tanya all over the world, suggested that a new edition of Tanya be printed in Amuka. When he looked into who the shluchim were in the area, he found us. We arranged for a ceremony in one of the homes where the father is a mekurav of ours. We brought the lecturer Rabbi Amram Muell and learned a chapter of Tanya with those present, and then R' Muell addressed the crowd.

"After all these events, who remembered the recent uprising? It was a nisayon, but when you go with the Rebbe, everything works out in the end. Just recently, they put up a kosher eiruv in the yishuv. When the Vaad wanted to rebuild the fence around the yishuv, some of the residents suggested that they make an eiruv at the same time so they could receive monetary aid from the religious council.

"Here, we clearly see the Hashgacha Pratis and help from Above. Since we arrived to work at the yishuv, much progress has been made. We are not successful in everything, but so many positive things have happened."

## CHANGES

Before going on shlichus to Mitzpeh Amuka, R' Wilschansky received the green light from the shliach of the settlements in Merom Galil, Rabbi Meir Masas, who helps them in their work. At that time, the shul was founded



by one of the locals, a recent baal t'shuva, and he had a hard time arranging a minyan. The one who serves today as gabbai is Dudi Ganun, a professional photographer and teacher of film in several schools in the north.

Now, R' Wilschansky sends bachurim for Shabbos and Yom Tov to make a minyan. The shul also has a regular shiur in Chassidus. "Those people who regularly attend the shiurim are getting very involved in Jewish life. We see how Torah reaches people and changes them."

R' Disraeli mentioned a shiur for women that recently stopped. "Mrs. Malka Wilschansky and Mrs. Rochel Hendel gave shiurim. They stopped, not because they weren't successful, but because the women said the shiurim obligated them, and they were afraid.

"The yishuv is undergoing a spiritual change. Not that long ago they accused us of missionizing," said R' Disraeli. "They had copies of articles describing what is happening in Ramat Aviv. The one who helped to calm the fire was the head of the yishuv's Vaad, as well as other people who knew us from the house calls and their personal relationship with us. They knew that the allegations were not true.

"Another indication of the

spiritual change at the yishuv is that we see new people at every Megilla reading that we didn't know before. Previously, the sight of religious people walking around the yishuv made people uncomfortable; now, they greet us first. We have become a part of the yishuv. We did not come to coerce anyone or to disturb the peace; on the contrary. What we want is to give them a glimpse of Judaism, to show them that it belongs to them as much as it belongs to us.

"The yishuv is generally known to be left-leaning and even anti-religious. People escaped from the center of the country and sought peace and quiet here. Up until recent years it was known as a stronghold of the Labor party. The fact that we are working here with a nucleus of thirty families out of forty says a lot.

"The people here are intelligent, and they greatly value the physical and financial commitment we have made. We devoted ourselves from the outset to work patiently, not hastily, and most importantly with consistency," says R' Wilschansky. "Better less, for a long time, than a lot that is not done on a regular basis. We don't just show up and knock on doors. It usually started with one visit in the course of which we met one

of the neighbors and we offered to visit them too. All mezuza checking takes three visits – one to take the mezuza, one to inform them it is pasul, and one to put up a kosher one. It can all be done in one visit, but the goal is to get to know them."

## MOSHIACH IN MITZPEH AMUKA

"The question that people ask most often is, 'When is Moshiach coming already?' Nobody questions the belief that the Rebbe is Moshiach," says R' Wilschansky. "People today are looking forward to Geula, especially in light of what is going on in the world."

R' Disraeli remarks, "I previously took a more cautious approach when it came to talking about Moshiach and Geula with newcomers, maybe because I didn't 'live' with it enough myself. But since I've gone on shlichus, my view has changed. I see that not only doesn't it push people away, on the contrary, it draws them closer.

"In every house that we visit, R' Wilschansky says that we are merely shluchim of the Rebbe to hasten the Geula. People regard the topic of Moshiach as part of Judaism like any other inyan in Torah and mitzvos."

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# REB MENASHEH 'THE SMALL' THE REBBE CALLED HIM GREAT

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Rabbi Menasheh Klein, author of “Mishna Halachos,” passed away just over two months ago on Erev Rosh Hashanah. The gaon, known for his s’farim and piskei Halacha, was a great admirer of the Rebbe.

By Shneur Zalman Levin

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**N**ews of the passing of Rabbi Menasheh Klein z”l, Av Beis Din Ungvar, at the age of 88 on the eve of Rosh HaShana, cast a pall of sadness upon all segments of religious Jewry. Rabbi Klein combined scholarship, Chassidus, and Halacha, and was known as “Menasheh HaKatan” (Heb. for “the small one,” a play on the name Klein which means small in Yiddish) for this is how he signed his correspondence.

Rabbi Klein was born on the first of Nissan 5683 (1923) on the outskirts of Ungvar in the Carpathian Mountains. His father was R’ Eliezer Zev Klein who served as rav in the Ungvar area until he was murdered in the Holocaust. The Munkatcher Rebbe was the mohel and he

told the father to name his son Menasheh, for the Nasi of that tribe brought his sacrifice on that day (the eighth of Nissan, according to the custom to read the Torah portion recounting the sacrifices that each Nasi brought to dedicate the Mishkan, one a day over the first twelve days of Nissan).

In 5692/1932, he went to learn in the yeshiva of the Av Beis Din of Ungvar, R’ Yosef Elimelech Kahane. After some time, R’ Kahane appointed him to give shiurim in the yeshiva.

At the end of 1939, with the outbreak of World War II, he returned home and lived in the ghetto. Erev Shavuot, he was taken along with his family to Auschwitz. He was separated from his parents who were sent

to their deaths. In the camp he promised that if he would live, he would dedicate his life to spreading Torah and Judaism.

He was saved with open miracles and after the war he set up a home for orphans in Buchenwald.

In 1946 he arrived in the United States where he helped reestablish Jewish life after the devastation of the war. He built a k’hilla that he named Ungvar for the town in which he was born, and served as Rosh Yeshiva in yeshivos Beis Sh’arim in Brooklyn and Mishnas HaTorah. In 5743/1983 he began building a k’hilla in Ramot, Yerushalayim and eventually moved there in 5769.

R’ Klein was known for his brilliance and knowledge



R' Klein, "But I want the Rebbe to make it happen! The Jewish people have cried out and this cry should have brought the yeshua already because the situation is very dire."

Before he left, R' Klein said, "I remember when the Rebbe began his nesius – may it be lengthy until the coming of Moshiach – and it was a small crowd. Today, boruch Hashem, many of the 'lost in the land of Ashur' have been gathered in. Whoever sustains one Jewish soul, it's as though he sustained an entire world; all the more so when it entails saving many thousands of Klal Yisroel. Now all we need is for the Rebbe to lead everybody towards Moshiach Tzidkeinu."

The Rebbe said, "State this as a p'sak in *Mishneh Halachos*."

R' Klein, "I will also pasken this l'halacha."

The Rebbe also commented on his being known as "Menasheh HaKatan." It was Rosh Chodesh Tammuz 5750 when his son, R' Amram Klein, went to the Rebbe for a bracha. The Rebbe said, "Your father signs his name as 'Menasheh HaKatan,' even though he is actually *gadol* (big, great)."

## HIS ADMIRATION FOR THE REBBE

R' Klein always spoke of the Rebbe with tremendous admiration. At a Kinus held in 770, he said that the Rebbe had achieved the pinnacle that a human being can attain. He lauded the Rebbe's drawing people close and his being a source from which all Chassidim draw the superhuman strength to work to spread Judaism around the world.

In Teves 5752, R' Klein attended a Melaveh Malka for

of all aspects of Torah. He wrote dozens of s'farim and his responsa were collected in *Mishneh Halachos*, *Mitzvos HaMelech* and many other books and pamphlets.

## I WANT THE REBBE TO BRING MOSHIACH!

R' Klein was a great admirer of the Rebbe and participated in Chabad events out of a deep appreciation for the Rebbe, the Chassidim, and the tremendous shlichus work being done around the world.

The first time he met the Rebbe was in 1946. On 24 Teves 5707, the yahrtzeit of the Alter Rebbe, he attended a Siyum

HaShas that the Rebbe made.

After the passing of the Rebbe Rayatz in 5710, the Rebbe told his secretaries to allow R' Klein to see him without having to make an appointment. Indeed, every so often, R' Klein would visit the Rebbe.

In 5748, R' Klein came to console the Rebbe on the passing of his wife, Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka. The Rebbe commented that acclaim for R' Klein's book, *Mishneh Halachos* preceded him.

R' Klein responded, "If my name precedes me, I want the Rebbe to bring Moshiach!"

The Rebbe said, "I scream nonstop about the coming of Moshiach."





a new Torah work, he would send a copy to the Rebbe with a dedication on the flyleaf.

Being a well-known rav, he tested bachurim from yeshivos Tomchei T'mimim for smicha. On one of these occasions, before the test began he said, "I am happy to meet a group of young Lubavitcher bachurim who are outstanding talmidei chachomim. With Hashem's help, you will be renowned morei Halacha who will sanctify Hashem's name." On that occasion, he gave the bachurim a shiur on the laws of Taaruvos. After the test, he gave each of the bachurim a certificate and his book, *Mal V'lo Pora* on the subject of circumcision.

His son, R' Dovid Shlomo Klein, published a work entitled *Mishnas HaGer*, an encyclopedia of the laws of conversion and the Seven Noachide Laws. He said that when he had yechidus along with his father, they discussed the subject of Mihu Yehudi. The Rebbe said, "The inyan of Mihu Yehudi affects you too." At the time, R' Dovid Shlomo did not know what the Rebbe meant. Once the book was published however, he realized that this is what the Rebbe was referring to.

At a Siyum HaRambam that took place in 5750, Rabbi Menasheh Klein said, "The Lubavitcher Rebbe, who should live long until the coming of Moshiach together with us, has been leading for forty years already ... I hope and give my blessing that this entire holy congregation, and all those who learn Rambam around the world, will continue to go in the holy path that the Rebbe shows us ... May we merit to hold the next Siyum HaRambam together with the Rebbe in Yerushalayim the Holy City with the building of the Beis HaMikdash."

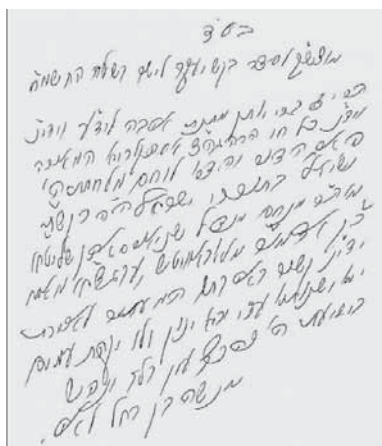
**“The Rebbe said, “The inyan of Mihu Yehudi affects you too.” At the time, R’ Dovid Shlomo did not know what the Rebbe meant. Once the book was published however, he realized that this is what the Rebbe was referring to.**

the descendants of the Alter Rebbe where he spoke about the imminent Geula and how the Rebbe, with his shluchim around the world, was preparing the world for Moshiach.

In 5749 he submitted some of his Torah writings for a collection being prepared for the Rebbe's 87<sup>th</sup> birthday. In the introduction he wrote, "I present this in honor of the Rebbe's 87<sup>th</sup> birthday. May Hashem extend his days and years until the coming of Moshiach Tzidkeinu, amen, may it be His will."

R' Klein had an ongoing correspondence with the Rebbe on Torah topics. He printed some of these letters in his *Mishneh Halachos*. He often quoted the Rebbe.

In 5717 he finished writing his commentary to *Halachos G'dolos* and before printing it, he sent it to the Rebbe. He received a response from the Rebbe with



comments on his work, which he published in the introduction to the book. In 5740 he printed his commentary to *Mitzvos HaMelech*. In the introduction he includes the Rebbe's letter in which the Rebbe encourages him in his initiative to promote a "mitzvah-a-day" study regimen. R' Klein's letters to the Rebbe are replete with laudatory titles and expressions of friendship.

Whenever he published

# THE REBBE IS TALKING TO YOU



By Rabbi Akiva Wagner

**T**he following story, as well as the explanation/interpretation that follows it, was told to me by Rabbi Dovid Markel, who personally heard the story from the Baal HaMaaseh:

Eliezer was a young child, growing up in Crown Heights in the 1980's. Although generally speaking, he was a regular Lubavitcher kid, there was one thing unique about him. Because his father was a diamond dealer, the family owned a dog – a Rottweiler – for security reasons. The dog was, by necessity, a big and vicious one, and practically towered over the little boy. When they walked together on the streets of Crown Heights, it was the dog that forcefully led the way, while Eliezer was pretty much dragged along at the end of the leash. Needless to say, anyone else out walking at the same time gave the two of them a wide berth.

Once, Eliezer was out walking with the dog, barely restraining the powerful and energetic dog – as usual – when suddenly the dog stopped in his place, literally slinking down, with his tail between his feet. Before Eliezer had too much opportunity to wonder at the

dog's uncharacteristic behavior, he suddenly saw the Rebbe pass by right in front of him. Amazed, he turned to the Rebbe and asked, "How is it that you're not afraid of my dog?"

The Rebbe smiled to him and replied, "When I was your age, I had an even bigger dog than this."

Naturally, Eliezer found the Rebbe's words puzzling, and shared them with his father. His father later related to him what he had learned from *Eltere Chassidim* that would shed light on the Rebbe's words. When the Rebbe was a young child, the streets in Russia were not a safe place for Jewish children (to put it mildly). Therefore, for added security, the Rebbe would take a large dog with him when he went to the beis midrash.

This story is particularly interesting when we contrast it with the story about R' Shmuel Munkes:

When R' Shmuel Munkes came to the Alter Rebbe the first time, he arrived in the town of Liozna in the middle of the night. Not knowing where the Alter Rebbe resided, he searched for a house that was lit up, surmising that surely the home of the Alter Rebbe would be lit up at night.

When he knocked on the door, the Alter Rebbe himself opened for him, and asked him what he wanted. "I would like to stay here overnight," R' Shmuel replied.

"There are other homes to stay by in this town," the Alter Rebbe said to him.

"So what," R' Shmuel retorted, "is this not also a Jewish home?"

The Alter Rebbe warned him, "I will call the goy to chase you away."

At that point R' Shmuel burst into tears, exclaiming, "Rebbe, *Mein goy iz gresser vi aier goy*" [my "goy" is bigger than your "goy"]. It was then that the Alter Rebbe took him in and R' Shmuel had his first yechidus.

What is interesting is that in the older story the Chasid R' Shmuel maintains that his "goy" – his *guf* and *nefesh ha'bahamis* – are greater than that of the Rebbe, whereas in the more recent encounter, the Rebbe maintains that the "dog" that he dealt with was greater than the one that the Chasid had to deal with.

It would seem that most of us are similar to R' Shmuel Munkes in our way of thinking. We may learn in Torah about our

“A bachur (who is today a Zeide many times over) was once in yechidus. At the end of his yechidus, the Rebbe remarked to him: “If you notice your Nefesh Ha’bahamis getting out of hand, take out a picture of the Rebbe and look at it.”

obligations and responsibilities. We may learn in Chassidus about our potential and ability. We study in a sicha about how each of us is capable of changing ourselves and the entire world.

And we think to ourselves: “If the Rebbe knew what my *goy* was like, he wouldn’t be saying these things. Of course, they may hold true for the average person. But me, with my lowly *nefesh ha’bahamis*, with my *grobbeh goy*? Impossible! There’s no way that I could transform myself into a Chasid, that I can re-focus my life to the service of Hashem. I’m just too far gone!

“Rebbe, my *goy* is bigger than yours! When you talk about “*pada b’shalom*,” about redeeming the *Nefesh HaElohis* from the galus of the *nefesh ha’bahamis*, you are surely referring to the *nefesh ha’bahamis* of Chassidim of times bygone, or to the *nefesh ha’bahamis* of all of the chassidishe Yidden in our times. But my *goy*?! It’s just too big! None of this can possibly work for it.”

When you tell someone that in the Tanya the Alter Rebbe explains how it is *karov m’od*, very easy and accessible for every person to explain to his yetzer ha’ra why it should love Hashem, and how to transform it via the various arguments and ideas elaborated on therein, he says, “Maybe that’s true for the *goy* that the Alter Rebbe had in mind, but not for my *goy*, **no way**, he’s

way too far gone!”

And when we learn in sichos about the tremendous virtues of a Jew, and the encouragement that he could and should derive thereof, he says “What, **me**, no way, I have (and I am) a much bigger *goy* than whatever and whomever the Rebbe must have had in mind!”

So the next step is the conclusion of feeling depressed and forlorn and hopeless. At the very least, one tells himself, I need to seek brand new solutions for my problems, solutions that have never existed heretofore. And, when someone says to me that all of the solutions to my problems are already contained in Tanya and in Chassidus, I think him naïve and unrealistic. Tanya couldn’t possibly have been addressing my *goy*, because my *goy* is a much bigger *goy* than the Alter Rebbe’s *goy* (and when the Alter Rebbe speaks about sins and temptations, he was surely addressing his Chassidim who were completely removed from the materialism of this world, and would understand these concepts in some spiritual dimension ...).

But the Rebbe says back, “Take it easy; don’t get so excited about your dog. I’m not scared of your dog. He may appear big and ferocious to you, but I’ve seen and dealt with bigger ones, and dragged them to the beis midrash, so I’m neither impressed nor intimidated by your dog!”

It’s a sobering thought. While I may have concluded that my level of *grobkait* is unprecedented and used that as a reason to become miserable and hopelessly despaired, or, alternatively, to excuse and justify my despicable behavior, the Rebbe says it’s no big deal. *Grobkait* such as mine, and even worse, has existed all along. This is precisely what Tanya was written for; this is exactly what the Rebbeim are here for. We have to recognize that there’s nothing unusual or intimidating about our ‘animal,’ and allow the Rebbe to help us drag it to the beis midrash (as the Gemara says: “*Im poga becha menuval zeh, moshche’hu l’beis midrash*”).

The Rebbe is neither worried nor concerned about our ‘dog,’ and therefore, neither should we be. Rather, we should confidently and decisively face it and take control of it!

And, another point: the dog in the story, as wild and fierce as it was, became instantaneously as tame as a pussycat in the presence of the Rebbe. This, too, may serve as a very vital lesson about how to deal with our animal. The way to go about taming it is by bringing it into the presence of the Rebbe.

How is that done? Firstly, this is achieved by learning the sichos and maamarim of the Rebbe, in such a manner that the *nefesh ha’bahamis* can also comprehend them. Especially now, in the month of Kislev, the *Chodesh HaGeula*, every one of us should make a good accounting, and see if we can’t be spending more time and more focus on learning the Torah of the Rebbe, and learning it properly in such a way that we are exposing our *nefesh ha’bahamis* – with its intellect and reason – to the Rebbe.



Also, in a literal way, we accomplish this by showing it pictures (including videos etc.) of the Rebbe. Just as Yosef HaTzaddik was saved from the trap of *Eishes Potifar* through the image of his father, so too the picture of the Rebbe can help us maintain control over our animalistic instincts.

A bachur (who is today a Zeide many times over) was once in yechidus. At the end of his yechidus, the Rebbe remarked to him: “*Az du zest az dein nefesh ha’bahamis tzuwildevit zich, nem arois a bild fun Rebbin un kuk oif dem*” [If you notice your Nefesh Ha’bahamis getting out of hand, take out a picture of the Rebbe and look at it].

Or, a more contemporary incident:

A few years ago, there was a bachur here in Yeshiva who had to struggle to get up on time in the morning (yes, there used to be bachurim who had such problems...). Once, he was ‘renovating’ his dorm room, and ended up (unwittingly) hanging up a picture of the Rebbe facing his bed. He subsequently told me that since then, as soon as he wakes in the morning and opens his eyes, he finds himself gazing straight into the face of the Rebbe. Staying in bed was no longer an option!

• • •

When contemplating recent incidents, another point of the story comes to mind. Every person is an *Olam Katan*, a microcosm of the big world. Just as the snapping, barking dog surely represents the animal contained within each of us, it likewise represents the force of evil, the great big frightening animal on the outside, which is the galus. As we witness countries on the brink of economic collapse

**“But the Rebbe says back, “Take it easy; don’t get so excited about your dog. I’m not scared of your dog. He may appear big and ferocious to you, but I’ve seen and dealt with bigger ones, and dragged them to the beis midrash, so I’m neither impressed nor intimidated by your dog!”**

and long-standing democracies challenged, we can’t help but feel overwhelmed and subdued. It makes us want to hide under the covers, and wait for Moshiach to make his appearance.

[In fact, it brings to mind the remark of one of the Tzaddikim who stated and foretold: “In the last era before Moshiach, the troubles will be so great that the only way to survive will be by consuming mashkeh and remaining in a state of intoxication until Moshiach’s arrival.”]

However, the Rebbe is very adamant in his direction; every episode of darkness needs to be met head-on with our reaction of increasing in light. While we can’t possibly understand or make any sense of the crazy things that are going on, and shouldn’t even try, we should, nonetheless, feel a total sense of confidence in our ability to battle this darkness, to obliterate it and transform it to light through our increased involvement (both quantitatively and qualitatively) in all of our positive activities.

To us, the darkness may take on the appearance of a ferocious and untamable beast, and we may be very intimidated by it and inclined to run and hide from it. But the Rebbe doesn’t find it intimidating at all, and with his strength and encouragement we must attack and take control of this beast by replacing it with

the light of Torah (through our increased Torah learning in both nigleh and chassidus), with the light of mitzvos (through our increased attention to performing mitzvos, both ourselves and with others), and (through them) with the light of Moshiach!

The month of Kislev is known as *Chodesh HaGeula*, and this refers to both the *geula pratis* – the redemption of each neshama from the galus caused by its *guf* and Nefesh Ha’bahamis, as well as the *geula HaAmitis VeHashleima*. This, then, is the fitting time to focus on “*pada b’shalom nafshi*,” to battle and attack the raging beast, both from within and outside of us, and bring them to the beis ha’midrash, where they can realize the purpose of their creation, to allow the entire world to be transformed into a Dira Lo Yisborach!

L’chaim! May we all put in all the necessary effort to tame the *goy* and the ‘dog’ that hinders us, and may Hashem, in turn, tame all the wild beasts, as He promised “*vehishbati chaya raa min ha’aretz*,” and kill the wild beast that is the yetzer ha’ra, thus paving the way for the Geula HaAmitis VeHashleima through Moshiach Tzidkeinu Teikef U’miyad Mamash!!!

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

# THE MAN WHO BOUGHT A SHARE IN OLAM HABA

By Shneur Zalman Berger

**I**t was the winter of 5706/1945-46, and the Chassidim were feeling especially tense. Hundreds of them congregated on the Lemberg (Lvov) border, waiting for a sign that they could escape the Soviet Union. In the meantime, they hid in houses scattered throughout the city and nobody dared venture outdoors.

Very few people walked the streets and if they did, it was for urgent matters only. Yaakov Krichevsky was one of these individuals. He went in search of food for his wife and little boy. On the way, he met Mrs. Sarah Katzenelenbogen, known as Mumme Sarah. She fearlessly worked to arrange for the escape of the Chassidim by raising money and transferring it from place to place and procuring false documents. Each of the many jobs she carried out warranted a twenty-five year sentence in Siberia.

She noticed Krichevsky and motioned to him to follow her to a side street where she asked him without exchanging pleasantries,



R' Yaakov Krichevsky

“Do you want Olam Haba (the World to Come)?”

Krichevsky was taken aback by this bizarre query. A moment later, he replied, “Of course!”

“I am in urgent need of fifteen *tzenerlach* (valuable gold coins, illegal and dangerous to possess in those days),” she said almost casually, as though merely speaking of a basic staple from the grocery.

Krichevsky unhesitatingly

removed his foot from his boot. Then he drew out a rolled up piece of material, which had *tzenerlach* sewn inside. He removed fifteen of these gold coins and gave them to her, and she immediately hid them within her clothing. Before she left, she repeated, “I promise you Olam Haba.”

The two of them met a few days later and she noted briefly, “Thanks to you, a Jew was saved from certain death.”

Today, R' Yaakov (Yanni) Krichevsky is the director of the Russian charter airline Transaero. He told me this story in his office in Tel Aviv and cried.

• • •

You could sit for hours, even days, with the ninety year old R' Yaakov Krichevsky, and listen to his stories of his childhood and youth, of *farbrengens* in distant Samarkand, or about his father and grandfather.

The office phones keep buzzing and outside his office door dozens of women sit facing computer screens, sending data to the central office in Moscow.

It's quite a contrast, the business of the office and his description of the farbrengens of the Chassid R' Avrohom Eliyahu Plotkin with their heartwarming, Chassidic insights.

"I would give all the money in the world to attend one more farbrengen like that," said R' Krichevsky.

"My mother's grandfather was the Chassid, R' Shaya Balanter, known by the Chassidim as Shaya Chotimsker for the city he came from. Every year, two weeks before Rosh Hashanah, he would leave home and walk to Lubavitch, to the Rebbe. It took him two weeks to get there. On the way, he would remove his boots and hang them around his shoulders so they wouldn't get worn out. He used them only when he had to, like when he had to cross a stream or swamp. When his son, R' Shmaryahu, my grandfather, grew up, he joined him on this pilgrimage.

"After he married my grandmother, Sima Henya, my grandparents lived in Tatarsk, where they had three sons: Yaakov Isaac, Yisroel, and Nachum. In 5646/1886 my mother was born, but the joy over her birth turned to sorrow since her mother died immediately thereafter. My grandfather was left with four young orphans, who despite suffering due to their great poverty, were raised in an atmosphere of Chassidishe yiras Shamayim.

"When the sons grew older, my grandfather sent them to learn in Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in Lubavitch. R' Yaakov Isaac, my uncle, married the daughter of the Chassid, R' Mendel Diskin who was a melamed in Lubavitch and lived in Lubavitch. My uncle lived there too until the Rebbe



Dancing with an old friend, R' Shlomo Maidanchek, and his grandson, R' Dovid Krichevsky, shliach in Ufa

**“Many years later, I heard that the Rebbe was interested in knowing the details of this story. . . I wrote the story and sent it to the Rebbe. The very same day I gave in the letter R' Groner came over to me and asked me what I had written that had given the Rebbe so much nachas.”**

Rashab moved to Rostov. Then, he also moved to Rostov since he yearned to be near the Rebbe.

"At this time, due to my grandfather's financial circumstances being extremely limited, my mother moved to her brother, Yaakov Isaac's house in Rostov.

"Since R' Yaakov Isaac helped with whatever was needed in the Rebbe's house, his sister also began visiting Beis HaRav until she became a bas bayis (member of the household). She personally became acquainted with Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah and Rebbetzin Nechama Dina, and

her friends were the daughters of the Rebbe Rayatz including Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka.

"During the years of the Communist Revolution there was a scarcity of basic food items. My mother was gifted at figuring out how to obtain things that many others didn't dream of having. It was her job to look for items needed in the Rebbe's home. She once told me that at a certain point, she worked on obtaining paper and ink for the Rebbe Rashab and Rebbe Rayatz so they could write maamarei Chassidus and letters.

"My mother was indefatigable



and when she was asked to obtain something, she searched for it for hours, even days. She would give bribes and use her connections until she got what she wanted.

“When the Rebbe Rashab became sick and needed medication that was unavailable through regular channels, they asked my mother to try and obtain the medicine, even if it was costly. My mother looked everywhere throughout Rostov but could not find it. Just when she had given up, she was surprised to suddenly meet a childhood friend dressed in an army uniform. They got to talking and the friend, who used to be religiously observant but was no longer, said she had been drafted into the Russian army ‘and now I serve on a nearby base where I work in the pharmacy.’

“My mother immediately realized that this was her chance. She asked her friend, ‘Do you want Gan Eden?’ Her friend said yes.

“So get me some medication for the tzaddik and I promise you Gan Eden.”

“The woman agreed and whilst endangering herself, secretly took the medication that was needed and gave it to my mother. The Rebbe’s household was delighted and the family warmly thanked my mother.

“Many years later, I heard that the Rebbe was interested in knowing the details of this story that was told in several places, but without the precise details. I wrote the story and sent it to the Rebbe. The same day I gave in the letter R’ Groner came over to me and asked me what I had written that had given the Rebbe so much nachas.”

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R' Zev Wolf Steingart, R' Yaakov's father-in-law

“When our family fled the Nazis who were overtaking large sections of Russia, we ended up in Rostov. One day, my mother took me to see the Rebbe Rashab’s house and that is when she told me about the miracle that took place there:

“One day, the secret police approached the Rebbe Rashab’s house. The Rebbe was concerned about an old coat that (I think) belonged to the Baal Shem Tov and so he asked one of the people present to put it on and leave the house. This dangerous task was given to me. I was afraid to do this since wearing a man’s coat would immediately arouse the suspicion of the men waiting outside. I asked the Rebbe whether I should leave by the side street or the main street. The Rebbe said to leave by the main street.

“Nobody present could understand why I should leave by the main street, but they would not question the Rebbe. When I left the house, I saw what miracle had taken place here. The street

was flooded by water due to some mishap and nobody was there, not even the secret police. That enabled me to escape without any problems.’

“During the Revolution there were fierce battles between the Whites (those opposed to communism) and the Reds (the communists). It was a bloody civil war and cities often went back and forth from one side to the other. At a certain point, the Whites ruled in Charkov while the Reds ruled in Rostov. When money needed to be transferred from Charkov to the yeshiva in Rostov, it was suggested that a woman do so since she would be unlikely to arouse suspicion. My mother was chosen to do this extremely dangerous job.”

• • •

“My mother married R’ Eliyahu Krichevsky and they lived in Ramen. I have no memories of that period other than what I saw in my grandfather’s house where I often visited.

“Every weekday my grandfather would daven Shacharis starting early in the morning and finishing at two in the afternoon. I, and the other grandchildren, wondered how he knew it was 2:00 when there were no clocks in the house. Every time he finished davening, one of the grandchildren would run to the nearby train station to check the big clock hanging outside. It was always 2:10.

“My grandfather was a special Chassid. In my childhood he taught me Torah. He imparted Chassidishkait to me, which later gave me the strength to deal with the tzaros and persecution, which was my lot. Not surprisingly, my father was also a special Chassid. To illustrate this, I’ll tell you the following story.

“One time, my father went



R' Eliyahu Krichesky (center) shechting chickens

to the Rebbe Rayatz who was in Petersburg (then Leningrad). He arrived at night and found a place to sleep. However, the house had no heat, despite it being thirty degrees below zero outside. Afterwards, I asked my father, 'How were you able to sleep in such cold?' He answered, 'I knew that the next day I would daven with the Rebbe and so I did not feel cold.'

"The days of tranquility for my grandfather did not last long. The communist regime targeted religious Jews, especially Lubavitcher Chassidim. They accused my grandfather, who was a businessman, of breaking commercial laws. He and his family, including his grandchildren, were expelled from the city. I was a little boy and I remember that we wandered around among the towns and villages near Ramen, until we were allowed to return home, but this was only for a short time.

"In those days, the government followed Lenin's

**"I said that I would remove my beard if, from that day on, they would draw the leaders of communism, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, without beards. The audience applauded and the judges decided I was innocent and could go home."**

NEP policy, which allowed some private trade on a minimal scale as well as handiwork done at home. However, a few years later, the government decided to totally prohibit private business and everything had to be transferred to the government. In order to enforce this law without opposition from businessmen, the government quickly arrested numerous businessmen. Many were exiled and some were even killed.

"We were all very frightened since my grandfather was a businessman. Indeed, he and the entire family, including his children and grandchildren, were exiled to a desolate place

near Crimea. After a protracted journey, we arrived at a clearing with no houses or shelter of any kind. We had to take care of ourselves, starting from scratch. The heads of the family asked nearby villagers for help in building houses, and were taken aback to hear that the government forbade them to help us in any way, whether with medical assistance or by selling us fuel, salt, etc. They managed to overcome the myriad difficulties, and everybody was involved in obtaining building materials out of which they constructed huts.

"Fuel was needed for light and warmth. They traveled about

## A GEMACH IN EXCHANGE FOR THE REBBE'S CHECK

R' Yaakov Krichevsky relates:

I once visited a businessman in B'nei Brak and noticed that he had a \$25 check signed by the Rebbe. He explained to me that the Rebbe sends him checks, for reasons he could not share. He refused to tell me what the checks were for.

"What do you do with the checks?" I asked.

"Deposit them," he said.

I offered to cash it for him, but he declined. I finally offered to give him money with which he could start a gemach, in exchange for the check. He said he would agree to that if the Rebbe would approve.

I sent a letter to the Rebbe about our "deal." I received a positive response from the Rebbe and the Rebbe suggested that the gemach be called Ahavas Yisroel.

I gave the man a large sum of money and he gave me the Rebbe's check.

fifteen kilometers to isolated villages where they agreed to give us a bottle of kerosene now and then, but that wasn't enough and our huts remained cold. All the children became sick and were unable to receive any medical help. I was eight years old and I hardly remember any of it since I was sick most of the four years in exile. Till today I suffer as a result of the illnesses I had back then.

"Our exile ended when a member of the CHEKA (secret police) came, put our family on wagons and brought us to the nearest train station. We were informed, 'You are free to return home.'

"My grandfather returned to his home in Ramen, while my parents went to Kremenchug where R' Avrohom Krichevsky, my father's brother, lived (as well as other Chassidim like R' Yisroel Noach Blinitzky and R' Yitzchok Lerman).

"We arrived in Kremenchug bereft of everything. At first we lived in an abandoned house that was regularly flooded, yet we thanked G-d for getting us out of

that terrible exile.

"At this time the government demanded that citizens go to work. If you were absent, even for one day, you were severely punished. It was extremely hard to get a job that enabled you to avoid desecrating the Shabbos and yet, my father never desecrated the Shabbos. At first, he worked as a postman. For this, he was given 200 grams of bread a day. This small amount was divided among five people: my parents, my brother, my little sister Sima Henya, and me. My father arranged with one of the workers that he work on Shabbos instead of him, in exchange for our portion of bread. So we starved every Shabbos in order not to desecrate the Shabbos. It was only after several years that my father obtained work in a kiosk where he received a salary without having to work on Shabbos. Nor did he have to work very hard as he did as a postman.

"The secret police hounded religious people. Since they knew that my father was religiously observant, they called him in for interrogations on a number

of occasions. One time, a Jewish girl who came to our house tattled on him, saying he grew a beard for religious reasons. Following her report, the government held a public trial. I still remember the hours we spent waiting at home for his return from court. It was a terrifying time. We didn't know whether he would actually return or whether we would be told that he was sentenced to prison or exile for many years. He returned late at night and we were ecstatic. My father emotionally told us what happened that day:

"The trial was held before a large crowd. They accused me of growing a beard and finally, at a certain point, they allowed me to say a few words. I explained that I was a worker like all citizens and I did nothing illegal. I said that I would remove my beard if, from that day on, they would draw the leaders of communism, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, without beards. The audience applauded and the judges decided I was innocent and could go home.'

"When I went to school, I was afraid to see which of my friends would not show up to school, because everybody knew that if a child did not show up, one could assume that his parents had been arrested and that he was sent to a government orphanage.

"Unfortunately, I went to public school since I had no choice. I was one little boy against hundreds of gentile students and dozens of anti-Semitic teachers. Under these circumstances, it is hard to think how to properly observe mitzvos. For example, during recess they gave out sandwiches of bread and meat. I could not eat this treif food and so, in order not to





With friends and grandchildren at a family simcha

go hungry, I would sneak away from the school yard and go to the home of R' Yisroel Noach Blinitzky who lived near the school. In his home, I ate a piece of bread with a cup of watered down milk every day.

"As for Shabbos, do you see these scars on my finger? I was not willing to write on Shabbos. At first I wore a bandage on my finger or hand, which worked out very well, but then an anti-Semitic teacher asked me why I wasn't writing. When I showed her the bandage she ripped it off and said I had to write. I knew I had to take more serious measures and so I started injuring my finger with a sharp instrument. With deep cuts, I was excused from writing. After a few weeks, the injury would heal and I would make a new

wound. These scars constantly remind me about how I kept Shabbos in school.

"Today, it is hard to understand how, as a child, I was able to make it through all those difficult times. I received special kochos from Hashem and thanks to them, I was able to prevail."

• • •

"During World War II, the Germans advanced on our city, Kremenchug, and my family fled. Traveling was exceedingly difficult. We suffered greatly from hunger, freezing cold, and traveling on jam-packed trains. After days of miserable travel, we arrived in Samarkand in Uzbekistan where other Lubavitcher Chassidim had also escaped. Starvation was rampant and dozens of Chassidim died. I remember an entire family

that starved to death, R' Chaim Kevesh, his wife, and son.

"I remember meeting the mashpia R' Mendel Futerfas who was holding a piece of black bread. I said, 'You suffer from ulcers; white bread would be better for your health.' He replied, 'Jews are dying of hunger and I should eat white bread?!'

"In Shevat 1945 I married Rochel Steingart, daughter of the Chassid, R' Zev Wolf, who was known as Velvel Batshaikover. He was a dear friend of my grandfather, R' Moshe Yehuda Leib Krichevsky. The joy of my wedding was marred by my father-in-law having been exiled three years earlier to a distant camp after being found guilty of spying for the Germans.

"I remember that a few years later, in 5713/1953, in Tashkent,

## PRECIOUS ITEMS

My parents had three precious items. My mother received a sweater from Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah that belonged to the Rebbe Rashab. On another occasion she received a small cloth that the Rebbe Rashab had eaten on. The third item was a towel belonging to the Rebbe Rayatz that my father received from him when he accompanied him to the mikva. My father did not have a towel and when the Rebbe Rayatz finished drying himself, he gave my father his towel. For some reason, my father kept it.

Unfortunately, after my mother passed away, the sweater, cloth, and towel disappeared as though they had been swallowed up by the earth.

I met one of the KGB agents who had been involved in my father-in-law's case. I expressed my outrage to him as to how they could possibly accuse a Jew with the title rabbi of spying for the Germans. This was during World War II when the Germans exterminated millions of Jews. How could he have been accused of spying for them?

"After the two of us had drunk l'chaim together, he explained it to me. 'We had a certain system in place. Someone who appeared before us on Monday was accused of spying for Germany. Someone who came on Tuesday was a spy for the Japanese. On Wednesday, he was an English spy, and so on. Why is it my fault that your father-in-law came to us on a Monday?'

"I had been in business before I married and would travel with merchandise from city to city. After I married I tried working closer to home, but still had to travel occasionally. I remember the first trip I made following my marriage. I had to smuggle illegal merchandise from Tashkent to Samarkand. Somehow, people heard about my trip and I was asked to take R' Mendel Futerfas and R' Bentzion Shemtov on my truck. Since my merchandise was illegal, we traveled only at night.

During the day, we stopped at a small park on the side of the road until it became dark once again.

"In that park we met someone who had learned in Tomchei T'mimim but had, sadly, stopped being observant. We got to talking and he told us that in his village lived a Jewish woman whose husband was in the army. She had recently given birth to a boy and he urged us to give the boy a bris.

"I was sent to convince her to have her son circumcised. She refused and I offered her 100 rubles to do it. That was a month's salary, but she still refused. I offered her 230 rubles, then 400, and she finally agreed. R' Mendel, R' Bentzion and I went to find a knife, bandages, etc. After several hours we had what we needed for a bris except for a mohel. R' Bentzion agreed to be the mohel and thank G-d, all went well."

• • •

"In the winter of 5706, I heard that Chassidim were escaping Russia via Lvov/Lemberg by posing as Polish citizens. My wife and I with our baby Mendel traveled to Lvov to try our luck. Unfortunately, things did not work out and we remained in Russia. Although I couldn't leave Russia, I acquired

my Olam Haba through Mumme Sarah, as I related before. When I saw that I would not be able to leave Russia, my family and I returned to Samarkand where I continued doing business.

"As I mentioned, my father-in-law had been exiled to a labor camp for ten years. At first he was in a camp not that far from Samarkand. Before Pesach, I decided to help him, knowing that he would not put chametz in his mouth. My goal was to provide him with food for Pesach. With miracles and bribes I was able to provide him with matza, wine, eggs and more.

"After some time, he was transferred to a camp called 'Samarkand' which was on the Samarkand-Tashkent highway. I found out that the commandant was a Tatar (they were generally not ideologically loyal to the communist regime). I went there and succeeded in getting kosher food to my father-in-law. Over time I made friends with the commandant. One day, I placed one million rubles on the table and said, 'Take this in exchange for releasing my father-in-law.' He was stunned by the offer and when he recovered he said, 'Believe me, I would release him, he's a good man, but what can I do when he was found guilty of section 58, betraying the motherland? If they discover that a traitor escaped from my camp, I will be accused of being a traitor!'

"My father-in-law was transferred to another camp where he stayed until he was released at the end of the summer of 5712. Before Pesach, I began thinking about how to get him matza and food for Yom Tov. Eventually, I met up with a top Mafioso, in other words,

a senior criminal to whom all the criminals had to pay a percentage of their earnings. In the underworld, such a person is considered all-powerful. I asked him to take a suitcase with forty kilograms of food for Pesach in exchange for a nice fee. He agreed. When my father-in-law was freed, he told me with tears in his eyes, 'I was in the camp and I was so worried about Pesach. I didn't know what I would eat for eight days. Suddenly, I saw a stranger in the camp. As I wondered what he was doing there, he came over to me and asked, "Are you Zev?" When I said that I was, he gave me a big, heavy suitcase and whispered, "Yaakov, your son-in-law, sent this for you."'

• • •

"My second son, Matisyahu, was born in 5709 and about ten years later, when I was living in Moscow, my third son was born.

"While I lived in Samarkand, there were dozens of Lubavitcher families living there, and where there are Chassidim, there are farbrengens. They were always held in private homes and would last all night. I remember them well and till today I miss those farbrengens in Samarkand. I would give all the money in the world to once again be at a farbrengen with R' Avrohom Elya Plotkin. He came to Samarkand during the war and I was a young bachur who often went to his farbrengens. I remember how, at the beginning of the farbrengen, he would take a small 100 ml. bottle of pure alcohol, put it on the table, and say, 'This is today's allotment.' He would make a lot of l'chaims and instill a lot of Chassidishkait into us bachurim.

"My home was always a center of Jewish activity. Couples

who were afraid to make a chuppa in shul or in their home, made it at my house. At certain times a minyan was held in my house, especially on Shabbos.

"The high point of all the activities were the brissin. Many Jews were circumcised in my house. The mohalim were R' Bentzion Geisinsky and R' Dovid Geisinsky. The brissin, like the chuppas, were dangerous and were performed under a cloud of tremendous fear.

"I remember one bris that was almost discovered. The man was about 70 and during the bris, he told us that he suffered from hemophilia! Even nowadays it is dangerous to circumcise someone with this blood disorder; all the more so back then! Since the bris had already been done, we couldn't stop the blood. It was dangerous and so we called for doctors even though they could inform on us. Boruch Hashem, nothing untoward happened.

"Many of the circumcised remained in my house for a few days until they recovered. This was so their relatives and friends wouldn't realize they had been circumcised."

• • •

"I moved to Moscow in 5713/1953, where minyanim were held in my house for a long time. The chazan was R' Yaakov Lerner who tried to keep his voice down so the neighbors wouldn't hear him. I would always tell him, 'Raise your voice. We can't be afraid of them.'

"Over the years I tried many times to make aliya, but was always refused. It was only after many years, in 5735/1975, that I was given a visa. Today I live



With an old friend, Prof. Branover

in B'nei Brak and have much nachas from my children and grandchildren, especially from those who are shluchim, R' Don Krichovsky who is a shliach in Ufa in Russia, and my grandson, Meir who is in Petersburg."

• • •

During the interview I asked R' Yaakov to tell me of the persecution and interrogations he experienced, but he chose to talk about his father and grandfather, and not about himself.

"I went through a lot and I am not young. Whenever I talk about what I went through it adversely affects my health and so I prefer not to talk."

In his work for Transaero in Tel Aviv he helps the Rebbe's shluchim in the CIS with various technical matters. When he told me about how he had to sneak away to avoid the non-kosher sandwiches given out in school, he drew a parallel between that and the work he does in arranging kosher food for Jewish travelers. Not only for those traveling from Russia to Eretz Yisroel and back, but even for flights within Russia.



# OPTIMISM REDEFINED

By Rabbi Heschel Greenberg

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



## CHARANA: INTO THE BOWELS OF CHARAN

This week's parsha begins with Jacob's departure for Charan, partly to escape the wrath of his brother Esau—who accused him of stealing his birthright and blessings—and partly to begin a family.

The fact that Jacob was on a mission to start the first Jewish family, which would form the nucleus of the Jewish people, tells us that every detail of the narrative is crucial for the formation of a nation in general and for the success of Jewish family life in particular.

The parsha begins: "And Jacob left B'er Sheva and went to Charan." There are two ways one can write "to Charan" in Hebrew. One way would be to add the letter *lamed* as a prefix to the word Charan—*L'Charan*. The alternative is to add the letter *Hei* as a suffix to the word Charan as in *Charan-ah*.

In this verse, the Torah chooses the latter form although it is the less common of the two ways. Or HaChayim raises the question why the Torah goes out of its way to add the suffix *Hei* rather than the more common prefix *lamed*.

One approach is that there is a difference between the two forms. When a *Hei* is added it implies that not only did he reach Charan but that he entered into its innermost precincts. Jacob could not be there as a mere

guest. He had to enter into its very bowels. His entry was total.

The reason why he had to penetrate into the corrupt environment of his uncle Lavan and the culture of Charan is explained in Chassidic sources. Jacob's travel there was geared to refine the place and to redeem all of the sparks of holiness that were lost in Charan. Jacob's efforts were intended to extricate those sparks. To accomplish that he was compelled to enter into the very "guts" of Charan. This can be compared to someone who is charged with a mission to rescue a hostage. The rescuer may be required to dress like the captors and identify with them. Only then can he rescue the hostage from the clutches of the captors.

In a nineteenth century Chassidic work *Ezor Eliyahu*, the author provides another answer as to why the Torah adds the letter *Hei* at the end of the word instead of the *lamed* at the beginning.

## TWO APPROACHES TO LIFE

The word Charan is virtually identical with the word *Rina*-joy. Both share the letters *Reish* and *Nun*. The only difference is that the word Charan has a letter *Ches*, whereas *Rina* has the letter *Hei*. And there is only a hairbreadth difference between a *Ches* and a *Hei*. Both have a right vertical line that is connected to a horizontal line on top. The difference between the two is that

the *Ches* has a left vertical line that touches the roof, whereas the *Hei* has a similar left vertical line that **almost** reaches the roof. There is but a hairbreadth of difference between them!

There are two ways a person can look at life's difficulties. One way is to see in all of the hardships G-d's wrath—Charan. And then there are those who make an effort, or are naturally inclined, to see the positive in everything. They see *Rina*/joy as opposed to Charan/wrath.

Hillel, the great Sage who was known for his kindness, love and patience, was returning from a trip. He heard a scream emanating from somewhere in his own town and remarked, "I am confident that the cry did not come from my home." The question has been raised about his confidence. One can have trust that things will be good in the future. But how could he say I am confident that no evil had befallen his family? It was after the fact!

The Commentators answer that Hillel was not expressing trust that nothing tragic occurred in his home. He was, however, confident that if something did happen, there would be no outcry coming from his home because he had so inculcated the ideal of accepting everything with joy. Hillel was a *Rina* personality. He did not see Charan, G-d's wrath; he saw only Divine joy!



This then is what the Torah wants to teach us when it refers to Jacob travelling to Charan. By adding the *Hei* at the end, the word Charan now has the word *Rina* in it. Jacob, though he was going to a lowly place of Charan, was determined to see that opportunity as one of *Rina*.

Jacob knew that he was entering into the bowels of deception and adversity, but he also knew that this will be the catalyst to liberate the sparks and establish a Jewish nation that will bring light and happiness, *Rina*, to the entire world.

### A HAIRBREADTH OF DIFFERENCE?

The question still remains. How can we posit that Charan and Rina are virtually the same and that only a hairbreadth of difference lies between them? Isn't seeing the glass half full the polar opposite of seeing the glass half empty?

Second, how can one be oblivious to the tragic aspects of life? Can a person who suffered bereavement, G-d forbid, not mourn and grieve their loss? To not be sensitive to the tragedies of life is not only contrary to natural human sensibilities, it is against the Torah as well. The Torah mandates that we mourn the loss of life; that we commiserate with another person's losses of any kind.

Upon reflection we will see that the first question can be answered by first resolving the second question as to how we can ignore the misfortunes of life.

### HALF-FULL, HALF-EMPTY AND ENTIRELY FULL

Whenever people talk about the positive view of life versus

“And there are those who make an effort, or are naturally inclined, to see the positive in everything. They see Rina/joy as opposed to Charan/wrath.”

the negative, the optimist versus the pessimist, the example given is the half full cup versus the half empty cup. In truth, that is not an accurate or a relevant analogy to the two aforementioned options of seeing life either as Charan or as Rina. To see the glass as being only half full is to ignore the fact that there is also a half that is empty. And while that may be a useful approach to help get people out of their negative mindset, it is not the ideal and nor is it synonymous with the Charan/Rina dichotomy.

To see Rina is not to ignore the Charan. A Jew must be aware of, and responsive to, the suffering of others and to react appropriately to their own misfortunes as well. Rather, the objective is to see beneath the surface of the Charan to discover that it is truly Rina; or, to use the terminology of Kabbala, to see the Divine source of adversity as a hidden manifestation of Divine kindness.

However, since we are human beings by G-d's own design, and so are affected by the surface Charan occurrences, we must pause to respect that overt reality and to mourn and grieve the losses that are associated with Charan. However, simultaneously, we must also acknowledge that beneath the surface there is Rina and that, ultimately, in the days of Moshiach we will see the Charan element give way to the unfolding of an exclusive Rina reality.

The benefits of this attitude over the half-full half-empty

model are twofold:

First, to ignore the negative does not always work. And when we are clobbered over the head with adversity we do not know how to cope with it. By recognizing the negative and responding to it appropriately, coupled with the knowledge that the underlying positive reality will assert itself and dominate in the near future, we are far better equipped to deal with adversity now.

Second, to see the cup half full is to see only a limited measure of good. It is only half-full. To see the Rina beneath the surface is to see that in reality it is all good. In King David's immortal words: "My cup runs over." King David suffered almost incessantly from his brothers, King Saul, his general Yoav, his sons, the loss of a child, etc., and yet he did not say "my cup is half-full." He realized that his cup was overflowing because King David was able to see the entire picture.

### TWO SIDES OF ONE COIN

Jacob, King David, and Hillel's positive attitude—with which they infected others as well—was not to ignore the suffering but, rather, to allow their understanding of the inner G-dly reality of life's experiences to inform their conscious attitude at all times. They taught us that even as we confront adversity and grieve and find ourselves deeply embedded in Charan, we ought not lose sight of the underlying Rina reality. We must try to see

the whole picture so that we can see the half-empty cup in a different light: not half empty but an integral part of the whole picture. The Charan and the Rina dimensions are not opposites. They are two sides of the same coin—two manifestations of Divine reality—the outer shell of which is Charan and its inner soul, which is Rina.

And while we dare not trivialize the pain and suffering

that we endure in exile, we must also not wallow in our grief and know that very soon, with the coming of Moshiach, all the sorrow will be turned into unmitigated joy.

Indeed, to the extent that we are cognizant of the pain of exile and we come to G-d and plead, *ad masai*, how much longer do we have to endure this pain, it is an indication that we know that a time will come

when the pain will not only cease, but will be transformed into joy. Consequently, the same dynamic that makes us reject and protest the suffering—i.e., our recognition that G-d can and will ultimately bring it to an end, and we want Him to do that sooner than later—is the same dynamic that allows us to revel in the joy that goes along with the transformation of the Charan into Rina.



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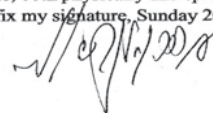
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# THE PATH TO REDEMPTION VIA CAMDEN YARDS

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What happens when a Gentile government official is told the kabbalistic rationale for the mitzvah of sukka? Why does a shul in Baltimore have the name “The Tzemach Tzedek Synagogue?” How did a descendant of the Rashba become connected to the Chabad House? Why did the nearby church move elsewhere on Yom Kippur? The following article contains the fascinating answers to these questions. The local shliach, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Gafni, notes with a smile: “We climb up from downtown straight to the great ascent of the Complete Redemption!”

By Menachem Savyon

Translated by Michoel Leib Dobry

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Our guest this week is Rabbi Menachem Mendel Gafni, who has been working on the Rebbe’s shlichus for nearly twenty-five years in the city of Baltimore, Maryland. The area in which he operates is characterized by two contrasting features. On the one hand, it is home to a large Lithuanian-brand community containing dozens of Litvishe shuls, to the extent that many people even call Baltimore “the B’nai Brak of America.” On the other hand, in the city’s downtown area there are numerous Jews who not only don’t observe Torah and

mitzvos, they don’t even have the most rudimentary knowledge of Judaism and most of them are *r”l* totally assimilated.

Rabbi Gafni came to Baltimore at the end of the eighties on a fundraising trip. When he saw the difficult situation there at the time, he decided to remain in the city and work with the local Jewish community. As part of his activities, he would bring groups of Israelis from Baltimore for an uplifting Shabbos in 770, and on Sunday they would all pass by the Rebbe together for dollars. On one occasion, when he came

to the Rebbe with a group of Chabad supporters, the Rebbe said to him, “**Good news always – every day!**”

Over the past two years, Rabbi Gafni’s activities have increased exponentially, highlighted by the miraculous redemption of the Tzemach Tzedek Synagogue, which had previously been controlled by the Christian church. This shul had been established about two centuries ago by Chabad Chassidim who had escaped the pogroms in Czarist Russia and settled in Baltimore. About sixty years ago, as the local Jewish community

**“Left with no alternative, I began to explain to them in a way that they could understand that this was a holy place where the Rebbe Rayatz had visited. Upon hearing this explanation, they were fully convinced. They gave their approval to having activities on the premises, and even granted an exemption on tax payments.”**

continued to shrink in size, the building was sold to a local priest and was turned into a church *r”l*. In recent years the location was redeemed and has been restored to Jewish hands. (A fascinating article about the process of redeeming the synagogue and the discovery that it had once been a Nusach Ari shul appeared in the *Beis Moshiach*, Issue #752.)

### **LOCKS THAT OPENED JEWISH HEARTS**

The synagogue has become the meeting point for Torah classes and farbrengens, drawing many Jews to participate in these events. Rabbi Gafni recalled an interesting episode that illustrates the fact how every small activity possesses the strength to bring Jews back to their traditions.

“The shul building is very old, and that included the locks on the doors. I had wanted to install new locks on the building’s entrance for a long time. We had recently brought a Torah scroll into the shul, and therefore, changing the locks became of paramount importance. I decided that it couldn’t be delayed any longer. I called a locksmith company and asked someone to come and install new locks.

“As I was waiting near the shul, the locksmith, an Israeli, appeared. I noticed the total shock on his face when he realized that he was entering a

synagogue. He was amazed that in downtown Baltimore, where there are virtually no observant Jews, a glorious synagogue structure stood prominently before him...

“After he finished the job, I began a conversation with him about Judaism, and it turned out that he didn’t know a thing about Yiddishkai! While he had initially thought that he would come for only a few minutes, we sat and spoke about Jewish subjects for several hours. As a result, he began to participate regularly in farbrengens held in the shul. As time passed, he became more and more connected to his Jewish roots – and it all started by changing a lock.”

It seems that activities in such a location have brought numerous stories in their wake. “The Rebbe says that the world is already prepared for the Redemption,” Rabbi Gafni added, “and if a Jew opens his eyes, he will see that the world itself is demanding that he conduct himself in a state of Redemption. Here are a few short stories that took place within the framework of our outreach activities and can express this point quite well.”

### **THE WORLD UNDERSTANDS SPIRITUALITY**

“According to U.S. law, every institution must pay certain

taxes on an annual basis. When we purchased the synagogue, I decided to try and ask for an exemption in paying these taxes. They sent me to appear at a hearing before three Gentile judges. As the legal proceedings got underway, I soon realized that they would not agree to grant a tax exemption. They even wanted to forbid us from holding any activities on the premises, once they learned that the building’s electricity and windows did not meet proper safety standards.

“Left with no alternative, I began to explain to them, naturally in a way that they could understand, that this was a holy place where the Rebbe Rayatz had visited. ‘In such a holy place, the holiness always remains,’ I told them. ‘Even in the Land of Israel, there is a concept of ancient sacred sites where many Jews come to pray.’ Upon hearing this explanation, they were totally convinced. They gave their approval to having activities on the premises, and even granted an exemption on tax payments.

“A similar incident occurred just prior to the Sukkos holiday, when we wanted to erect a public sukka near the shul. I went to the Baltimore City Hall to obtain the necessary permits. I tried to speak with the Gentile clerk in charge of building permits, but he was against approving the request. He simply failed to understand why we had to build the sukka in the street. I decided to give him an informational brochure in English, providing the deeper reasons for the mitzvah of sukka. Incredibly, the spiritual explanation did its job, and I received the required permit.

“In general, the local Jews

have great respect for their city's historical sites, and as a result, the area's most popular newspaper came to me and asked if they could do an article about the synagogue. While I spoke at length about Judaism, and did not conceal my faith in the Rebbe as Melech HaMoshiach, this didn't stop them from publicizing several very favorable articles about the shul and our activities."

Another story in connection with the Tzemach Tzedek Synagogue: "A church is situated about half a block from the shul building, and whenever the Christians come to hold their services, they make a great deal of noise. On Erev Yom Kippur, as we were getting ready for our minyan in honor of the holy Day of Atonement, the noise emanating from the church was particularly loud.

"One of the Israelis who had come to shul to participate in the minyan went over to the church leaders and said with the utmost simplicity, 'Could you please lower the volume? It's very disturbing...' I saw him speaking with them, and I was most concerned that this Israeli's innocent appeal would create a tumult among the church members, and who knew where it would lead. To my great surprise, I noticed that they accepted what he said without objection, and incredibly, they decided right there to close the church that day and move their own services to another location."

## FROM SHALOM BAYIS TO LUBAVITCH

Rabbi Gafni recalled an amazing story about a couple that came closer to their Jewish roots and was privileged to have children in the merit of a



bracha from the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach.

"There were times when we held weekly Shabbos meals for Israeli guests. Much time and effort went into preparing these meals, and they drew many Jews from throughout the area. One Shabbos about five years ago, a married Jewish couple came into the Chabad House. As we began a conversation with them, they said that they had come to the Chabad House to get some advice on shalom bayis.

"I started speaking to the husband while our wives spoke between themselves. We explained to them that Jewish marriage represents a form of spiritual connection, and if there are problems in domestic harmony, this is apparently a result of a lack of spirituality. During the conversation, they also told us that they still don't have any children. We suggested that they should ask the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach, regarding this matter, and after a lengthy discussion, they agreed. They opened a volume of *Igros Kodesh*, and the letter they received included an instruction to increase and become stronger in matters of Torah and mitzvos, and thereby everything would



Baltimore preparing for the Redemption  
in Oriole Park at Camden Yards

work out. As a result, the husband resolved that he would start coming to daven at the shul and participate in other activities.

"He did as he promised, and with the passage of time, he became stronger in his Torah observance and even visited other shuls in the city. At first, he found it difficult to connect to the whole concept of Moshiach and the faith in the Rebbe as Melech HaMoshiach. This was particularly due to the influence of the Litvishe environment where he spent time after he began his kiruv process. He had a problem accepting the arguments of a relatively small group of people who believed that the



Rebbe is Moshiach, while the rest of the city, including a much larger percentage of the Jewish community, didn't necessarily share that view.

"I brought him much closer without speaking directly on the issue, although at farbrengens, people naturally discussed the matter and lived with it. One day, he came up to me and said that he felt that the whole thing was too much for him and he wanted to leave. 'Apparently it's hard for you because you haven't learned enough of the Rebbe's sichos,' I replied. I gave him the seifer *Ata Yadati* by Rabbi Chaim Sasson, and over the next two months he read it from cover to cover.

"As a result, he became even stronger in his faith, and he started wearing a Yechi kippa. By the very nature of things, people who met him asked various questions, thus causing him to learn the subject with even greater seriousness. As a direct result, he and his wife eventually became full-fledged Chabad chassidim."

### **"AND HE IS NAMED AFTER MY FATHER"**

"But the story isn't over yet," Rabbi Gafni said with a smile. "Some time later, his wife, Baruch Hashem, discovered that she was pregnant. However, several medical problems arose in her pregnancy, and she was admitted to the hospital during the Shavuot holiday. Gasping for breath and extremely anxious, her husband came into shul. Naturally, I told him to write a letter to the Rebbe immediately after Yom Tov. After making all the necessary preparations he opened Volume 6 of *Igros Kodesh* to page 108. The Rebbe wrote: **"His letter has just been received with the auspicious**

**notification of the birth of his son, named in Israel after my father and teacher, of righteous memory. May he live many long and prosperous years..."**

"Without a moment's hesitation, the husband decided to name his son after the Rebbe's father. Thank G-d, just a few days later, his wife was released from the hospital after giving birth to a healthy baby boy. The bris mila was held in the presence of many friends and members of the community, and the baby was named Levi Yitzchak. During the seudas mitzvah he told about the Rebbe's amazing brachos and how they were fulfilled with the birth of their son. His remarks left a powerful impression upon all those present. After Levi Yitzchak, they were blessed with two more sons – Shneur Zalman and Menachem Mendel – and the family today is a part of the Anash community in Eretz HaKodesh."

### **FROM BEING THE TENTH MAN TO GETTING A BRIS MILA**

"It is readily apparent," Rabbi Gafni continued, "that with a relatively small investment, you can achieve some very great things, as evident from the following story:

"One Shabbos, only a few people came to shul and we didn't have a minyan. I went out into the street looking for a tenth man to complete the minyan. I looked in all directions trying to catch a glimpse of a Jewish face. Suddenly, I noticed a young man with long hair walking along side a middle-aged woman, who appeared to be his mother. I approached them, and to my delight, I discovered that they were indeed Jewish. I invited the mother to go into the women's section, while the young man

joined us for davening.

"As with many other Jews, this young man came in and 'caught the bug.' Ever since that cameo appearance as the tenth man, he began appearing in shul more regularly to participate in Torah classes and farbrengens. At the farbrengen on Shabbos Parshas VaYeira, we spoke about the weekly Torah portion, including a lengthy discussion on the great importance of the mitzvah of bris mila, which expresses the eternal connection between a Jew and G-d.

"This young man sat at the farbrengen and listened, and then suddenly said, 'If that's the case, then I want to do a bris mila.' It turned out that his father is a Gentile who opposed the idea of allowing his son to be circumcised when he was born. I then told him that he should get himself ready, and we would organize a bris for him after Shabbos.

"On Sunday we traveled to Crown Heights where we held a moving bris mila ceremony and then gave him a Jewish name: Shmuel. After the procedure we celebrated with a festive meal in the shul.

"He eventually began to study in the Hadar HaTorah baal t'shuva yeshiva program, and today, he is a strictly observant Jew."

There's yet another story that illustrates the tremendous strength concealed within learning the Rebbe's sichos:

"One day, a bachur from a non-Lubavitcher family approached me and said he was interested in learning Chassidus and the Rebbe's sichos. After giving him a warm welcome, I discovered that he was a student at a local Litvishe yeshiva. I immediately arranged a chavrusa



The child born with the Rebbe's bracha, "and he is named after my father," Levi Yitzchak.



A descendant of the Rashba (right) participating in a farbrengen at the Chabad House.

for him with a Lubavitcher bachur, and he started coming on a regular basis to learn in the Chabad House.

"When his yeshiva found out about this they forbade him to go anywhere near the Chabad shul. Nevertheless, and despite his parents' strong objections, the bachur continued to come secretly for a whole year to learn Chassidus and the Rebbe's sichos with the chavrusa we had arranged for him.

"Despite all the opposition that had accompanied his Chassidic studies, when he concluded his course of study in Baltimore, it was clear to him that the only place for him to continue his learning was in 770.

"Today, he learns in 770 as one of the many T'mimim on k'vutza – all as a result of studying the Rebbe's holy sichos."

### THE DESCENDANT OF THE RASHBA LEAVES HIS GENTILE GIRL FRIEND

We will conclude with a most interesting story that took place

**“During the journey, as is my custom, I chatted with the driver. He told me that he was a Jew, and his name was – of all things – Shmuel ben Aderet, and he was a descendant of the Rashba.”**

“along the way,” literally and figuratively:

“One day, as part of our regular activities, I had to travel to a certain location, and I ordered a taxi. During the journey, as is my custom, I chatted with the driver. He told me that he was a Jew, and his name was – of all things – *Shmuel ben Aderet*, and he was a descendant of the Rashba.

“This descendant knew nothing about Judaism except for the fact that he was a Jew and a little bit about his family history. Furthermore, similar to many other Jews in the area, he was even living with a non-Jewish woman *r”l*.

“I took down his personal information and kept in close touch with him. He started coming to the shul, and he was always the first to help whenever we were in need.

“I spoke with him often about his Gentile girlfriend and told him that he had to leave her, but he had a very hard time making such a decision. Time took its course, and he continued sitting at farbrengens and participating in prayer services, until he came to shul one day and informed me: ‘I have finally decided to leave her.’

“With the passage of time, he became stronger in his mitzvah observance. He came to me once and complained that he’s having difficulty with certain matters, and I told him quite simply to say more T’hillim each day. Since then, he always keeps a T’hillim in his pocket and recites Psalms whenever he has time. He constantly tells me that he feels that this arouses a greater sense of love for G-d – a simple Jew as in the times of the Baal Shem Tov...”

# A TALE OF TWO ARGUMENTS



R' Lipa Dubrawski never heard a lecture on "Chinuch with a Smile" and he didn't know what it meant to "mirror" your child's feelings. He was as distant from these concepts as Lubavitch is from modern psychology. \* Note the following two stories in which an argument broke out between him and his son Heishke. In one instance, he gave in to the boy and in the other case he stood on principle. \* Now you tell me, was this villager a "chinuch expert" or not.

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By Rabbi Yehoshua Dubrawski a"h

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## MATERIAL MATTERS

A brief description will offer a glimpse of our family's miserable situation in those days in the Soviet Union. It will also provide a snapshot of the suffering of the family, of the father and mother, because of their only son – that would be me – due to his unfettered stubbornness, which was incomprehensible to my parents. I don't remember precisely how old I was and in what years this took place. I must have been around nine-ten years old.

Throughout the years that we lived in Krolevets, the few general stores in town never had fabric (to make clothing) for sale. Generally, you could buy material from the few black marketers in their homes or secretly on the street. They would go to Kiev, Moscow or other big cities where you could buy merchandise. After they purchased the maximum amount of material allowed in one sale, they would go back again and buy more. On the trains there were inspections made by inspectors, policemen,

and all sorts of other demons.

One time it happened that the general stores had material for sale. One of the sellers was a Jew, an acquaintance of my father. He told my father in strictest confidence that the municipality had managed to get hold of a significant amount of material and it would be sold the following day. The Jewish salesman would set aside some extra meters of fabric for my father but, unfortunately, the gentile salesman, that *paskudnyak* (Yid. lowlife), kept a close watch on the Jew. So the Jewish salesman told my father that one of us should come to the store as early as possible, since news of the shipment would spread and a line would form by early morning.

My mother cooked for Shabbos on Thursday and early Friday morning she went to the store to get a place in line (I don't recall what time she left the house). The salesman was right; a large crowd had gotten wind of the merchandise and by the time my mother showed up there was a long line. It was fortunate, said my mother, that some policemen arrested some village ruffians who pushed right and left trying to force their way to the door of the store.



My mother arrived home late that Friday, exhausted but with a glowing face. She brought several meters of white material and I think some blue material too.

All the Shabbasos in our home, as impoverished as we were, were unusually exalted and endowed with the special taste of Shabbos. However, that Shabbos there was an admixture of mundane joy that we children demonstrated with some degree of restraint.

### A "RIBBON" FOR THE HOLIDAY

I remember that my mother, after much deliberation, decided not to sell the material and make a little profit, but to sew clothing for the family for Yom Tov (Pesach?): two undershirts for Zeide (he did not wear shirts); an undershirt and shirt for my father; white blouses and blue skirts for my two sisters; and for me — a shirt and blue pants. I don't remember what, if anything, she sewed for herself. She had a Kaiser sewing machine and patterns, and she knew how to sew well (for some reason, although my memory of what happened yesterday is weak, I remember small and trivial details of my childhood years).

After much work, all the clothes were ready. Erev Yom Tov, my sisters put on their new blouses and skirts. At this point, the Satan intervened. Well, actually, it was I who intervened. My sisters' blouses were in the new style of the time, decorated with blue ribbons and my mother also sewed a blue ribbon on the front of my shirt. When I put on my shirt with the ribbon, I hated the ribbon because it was *veiberish* (Yid. womanlike, feminine). [In a footnote, the author points out here that his

stubborn refusal to wear the shirt had nothing to do with any negative preconceptions regarding women *chas v'shalom*; on the contrary, he always pitied their suffering during pregnancy and birth. However, in his childish way of thinking, he could not bear the thought of dressing like a girl].

My mother's requests and demands were fruitless. And I, unlike a little child but like a big fool, refused to wear the ribbon. My father was a witness



**I did not understand it, but everybody at the table rolled with laughter, so I did too. I remember the pseudonym that my father used at the end of the song: Grebchel from Karlafomke.**

to my untamed outburst and was ready to slap me, since from where did this child get such a stubbornness, *yeshus*, and arrogance? Like all mothers, she saved me from his slap and in the end it was decided that either I would wear the shirt with the ribbon or I wouldn't wear a new shirt, one I had looked forward to wearing for so long! I stuck to my old, stained shirt and brought tears to my mother's eyes.

My heart trembled and I was ready to give in but my *yeshus* stood in the way. How right my father was!

I won't elaborate how, with tears in my eyes I managed, with much difficulty, to blurt out some words of apology. I was already prepared to wear the ribbon when my father returned from shul and wanted to know why I hated the ribbon. I myself didn't know why, but it seemed to me, I mumbled, "It is a *vaiberishe* thing."

My father's large dark eyes gazed at me with an odd smile as

he said, "And so what?" but he agreed that I could wear the shirt without the ribbon.

### KNOWING WHEN TO SAY "NO"

I was never able to explain to myself why I had an inordinate fear of my father, the kind of fear that I never saw in another child. When he occasionally tested me in Chumash or Gemara, I began to cry even before I opened my mouth. No, I wasn't afraid he

would *potch* me, especially as he only treated me so on rare occasions and I could readily face the "risk" of a slap. So why?

In later years, when I saw things from the vantage point of time and more mature understanding, I realized that my father was absolutely right in his "diagnosis" of my *yeshus* and arrogance. With the passage of years, my developing intuition led me to feel, and perhaps to understand, how great and real was my father's *yiras Shamayim* (fear of heaven). It was a deep-rooted and strong *yiras Shamayim*, and as Chassidim would say, "without a scintilla of superficiality." From this perspective I identified with his pity towards everything that was distant from his Chassidishkait, and I felt a strong sense of guilt — a sense of guilt that faded as time went on, along with other more worthy childish guilt feelings.

My father was a zealot,

especially with regard to issues that related to his children's chinuch. He absolutely refused to allow into the house illustrated storybooks written by Jewish authors like Y. L. Peretz and N. Bialik and their ilk. His zealotness was firm, but without the thinly veiled hostility of certain zealots today. Here is an example of his ardent zealotness.

As difficult as our financial situation was back then under the Soviets, my father refused to allow gentile milk into our house. And when father said "no," it was no! It once happened that cousins of ours came from Leningrad and brought something that we hadn't even seen in our dreams, chocolate! As far as I can remember, the package did not state whether the chocolate contained non-Jewish milk or not, but it was quite likely that the chocolate contained milk.

All the adults in the family did not taste the chocolate and I seem to remember that grandfather was lenient with my little sister, but for me it was "no!" I was nine years old and my Evil Inclination was very developed and powerful. I really wanted it and I sobbed, "I want chocolate!" In this case too, I saw how my father had had enough. I remember that he gazed upon me with his big, black eyes that flickered with anger. He looked at me for a moment and then said, "Listen, I thought you were only a baal

gaava (arrogant person), but I see that you are also a baal taava (a person who follows through on his temptations)! You are not going to get your way in satisfying your craving." Indeed, I did not prevail.

### WRITER AND SINGER

My father was taken from us after my bar mitzva. Obviously, I did not see any flaws in him, but neither could I discern all his good qualities. There were things that I heard later from my mother and sisters and from other people.

Despite the exigencies of the time rendering it impossible to speak at public gatherings, meetings, etc. — simply because all these did not exist — nevertheless, I knew that my father, like my grandfather, was a good speaker and it was captivating to listen to him. Unlike my grandfather, my father knew how to sing very nicely and he was often the chazan at the secret minyan. But I, being little at the time, was most impressed by his handwriting in both Yiddish and Russian (back in those distant times in which they wrote by hand, a beautiful handwriting was highly esteemed). It is possible that until this day, I never saw as nice a handwriting as his.

It wasn't only the shape of the letters that was amazingly beautiful; the content was also

wonderful. He spoke simply and had a talent for nuanced and witty writing. I certainly knew nothing of all these concepts at the time, but that is what my family told me.

I also recall that on a certain occasion he wrote a humorous lengthy song that was read at some family gathering. I did not understand it, but everybody at the table rolled with laughter, so I did too. I remember the pseudonym that my father used at the end of the song: Grebchel from Karlafomke.

I have none of my father's writings. The only keepsake I have, that I found in a cousin's possession, was my father's Tanya with two *panim* in it, but I hid them so well that I can't find them.

My father both respected and loved his father, something that I observed in my childhood. They spoke together a lot. I did not understand what they said; I only knew that they had differing views concerning the young zealous Chassidim. Zeide, no small zealot himself, was dissatisfied by their extreme zealotness. My father maintained that they had to act that way. It was a great pleasure to listen to their debates even though I barely understood them. When it came to practice though, my Zeide's word was law to my father, with one exception, immersing Erev Rosh HaShana, which you read about in a previous installment.

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# JOIN THE REVOLUTION!

The last time we heard the Rebbe directly address the Shluchim was 20 years ago in 5752. In that talk the Rebbe said:

“...This then must be the practical lesson that results as we gather now at the opening and commencement of the “International Convention of Shluchim.” We must come out with a resolution and an announcement to all Shluchim that the work of Shlichus now for Chassidim and for every Jew is to do all in their capacity to lead the world to the greeting of our righteous Moshiach. This means that all details of the work of Shlichus in spreading Torah and Judaism and spreading the wellsprings of the inner teachings of Torah outward must be permeated with greeting our righteous Moshiach...

*“From the International Convention, must come...resolutions such that every Shliach must prepare himself and prepare all Jews in his place and city etc. to greet our righteous Moshiach. This should be done through his explanation of the concepts of Moshiach, as explained in the Written Torah and Oral Torah, in a way that it will be received by everyone, according to his intellect and understanding.*

*“This particularly includes the studying of the subject of Moshiach and Redemption and specifically in a manner of Wisdom, Understanding and Knowledge. And since this*

*is the Divine service of the time, it’s understood that this applies to every Jew without exception whatsoever.”*

It is these words that demand from all of us to do our part in teaching and spreading the concepts of Moshiach to all our family and friends. We have to constantly think of ways to do more. In the words of the Rebbe (in the introduction to HaYom Yom): “In our times, when we are going through the “birth pangs” of Moshiach, it is the obligation of every Jew, man and woman, old and young, to ask himself, “What have I done, and what am I doing to ease the birth pangs of Moshiach and make us worthy of the complete Redemption through Moshiach?”

I want to share with you two new initiatives that have been started to bring Moshiach sooner:

1) Starting this Motzaei Shabbos, there will be a weekly VIDEO SHIUR IN ENGLISH on the concepts of Moshiach and Geula. The video can be seen – and shared – on [WWW.CHABAD.INFO](http://WWW.CHABAD.INFO) (English). We are certain that it will turn into the biggest Shiur on Moshiach worldwide.

2) We have just released our 11<sup>th</sup> CD on Moshiach and Geula. This CD’s topic is T’chiyas HaMeisim – the resurrection of the dead in the times of Moshiach. The CD – as well as the previous 10 – can be downloaded at [www.ylrecording.com](http://www.ylrecording.com)

**Beware:** You might get inspired! Join the revolution!

**Rabbi Gershon Avtzon**  
Menahel – Yeshivas Lubavitch Cincinnati



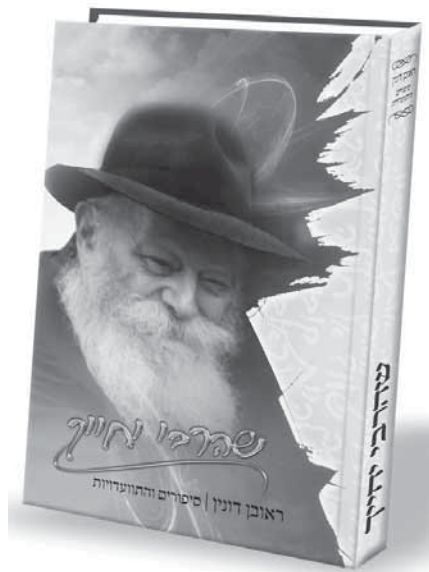


# IT'S NOT RABBI DUNIN; IT'S REUVEN!

Beis Moshiach is pleased to present another excerpt from the seifer “So That The Rebbe Should Smile,” containing more than five hundred brief stories and recollections about the illustrious Chassid, R’ Reuven Dunin.

Collected and Arranged by Chanoch HaLevi Shachar

Translated by Michael Leib Dobry



**I**t's hard to “define” who Reuven was, and far be it from me to attempt it. Perhaps it would be easier to tell some stories that explain how we – the young Chabad Chassidim in Haifa – perceived him. You want to help someone do t’shuva? Simply bring him to Reuven and that’s it. In our naiveté, that’s what we always thought, and word quickly got around. Take for example the following story:

One day, we drove to the Chabad House at 70 Herzl Street, only to find that our regular parking place had been taken. With no alternative, Reuven parked the car on the sidewalk, while making certain not to block the way for pedestrians. Reuven and Yossi Dunin went into the Chabad House, while I stayed near the car, just in case a policeman or traffic inspector came by. About a minute later, a municipal traffic inspector did appear on the scene. He approached the car and gently asked me if I knew who the owner of the car was, since he would rather have him move the car, instead of issuing a ticket. “The car belongs to a very, very

important person,” I told him. “While I’m afraid to disturb him, I would suggest that perhaps you should go upstairs and explain the matter to him. Since you’re being polite about it, I’m sure he’ll listen to you.” The traffic inspector gladly agreed and went up to the Chabad House, while I motioned to Yossi that they should offer him a cup of cold water and bring him to Reuven. The conversation continued longer than expected, and he soon began to come to the Chabad House on a regular basis. He eventually became a key individual within the Anash community in Haifa.

## QUALITY TIME

During the relatively short amount of time that I spent in Reuven’s home, I tried to grasp as much as I could. Once on a Motzaei Shabbos, I went up to his house, unaware that a farbrengen was scheduled to take place there two hours after the end of Shabbos. When I entered the house, I encountered Reuven, surrounded by his children. He saw me out of the corner of his eye and then said to me apologetically, “Please

understand that I also need a little time with the family,” as he sent me to the “cottage” (a nickname for the storeroom under the house that had been turned into a place for guests).

(Chanoch HaLevi Shachar)

## IT'S PROPER TO SAY

Once my brother-in-law Moshe Tamari and I were traveling to Reuven to ask him about a difficult answer we received in Igros. After he gave us his explanation, he couldn’t let us go without something for the way. In his unique style, he said, “You surely remember the meaning of the words ‘*Nachon lomar kodem ha’t’filla*’ (It’s proper to say before prayer), which is our custom to say each morning before T’fillas HaShachar?”

(NOTE: The truth is that we hadn’t learned this before, and this introduction taught us how we must always speak with respect to everyone and give a sense of belonging. Even when he taught Likkutei Torah, he always used to say, “You surely remember that we learned...”)



After a deafening silence (which we knew would follow from experience), Reuven began to explain: “*Nachon* means *muchan* (ready), as is written, ‘Be ready for the morning,’ a call to be prepared. We thereby learn that *nachon* does not mean to reject that which is improper, rather a derivation of the word ‘ready.’” After waiting a few moments, he continued, “What is the meaning of the word ‘*lomar*’? *Lomar* has the same root as *imra* (edge of a garment), meaning that we must prepare ourselves – as we have already said regarding the word ‘*nachon*’ – down to the very fringes, as *imra* alludes to the outer edges.” After another deafening silence, Reuven continued, “What is the meaning of the word ‘*kodem*?’”

Regrettably, we had to stop the explanation here because Reuven had to leave for some medical treatment.

(Chanoch HaLevi Shachar)

## JUST AS THEIR FACES ARE DIFFERENT

Amir Kahana, then a cadet in the army youth battalion,

arranged for Reuven to give lectures to the other soldiers. On one such occasion, something unusual took place. As Reuven started talking about a certain subject, he suddenly stopped and began speaking about something entirely different. After he did this several more times, I began to feel uncomfortable. When the lecture was over, I asked Reuven what had happened, and he replied, “As I began speaking, I noticed that just five people were paying attention. I changed the subject, and then I saw that another five people woke up, while the previous five had lost interest. In short, each change of discussion attracted no more than five people. I tried to reach a situation where as many as soldiers as possible would be interested in the lecture, but it didn’t seem to work. This is something that had never happened to me before in my life.”

(Chanoch HaLevi Shachar)

## WHERE IS IT WRITTEN?

At a farbrengen in Ramat Gan, Reuven spoke with a very engaging and vivacious style.

One of the baalei battim asked him, “Where is that written in Chassidus?”

Reuven replied, “It appears in Likkutei Torah and Chassidus, although you wouldn’t understand it in that language...”

(Rabbi Lior Rosenbaum)

## RABBI DUNIN

When in Haifa, Reuven was unwilling to hear the title “Rav” mentioned in connection with himself. Once when someone came to the Chabad House at 3 Borochof Street while Reuven was sitting and farbrenging with two bachurim, the guest turned to Reuven and asked, “Where’s Rabbi Dunin?”

In his usual style, Reuven replied, “He’s not here at the moment. Sit here and wait; he should be back at any moment.” Twenty minutes passed, and only then did the guest realize what Reuven actually meant. Even when he got on the phone and someone asked him, “Is this Rabbi Dunin?” he would reply, “No! It’s Reuven.”

(Chanoch HaLevi Shachar)

**“As Reuven started talking about a certain subject, he suddenly stopped and began speaking about something entirely different. After he did this several more times, I began to feel uncomfortable.**

### RUACH HAKODESH

One of Reuven's mekuravim was making a bris mila for his son on a Friday in Raanana. Reuven was the sandek, and he spoke at the seudas mitzvah about Moshiach and the Redemption. Another mekurav there suggested that they should all make a circle and stay in place until Moshiach comes. "That isn't the intention," Reuven said. "These are souls within bodies, etc."

After the bris, Reuven traveled to his home in Rechovos, and this mekurav took him in his car. On the way, Reuven got a phone call that he must come to Ramat Aviv for Shabbos. He then asked the mekurav, "Why didn't you take the right turn heading for Ramat Aviv?"

The young man replied: "How

am I supposed to know that you have to go to Ramat Aviv?"

Reuven then said, "I thought that you had *ruach ha'kodesh*, and you know how to bring the Moshiach..."

When they arrived in Ramat Aviv and just before they parted from one another, Reuven told him, "Would you like us to be friends? Stop cutting your beard." And he stopped trimming his beard from that moment on.

(R' Shlomo Zalman Landa)

### YOU SHALL NOT STEAL

Back in the sixties, Reuven decided to tape the Rebbe as soon as Shabbos went out, thereby acquiring a rare recording from the farbrengen. The idea was to finish Shabbos exactly on time, while the Rebbe continued

to farbreng well into Motzaei Shabbos. Reuven would then come back with a cumbersome audiotape machine and record the Rebbe. Other bachurim joined in this project, and as soon as Shabbos was over, Reuven crept out and returned after a quick Maariv. He carefully snuck into the place where he had concealed the tape machine before Shabbos, while three bachurim screened him from view as he pressed the record button. Then, amazing as it sounds, the Rebbe suddenly become silent, as if the button had directly affected him. The Rebbe simply sat there for several long bewildering moments without speaking, and then gave a penetrating look in the direction of Reuven and the bachurim who were hiding him. "At that moment," Reuven recalled, "I felt like a miserable thief who had been caught red-handed. As long as the Rebbe had yet to acknowledge the end of Shabbos, it was still Shabbos for him. So who was I to try and outsmart him?"

(Chanoch HaLevi Shachar)

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# WATCH YOUR HEAD!

By M.E. Gordon

Yanky was miserable.

He really did not want to leave the yeshiva, but he had no choice. Unfortunately, his father had developed a serious medical condition, and Yanky was needed at home. He understood that his mother would not have asked him to come if she could have managed without him, so he resignedly packed his suitcase.

Yanky sighed. He knew that he should be thankful for the time that he had been in yeshiva until now. He loved the learning, the intellectual stimulation, the friendships he had made, the farbrengens, and the chassidishe atmosphere. This past month he had paired up with a great chavrusa, learning faster and deeper than ever before. Now he would have to leave it all and go home.

That evening after Maariv, Yanky's friends organized a farewell farbrengen for him. The mashpia, Reb Mendel spoke. "Yanky, listen carefully. This week's parsha talks about the first Yaakov – the father of our nation. Yaakov Avinu had to leave the holy home of Yitzchak and Rivka, the Holy Land of Israel, and go to Charan, a degenerate place with conniving inhabitants.

"The first thing he did to prepare himself was to go to the yeshiva of Shem and Ever. He studied diligently for fourteen years. He finally went on his way towards Charan, and was nearly there when he realized that he hadn't yet davened. He went back to the place where the future Beis HaMikdash would

stand, and davened Maariv there. He prepared for the night by encircling his head with stones to protect him while he slept.

"Yanky, you too are leaving a holy environment. There will be many spiritual dangers that you may encounter. You must take a lesson from Yaakov Avinu. You have already fortified yourself with Torah learning and Chassidishe habits here in yeshiva.

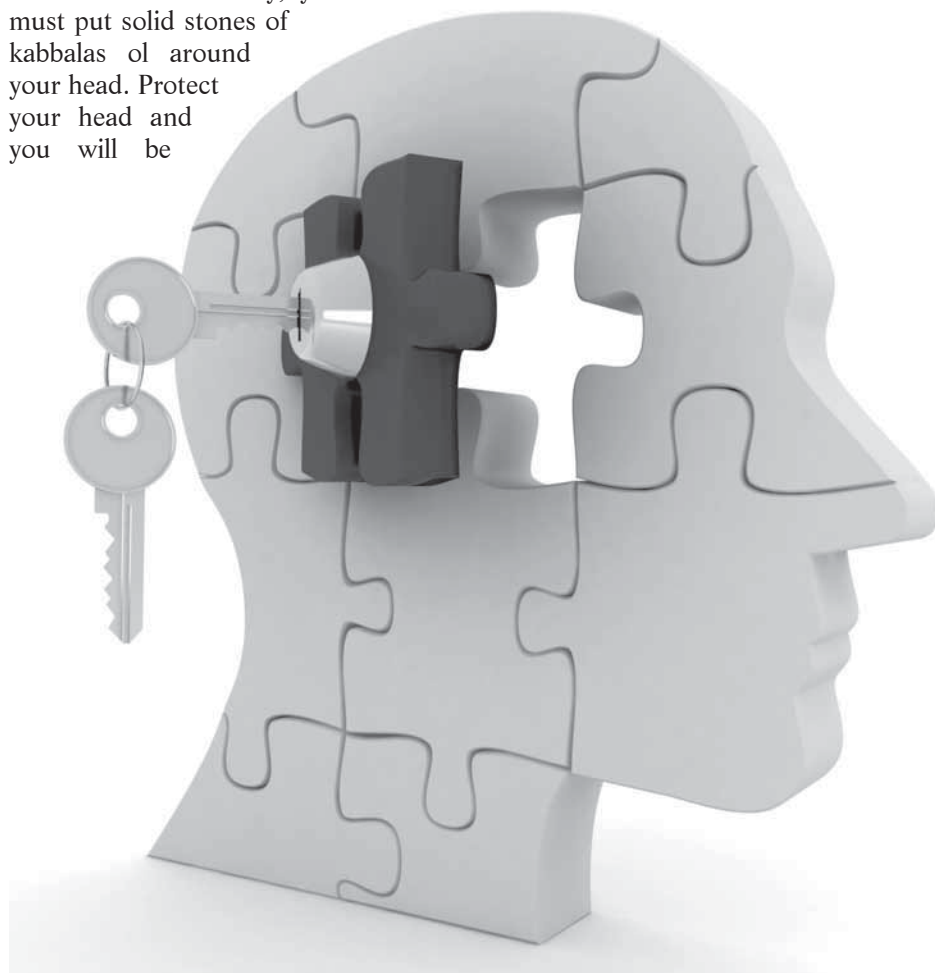
"You must daven for Hashem Yisborach's help, just as our forefathers did. Finally, you must put solid stones of kabbalas ol around your head. Protect your head and you will be

safe."

That night, Yanky found it hard to fall asleep. His mind was churning with thoughts and emotions. He eventually did doze off, and awoke in the morning with the memory of a very vivid dream.

In his dream, he was sitting on an airplane. "Good afternoon," a uniformed steward was standing next to him. "Here's a pair of earphones, so you can follow the movie."

"No, thank you," Yanky answered, pulling a shiny stone out of his pocket and placing it between



himself and the screen. The steward did not seem to think it was strange that a rock was suspended in mid-air.

"Then take the earphones so you can listen to the music. You have a choice of rock, country, or rap."

"No, thank you," Yanky replied politely, as he suspended another rock in the air.

The fellow sitting in the next seat spoke up. "I don't blame you for not wanting that noise in your ears. I prefer reading, myself. Maybe you want to look at one of these magazines that I'm finished with."

"No thank you, I have what to read," answered Yanky, as another stone was put in place. He spent the next half hour explaining to his seatmate what a seifer is, and why a boy his age would enjoy learning even when not in school.

The scene shifted. He was

now home. His younger sister was excited to see him. "Yanky, I'm so glad that you're here to help. By the way, we recently installed a new computer with internet access. Things have been so upside down here that no filter was put on it, so we can do whatever we want."

"Whatever we want?" Yanky repeated, as he put another few stones into the air.

"Certainly we want whatever Hashem Yisborach wants. I'm going to ask Mommy to purchase a filter right away. For myself, I'm going to make myself a list of rules as to what I'm going to use the computer for, and for how long. I'll link it up with someone who will be able to monitor what sites were visited and when. There are a lot of wonderful things we can do with the computer but first we must make it safe."

The stones above Yanky's

head were shining with a heavenly light. They rotated and spun faster and faster, becoming a glowing crown hovering above him, radiating an invisible shield, protecting him from harm.

At that point Yanky had woken up. He felt a bit better than he had the night before. He was sure that with Hashem's help, and the Rebbe's guidance, he would overcome the challenges ahead.

*The story is fictional. Based on Likkutei Sichos volume 1, p. 60-63.*

## ERRATUM

In issue 810, at the end of the article "Not a Moment Too Soon" we wrote that the anecdote was based on a true story. It should have stated that the story is a work of fiction, but dedicated to the many shluchim who turn every crisis into an opportunity to spread the Rebbe's message.

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