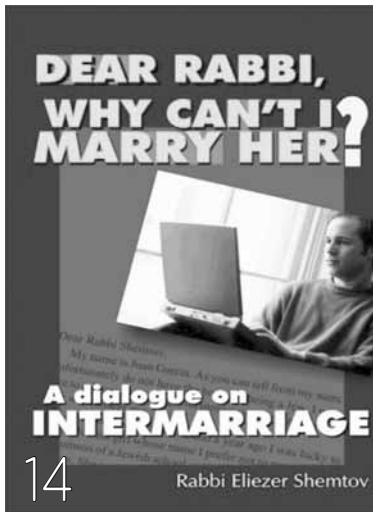




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# LOOK ALIVE! THE LIFE OF THE REBBE IS DEPENDENT UPON IT

The Torah of Truth establishes that the eternal life of Yaakov is dependent upon the fact that “his descendants are alive.” We must, therefore, conclude that “his descendants” in every generation, in every respect, in all times, in all places, and in all personal states – are “alive”! Any lack in “his descendants are alive” is tantamount to a diminishment in “he is alive,” G-d forbid, a decline in the very life of Yaakov Avinu!

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Translated by Boruch Merkur

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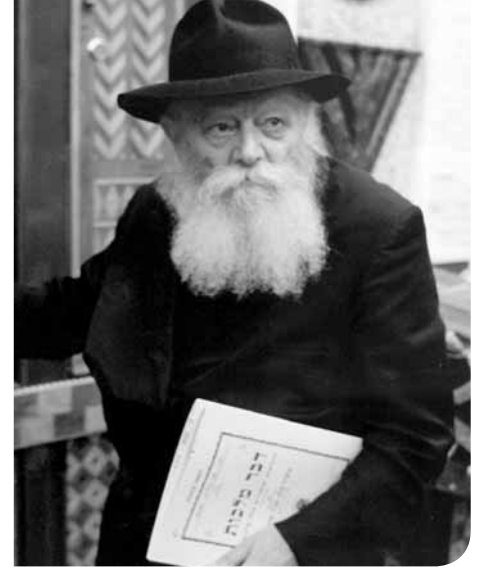
The proof that “he (Yaakov) is alive” is that the descendants of Yaakov, every single member of *Am Yisroel*, the Jewish nation – men, women, and children throughout all generations – are “alive.” Since his descendants are “alive,” “he (Yaakov) is alive”!

On this basis, it is understood and obvious that it is not at all appropriate to distinguish, G-d forbid, between the generations of the Jewish people with regard to the concept of “his descendants are alive,” as if to say that certain generations are consider genuine – “*echshor dara*” (Yevamos 39b) – whereas other generations are not. The Torah of Truth establishes and testifies that the eternal life of Yaakov is dependent upon the fact that “his descendants are alive.” We must, therefore, conclude that “his descendants” in every generation, in every respect, in all times, in all places, and in all personal states

– are “alive”! Any lack in “his descendants are alive” (even if it were merely a single generation, or even a single moment of time within that generation) is tantamount to a diminishment in “he is alive,” G-d forbid, a decline in the very life of Yaakov Avinu!

So it is ruled in the Torah, and a ruling of the Torah defines reality (as our Sages say, when a Jewish court establishes a leap year, the physical signs of virginity of a young maiden return [should her birthday now fall in the upcoming month of Adar Sheini]\* (Yerushalmi Nedarim 6:8))!

Since every single Jew – man, woman, and child – comes from the seed of Yaakov Avinu (as recorded even in the annals of the Gentile nations, a Jew is so and so, the son of so and so, all the way back to Yaakov Avinu), it is, therefore, understood that the phrase, “his descendants



are alive,” refers to every single Jew, with no distinctions or exceptions among them, G-d forbid.

The latter rings especially true upon considering what is explained in *Igeres HaKodesh*: “The soul (of Yaakov) ... includes all the souls of the Jewish people from time immemorial and forevermore.” This statement is especially true of the *Nasi*, the leader of the Jewish people of every generation. Indeed, “*Nasi* – leader” is an acronym for “*Nitzutzo Shel Yaakov Avinu* – a spark of [the soul of] Yaakov Avinu.” Thus, harm to the concept of “his descendants are alive” is detrimental to the *Nasi* himself, G-d forbid, as well as to Yaakov Avinu.

The point is this: Every Jew, without any exception, is eternally connected and unified with G-d Alm-ghty, as the Rambam clearly rules: Every single Jew “wants to be from among the Jewish people and wants to perform all the Mitzvos and distance himself from transgression; [thus, to whatever extent he strays from this path] it is simply that his [evil] inclination prevails over him.”

Indeed, our Sages have said (Kiddushin 49b) that one who betroths a woman “‘upon the condition that I am a *tzaddik*, a

righteous man' – even were he to have been utter wicked, [the condition is deemed to have been met and] the woman is betrothed, for perhaps a thought of repentance crossed his mind [at the moment of the betrothal, rendering him a righteous person].” Some versions of the Gemara even read that through a thought of repentance he becomes a “*tzaddik gamor* – one who is completely righteous.”

In light of the above it is understood that even a thought in the manner described [i.e., distinguishing among Jews the extent to which they embody “his descendants are alive”], and how much more so regarding speaking or publicizing it – this detracts from the “he is alive” of Yaakov Avinu, G-d forbid, and it is the opposite of simple faith in the Torah of Moshe, which states “Yaakov Avinu did not die,” for “just as his children are alive, so is he alive.”

But since this matter has already been publicized, etc., then certainly – may it be G-d's will that – the intent of this [negativity will result in a repentance of such earnestness that] “intentional sins become for him as meritorious deeds.” Or even more so, they become actual “meritorious deeds.”

“Even the thought of distinguishing among Jews the extent to which they embody “his descendants are alive,” and how much more so regarding speaking or publicizing it – this detracts from the life of Yaakov Avinu, G-d forbid, and it is the opposite of simple faith in the Torah of Moshe, which states “Yaakov Avinu did not die,” for “just as his children are alive, so is he alive.”

So too regarding the impact of writing and publicizing it, etc. – the matter should be completely and utterly erased. To note that regarding the scroll used for a *sota*, a woman suspected of adultery, the entire intent of writing this scroll is in order that it should then be erased, the ink dissolved in water: “It is thoroughly erased, to the point that the scroll retains no visible trace at all” (Rambam's Laws of Sota 3:10). In fact, in so doing “she shall be exempted and bear seed” (had she been pure of sin) – if she had previously experienced painful births, she will now give birth with ease; if she had had girls, she will now have boys (a concept which is connected with redemption).

[From the address of Shabbos Parshas VaYeichi, 12 Teives 5751, bilti muga. Part of the hanacha

from which this was selected was submitted to the Rebbe MH”M for review, and appears in Seifer HaSichos 5751 Vol. 1, pg. 225 ff.]

\*That is, prior to the age of three, the physical signs of a girl's virginity return. After three, however, the removal of these signs cannot be reversed. Thus, if a girl has already reached three years old and one day in the month of Adar, and then the Jewish court decided to establish a leap year – adding a second month of Adar – according to Jewish law, the child's age reverts to less than three years old and the physiological reality changes, for the girl's signs of virginity regenerate until she turns three (again) in Adar Sheini. This is a clear example of how a ruling of Torah changes the physical reality. (Based on [http://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/112685/jewish/G-d-and-Nature.htm#footnote39a112685](http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/112685/jewish/G-d-and-Nature.htm#footnote39a112685))

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# SHIDDUCH CRISIS IN THE SOVIET UNION

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If Shidduchim in general are described as being as difficult as splitting the sea, the shidduch of a Chassidishe bachur in the Soviet Union was far harder. \* We present another installment from the memoirs of Rabbi Hillel Zaltzman.

Prepared for publication by Avrohom Rainitz

**L**iving a religiously observant life in the Soviet Union was always difficult, but there were times when it was harder than usual, such as when it came to shidduchim. If shidduchim in general are described as being as difficult as splitting the sea, the shidduch of a Chassidishe bachur in the Soviet Union was far harder.

The main difficulty was the small number of G-d fearing, Chassidishe families. In the free world there were hundreds of thousands of religious Jews who could observe Torah and mitzvos without fear. Every young man and woman had dozens of potential people to marry within a small radius of their home, and thousands of people within a larger radius.

In the Soviet Union, after

the great exodus of Anash in 1946, very few Lubavitcher families or other religious Jews remained there. When a bachur came of age, you could count the potential candidates for marriage from the entire Soviet Union on the fingers of one hand.

Among the families that remained in the Soviet Union, those who lived in a “k’hilla” would support one another, and together would manage to educate their children in the spirit of Torah. However, those families scattered throughout the Soviet Union who lived in isolation, one or two religious families in a city, found it difficult to prevail spiritually.

As long as the children were at home, under their parents’ supervision, the parents retained control. However, once the

children grew up and became independent, many of them went off the derech.

In the Soviet Union, it was almost impossible to open one’s own business. Therefore, someone who wanted to support himself honorably had to study a profession. This is the reason why even our bachurim and girls went to university. Obviously, studying in a gentile environment and the unavoidable socializing with gentile students had an adverse effect on their lives. This was the main factor in their veering from their Jewish roots.

Even if they managed to avoid eating treif, they found it extremely hard to keep Shabbos. This was especially so in the big cities and especially when working in large factories. Keeping Shabbos entailed



actual mesirus nefesh; many did not withstand the test. Understandably, this kind of spiritual life ended up weakening them in other critical areas such as t'filla, t'fillin, etc.

The main problem in shidduchim was in finding Chassidishe girls. In Chassidishe families the bachurim learned secretly and attended farbrengens with the elder Chassidim where they absorbed the Chassidic flavor. The girls did not learn Torah and did not attend farbrengens, so their Chassidishkait was based solely on the atmosphere in their homes. When the atmosphere in the street and schools were antithetical to everything they heard from their parents, the girls found it hard to preserve their

**“At the Tanim seuda the father stood up to speak in praise of the chassan, his son. As is customary among Poilishe Chassidim, he praised the chassan and his yichus to the skies. Rabbi Yehuda was not a man of words and when the chassan’s father finished his speech, he stood up and said, “The kalla’s father was a Tamim and there is no greater yichus than that.”**

Jewish character.

(This problem, by the way, was the problem of world Jewry even close to a century ago. The heretical winds of Haskala that blew in Europe felled many, mainly among young girls who had not been taught about Judaism. They were easily enticed to join the “progressive” Maskilim. The one who saved

the day was the righteous woman Sarah Schenirer z”l, who fought Haskala and the secularizing of Jewish girls by opening Bais Yaakov schools. In 5678/1918, she opened the first independent religious school for girls in Krakow, which turned into a huge network of schools under the aegis of Agudas Israel. The Rebbe Rayatz greatly encouraged

this movement, and in the 1930's he founded Achos HaT'mimim in Riga).

So a Chassidishe bachur who was looking for a Chassidishe girl, even just a religious girl, had to work very hard until he found someone suitable. Even when he found a girl from a Chassidishe home whose parents were T'mimim and Yerei Shamayim, generally speaking, if they lived without a religious environment her level of religiosity was much lower than that of the bachur. It was only with the infinite power of G-d that they managed to overcome the differences and to build a Chassidishe home together.

Unfortunately, there were instances in which a bachur met a girl from a Chassidishe home, from the best and the finest, and after one meeting he discovered that although the parents were the cream of the crop their daughter was far from it.

In the following pages I will tell you some stories, some of them without names, about interesting shidduchim that took place in those days:

## YICHUS OR GOOD MIDDOS?

One of the Chassidishe bachurim in Samarkand, who had a very hard time finding a Chassidishe girl, reached the age of 30 and was still single. One day, he went to my sister Sarah's home in order to consult with my brother-in-law, Rabbi Eliyahu Mishulovin a"h, who was his close friend and known for his Chassidishe cleverness. The relationship between the families was very warm and they felt like one family. So, although I was only fifteen, I heard and knew what was going on.

From what the bachur said,

I understood that he had two possibilities. Yes, out of all the Lubavitcher girls throughout Russia, there were just two girls who were suitable! One was from a distinguished Chassidishe family. The other was from an anonymous family whose father had been killed in the war, but she was known as someone with good character. He could not decide between the two possibilities. He consulted with the rav of the Chabad community in Samarkand, Rabbi Eliyahu Levin (Paritcher), who was a distinguished talmid in Lubavitch.

When the bachur told everything he knew about both girls, Rabbi Eliyahu recommended that he meet the girl with the lesser lineage but good middos. "You will be able to build a *Bayis Neeman B'Yisroel*," he said.

The bachur was destitute with shabby clothes and he could not afford to buy a new suit. My brother-in-law, who was a big baal chesed, gave me 200 rubles and said, "Go with him and buy him a suit."

He went and met with the girl and boruch Hashem, they built a Chassidishe home and merited to see generations of shluchim and genuine Yerei Shamayim.

## THE YICHUS OF THE KALLA

Rabbi Shmaryahu Marinovsky was a Skverer Chassid whom Divine Providence brought to the Chabad community in Samarkand. His two sons, Yisroel and Chaim, who learned in the Lubavitcher underground chadarim during World War II, had become Lubavitcher Chassidim. I remember hearing from our melamed Rabbi Benzion Maroz that he once prepared a boy for his bar mitzva

and was so impressed by his Yiras Shamayim that he wrote about it to the Rebbe Rayatz. He ended the letter with the phrase, "I am sure that this bachur will put on t'fillin all his life." Needless to say, in Stalinist Russia this was the highest Jewish-Chassidic accolade one could say. This bachur was Rabbi Yisroel Marinovsky a"h.

He was indeed modest and a big Yerei Shamayim. They said about him that he once had to go to Moscow and stay with one of Anash. When he arrived in the evening, the woman opened the door and said that her husband would be returning late that night. Of course, he did not enter the house because of the prohibition of yichud (seclusion with a member of the other gender). Since it was dangerous to walk about in the street, he returned to the train station, bought a ticket, and traveled back and forth all night.

His younger brother Chaim had golden hands. Later in life he became the well-known mohel in Kfar Chabad. Since the two of them were Chassidishe bachurim from a distinguished family, it was very hard to find them appropriate shidduchim.

At a certain point, Rabbi Moshe Vishedsky went to Chaim's parents and suggested his niece. Her father, who had been arrested for the crime of spreading Judaism and Chassidus, had died in jail, and Rabbi Moshe felt it his holy obligation to marry her off to a Chassidishe bachur.

After they met and liked one another, they finalized the shidduch in the home of Rabbi Yehuda Butrashvili (Kulasher) who lived in Malachovka on the outskirts of Moscow.

At the Tanaim seuda the father

stood up to speak in praise of the chassan, his son. As is customary among Poilishe Chassidim, he praised the chassan and his yichus to the skies. Rabbi Moshe Vishedsky, who wanted his niece to feel at ease, went over to the host Rabbi Yehuda Kulasher and urged him, “Nu Reb Yehuda, say something about the kalla’s yichus.”

Rabbi Yehuda was not a man of words and when the chassan’s father finished his speech, he stood up and said, “The kalla’s father was a Tamim and there is no greater yichus than that.”

He concluded his brief speech in tears, “He was arrested for the crime of spreading Torah and Yiddishkait and died in prison.”

His few words made a tremendous impression on all present.

## THE PULL OF THE HEART

When I was seven, shortly after World War II, I noticed a fine looking young man in a new officer’s uniform that indicated his high rank. He looked as though he had just returned from battle (whoever returned from the war usually wore their military uniform because they had no other clothes to wear).

When I saw him appear at our secret minyan in his uniform, I was terrified. Who told him about our secret minyan? The other people present at the minyan didn’t seem afraid. So I realized that he was one of “ours.” I followed him to see what he would do. To my surprise, he stood in a corner of the house and davened sweetly with a Chabad niggun. I also saw him at farbrengens and other community occasions, but I did not know who he was.

Like any child, I always

listened to the conversations of the adults and so I heard the man’s fascinating story:

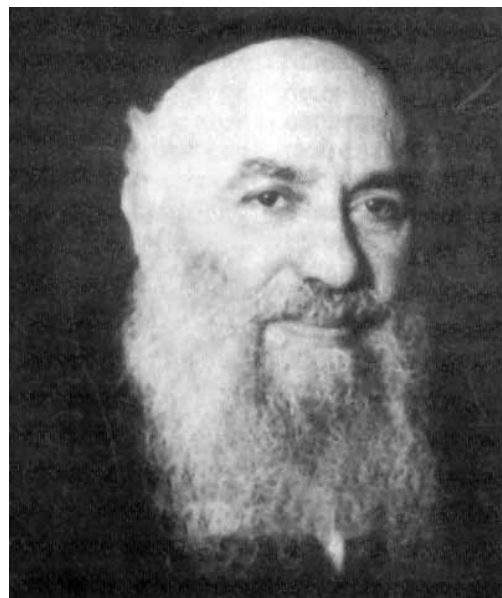
He was a Chassidishe bachur who had been drafted into the Russian army and had found himself on the front lines against the Nazis. He miraculously survived the war and returned to Samarkand. A Jewish girl came with him and he told his acquaintances that he wanted to marry her.

The girl’s lineage was unknown. She was from a small town in the Ukraine. When the Nazis came to her town, they took all the Jews to the nearby forest and ordered them to dig a pit. As the Jews stood on the edge

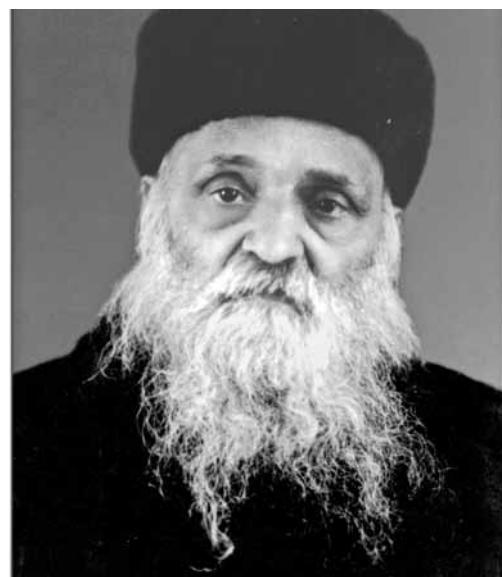
**“When he arrived in the evening, the woman opened the door and said that her husband would be returning late that night. Of course, he did not enter the house because of the prohibition of yichud. Since it was dangerous to walk about in the street, he returned to the train station, bought a ticket, and traveled back and forth all night.”**

of the pit, they shot at them until they all fell into their communal grave. The bullets missed the girl, but she fell into the pit with the others. When the Nazis began covering over the pit, she managed to quietly crawl to the edge. She waited until the Nazis left and she climbed out and walked into the dark forest.

She suddenly heard approaching footsteps. She hid among the trees, but the soldiers found her. She didn’t know which side they were on and she refused to answer their questions. It was only when they arrived at their base and she realized



Rabbi Yehuda Butrashvili (Kulasher) spoke in praise of the kalla.



Rabbi Eliyahu Levin (Paritcher) recommended good middos over yichus.



Rabbi Nissan Nemanov  
told the bachur to follow his heart

that she had been found by the Russian army that she began responding to their questions. She told them which village she was from and how the Nazis had murdered all the Jews.

At first, they didn't believe her and suspected she was a German spy with a good cover

story. The next day, they found out through their own sources what had happened in the village. They believed her and decided to enlist her in their ranks. They had her study basic medicine and sent her to one of the military hospitals where she would work as a nurse. When the bachur had been wounded, they brought him to the military hospital where the two of them met.

Many of Anash who knew him as a Chassidishe bachur were horrified that he wanted to marry this girl when nobody knew her family. They said, "Who knows what her yichus is?" They suggested suitable Chassidishe shidduchim, yet he couldn't decide what to do since he had no relatives and had no one with whom to consult.

One time, at a Chassidishe farbrengen, after some men rebuked him for his ideas, he was utterly broken. Rabbi Nissan Nemanov, who was still in Samarkand at that point, lovingly asked him, "To whom do you feel that your heart is more drawn towards, to those suggested shidduchim from families of Anash or to the girl you met?"

The young man answered,

"The girl I met in the hospital."

Rabbi Nissan said, "Don't listen to anyone. Marry the girl who came with you, and you will build a Chassidishe home together."

He followed Rabbi Nissan's advice, and together raised a large family whose descendants are all religious Jews and wonderful Chassidim of the highest caliber.

I remember that a few years after they married they moved to the courtyard where we lived, which belonged to a Bucharian Jew named Yegudaiov. When they arrived with their belongings it was evening; my mother, who was in the middle of a lively conversation with the new tenants, turned to me and said, "It's late, go daven Mincha."

I was terribly frightened and motioned to my mother, asking why she referred to religious matters in front of people we didn't know. My mother laughed heartily and said, "They are one of us and there is no need to be afraid or to hide from them."

*The story and details about my brother Berel's shidduch and my own shidduch will follow in the next installment.*



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# PRAGMATIC TRANSCENDENTALISM



By Rabbi Akiva Wagner

**T**he Alter Rebbe once approached the Mittlerer Rebbe after davening and asked him, “With what did you daven today?”

The Mittlerer Rebbe responded, “With the concept of ‘*V’Chol Koma LeFanecha Tishtachaveh*,’ that *Koma* refers to ‘*Koma of AK (Adam Kadmon)*’ – *Machshava HaKeduma De’AK*.”

(Once when the Rebbe told over this story, he explained how the Friedike Rebbe related this story to a mekurav: “The mekurav would not have been able to comprehend the terms ‘*Koma of AK*’ – *Machshava HaKeduma De’AK*, and so the Friedike Rebbe used simpler terms.)

The Mittlerer Rebbe then asked the Alter Rebbe, “And with what did you daven today?”

To which the Alter Rebbe responded, “With the shtender!” meaning that he davened by contemplating the fact that even the shtender is being constantly renewed and recreated by the D’var Hashem.

Which raises a question: What, in essence, was the difference between their responses (and the story seems to imply that there is a difference)? After all, isn’t the concept of *Machshava HaKeduma De’AK* – where everything that ever was and ever will be created in any of the Olamos are all included in one

general Machshava of Hashem – being battul to Hashem (*LeFanecha Tishtachaveh*), synonymous with Olam HaZeh being subservient to its source, to G-dliness? Isn’t that, after all, equal with the fact that the shtender is constantly deriving its sustenance from G-dliness?

What lesson was the Alter Rebbe imparting to the Mittlerer Rebbe, and what message are we supposed to take from this?

Perhaps the idea contained here is as follows: Surely all of Chassidus is the teaching of Ein Od Milvado, the detailed explanation and illustration of how the world is in fact not a separate entity from Hashem. The more we learn Chassidus, the more we can grasp that *Havaya VeElokim Kula Chad*, that the dark and mundane world that we live in is in truth not apart from the Eibishter who created it.

But, although it may make perfect sense while learning the maamar or during a farbrengen, when we’re standing on line to checkout from the store, or when we’re waiting for our turn at the bank, the world continues to appear very genuine. While we may accept the arguments of the maamar **intellectually**, our real-life experience continues to be one in which *Olamos BePshitus and Elokim* (hopefully, at least) *B’Hischadshus*.

While we say Shma Yisroel, we think deeply about the idea of Hashem Echad. But in order to do

so, we cover our eyes. Because, although we are thinking about how the world is really G-dliness (the 7 heavens and the earth and the 4 directions), nevertheless we avoid looking at that very world, lest seeing it in Technicolor will change our whole picture. As the Alter Rebbe writes in Tanya (Igeres HaKodesh 9): “When one says Krias Shma he can be testifying falsely chas v’shalom, proclaiming with closed eyes that there is nothing that exists except Hashem, but when he opens his eyes afterwards he perceives a very different reality!”

Rabbi Heschel Ceitlin was a very chassidisher Yid. When the Rebbe spoke about the importance of everyone owning their own home (and not just renting), and that those who don’t yet own a house should buy one, Rabbi Heschel was thrown into a quandary. The money was not the issue; rather, it was something much more technical. In order to buy a house, he would need to get a mortgage, and in order to get a mortgage, he would have to go through the various requisite steps in applying for one, which included having a checking account in his own name.

So far so good, but Rabbi Ceitlin did not have a checking account. It was not an insurmountable difficulty, because anyone can open an account, except for the fact that Rabbi Heschel had never been in a bank before. As a matter of principle, he could not abide by the idea of entering a place



**“So far so good, but Rabbi Ceitlin did not have a checking account. It was not an insurmountable difficulty, because anyone can open an account, except for the fact that Rabbi Heschel had never been in a bank before.**

that represented the pursuit of materialism and the avoda zara of money. He feared that such an atmosphere would detract from his Chassidishkait. Now he didn't know how to carry out the Rebbe's directives without compromising on his principles.

(As a true Chasid, he wrote the Rebbe about his dilemma. I was never told what the Rebbe answered him, but the fact is that eventually he bought his own home!)

R' Heschel Ceitlin was a real Chasid, and his life was a reflection of his beliefs and ideology that the world is nothing separate from the Eibishter. He learned about this, farbrenged about it, davened with this idea and lived it. But that very world,

that he learned and knew was G-dliness, was viewed by him as a threat to his connection with G-dliness.

As much as we understand and acknowledge and believe and declare that *Havaya Hu HaElokim*, that the world and Hashem are one, what we actually see when we look at that world is a completely different story.

The Mittlerer Rebbe davened with the maamar, with the profound ideas of chassidus. He thought about them, and meditated upon them and davened with them, and understood deeply and sincerely that *Koma De'AK*, that the entire existence, is totally battul to

Hashem. But this understanding was derived from the maamar.

The Alter Rebbe revealed to him a deeper level, the ability to see the G-dliness within the world and from the world. He did not have to close his eyes and contemplate the fact that the shtender, the entire world, is G-dliness. Instead, he ought to look at the shtender, as it exists in its physical form, and to see it for what it truly is, an expression of D'var Hashem – to appreciate the greatness of the Eibishter, not through escaping from the world and ignoring it, but by the world and from the world.

This is as the Alter Rebbe said to the Mittlerer Rebbe (before his histalkus): “I don't see the

rafters in the roof; I see the D'var Havaya!”

• • •

In the Midrash that is quoted in the maamar Basi L'Gani, it describes the Sh'china being in various heavens, until, ultimately, it was brought down to the earth through Moshe Rabbeinu. The Rebbe, in his maamar, emphasizes how the last step of drawing the Sh'china down to this physical world is of incomparably greater significance than all of the other levels.

What is the significance of the Sh'china being located in various levels? What does it mean that the Sh'china is now on the Aretz?

How can we explain the fact that for Avrohom Avinu, who taught G-dliness even to Arabs, who was a chariot to the s'fira of chesed d'Atzilus (and about whom it said “now that Avrohom is around I can file for chapter eleven”) the Sh'china was “somewhere up there,” and for the plain Jew after Mattan Torah, the Sh'china is on the ground?

And if Moshe Rabbeinu brought the Sh'china down into this world, then what was it doing back up in the Rakia HaShvii in the times of the Alter Rebbe?

It would seem that the idea of the Midrash is the same as the one mentioned above: Avrohom taught hundreds of thousands of people about the One G-d. He taught them not to be misled by the false impressions of the world. Although the world announces that “Ani VeAfsi Od,” that everything and everyone exists independently, nevertheless they should understand and comprehend that there is nothing that exists outside of the Eibishter.

The objective was to ignore the world, to disregard the

impressions and influences of physicality, and to focus instead on G-dliness. To have the strength not to be distracted by the false representation of worldliness, and remain convinced of the truth. Avrohom's avoda was to turn away from Olam HaZeh and thus be able to remain steadfast in his faith.

The Sh'china was in heaven. The way to be connected with the Eibishter was by detaching oneself from worldly matters. In the words of the Midrash (one of the most frequently quoted ones by the Rebbe): there was a g'zeira, a separation, between spirituality and physicality, between elyonim and tachtonim. The path to spirituality was by maintaining a distance from physicality.

All of this was changed by Moshe Rabbeinu, who brought down the Torah. The Torah changed the rules of the game. The Sh'china is no longer 'somewhere up there,' rather, it is here in this world, in and within everything in this world. An animal is not something that I have to ignore and distance myself from in order to become more spiritual; rather, it is through the animal that I become attached to G-dliness. The skin becomes t'fillin, the flesh becomes a seudas Shabbos, the horns become a shofar etc.

With the giving of the Torah, the revelation of Ratzon HaElyon, we were taught that



Drawing: R. Zalman Kleinman

**“The Alter Rebbe revealed to him a deeper level, the ability to see the G-dliness within the world and from the world. He did not have to close his eyes and contemplate the fact that the shtender, the entire world, is G-dliness.**

G-dliness is not any more spiritual than physical, and every single physical object in the world can become a vehicle for our connection with Hashem. You don't have to meditate in order not to be confused by the trees and the ocean; rather the shtender itself (that is made out of the trees) is part of Eibishter, is the way I connect with Him.

The main idea of Mattan Torah and of Yud Shvat (which is in one month) is about drawing down the Sh'china into this world. We don't have to search

elsewhere, for in and within every aspect of our life and our world we can find the Eibishter.

L'chaim! On a practical note, the specific directive that the Rebbe gave in connection with preparing for Yud Shvat was Aseh Lecha Rav! May each of us have hatzlacha with our Hachanos, and may we spend Yud Shvat together with Moshiach Tzidkeinu Teikef U'miyad Mamash!!!

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

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# TRUST THE REBBE

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Serious doubts persisted as Rabbi Blumenfeld pondered his options... Just as Rabbi Blumenfeld had feared, the harsh reactions were not long in coming and the community was in an uproar... Two fascinating stories about the power of the m'shaleiach, as they were told at the recent International Shluchim Conference.

By Chaim Brook

Translated by Michael Leib Dobry

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I heard the following story at the recent International Shluchim Conference held in 770, from Rabbi Shneur Zalman Blumenfeld, the Rebbe's shliach in Lima, Peru:

## A SURPRISING REQUEST

It was a rather usual day on Rabbi Blumenfeld's shlichus in the Peruvian capital. He was sitting in his office, immersed in his activities, when the telephone suddenly rang. He picked up the receiver and heard the familiar voice of a certain young woman on the line. "Hello, Rabbi Blumenfeld, this is Keren speaking (not her real name). I would like to have an appointment to meet with the rav."

He thought to himself: "Why is she suddenly calling me after such a long period of

no contact?" At first, he was worried what it might mean, but then he decided to give a chance to the G-dly spark hidden deep within the heart of every Jew. "By all means," he replied. "You can come to my office tomorrow afternoon at four o'clock."

## SERIOUS DOUBTS...

*A month earlier, shortly before the International Shluchim Conference:*

Rabbi Blumenfeld held a volume of *Igros Kodesh* in his hand, reading over and over again the two pages to which he had opened. The only part that drew his attention were a few sentences in which the Rebbe wrote that a Jew who intermarries is aiding Hitler (may his name be erased). He went over the two pages again, trying to find something less sharp, but

the only relevant section was this one.

What exactly was troubling Rabbi Blumenfeld about this section of the letter?

Rabbi Blumenfeld's Chabad House puts out a weekly newsletter. One of the columns in the newsletter presents a correspondence from the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach. Each week, he would open a volume of *Igros Kodesh* at random, and then choose an appropriate portion or two out of the letters on the selected pages for submission in the coming newsletter.

In the week when this story took place, the only section appearing on the selected pages that had any relevance for the weekly column was a short portion in which the Rebbe says that a Jew who marries a Gentile is helping Hitler, *yimach shemo* –

no more, no less.

Rabbi Blumenfeld simply didn't know what to do. As in many other countries in South America, a sizable percentage of Peru's Jews are married to Gentiles (*r"l*). Thus, he knew all too well that if such a statement would appear in the newsletter, it would arouse a firestorm within the Jewish population.

"Can we print such 'direct' and sharp words in relation to other Jews? How can I write that they're assisting Hitler? Won't this result in driving them even further away from the observance of Torah and mitzvos?" Serious doubts persisted as Rabbi Blumenfeld considered what he should do.

After much thought, he made his decision. "If I believe that the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach, continues to lead the world," he determined, "and it was his will that the seifer should open to this letter, this means that the Rebbe desires for these words to be printed in the newsletter."

The section in question was translated into Spanish, and was included in the regular weekly column.

### NO APOLOGIES!

However, just as Rabbi Blumenfeld had feared, the harsh reactions were not long in coming; the community was in an uproar. "How can this be?" people cried. "How can you write such harsh things about other Jews?" As the storm of outrage intensified, the wealthier members of the Jewish community turned to the Chabad House administration and demanded that the following week's newsletter include a retraction and an apology.

The Chabad House



The Rebbe's shliach in Lima, Peru, Rabbi Shneur Zalman Blumenfeld, speaking with a community member

“After a brief inquiry, he discovered that the Gentile had invited the Jewish woman to a lavish restaurant, where he informed her that he had no intention of marrying her.

administration gathered for an urgent meeting. After debating the issue, they decided that no retraction or apology would be forthcoming. The tumult over the issue continued, but the Chabad House administration stood firm in its position. The furor gradually died down, and the matter was largely forgotten.

### AN UNEXPECTED MONOLOGUE

A month had passed since the printing of that newsletter and the subsequent storm of protest, and Rabbi Blumenfeld had not noticed any further negative reactions. Then that unexpected telephone call came. Rabbi Blumenfeld was stunned when he realized who was on the line.

This was a young Jewish woman who was in a longstanding relationship with a non-Jewish student. Her parents were very afraid that she would eventually marry this Gentile boy, and they had pleaded with Rabbi Blumenfeld to have some influence upon her to break off the relationship. She naturally understood why the shliach wanted to speak with her and had made every effort to avoid him. Thus, it is clear why he was so surprised when she called him on her own initiative.

"I would like to have an appointment to meet with the rav regarding the newsletter that the Chabad House publishes," she said. Rabbi Blumenfeld was concerned that the old tempest was about to start up again, but



# A dialogue on INTERMARRIAGE

“I don’t usually read the Chabad House newsletter, and as the rav already knows, I also haven’t been coming to my parents’ house much lately. Recently, I had to make a quick stop over there for a specific purpose, and during that brief visit, I suddenly noticed this newsletter in some corner.

“My eyes chanced upon the section where it said that a Jew who intermarries is aiding Hitler (*yimach shemo*). My first reaction was one of intense rage. I felt my blood boil, and I assume that I don’t have to explain why. My anger was so great that I

“After a few moments, once my anger had subsided, I considered the fact that my reaction had not been appropriate. ‘There’s no reason to tear something in anger,’ I said to myself. ‘You should sit down and think about this calmly, and only then can you draw a conclusion whether such a statement is correct or not.’ Thought soon transformed into action. I took the parts of the torn newsletter, put them alongside one another, and read the relevant section again – only this time without any anger or emotion.”

"I also wanted to tell you that I have finally decided to end my relationship with this non-Jewish student. I'll only get married to someone Jewish, and with G-d's help, we'll have a proper Jewish home."

• • •

“Rabbi Blumenfeld,” called the guard at the entrance to the Chabad House to the shliach, as he was entering the building. The guard then turned back to his booth, pulled out a seifer, and handed it to Rabbi Blumenfeld. “A Jewish woman left this book with me,” he explained, “and she asked me to give it you.”

As Rabbi Blumenfeld took the seifer, he noticed that it was one that had been distributed to the Jewish community the previous Yud Shvat. The seifer was still

## A BOOK ON THE TRAGEDY OF INTERMARRIAGE

Every year on Yud Shvat, the Chabad House of Lima, Peru customarily gives a seifer to all community members, donated each time by a different Jew answering an inner call to sponsor this important project. One year, for example, everyone received the seifer “HaRosh” by Rabbi Shloma Majeski.

In this seifer Rabbi Shemtov explains the danger that results from such unions, based on the Rebbe's approach that intermarriage eventually destroys the lives of each partner, both the Jew and the Gentile.

Rabbi Blumenfeld understood that although she hadn't even opened the seifer, through its very candid name ("*Dear Rabbi, Why Can't I Marry Her?*") she must have quickly realized its theme and had been motivated to return it posthaste. In this

manner, she apparently sought to express her loyalty to her "future husband."

## THE SHLIACH RELIES UPON THE M'SHALEIACH

There wasn't much left that Rabbi Blumenfeld could do. As a shliach, he knew that he had done everything that he could, and now the rest was up to the

Rebbe, the m'shaleiach. A few months later, Rabbi Blumenfeld heard a rumor that the wedding between this Jewish woman and her Gentile companion had been called off.

Naturally, he was very happy by these reports, but he was also very surprised and was curious to know what had suddenly led to the breakup. After a brief inquiry he discovered that the

Gentile had invited the Jewish woman to a lavish restaurant, where he informed her that he had no intention of marrying her. It turns out that while they never did open the seifer, the clear message on its cover had made it through to the non-Jew.

The power of one small action, accompanied by the power of the m'shaleiach, eventually did the job!

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Upon this statement I affix my signature, Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> 1amuz 5766



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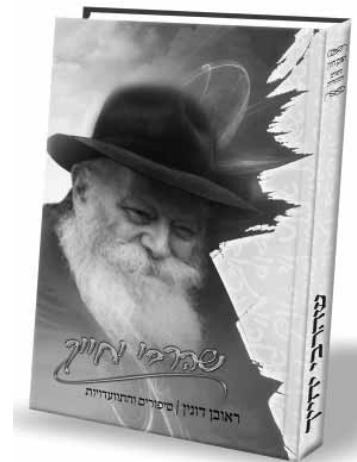
יחי אדונו מורנו ורבינו מלך המשיח לעולם ועד

# RECEIVING A 'THANK YOU' FROM THE REBBE

Beis Moshiach is pleased to present a final excerpt from the seifer “So That The Rebbe Should Smile,” containing more than five hundred brief stories and recollections on the illustrious chassid, R’ Reuven Dunin of Haifa.

Collected and Arranged by Chanoch HaLevi Shachar

Translated by Michael Leib Dobry



## YECHIDUS BY INVITATION

During the first years of his leadership, the Rebbe would daven Mincha in the small zal and then would scan the crowd of Chassidim with his piercing eyes at the end of davening. Reuven would tell the following story in connection with such occurrences: “Back in the early days, when I wanted to go in for yechidus with the Rebbe, I would think to myself: ‘Rebbe, I want to come in,’ and I would lift my head and look at the Rebbe, waiting for an answer. The Rebbe gave his reply through a sign with his eyes (shutting them meant yes). Sometimes, the Rebbe wouldn’t respond, and I thereby

understood that now was not the proper time. When the Rebbe did grant permission, I would escort him until *Gan Eden HaTachton*, make certain that the door was closed, run to the downstairs beis midrash, go back upstairs through the inner stairwell (so as not to be seen), knock on the door to the Rebbe’s room or ring the bell, and then I would enter.”

(Rabbi Gurevitch)

## A DANK (1)

On Lag B’Omer 5744, we landed in New York and went straight to 770 from the airport. We placed our suitcases at the side and waited for the Rebbe to arrive. Reuven approached the

front door of 770, which was held open with a gartel tied to the door handle. He untied the gartel and let the door close. He then opened the door himself, standing behind the door as he held it open. We then proceeded to wait until the Rebbe came. The Rebbe arrived and briskly walked up the path, and when he came to the door, he turned to Reuven and said with a big smile, “A dank.” As the Rebbe entered 770 I could see the tears in Reuven’s eyes.

(Chanoch HaLevi Shachar)

## A DANK (2)

“Once at a farbrengen during the sixties,” Reuven said, “I



decided that I would hide under the Rebbe's table because I wanted to hear him better. As I was crouched down under the table, I suddenly noticed that the Rebbe's shoe was untied. I immediately crawled over and tied his shoe. The Rebbe lifted the tablecloth and said to me, "A dank (thank you)," and resumed the farbrengen.

"I said to myself at that moment, 'Alm-ghty G-d, thank you. You can take me now. I can't ask for anything more than that; I've received all that I ever could have possibly wanted.'"

(Chanoch HaLevi Shachar)

### I'M WITH HIM

On the night of Shavuot 5744, when the T'mimim of Chovevei Torah came in tremendous numbers to Reuven's farbrengen, it became clear that at least some of them would not participate in the Rebbe's farbrengen the following day.

Reuven had an uncomfortable feeling about this, since he had come to the Rebbe to receive spiritual vitality, not to serve as a replacement for him ch"v. He submitted a note to the Rebbe the following day with a question: Would it be proper for him to farbreng with the T'mimim, particularly when he knows that some of them coming to hear him would not be at the Rebbe's farbrengen?

The following evening Reuven held another farbrengen for the T'mimim, where he told them about the content of the Rebbe's answer. In his reply, the Rebbe encouraged him to make the farbrengen, stating, "When he farbrengs – I am with him." Reuven explained that in his opinion, the Rebbe meant that he (Reuven) is not coming with his

own interpretations, rather he is giving over the Rebbe's words. Thus, what matters to the Rebbe is that the T'mimim accept the message conveyed, regardless of who conveys it. When the person farbrenging has bittul towards the Rebbe, acting merely as a channel, it results in "I am with him" – the words of the Rebbe himself come from his mouth.

(Chanoch HaLevi Shachar)

### YECHIDUS NOWADAYS

At a farbrengen at Chovevei Torah on the night of Erev Shavuot 5744, Reuven cried,

(Chanoch HaLevi Shachar)



The Rebbe arrived and briskly walked up the path, and when he came to the door he turned to Reuven and said with a big smile, "A dank." As the Rebbe entered 770, I could see the tears in Reuven's eyes.

"Why don't we have yechidus as in the old days?"

The following morning he submitted a written question to the Rebbe: "Why can't there be yechidus like there once was?"

The Rebbe gave an answer that same day. Rabbi Groner called Reuven in and showed him his original note. The words "like there once was" were underlined, and the Rebbe also drew another line underneath and added the words "**and more than that.**"

(Chanoch HaLevi Shachar)

### YECHIDUS JUST LIKE THE OLD TIMES

Reuven recalled that during a visit to Beis Chayeinu in 5744, he longed to go in to the Rebbe for yechidus "like it used to be," and hinted to the Rebbe about this in his own way. When he saw the Rebbe nodding his

head in his direction, he waited for the customary sign (as in the old days) for permission to enter. (Reuven recalled previous occasions when the Rebbe would leave his handkerchief on the door handle as a sign that he could go in.) "When I saw the sign, I longed to go in," Reuven said, "and I started to walk towards the door with a feeling of indescribable simcha. However, when I saw the looks from people who also saw the sign, I decided not to go in so as not to cause jealousy."

### HOW DO YOU COORDINATE A TORAH CLASS?

Reuven asked one of the bachurim to get in touch with the activities coordinator at a certain prison facility about coming to give over a Torah class. The bachur got right to work and called the administrative offices. A few minutes later, he came back to Reuven and said that they gave him the runaround and he didn't manage to arrange anything.

"What did you say to them," Reuven asked.

"I gave them my name," the bachur replied, "and asked when we could come and give a shiur..."

Reuven cut him off. "Nu, obviously you got nowhere. That's not the way to talk." Reuven took the phone and

called. “Shalom, this is Chabad calling,” and within a minute, it was all set. “You understand now?” Reuven asked. “It’s not you, it’s Chabad, it’s the Rebbe – and the Rebbe already opens all the doors for us.”

(Yitzchak Lipsh)

### THREE BACHURIM FOR SHABBOS

One Friday afternoon, about two hours before the onset of Shabbos, the telephone rang in my house. Reuven was on the line, and he said, “Yigal? I have three bachurim stuck here, and I have no place for them. Can I send them to you?”

I immediately replied, “Yes,

despite the fact that he had suffered an asthma attack earlier that day. Reuven did not appear well, but he was determined to give the class. As the evening wore on, his condition worsened and he began turning bluer and bluer. At a certain point, I suggested that we take him to Kaplan Hospital in Rechovos to receive some treatment, but he refused.

In the meantime, his condition deteriorated further, and he went out on the porch to try and get some fresh air. But when he came back inside, we saw that he required immediate medical attention. I eventually succeeded in convincing him to go to the hospital and get help. During the

enough,” and demanded that we go back to Raanana to resume the class. He returned with renewed strength and continued the shiur longer than anticipated.

(Dr. Eliyahu Sorkin)

### LEARNING SOMETHING FROM EVERYTHING

Once during a private discussion with Reuven, he told me. “You have to derive a personal instruction from everything that occurs in life. You obviously know that nothing happens without a reason. Everything that took place in your life before has to teach you something regarding your conduct in the future. I don’t know how to tell you this...so just accept what I am telling you and don’t be offended.

“The first time we met, I saw standing before me a soldier that the army had turned into a meshugganeh. I said to myself: ‘Aren’t there enough crazy people...’ (Chanoch HaLevi Shachar: *This took place in the street en route to the base where I was serving. My father was with me, and when he saw Reuven, who was his friend and operated heavy army machinery under his authority, he went up to him and embraced him warmly. As they were talking, my father said: “Reuven, this is my son. Take him.” Reuven looked at me for a good long while and then said: “Nu, fine, come on Wednesday to the Tanya shiur at 1 Frishman Street.”*)

“But then I suddenly remembered an incident that once happened to me, and I thought to myself: What Divine Providence! I recalled that I went through the same thing when my father (Rabbi Tanchum a”h) was displeased by my stay

“After about half an hour, Reuven disconnected himself from the IV and told us, “That’s enough,” and demanded that we go back to Raanana to resume the class.

of course.” Ten minutes before Shabbos, Reuven arrived together with [his wife] Rivka and all the children. It was a wonderful Shabbos. During Shabbos, I asked Reuven: “Why did you have to tell me a story about three bachurim?”

Reuven replied: “I wanted to see if it was worth it to come to you for Shabbos. If you were prepared to accept three bachurim this way, then it would also be no problem to accept a whole family.”

(Rabbi Yigal Pizem)

### THE STRENGTH OF A HORSE

Reuven was asthmatic and endured some serious respiratory problems. One day, he came to Raanana for a Chassidus shiur,

ride there, Reuven insisted that I call the people at the class and tell them that they shouldn’t go away because the shiur will resume shortly. I didn’t argue with him and did as he said, although as a doctor, I thought that in his condition, he would surely have to be hospitalized to receive the treatment necessary to stabilize him.

We arrived at the Kaplan Medical Center, and Reuven immediately received a strong intravenous dosage of steroids – and what a dosage it was! The steroids began to take effect, and as is known with steroids, in addition to strengthening the lungs, they provide tremendous strength for a limited period of time. After about half an hour, Reuven disconnected himself from the IV and told us, “That’s

in Kibbutz Lavi (my brother Avraham had already been in the Chabad yeshiva in Lud for a while); at that time, he called me and said, 'Reuven, we have to go somewhere.' When I asked where we were going, my father replied, 'To yeshiva.' I knew exactly what he meant, and I refused. Then my father said something that really shocked me. 'Reuven, if you don't come with me, I'm a dead man.' Naturally, I then agreed to go with him (I rode on my motorcycle, while my father took the bus), but I wasn't particularly dressed for the occasion. I went into the zal to go and talk to Rabbi Shlomo Chaim Kesselman *a"h*. I could already see my father crying as he spoke with him and pointed in my direction. I'll never forget how Rabbi Shlomo Chaim looked at me from a distance, waggled his finger with a rejecting gesture, and then told my father that he has no interest in a 'meshugganeh' with shorts and a T-shirt. My father then said out loud, 'Reb Shlomo, **this is my son! Take him!**' As Rabbi Shlomo Chaim pursed his lips and thought for a moment, I came into the zal and told him, 'I'll do whatever you say,' and he agreed to accept me. I thought to myself: If Rabbi Shlomo Chaim agreed to take on a . . . like me..."

(Chanoch HaLevi Shachar)

### THE ONLY TREATMENT THAT HELPS

Once on our way back from the mikveh Reuven began

breathing rather heavily. "What are you doing about your respiratory problems?" I asked Reuven. "Are you treating it?"

"Yes, of course," Reuven immediately replied.

"What do you do?" I asked.

"I travel to the Rebbe," he said, "and when I come back, I have three or four months of respite."

(Chanoch HaLevi Shachar)

### KOS SHEL BRACHA, MOTZAEI SHAVUOS 5744

After two weeks during which the Rebbe rarely smiled and appeared with a very ominous look on his face, the simcha during the Shavuos holiday that year was rather limited. The bachurim went into low gear. The singing was somber, and the people passed in line very quickly.

Just as the person in line before Reuven approached the Rebbe, the Rebbe turned around to face the crowd and began giving wine to the people in the opposite line. The amazing thing at this turn was that the Rebbe gave out to far more people in relation to how much wine the cup could hold. Once the cup was refilled again, the Rebbe turned back to Reuven's line. The Rebbe gave wine to the first person in line and then to Reuven. Reuven then approached the Rebbe and said something in his ear. The Rebbe responded with a gesture of encouragement with his

hand and said "Amen." Reuven proceeded to do this a second time, and the Rebbe again made a sign of encouragement and smiled broadly. When Reuven did this a third time, those Chassidim in charge of maintaining order (or disorder, as they used to say in k'vutza) forcibly began to drag him away, as the Rebbe gestured with his hand yet again and gave another unusually big smile.

The Rebbe then turned to face the congregation again, and his smile had the immediate effect of intensifying the singing to a feverish pitch. The simcha was positively indescribable. The sharp shift from solemnity to happiness had a dramatic influence upon everyone. From that day forward, the Rebbe's conduct was extremely joyous.

(Chanoch HaLevi Shachar)

### SHTUS D'K'DUSHA

"When I came to the Rebbe and saw 770 for the very first time," Reuven recalled, "I bent down and kissed the floor in front of Beis Chayeinu. Some of the elder Chassidim were standing nearby, and they burst out laughing as they made a rotating gesture with their finger around their ear, suggesting that I'd lost my marbles. I was very insulted, and at my first meeting with the Rebbe, I requested a means of spiritual correction if I had done something wrong. The Rebbe smiled at me and said, 'Don't pay any attention to them.'"

(Chanoch HaLevi Shachar)

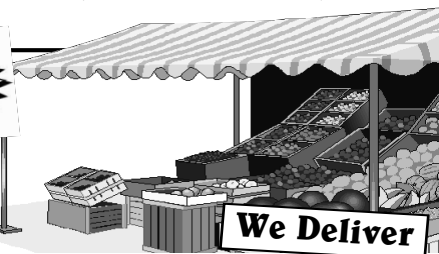
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# EMISSARIES OF MIRACLES

The following are a few of the special miracle stories related by shluchim at the recent Kinus HaShluchim.

By Chaim Bruk

## RABBI YONASAN BIGGS: T'FILLIN OF HASHGACHA PRATIS

I heard the following story from Rabbi Yonasan Biggs, shliach on Long Island:

"Lately, I've been feeling that something is not quite right and that I need to change something," said Rabbi Biggs to his wife.

"What's the problem?" she asked and then immediately advised, "Send your t'fillin and mezuzos to be checked."

"That's a great idea. Waiting for the mezuzos should not be a problem, but what t'fillin should I use while mine are being checked?"

"Why don't you ask the sofer to give you his t'fillin?"

Rabbi Biggs gave his t'fillin to the sofer after Shacharis and said, "Please finish checking these as soon as possible."

"Don't worry," said the sofer. "They will be ready for you before Shacharis tomorrow."

Rabbi Biggs was happy to hear this and went on his way. The next day before Shacharis he returned to the sofer for his t'fillin. He was disappointed when the sofer said, "I'm so sorry, but I suddenly and unexpectedly had a lot of work to do and didn't have a chance to check your t'fillin. Here, take my t'fillin. Use them today and tomorrow you will have your t'fillin back."

Rabbi Biggs took the sofer's t'fillin for Shacharis that day and, as they had arranged, he showed up the next morning. To his great disappointment, the sofer said the same thing he had said the day before, "I don't know what happened to me, but I didn't have a chance to check your t'fillin."

"But today is Friday," said

the shliach. "I need the t'fillin for mivtzaim."

"You know what?" said the sofer. "I'll give you a new pair of t'fillin that I recently wrote, and you can use them for mivtzaim."

Having no other choice, Rabbi Biggs took the new t'fillin. His own t'fillin were ready on Sunday and he received them from the sofer along with many apologies. Both of them promptly forgot the new t'fillin that had been taken for mivtzaim and thus remained in Rabbi Biggs' possession.

From the sofer's office, Rabbi Biggs went to Merkaz Stam on Kingston Avenue where someone pointed out a rip in his yarmulke, so he bought a new yarmulke.

After making his purchase, Rabbi Biggs set out for New Jersey for an appointment he had made with an acquaintance. He arrived at his destination only to find that his acquaintance was not at home, so he decided to do some shopping in the area.

The salesman in the first store he went into was Jewish. Rabbi Biggs politely asked him whether





Thousands of shluchim a few minutes before the formal picture of the shluchim was taken. Dozens of reporters can be seen documenting the event.

he had put on t'fillin.

"Uh, I put them on every day," said the man.

"And today?" asked Rabbi Biggs.

"Well, actually, I didn't put them on yet, but I have t'fillin at home and will put them on later. It's not comfortable for me to do it here, you know ... Hey, and would you happen to have new t'fillin for sale?"

Rabbi Biggs thought for a moment. New t'fillin? He always had mezuzos with him, but who carries around t'fillin for sale wherever he goes?

Then it hit him. Yes, these t'fillin that I have with me are the new t'fillin that the sofer gave me. How did I forget that I still have them, Rabbi Biggs thought to himself.

"Yes, I have t'fillin, but they aren't mine. I have to ask the sofer."

"Fine, let's call him. What's the number?"

Rabbi Biggs spoke to the sofer and asked him what price he wanted for the t'fillin. The

salesman immediately took out his checkbook and wrote out a check for the full amount. Then he said, "I didn't lie to you. I have t'fillin at home and I try to put them on every day, but I have a Jewish friend who doesn't put on t'fillin. I know that if he has t'fillin, he would use them. I bought these t'fillin for him."

"I have another question for you. Would you have a kippa to sell me?"

Rabbi Biggs realized why he had decided to buy a new yarmulke that day. He took the new yarmulke off his head, replaced it with his old one, and gave the new one to the salesman.

Amazed by the open Divine Providence he had witnessed, Rabbi Biggs said goodbye. But that wasn't the end of the story.

• • •

A few months went by and one day Rabbi Biggs went to New Jersey with his wife to do

some shopping. They went into a carpet store to find out how much it would cost to clean their carpet. As he always does, Rabbi Biggs asked the store owner if he put on t'fillin.

"The truth is that there was a time that I didn't put on t'fillin," said the man honestly. "Then a few months ago, a friend gave me t'fillin and a kippa as a gift. He bought them especially for me from a shliach of the Lubavitcher Rebbe. Since then, I put them on every day."

# **RABBI SHOLOM DOVBER KALMANSON: RABBI SCHNEERSOHN? THAT EXPLAINS EVERYTHING!**

I heard another story at the Kinus HaShluchim from Rabbi Sholom Dovber Kalmanson, shliach in Ohio:

"Rabbi Kalmanson?"

The man on the other end of the line sounded distressed.



“My daughter has started getting involved in all kinds of religions. You’ve got to help me. She’s studying in Cincinnati; I’m begging you to get in touch with her and get this nonsense out of her head.”

David, the man on the phone, surely thought that he was helping his daughter. What he didn’t know was that he was also (mainly) helping himself, but let’s not get ahead of ourselves.

Rabbi Kalmanson contacted the girl, and slowly she got back on track. Rabbi Kalmanson had never met the father, but the girl’s connection with the Chabad house became ongoing and consistent.

as the Rebbe had said and find a doctor *friend*. They found a doctor who met that description and he said that he had recently read in one of the medical journals about a doctor in New York who was working on developing a method for treating certain types of blindness.

“Maybe his approach will work in your situation,” he said to David.

At first, David didn’t want to travel to this doctor. He was despondent and offered his resignation at his work, but the company refused to accept his resignation.

After a lot of convincing on the part of Rabbi Kalmanson,

After she had been aroused from her faint, the doctor told her, “I started operating and after half an hour I realized I had finished whatever I had to do. I was completely bewildered. How could this be when the operation is supposed to take at least six hours? I opened my books again to see if I had forgotten anything and saw that I had done everything I was supposed to do. I have no explanation for this. It’s simply a miracle!”

After coming out of the anesthesia and being able to see already, without additional procedures, the doctor asked David, “Who told you about me?”

David told him, “The Rebbe’s shliach wrote to the Rebbe about my situation and he gave a bracha and advised me to speak to a doctor friend who referred me to you.”

“The Rebbe? Who is he?”

“Don’t you know? Rabbi Schneersohn of Brooklyn.”

“Ah, Rabbi Schneersohn. You should have said so. Now I understand everything. He has already arranged a number of miracles for us.”

#### RABBI YOSEF YITZCHOK LEVY: A SIGN FROM THE REBBE



Here is another amazing story that I heard from Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Levy, shliach in the Philippines:

The Israeli consul in the Philippines said to the shliach, “I heard about an older Jew

who is in a prison which is a two-hour flight from here.”

Rabbi Levy felt bad for the incarcerated Jew and in his mind

“Rabbi Levy felt like pinching himself to make sure he wasn’t dreaming. He had just asked the Rebbe to send him money for a ticket and here it was!”

One day, Rabbi Kalmanson received another call from the family, this time not from the father but from the daughter.

“Rabbi Kalmanson,” she said in tears. “My father suddenly went blind and the doctors don’t know how it happened or how to restore his sight! You must help us.”

Rabbi Kalmanson tried to calm her down, and he promised to write to the Rebbe immediately and ask for a bracha. He did so and the answer he received was, “**Consult with doctor friends.**”

He conveyed the answer to David who went to additional doctors. However, they all said they did not know the root of the problem and therefore they had nothing to offer him.

After another consultation with Rabbi Kalmanson, the shliach told them to do precisely

David finally agreed to visit the doctor suggested by the doctor friend. He went to New York and underwent an examination. The results showed that his case perfectly fit the approach the doctor was developing.

“The cure entails a complicated operation,” said the doctor. “It will take six hours.

Then you need to rest for a few days, after which I will insert new lenses in your eyes and after a few more days rest you will see again.”

An operation was scheduled, and on the appointed day David’s wife waited outside the operating room. Thirty minutes went by and the doctor appeared! She fainted on the spot for she assumed the operation had failed.

he addressed the Rebbe and said, "Rebbe, I really want to go see this Jew and see how I can be of help to him, but I don't have money for a ticket. If you send me money for a ticket, I will go and see him."

Not long afterward, Rabbi Levy received a phone call from one of the kosher agencies. "We would like you to fly to a certain area of the Philippines in order to supervise the production of a food item in a local factory."

Rabbi Levy felt like pinching himself to make sure he wasn't dreaming. He had just asked the Rebbe to send him money for a ticket and here it was! The area the factory was located in was precisely the place where the jail was.

The kashrus agency ordered a ticket and Rabbi Levy took the flight. Upon arriving at the prison and managing to get in, he met the older Jew who was excited to see him. The man told him, "I was very wealthy and doing well in business until things began going downhill. As a result, I got caught up in scams involving large sums of money. I was caught and sentenced to sit here in jail. The conditions here are horrendous and after a while I decided to end my life."

The man showed Rabbi Levy the knife he had prepared and added, "I decided to give myself one last chance. I said to G-d that if he didn't want me to take this drastic step, he should give me a sign. And you arrived! You are the sign!"

Rabbi Levy understood why the Rebbe had sent him to this forsaken place. From that point on, he took care of the incarcerated Jew. He was able to bring t'fillin in to the prison and from that day on, the man put t'fillin on every day.


At a certain point, the man was transferred to Manila where he was closer to Rabbi Levy. On Pesach night, Rabbi Levy walked a long way in order to bring him matzos and bolster his spirits. He told the man about the Rebbe and about Judaism, and the man's faith became stronger.

On his walk back to the Chabad house, Rabbi Levy and

## RABBI YITZCHOK LIFSH THE POWER OF A P'SAK DIN

Rabbi Yitzchok Lifsh, shliach in Tzfas, relates:

I had the privilege of being involved in getting rabbanim from all over the world to sign the p'sak din that the Rebbe is *b'chezkas Moshiach*. The Rebbe said, "This p'sak din from Sinai

 Then it hit him. Yes, these t'fillin that I have with me are the new t'fillin that the sofer gave me. How did I forget that I still have them, Rabbi Biggs thought to himself.

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his brother-in-law who had accompanied him stopped for a rest. They met a couple who told them that their ancestors were Marranos from Spain who had arrived in the Philippines via Cuba. The couple asked Rabbi Levy and his brother-in-law where they were coming from and Rabbi Levy told them. It turned out that the couple was very wealthy and they owned a business located exactly opposite the prison the man was in. They began delivering food products to the man which further lifted his spirits.

Rabbi Levy also arranged for a Filipino, who observes the seven Noachide laws, to visit the inmate and bring him food packages. One day this Filipino told Rabbi Levy that the man had died in jail. The community brought him to a Jewish burial in Manila.

This was yet another Jew who had the merit of returning to his roots in his final years, thanks to the Rebbe MH"M.

penetrated the parameters of the world." This year at the Kinus HaShluchim a certain shliach at a university told me an amazing story that illustrates the impact of the p'sak din.

This shliach works in a place with many students and it's not easy establishing connections with all of them. This is the reason why with many of them, the relationship consists merely of a nod of the head in greeting when they pass by.

When this campus shliach received a copy of the p'sak din, he hung it up in a prominent place. Since then, a huge change developed between him and the students. Many of them began approaching him with questions. This led to new shiurim and an uptick in mitvza t'fillin. The shliach saw that the p'sak din had a certain power which expresses the only remaining shlichus that needs to be done, kabbalas p'nei Moshiach, through which all other aspects of shlichus are accomplished.

# REACHING OUT FROM THE OTHER SIDE

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**Even after their passing, some souls are able to have an influence on our world. \* Presented for Parshas VaYechi, which ends with the passing of Yosef who continued to have a spiritual impact on Egypt even after his death.**

By Rabbi Yaakov Shmuelewitz

Shliach, Beit Shaan

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**T**he Rebbe gave a sicha in 5747 in which he asks how the book of B'Reishis can end with the passing of Yosef who is placed in a coffin in Egypt. We have a principle that "we conclude with good." Is Yosef's leaving this world good? Is this what we should be saying "Chazak, Chazak, V'Nis'chazek" about?

The Rebbe answers that yes, it is good news, and it is only with the strength of this news that we can move on to the next story, "And these are the names of the Jewish people who came to Egypt." In other words, after the empowerment from the stories of the three Avos throughout the book of B'Reishis, we reach the epitome of strength for the period of exile in Egypt. The fact that we know that Yosef HaTzaddik is with us in exile is what gives us the strength to prevail in galus. Furthermore, it enables us to rule (like Yosef) over the galus, and fortifies the bitachon that we

will soon leave with the true and complete Geula.

The Rebbe goes on to relate this to the Yosef of our generation, the Rebbe Rayatz, who is in the "lower hemisphere" (the United States), and he gives us the requisite strength for the final days of galus and mainly, the bitachon that Moshiach is coming.

This week, I will share some shlichus stories about Jews who received chizuk from people who were no longer in this world.

## CORPORATE SHLICHUS

Yisroel G. is a Lubavitcher Chassid and is an employee of a large aeronautics company in the center of Israel. I have written about him before and about his outreach activities at his place of employment and on the business trips he makes. He came back from one of these trips abroad with a beautiful story of hashgacha pratis and

the intervention of grandparents from the Next World.

Yisroel was invited to attend an international convention of aeronautical engineers to be held in S Diego. The invitation was signed by two senior managers who work for a company that produces jet engines in the US, along with a list of those in charge of various aspects of the event. Yisroel emailed the person in charge of lodging and meals and asked whether there would be kosher food. He also did some research of his own and found two caterers in S Diego who offer kosher food. He sent an email saying that he would attend only if they ordered meals for him from one of these two caterers.

Since the person in charge of handling accommodations did not respond to any of his queries and the date of the convention was fast approaching, he turned to the two main organizers of the event to find out about kosher meals. The first one did





Rabbi Yehuda Dunin walking towards security forces near the burnt bus in the Carmel Forest.

not respond and the second one did. Yisroel asked why he hadn't received a response from the person responsible and was told that he had left the position.

Yisroel explained that he is a religious Jew and he needed kosher food at the convention. The man told him he would personally take care of it and said he knew what kosher food is because in the distant past he had gotten a little Jewish education from his mother and grandmother. This was all Yisroel needed to hear in order to understand why he was being sent to this convention in California. He needed to reach out to this Jew.

### **HIS SECOND BAR MITZVA**

Yisroel flew to the convention, attended all the sessions and viewed all the exhibits, but he was waiting for an opportunity to meet the Jewish manager. The opportunity arose during Happy

Hour. He went over to the man whose name was Michael, and the conversation went like this:

Yisroel: Hi, I'm Yisroel from Israel. You told me about the little Jewish education you got from your mother and grandmother.

Michael: Sure. My mother and grandmother were Jewish. They even made me a bar mitzva when I turned 13.

Yisroel: How nice. Would you like to put on t'fillin?

Michael: What's t'fillin?

Yisroel took out t'fillin and Michael said he had never seen anything like that before.

Yisroel (bewildered): Just a moment ago you told me you had a bar mitzva?

Michael: Right, but I've never seen this in my life. I just remember that they put a white scarf (maybe some kind of tallis) on me, but this is the first time I'm seeing t'fillin.

Yisroel: So would you like to

put them on now?

Michael: Okay.

Yisroel and Michael went off to a side room where, for the first time in his life, in his late fifties, Michael celebrated his real bar mitzva by putting on t'fillin. Upon removing them, Michael said, "While the t'fillin were on me, I felt my grandmother looking at me from the World of Truth and smiling."

Yisroel returned to Eretz Yisroel and continued to keep in touch by phone with Michael. Erev Yud-Tes Kislev two years ago, Yisroel called Michael. Michael excitedly told him the following extraordinary story:

"My sister is moving and she organized a family gathering. I must pause here to say that my sister had been living in my grandmother's house. When I arrived for the party, while I was still standing in the entrance to the house, she told me they had



**All the roads were blocked and were choked with smoke and flames. On the right, Ein Hod was on fire; on the left, Yemin Ored was on fire ... the police only allowed traffic in one direction, out of the kibbutz. However, Rabbi Axelrod explained to the police that he had to get to the kibbutz in order to save the Sifrei Torah. Roadblock after roadblock, the policemen gave in and allowed him to pass.**

organized the house and my grandparents' belongings. Then she gave me a closed bag and said, 'This was in Grandma's apartment. I think it will be of interest to you.' I opened the bag and saw my grandfather's t'fillin."

Michael sounded very emotional over this heavenly sign that he received not too long after he put on t'fillin for the first time.

### **CHABAD CANNOT BE STOPPED BY ROADBLOCKS**

Rabbi Yehuda Dunin, shliach in Chaifa, did a tremendous amount of work last year following the Carmel conflagration. Memories of his father's home infused him with strength and encouragement during the exhausting days on the roads around the burning forest when hundreds of families were evacuated from their homes.

He was helped by dozens of friends of the Chabad house, bachurim from the yeshiva in Tzfas, and others. They went out to support the rescue and security forces whether with lighting the menorah, distributing doughnuts, or putting on t'fillin. Rabbi Dunin related that despite the numerous roadblocks set up by security, and although they kept out all the gawkers, journalists and Knesset members, when Chabad showed

up with menorahs on their cars, the gates were opened. Everyone understood the importance of their presence during those difficult days.

A large section of Kibbutz Beit Oran went up in flames after all the residents were evacuated. Rabbi Dunin has memories of this kibbutz from when his father, Rabbi Reuven Dunin a"h would give a shiur there. Among the members of the kibbutz at that time was Danny Saadi who would come every week to take Rabbi Reuven to the shiur and then bring him back. Today, Danny is a pillar of the Chabad community in Natrat Ilit.

Rabbi Yehuda Dunin remembers that time well, when his father would return from Beit Oran with moving stories about another Jew who bravely put up a mezuzah or joined a shiur, etc. These were completely unacceptable activities at the kibbutz at that time.

As soon as Rabbi Yehuda heard that the residents of Beit Oran were allowed to return home, he was among the first to arrive in order to see how he could help. The unfortunate residents returned to find their homes completely destroyed. They wandered around the rubble helplessly. Rabbi Dunin and his assistants went from family to family offering words of

consolation and support.

There was one woman who refused to be consoled. She said to Rabbi Dunin, "I really admire Chabad and the work that you do. You always appear where you are needed, in the army, abroad, and now here too. I am willing to light the menorah and eat a doughnut; there is just one thing I ask of you. Don't tell me, 'Chag Sameiach.' I can't hear that now when I see my home destroyed." R' Dunin offered a little encouragement and a little emuna.

"The most encouraging thing we said to them was the aphorism that after a fire you become rich," said Rabbi Dunin.

### **TEN SIFREI TORAH IN THE SHLIACH'S CAR**

Rabbi Moshe Axelrod, shliach in Atlit, also spent days and night in the Carmel area. On the second night of the blaze he got a phone call from a student of one of the classes he gave at Kibbutz Nir Etzyon. Atlit is located at the foot of Mount Carmel and Rabbi Axelrod gives shiurim to dozens of mekuravim in Nir Etzyon, Ein Hod, and Yemin Ored. Those three locations were in the heart of the conflagration.

Police cars announced that all residents of Nir Etzyon should leave their homes because the fire had reached the edge of the kibbutz. They had a few minutes to decide what to take with them before fleeing for their lives. One of Rabbi Axelrod's students had the presence of mind to wonder what would happen to the Sifrei Torah. He knew who he could call in this emergency – the Rebbe's shliach. He called Rabbi Axelrod and told him, "They are evacuating the kibbutz. Come and save the Sifrei Torah!"

Rabbi Axelrod immediately got into his car and raced towards Nir Etzyon. All the roads were blocked and were choked with smoke and flames. On the right, Ein Hod was on fire; on the left, Yemin Ored was on fire. On the road leading to and from Nir Etzyon the police only allowed traffic in one direction, out of the kibbutz. However, Rabbi Axelrod explained to the police that he had to get to the kibbutz in order to save the Sifrei Torah. Roadblock after roadblock, the policemen gave in and allowed him to pass.

He arrived at the kibbutz and went directly to the shul where there were six Sifrei Torah. He put them in, two by two, into

his car and then raced over to the guesthouse where there were another four Sifrei Torah. Only then, surrounded by ten Sifrei Torah, did the shliach leave the kibbutz.

It turned out that the kibbutz was not harmed in the blaze, but in the meantime, he brought the Sifrei Torah to the Chabad house in Atlit until the fire was extinguished.

### THE GABBAI SAID TO CHECK THE SIFREI TORAH

When Rabbi Axelrod took the Sifrei Torah, he was reminded of another rescue story concerning Sifrei Torah. Yechezkel Pinker a"h was the dedicated gabbai of

the central Ashkenazi shul in Atlit for many years. Shortly after he passed away, the gabbai appeared three times in a dream to the rabbi of the city who had since left Atlit for a senior position in Yerushalayim. The gabbai told the rabbi that the Torah scroll in the shul was pasul.

After the dream repeated itself three times, the rav in Yerushalayim told the shliach in Atlit about it. All the Sifrei Torah were taken to be checked and whatever needed fixing was fixed. The rabbi in Yerushalayim enjoyed peaceful nights once again without disturbing dreams about Sifrei Torah that needed fixing.

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# A WAYFARER'S ODE TO SHLICHUS

## BIO

Moshe Shiffman holds a law degree from Hebrew University and has been a lawyer since 1979. He specializes in a wide range of civil actions, negotiations, drawing up contracts, civil and criminal litigation, including zoning, construction and corporate licensing. He also served as a judge on the disciplinary court of the law licensing office. Currently, he holds the position of honorary consul to Austria, and is a certified arbitrator who is involved in community affairs in Eilat and beyond.



At the age of 60, Moshe Shiffman, a senior lawyer who is very active in various social movements, went to India for a month and a half. \* Upon his arrival in Rishikesh, he saw the incredible work of Chabad and got to know the bachurim Meir Boktzin and Menachem Mendel Thaler, who made a tremendous impression on him. \* He kept a diary of his experiences and impressions about the Shepherd of Israel who sits in Brooklyn and whose net is spread as far as the Far East.

## MID-LIFE TOUR

The scene is the Far East, India, the first night of Sukkos. I crowd in together with the younger generation in the Chabad house sukka. There are hundreds of backpackers here. For most of them, this is the trip they take after their army service and for me too, this is my “after the army” trip with a delay of about forty years.

Lively singing of

“V’Samachta B’Chagecha,” divrei Torah, and fascinating stories are the main course. It is an intense evening run by two young Chabad emissaries from the yeshiva in Brooklyn. From the very start it is apparent, though not fully understood, what power lies in shlichus and I still haven’t said anything about the **meshaleiach**, the Rebbe, who provides the power.

Actually, without a Chabad house, this wonderful trip may

not have gotten off the ground. My 60<sup>th</sup> birthday was on the 25<sup>th</sup> of Elul. I am here alone for a month and a half. I left behind my wife, children, my busy high pressure law firm, and a home in the early stages of construction. A month and a half! (Just changing and arranging my court schedule and important meetings took a month and a half). The only way I could make a trip like this was to do it during the holidays, when the extended family gets together and the office is closed for a part of the time.

How did I arrange it? I simply (it's interesting how something so complicated and different can be so simple) looked around on the Internet and found out where there are active Chabad houses. I opened a map of the Chabad houses in India and then I plotted my mid-life trip. As I said, it was simple.

Chabad houses and travel plans worked in perfect sync, and now I am sitting and contemplating this massive undertaking which is a Chabad house. It entails renting a house, getting manpower, bringing an entire Chabad library, a Torah scroll, the 4 minim, kosher food, sh'chita, finding a place to live, learning a new language, financing, getting donors, fundraising. All this is done without any solid financial backing, and I have yet to mention the glowing faces, the hugs, the love and more.

### **SIMPLE OR COMPLICATED?**

Is it simple? It depends on who you ask. If you were to ask me, it's insanely complicated, but if you ask Meir and Mendel and the others, it's simple.

Not enough people understand what shlichus, real shlichus, is about. We are always





Moshe Shiffman with Mendy Thaler at the Chabad house in Rishikesh  
(photo by Hutch Axilrod)

**“You are connected to the source, to the sender, to shlichus. You are not connected to the place you are sent to; you came to influence and not to be influenced.”**

looking for the bottom line, profit margins, results that fit our goals. Sometimes we are better than that and we help more; sometimes less and sometimes more. But it's all with a reason, with an agenda of some sort.

The shliach of the Rebbe, on the other hand, doesn't play by these rules. He is a simple channel, clean and hollow, who transmits the blessing, the message, Torah, **through him** to someone else. He has no agenda; he is a hollow and clean pipeline with no desires of his own.

If you were to ask him what he really wants, he would say – to be in 770 with my friends and my studies, with all the familiar comforts. However: 1) Nobody

asks, and 2) if asked, a genuine Chabad Chassid would say: Here I am, ready to be sent wherever you send me.

What self-negation, what mesirus nefesh. The “I” is nullified to shlichus, to the one who sends him. There is no “I.” The existence of an “I” is only as a tool in the service of an idea, a person, a tzaddik, G-d and His people Israel.

It's not normal, it's not ordinary. But this is the way it is when there is an inflamed impassioned heart, ablaze with such a lofty light. You are connected to the source, to the sender, to shlichus. You are not connected to the place you are sent to; you came to influence

and not to be influenced.

There is no minyan? But there is one in 770. There are no friends? In 770 there are. No family? The Jewish people are your family to whom you spread Ahavas Yisroel, love for Torah and love for G-d, in whatever corner of the world they are in.

Is it hard? Maybe, but that isn't on the list of considerations and concerns of the shliach. (The missile is fueled up, the ignition sequence is fired, and off it goes). The fire burns constantly.

## WE ARE HERE, FOR YOU!

There is no time for yourself. You need to run to the coffee houses where Israelis congregate and show them you are here and available. You think India is spirituality? One minute, it might look that way, but we are here to show you that there is a more accessible option, very accessible, “in your mouth and in your hearts, to do it.”

You see sadhus, idols, swamis, ashrams, bells, candles, bangles, lots of gold and lots of orange. Looks good to you? It attracts you because a Jew by nature seeks the spirit and not just the material.

Here we are, shluchim of the Rebbe, with the familiar Chabad hat, tzitzis out, a suit, available in every forsaken place, wherever the sitra achra rears its ugly head and the Jew or innocent Israeli is likely to fall.

Here we are. We haven't changed our appearance. We look just as we do in 770 and when we stood jammed together to listen to the Rebbe. It's the same uniform, the same doctrine, the same Torah; it's just that it's all deeper. Shlichus isn't something that comes out in the wash; time does not vanquish it.

By definition, it is connected with the sender, to the message, to devotion.

Rishikesh is a city full, and I mean full, of idols. These young fellows, like Aharon HaKohen, go through the camp with the “fire-pans” and atone for the wayward sons and invite them to come back home. They don’t look like standard Israelis; they don’t look like wayward youth. They look like Jews. And whoever looks at them, their work, sweat, supreme efforts, lack of shame, along with the luminous and welcoming Chabad face which is so different and special – must perforce, look at our Father in heaven.

The sense of responsibility for every Jew, no matter what his current status may be, is constantly felt. “When you count diamonds you don’t tire,” is not just a nice line, but their way of life. What more is needed? More t’fillin, another shake of the four minim, another invitation for a Shabbos meal, another trip to the coffee houses or the “smokehouses” where there sit beautiful, pure, Jewish souls that are a bit confused and shrouded in mind-altering smoke.

Give to them with a “Yechi Adoneinu,” give to them with a hug, give to them with a smile, open for them an opening like the eye of a needle ...

## THE ULTIMATE CASE STUDY

I have been a round for a while, “*Ben Shishim L’ zikna*” (60 years to old age), and I must say that from the perspective of years, organization, operational form, even public relations and franchise expansion – Chabad houses are a phenomenon that will be written about in books. It will be studied by every



Meir Boktzin and Mendy Thaler with Chabad house activity behind them  
(photo by Hutch Axilrod)

**“More t’fillin, another shake of the four minim, another invitation for a Shabbos meal, another trip to the coffee houses or the “smokehouses” where there sit beautiful, pure, Jewish souls that are a bit confused and shrouded in mind-altering smoke.**

self-respecting financial or commercial organization, not to mention educational institutions.

A fire shall burn and not be extinguished or dimmed; amazingly, it will grow and grow until the coming of Moshiach!

## THE REBBE IS HERE!

Where is the Rebbe? I declare – taking full responsibility for the statement – that he is here! I don’t want to argue and I certainly don’t want to offend other people and their views, but this is the picture – more Chabad houses, more shluchim, another point on the map, another person putting on t’fillin, another

bracha, another ritual washing of hands, and a little bit of learning about the beinoni. Another smile and another Jew drawn out of the filth; it’s all done with a smile, with unflagging energy. Whoa, what a sweat of holiness. Shlichus.

As for me, I look, write, talk, jabber, praise, extol. An old man in contrast with these young shluchim, who could be my children and who have accomplished so much until this point, not to mention what will be in the future...

Yasher ko’ach and long live the Rebbe who sent you. May all your hopes be realized, and ours as well.

# YOU HAVE REACHED YOUR DESTINATION

By Rabbi Heschel Greenberg

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



## JACOB'S REQUEST AND "DEFENSE"

Jacob is getting ready to depart from this world and summons his son Joseph to his bedside. Jacob makes a request of Joseph to bury him with his parents and grandparents in his ancestral burial plot in the Cave of Machpelah in the Land of Canaan.

A while later, Joseph was told that his father was ill, and he came with his two sons Menasheh and Ephraim to Jacob who then blessed them and made them equal to Jacob's sons. As a result of this blessing they would be counted as two separate tribes.

The Torah then follows this part of the narrative with Jacob's recounting the passing and burial of Rachel, "When I was coming from Padan Rachel died on me, while traveling through the land of Canaan, when there was still a stretch of land to reach Efras, and I buried her on the way to Efras, in Beis Lechem."

According to Rashi, Jacob was providing a "defense" of his burial of Rachel, Joseph's mother, while still on the road and not in the Cave of Machpelah where he had buried his wife Leah and where the other Patriarchs and Matriarchs were buried.

As Rashi explains, Jacob was concerned that Joseph might harbor some ill feelings towards

him for asking to be buried in the Cave of Machpelah, which he did not do for his wife Rachel. Jacob therefore intimated to Joseph that it was not intended as a slight to Rachel; rather it was Divinely ordained that she be buried on the road so that in the future when the Jews were exiled by the Babylonians they would stop at her gravesite to pray for their return and that G-d had promised her that her "children will be returned to their boundary."

Commentators raise the question about why Jacob did not mention this matter before when he made the original request of Joseph to bury him in Canaan. And what connection is there between Jacob's promotion of Ephraim and Menasheh to the status of Tribes with his need to allay Joseph's misgiving about his father's request to be buried in Canaan?

The simple answer is that Jacob did not suspect that Joseph would, G-d forbid, harbor any negative feelings against him for not burying his mother in the Cave of Machpelah. In Joseph's mind, it was a sign that although Rachel was initially Jacob's preferred wife, Leah ultimately inherited that position after Leah bore him six of the twelve tribes. Her preeminent role in establishing a Jewish nation conferred upon her a status superior to that of Rachel. And

since there was room for only one wife to be buried in the Cave of Machpelah, he had no choice but to bury Rachel on the road.

However, now that Jacob had indicated that Joseph's children were to be promoted to a position that equaled Reuven and Shimon, the two eldest sons of Jacob and Leah, it served as a sign that, on the contrary, Rachel was still the preferred wife of Jacob. Joseph would thus have been justified in wondering why Rachel was not treated as a Matriarch to be buried in the Cave of Machpelah with the other Matriarchs. Why was that place reserved for Leah who died much later?

Jacob, anticipating Joseph's question, addressed this issue precisely at this time when he indicated that Joseph actually occupied a higher position than that of the other tribes and that Rachel's burial on the road was not a sign of her inferior position.

## THE TWO KINGDOMS

One can understand Joseph's concern about where his mother Rachel was buried on another level.

Joseph knew that the Jewish people were to go through two phases; a temporary phase of exile and a permanent phase of peace and Redemption. These two phases are represented by the division of the Jewish nation into two: Joseph's descendants were to occupy positions of




leadership in their own portion of the Land of Israel. Jeroboam, the first king of the breakaway kingdom of Israel was a descendent of Ephraim. He and his successors—until their exile at the hands of the Assyrians—would rival the kings from the tribe of Judah, the dominant son of Leah.

What was the most salient difference between these two Kingdoms?

Rambam explains that although the *Malchei Yisroel*, the Kings of Israel, as they were called, were divinely ordained to be kings, nevertheless their power and dominion was intended, by G-d's design, to be only of a temporary nature. Kingship was given to them provisionally whereas the Davidic dynasty that descended from Judah, was to remain forever.

Another manifestation of this difference can be seen in the two leaders who will be responsible for the future Redemption: The Talmud (Sukka 52b) tells us that there are two Moshiach's: Moshiach ben Yosef, the descendent of Joseph; and Moshiach ben Dovid, the descendent of David. The role of Moshiach from the tribe of Joseph is to pave the way for the ultimate Moshiach. One of his responsibilities according to Midrashic sources is to wage war against the enemies of Israel. According to some sources he will be killed in this war. Thus his role is of a temporary nature. Indeed, according to Rabbi Saadia Gaon the very appearance of Moshiach ben Yosef is tentative. There might not be a need for his coming if the Jewish people are already sufficiently prepared for Moshiach ben Dovid.

In Chassidic sources based on the teachings of the Zohar there

 In the distant past we had to place greater emphasis on the journey itself. As we get closer to the end the focus has to gradually turn from the journey to the destination.

is some indication that Moshiach ben Yosef and Moshiach ben Dovid may actually be one and the same person. The different titles he is given represent different phases in the process of the Redemption. The Moshiach ben Yosef phase is the one that involves Moshiach's need to fight the battles, spiritual and perhaps even physical, to remove the impediments to the building of the Holy Temple. Moshiach ben Dovid is the appellation given to Moshiach in his role as the builder of the Temple and the one who will usher in an age of permanent goodness, peace, and heightened awareness of G-d.

In short, the kings that have arisen from Joseph will be intended to play a provisional and tentative role, while the leaders from Judah and King David will be intended to be the ultimate and permanent leaders of the Jewish people. The former is the leader and inspiration for the journey; the latter is the one who greets us at the gates of our destination and ushers us in.

Thus Joseph's knowledge that his mother Rachel was buried on the road did not initially disturb him. He realized that Rachel's, and thus Joseph's own role, was an "on the road" role, and intended to keep us going even when we were/are in a holding pattern. Rachel was the Matriarch who would beseech the Al-mighty when the Jews would be on their way out of Israel into the Babylonian exile. Rachel epitomizes the loving mother who cares for her

children particularly when they are not in their home and are in distress. Rachel is the mother of the Jewish nation in their state of temporary displacement as they wander through the highways and byways of exile.

## JOSEPH WAS BAFFLED

However after Jacob had made it clear that Joseph would enjoy the status of the first born in that he would receive a double portion of the Land of Israel by making his two sons Ephraim and Menasheh equal to the tribes of Reuven and Shimon, Joseph was baffled. If his role was to be as permanent and solid as his brothers, the sons of Leah, why then was his mother Rachel relegated to the "on the road" resting place?

The answer is that, in truth, nothing changed in terms of Rachel's and Joseph's role. They were the ones whose function it was to pave the way for the coming of Moshiach and of the ultimate Redemption. And indeed, in terms of preserving us in exile and preparing us for the future Redemption, most of the credit goes to Rachel and Joseph. However, when it comes to the actual process of Redemption it is Judah and his descendant Moshiach who plays the more prominent role.

And while it was true that Joseph's sons would be equal to Reuven and Shimon, they were not equal to the tribe of Judah, whose descendants would include King David and the

Moshiach ben Dovid.

Jacob therefore wanted Joseph to know that his role, and that of Rachel, would be to empower us to make the journey in and out of exile, but that ultimately this journey will come to an end at which time the Moshiach who descends from David and from Leah will assume the permanent leadership role.

## THE JOURNEY HAS AN END

The message to us is that as long as we are in exile we need to derive inspiration and empowerment to persevere and

even thrive from the Joseph model of leadership. However, we must also realize that the journey does have an end. In the distant past we had to place greater emphasis on the journey itself. As we get closer to the end the focus has to gradually turn from the journey to the destination. How much more so, in the present day and age—the one that the Rebbe has designated as the “last generation of exile and the first generation of Redemption,” and particularly after the Rebbe’s declaration that “the time of your Redemption has arrived”—our focus has to turn from the Rachel-Joseph “on

the road” dynamic to the “we have arrived” and the “now it is time for us to greet Moshiach” mindset and approach to life.

To be sure, nothing has changed in terms of our observance of the Torah and its commandments. The difference lies in the focus. Whereas in the past we were supposed to concentrate on getting closer to our destination by virtue of our Mitzvah observance, now the objective is to study Torah and perform the Mitzvos as a way of greeting and welcoming Moshiach and the Redemption into our midst.

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transcend the self and draw our spiritual energy from a source beyond our normal potential.

We live in a world of lies. Every message is basically a deception of some sort, with ulterior motives so convoluted you need a PhD in quantum mechanics to sort them out. But we also live in a world with an

incredible capacity for kindness, both manifest and in potential. Levels of giving, despite the economic uncertainties, are at unprecedented highs. The idea that human rights trump individual ambition is an accepted fact. The value of the spirit is finally overtaking the obsession with the hedonistic pursuit of pleasure. The world is getting there, and the avenue it is

traveling on is kindness.

Truth is when it works. Kindness is effective as a light that illuminates darkness and melts the obstacles of truth. It empowers us to overcome all of our deficiencies, and achieve our dreams in spite of ourselves. In other words, through kindness we get to truth. Eventually.

*Reproduced with permission  
from Exodus Magazine*

### Continued from page 42

Eliezer, perek 38. Shoshana’s eyes lit up, and she smiled for the first time in 24 hours. “Thanks, Mrs. Gold! Now I know what to talk about.”

On the day that the assignment was due, Shoshana came to class ready to give her speech. As she listened to each girl, she was truly impressed by the inspiring personalities they described. When her turn came to speak, she was still a bit nervous, but stood up straight and tall.

“My personal hero is Ossnas bas Potifera, who married Yosef in Egypt. According to the Midrash, she was actually the daughter of Dina, born under difficult circumstances and adopted by Potifar and his wife. Despite of all these drawbacks, she ended up reconnecting to her heritage, and married Yosef. Interestingly enough, it is specifically her children that are given the status of being considered equal to their uncles, the sons of Yaakov. Efraim and Menasheh each head their own tribes. Yosef and Osnass managed to raise G-d-

fearing children while living alone in Galus. In fact, Jewish parents to this day bless their children that they should be like Efraim and Menasheh.

“Learning about Ossnas taught me that although you do not choose the circumstances of your birth or upbringing, you can (and will) find your way back to your people, sooner or later. A diamond doesn’t lose its value just because it was buried in the ground for while. Just clean it off, and you will see its brilliant shine.”

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

Dear Anash שיחיו,

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

# BUBBE'S LAST SMILE

Nothing happened in Heishke's family in the usual manner. Everything transpired in an intense fashion as in a dramatic and jolting suspense story.

\* The lengthy, incurable illness of his beloved grandmother, her pain-filled waning years and a frightening scene on Motzaei Yom Kippur, all seared the soul of this young boy who grappled with these memories for many months.

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By Rabbi Yehoshua Dubrawski a"h

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## CHILDREN, SAY T'HILLIM

I never really knew my father's mother, Bubbe Aidele (wife of Zeide Mendel Dubrawski). She was very sick and suffered terribly. She had jaundice which was incurable and was confined to bed for over a year and a half. In addition to terrible pain, she suffered from unceasing itching. She scratched her skin incessantly and scraped her body with shards not knowing where to scratch first. She literally ripped off her skin, and so her flesh was yellow and covered with wounds.

I heard from my grandfather that my grandmother, who was petite, had a high pain threshold, but not for these "tribulations of Job" that she suffered from day and night. She often burst into tears from the depths of her heart. My sisters and I would stand in the doorway of her room and swallow our tears. We rarely entered her room since Bubbe would immediately send us out, saying that her condition was very contagious. From time to

time she would say: "Children, say a little T'hillim ... perhaps He will have mercy."

From a very early age I taught myself to use my eyes instead of my mouth. I was not talkative and I did not ask questions, even of my parents. For the most part, I read about Bubbe's condition in their unhappy expressions. I also saw a lot on the faces of the doctors who came and went. A wrinkled forehead and the motions of their hands indicated helplessness.

The doctors of the town prescribed potions, salves and powders, but nothing helped. With a lot of protektzia and help from the family in Leningrad, they arranged for Bubbe to be examined by a well-known doctor in Leningrad. During that time, it wasn't even possible to dream about transferring a patient by ambulance, and so Bubbe, who was so sick and jaundiced and cut up by the terrible scratching, had to travel like everyone else (and even that, with protektzia) on a crowded train.



## THE FINAL JOURNEY

Bubbe's niece (my aunt) Sara'le, a quiet girl of 13, accompanied her. For various reasons nobody in the family could go along. Young Sara'le was able to accomplish what two adults with experience would not have been able to accomplish. Years later, my aunt described her adventures on that trip with such simplicity. She spoke of the superhuman efforts and the suffering of old, sick Bubbe and her young escort.

On the crowded train, among irritable passengers, Bubbe with her sunken cheeks refrained from scratching too much and tried to cover and hide her injured skin and yellow skin tone.

As for Sara'le, she did not rest for a moment. She constantly tried to conceal Bubbe; covering her, smearing cream on her open wounds, squeezing into the "rest facilities" with her heavily swaddled grandmother and making believe she didn't hear the grumblings and curses of the passengers.

The return trip from Leningrad was far worse. The small measure of hope that still burned when they traveled to Leningrad was entirely extinguished on their way back. Sara'le knew this and Bubbe realized this. The strength Bubbe and Sara'le had, to deal with the

harsh illness and the ability to hide the wounds as best as they could, had waned. The doctors in Leningrad said the same thing the local doctors had said – they could not help her.

Even before Bubbe returned, I already knew the bad news from Leningrad. I had seen the sad faces of Zeide and my father and the tear-filled eyes of my mother. I did not have enough courage to be home when Bubbe and Sara'le returned. One of my favorite things was traveling with Meir Vinetzky the wagon driver in his wagon with the blind horse. My mother wanted to take me to meet Bubbe at the train station, but I demurred. I think my mother understood the reason.

## RETURNING TO TOWN

I left the house before Bubbe returned and looked for a place to hide. I knew that a good boy did not behave this way and that I should have stayed at home to wait for Bubbe while reciting T'hilim. As I thought about this, I walked to the end of the courtyard and lay in the tall grass behind the cellar with my face skyward. That moment remains very clear in my memory, since it was the first time I contemplated the neshama rising heavenward after death. I stared at the distant blue sky and began to tremble. It was so distant and deep!

I lay among the grass and could not get rid of the terrible future visions I had regarding Bubbe. I tried recalling verses from T'hilim that I knew by heart, but the words eluded me. Zeide said T'hilim, as did my father and my mother, but as for me, nothing! And Bubbe ... how would my T'hilim help? I had never felt so bitter before in my life. Afterwards, I did not know whether I slept or just lost myself

in my thoughts. I awoke to the sound of my mother calling from the house, "Heishke, Heishke, where are you?"

At first I did not respond and remained lying there behind the cellar. But then I could not take it anymore, and I tore myself away from my spot and went to the house. My mother angrily said, "Aren't you ashamed? Bubbe returned *ois mentch* (Yid. lit. not human, i.e. completely out of sorts). She has no strength to speak, not even to groan, but when she saw that you weren't here, she began to whisper, 'Heishke, where is Heishke?' That's the first thing she said."

I went inside where Bubbe was already lying down, exhausted, in bed. I stood mute. Bubbe was lying there in a strange sort of silence, peacefully, without scratching, without groaning, her eyes closed. I blurted out, "Bubbe!"

She slowly turned her head in my direction and sighed faintly along with a weak smile. That was the last smile of hers that I saw.

## SCENT OF DEATH

I could never understand it. Why was it that from the time Bubbe came back from Leningrad until her final day I did not remember a thing about her? It is as though it was deleted, as though throughout that time I wasn't home. I only now remember how on Yom Kippur afternoon, my father and grandfather disappeared from shul (shortly before the NKVD closed the last shul). A young man from the other Chassidishe family, Robinson, kept an eye on me and on Motzaei Yom Kippur he brought me home.

I hardly recognized my house. There was a lot of light,

much activity, many people, and still and all, an unusual silence. Nobody sat at the table eating, they just took something to eat while standing around or sitting off to the side. All the relatives came. My father stood near the door to my grandmother's room, silently crying into the palms of his hands.

With trembling legs and a chill up my spine, I slipped into Bubbe's room. I could barely absorb what my eyes were seeing for the very first time in my life. Bubbe's bed was empty. In the middle of the room, something small was lying on the floor covered with a sheet, apparently Bubbe. She was no longer alive and looked so small. A candle stood on the floor next to her. Zeide stood with his face to the window. Was he crying? I had never seen Zeide cry; maybe when his young daughter Chiena died a few years prior?

They stood around, whispering, T'hilim I suppose. Bubbe's sister Miriam cried audibly, my mother sobbed quietly with her hands over her face. And Bubbe didn't hear? She wasn't moving even under the sheet? I looked at the large black shadows on the walls and saw in them threatening movements of frightening occurrences that I myself did not fully understand.

I nodded off on the bed and woke up in confusion. People came in and out. They brought various utensils made of wood and tin and pails of water. Then the men left and women came in, older women and some were very old. Then Aunt Sarah took the three children, my two sisters and I, and brought us to our maternal grandparents. Afterward I found out that for various reasons they had done the *tahara* for Bubbe in the house, in her room. When I returned home, the floor in her

room and part of the foyer was still covered with water. The water had a peculiar smell; it seemed like the smell of a body that is no longer alive, not fresh ... The smell lingered for weeks, even months, and often it seemed that the smell followed me even when I went outside. It was as though the smell had lodged itself in our noses and did not want to dissipate.

## **FIGHTING FEAR AND NIGHTMARES**

Many weeks after they took Bubbe, I had a hard time falling asleep at night. When I lay down in bed, I thought about Bubbe on her sickbed, crying, scratching, until my own body began to itch and I thought I had caught what she had. Furthermore, the smell bothered me and plugging my nose didn't help. I could not decide what kind of smell it was. I sensed it was the smell of death, something outside the realm of the good or bad smells of things that belonged to the world of the living.

For days upon days, the floor in Bubbe's bedroom was wet with water that had decided not to dry up and disappear. That is what I thought and every so often I glanced around the bedroom. I did not enter the room for a long time. Finally, the floor dried up and the peculiar smell went away and only then did I begin going into Bubbe's bedroom again. By entering the room, I wanted to dispel the nightmare and frightening images of the Angel of Death within me and anything associated with a departure from life. I encountered this horror face to face for the first time in my childhood, and it swept over me like a huge wave (as young as I was, that is how hard it was for me to reconcile with the fact that

Bubbe would no longer be in the house, but was in a grave at the edge of town).

After a few months, I was satisfied with myself. I had managed to push aside the strange fear of Bubbe's room. With gritted teeth I forced myself to enter the room again and again until I had dispelled the fear to some corner within me.

I was so self-satisfied that I dared to resolve to sleep in her bedroom at night, together with Zeide. Every so often I would go in to ask Zeide questions. I had a three-fold agenda – to utterly break my fear as well as to comfort Zeide and hopefully sleep in the same room as him. I had once heard that a Torah scholar cannot sleep alone.

However, I did not have the courage to verbally offer to sleep in the room. One day, when someone commented about my old straw bed with one leg completely broken, I spoke up, "I can sleep with Zeide in his bedroom."

I was shocked that I had said that but I did not want, or better put, it wasn't befitting for me to take back what I had said. My mother and sisters looked at me with some surprise and their eyes asked: Aren't you afraid? I kept quiet. Zeide heard my offer and smiled. To me it was a sign that my grandfather did not even suspect that I had so many fears, since he did not even know what it meant to fear anything or anyone.

## **RETURN TO A SAFE PLACE**

Before my mother offered the bed in Zeide's bedroom she asked me several times, "Will you be able to sleep there? Don't be embarrassed to tell me." She knew me well, but I insisted I wanted to sleep there. There was one thing I hadn't considered

though, that Zeide sat and learned in the kitchen until late into the night. I would have to go to sleep alone, without Zeide and in the shadow of Bubbe.

I lay down on the ancient creaking bed, it seemed really like a Bubbe's bed, and a strange biting cold wafted about me from my head to my toes. I closed my eyes and buried myself in the pillow, but the smell of the water suddenly penetrated my pillow. There was an oil lamp with a tiny flame that was lit in the room, but in the gloom I saw a strange faceless shadow.

I couldn't even dream of sleeping. I entered into a quivering nightmarish fugue; the hair on my head stood on end. From the corners of the room along the ceiling some black yet greenish thing was trapped and seemed to move, and Bubbe's diminutive body did not cease hovering before my eyes. I could not get out of bed as the nightmare held me transfixed. I myself did not know or sense, when or how, I finally made it through the nightmares to a deep sleep.

The next night was no better. I decided to wait for Zeide. I got out of bed and sat quietly on the foyer floor. I will sit here, I thought, until I see Zeide finishing his learning and saying the bedtime Shma and then I will silently slip back into bed. However, when I left the room I became completely calm and the sweet tune that Zeide used as he learned rocked me to sleep. I did not feel it when warm, grandfatherly arms picked me up and brought me not to Bubbe's bed but back to my previous bed of straw (that was fixed up a bit by Zeide).

Never again did I go to sleep in Zeide's bedroom and nobody brought up my sleeping there.

# THE CASE OF TRUTH V. KINDNESS

By Rabbi Yisroel Harpaz

Before it all began, in the supernal chamber up above, Truth challenged the existence of humanity. When Adam was about to be created, legend has it that Truth protested. “Why create a being so full of lies?” Indeed, it is a powerful argument. Like characters from more enlightened civilizations in a sci-fi film viewing the barbarism and savagery of humanity from their objective perch, the supernal beings present, with their foreknowledge of human history, certainly found a compelling critique.

There was awkward silence in the supernal chamber. The words of Truth had struck a chord. The supernal beings were all sentimentally in favor of creating humanity – the romantic half spiritual half beastly being that would bridge the gap between the transcendent and the earthly. But none of them could come up with a rational retort to Truth’s argument. They held their breath, and the air was still. That is, until Kindness broke the silence.

“These humans may be full of lies,” began Kindness. “But they are kind.”

The supernal beings breathed a collective sigh of relief, nodded and murmured approvingly to one another, while Truth stood there scratching his head in astonishment wondering what happened.

Indeed, how does kindness serve as a response to the deceptive nature of humanity?

My wife’s Grandpa Sid has a number of original aphorisms



**“The supernal beings were all sentimentally in favor of creating humanity – the romantic half spiritual half beastly being that would bridge the gap between the transcendent and the earthly. But none of them could come up with a rational retort to Truth’s argument.”**

that he uses when we engage in philosophical debates or reflections on life. Like a poetic gunslinger, he always has the right whimsical word to simultaneously address the issue and diffuse the tension (and, coincidentally, end the debate). One of his favorites is, “Truth! What do we know about truth? You know what truth is? Truth is when it works.” Can’t argue with that. (I’ve studied with some of the best scholars out there, but there are things I’ve learned from Grandpa Sid that none of them could ever teach me).

Truth is when it works. Finding the right path to discover truth and personal growth is

one thing. Actually getting over yourself so that you surrender to that path is an entirely different story. In the words of Rabbi Yoseph Yitzchak Schneersohn, the sixth Rebbe of Chabad, our task is not to find truth in what we do, but to become the very embodiment of truth. If you try to do things with sincerity, with truth, then you’re fighting an uphill battle in every area of life. But if you strive to *be* truth, then you reach a point at which the infantile challenges we face

that make us deceptive and selfish, often at our own expense, become irrelevant. However, to get to this level of truth, you really have to move the egocentric self out of the way.

Enter kindness. Ultimately, kindness is about letting go of our own selfishness and making room for other people – acknowledging that my friend’s baggage is just as heavy as my own, and perhaps heavier, or that the needs of others are no less important than my own. When we recognize this, and act on it by giving of our time and heart and money to others, then we

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# DIAMONDS FOR ETERNITY

By M.E. Gordon

Shoshana usually enjoyed Mrs. Gold's classes. There were always stimulating discussions and interesting homework that the students actually enjoyed doing. Mrs. Gold certainly knew how to get everyone involved and enthusiastic. Today, however, Shoshana felt left out. It seemed that all of her classmates were excited about the new assignment, but she wished that she could just disappear until the next term.

Mrs. Gold had announced the project with the title "My Personal Hero." Each girl was expected to present a short speech to the class about someone who inspires them.

"I know who I'm going to talk about," Esther told her friends at recess. "I've always been inspired by my grandfather's self-sacrifice. He risked his life in Communist Russia to teach Torah."

"And I want to talk about how my grandmother kept her trust in Hashem strong all through the terrible years under the Nazis," declared Fraidy.

"My great-grandfather came to America in the 1920's, and was fired from his job every Monday, because he wouldn't

come in on Shabbos," said Tova.

Simi spoke up. "I could talk about how my mother rescued her family from Syria. She didn't give up until, with Hashem's help, she succeeded."

Chaya looked thoughtful. "My grandparents were not religious, but they gave a tremendous amount of money to charity. That's something I find inspiring."

Naomi spoke up next. "My heroes are my parents. They left everything familiar behind when they decided to convert."

It seemed to Shoshana that everyone was planning to speak about a family member. Who would she speak about? She had convinced her mother to transfer her to a Jewish school two years earlier after becoming interested in Yiddishkeit. Her mother had koshered the kitchen for her daughter's sake, and let her keep mitzvos, although she herself wasn't interested, at least not yet. Shoshana never really knew her mother's parents, nor had her mother spoken much about them. Her father died many years earlier, and anyway, he hadn't even been Jewish.

Naomi was the only one who

noticed that Shoshana was too quiet. She waited until she was able to talk with her privately. "Shoshana, what is wrong? Why do you look so glum?"

"It's the project. Everyone else is planning to talk about someone in their family. What will I say? I suppose that I could talk about Rabbi and Rebbetzin Blum. I eat there nearly every Shabbos and Yom tov. They certainly are an inspiring family, but it won't be the same. I feel like a nobody."

"Don't say that!" admonished Naomi. "Firstly, Hashem created you, so you definitely are a very precious somebody. Secondly, you are an inspiration to all of us, because you became frum all on your own."

"Thanks, Naomi, but I still don't know what I'll do for my project."

Naomi was determined to help Shoshana. She found Mrs. Gold in the staff room, and quietly told her about Shoshana.

"Oh dear! I should have been more sensitive to her situation. I'm so glad that you came to let me know, Naomi."

The next day Mrs. Gold told Shoshana that she wanted to speak to her after class.

"Shoshana, I want to show you a Midrash which you may find interesting. In fact, you might find this useful for the 'Personal Hero Project.' Mrs. Gold read and translated the paragraph from Pirkei D'Rabbi

**“Despite of all these drawbacks, she ended up reconnecting to her heritage, and marrying Yosef. Interestingly enough, it is specifically her children that are given the status of being considered equal to their uncles, the sons of Yaakov.”**

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