

BEIS MOSHIACH

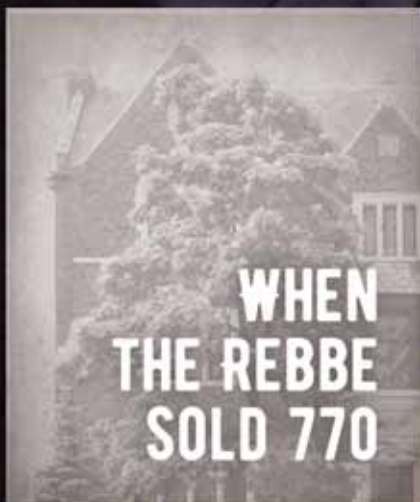
22 Adar II 5779

March 29 2019

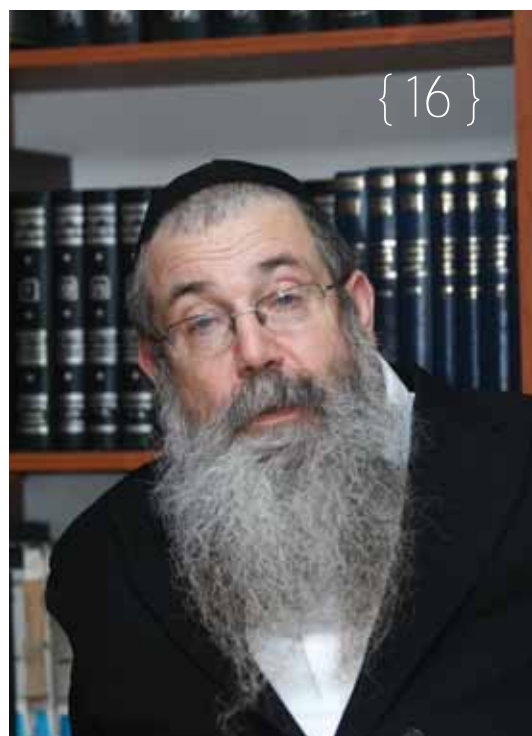
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Bringing Moshiach-Values
into Our Homes

no. 1160



יחי אדוננו מורנו ורבינו מלך המשיח לעולם ועד



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The Rebbe speaking at the Hanochas Even Hapina, the groundbreaking ceremony for the expansion of 770, 17 Elul 5748 (1988)



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BESURAS HaGeulah

THE IMMINENCE OF THE GEULA

בשורת הגאולה אות יז

קטעים מ"מכתב כללי" - מוצש"ק, כ"ה אדר,

אור ליום ג' פרשת ויקרא ה'תשנ"א (א)

25 Adar 5751 — March 11 1991 (1)

The Persian Gulf War ended almost as soon as it began — in under four weeks. In a series of three *Michtovim Kloliyim* — public letters — that were written by the Rebbe in honor of Pesach that year, the Rebbe wrote on the topic of miracles. In the first of the series, issued on the 25th of Adar, the Rebbe wrote of the recent miracles of the Persian Gulf War:

Coming from the days of Purim — days of miracles that G-d wrought "in those days at this season,"

— and approaching the festival of Pesach, when we celebrate the "Festival of Our Freedom," thanking G-d for the miracles and wonders which He wrought in connection with *Yetzias Mitzraim* (our liberation from Egypt) —

It is now highly opportune to give full attention to the miracles and wonders which came to pass just recently around Purim time.

These were *revealed miracles*, obvious miracles, not only for Jews but also for all nations, "seen in all the corners of the earth"; everyone saw the great miracles that unfolded at this time.

These miracles were even greater than those of Purim, for:

The miracles of "those days" — in the days of Mordechai and Esther — were, as is well known, concealed in the natural order of events ...

קומענדיק פון די ימי הפורים — טעג פון נסים, וואס דער אויבערשטער האט באוויזן "בימים ההם בזמן הזה",

און דערנענטערנדיק זיך צו חג הפסח — ווען מיר פראווען דעם יום-טוב פון "זמן חרותנו" און מיר דאנקען דעם אויבערשטן פאר די נסים ונפלאות וועלכע ער האט באוויזן ביי יציאת מצרים —

איז איצט די פאסיקע צייט צו ציען די פולע אויפמערקזאמקייט אויף די נסים ונפלאות וועלכע האבן פאסירט נאענט צו דעם היינטיקן פורים.

דאס זיינען געווען נסים גלויים, אפגען נסים, גיט נאר פאר אידן, נאר אויך פאר אלע פעלקער, ביז אז "ראו כל אפסי ארץ", אלע האבן געזען די גרויסע נסים וואס זיינען פארגעקומען אין דעם זמן.

[די נסים "בימים ההם", בימי מרדכי ואסתר, זיינען געווען, ווי באוואוסט, באהאלטען אין דרכי הטבע,

By contrast, the events during the months leading to (and up to the middle of) the month of Adar unfolded a clearly extraordinary miracle for the benefit of Jews as well as for the benefit of the entire world; a conspicuous miracle before the eyes of all the nations.

The Rebbe goes into detail:

In view of the existing international conditions it seemed inevitable that not only would there be a declaration of war, etc.,

but that the war would engulf many nations and set off a new world-war, G-d forbid,

— yet, in a most extraordinary turn of events, not only was a world-war prevented, but the war that had begun was quickly over!

While all signs pointed to the outbreak of a massive war, requiring a huge army with massive weaponry of the most advanced technology,

and after everything was duly assembled and in place for a long war expected to last weeks and months — victory came in a matter of days!

The victory was so wondrous that not only was much bloodshed among the nations of the world avoided (as had been feared),

but it caused the enemy to be forced to relinquish without further ado its booty and to free captives and hostages including some that had been held from before.

... Indeed, those who are "insiders" — who know many details that do not reach the media — appreciate more deeply the marvels of the miracles and wonders in this our time and in these our days.

...דאקעגן איז אין די געשעענישן פון די חדשים ביז אין (מיטן פון) חודש אדר פארגעקומען א גאר גרויסער נס לטובת בני ישראל ולטובת העולם כולו, א נס גלוי לעיני כל העמים.]

לויט די נאטירלעכע אומשטענדן אין דער וועלט, האט עס געהאלטן דערביי, אז עס זאל זיין גיט נאר א מלחמה ערקלערונג א.ז.וו. [און אזוי ווייטער].

נאר אז די מלחמה זאל אריינציען מערערע פעלקער און זיך צעפלאקערן אין א וועלט-קריג, רחמנא-לאלן —

און למעלה מדרך הטבע הרגיל, איז גיט בלויז אויסגעמיטן געווארן א וועלט-מלחמה, נאר אויך די שוין אנגעהויבענע מלחמה איז איינגעשטילט געווארן.

בעת אלע סימנים האבן געוויזן, אז מ'דארף דערנווארטן א שווערע מלחמה, און צוגרייטן א גאר גרויסע ארמיי מיט א סך כלי-זיין און דוקא פון די נייעסטע,

און נאך די אלע צוגרייטונגען ווי ס'איז דער סדר ווען מ'גרייט זיך צו א לאנגער מלחמה, וואס דארף דויערן וואכן, חדשים — איז דער נצחון געקומען אין גאר א קורצער צייט.

דער נצחון איז געווען אזוי וואונדערלעך, אז ער האט גיט נאר פארמיטן א סך שפיכות דמים צווישן אומות העולם (ווי מ'האט מורא געהאט),

נאר האט געבראכט דערצו, אז דער שונא זאל באפרייען, אין א גוטן אופן, א טייל פון די מלחמה-געפאנגענע און אפלו א טייל פון די געפאנגענע פון פריער.

...און נאך מער: די וועלכע "ווייסן וואס ס'טוט זיך אינעווייניק" — זיינען באקאנט מיט גאר א סך איינצלהייטן וועלכע דערגרייכן גיט צו דער עפנטלעכקייט — באגרייפן א סך מער דעם וואונדער פון די נסים ונפלאות בזמן הזה בימים אלה.

From The Rebbe's Pen

The Yetzer Harah's Favorite Trick

פשיטת (המקבל) את השמות דהנ"ל -
אזכרים עה"צ.
להזכרתו (של) כתב
המכ' (ש') ע"ד יאוש
וכו' - לפלא שאינו יודע
שנסיון להפיל למח'
האדם רגש של יאוש
וכיו"ב - ה"ז מתכססיו
הכי מובהקים של יצה"ר
למנוע את האדם ממילוי
חובתו: כי מה יש לתבוע
ולמה ישתדל? והרי כבר הכריז (לאחרים וגם לעצמו) שמיאוש הוא, ר"ל.

כשיעתיק (המקבל)
שי' את השמות דהנ"ל -
אזכרים עה"צ.

להזכרתו (של) כתב
המכ' (ש') ע"ד יאוש
וכו' - לפלא שאינו יודע
שנסיון להפיל למח'
האדם רגש של יאוש
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ולמה ישתדל? והרי כבר הכריז (לאחרים וגם לעצמו) שמיאוש הוא, ר"ל.

ראי' מוחשית שמקור הנ"ל בא מהיצה"ר - כי אין היאוש ממעט כלל בתאוות גשמיות.

Regarding (the letter-writer's) mention of [feelings of] despair, etc.

It is of great wonder that you don't know that one of the most salient tactics of the Yetzer Harah is the attempt to cast into man's thoughts feelings of despair and the like. [He does this in order] to prevent the person from fulfilling his duties, [by "planting" the following thought-process in his mind]:

"What can be demanded [of him] and why should he put in any effort [if] he already proclaimed (to others as well as to himself) that he has given up hope, *Rachmono Litzlan*? ...

Clear proof that such [feelings] come [exclusively] from the Yetzer Harah, [is the fact that] despair doesn't lessen at all [the drive for] physical pleasures. ■

SHABBOS

03/30

כ"ג אדר ב

CANDLE LIGHTING	SUNRISE	LATEST SHEMA	MIDDAY	SUNSET	SHABBOS ENDS
6:59	6:42	9:51	1:00	7:18	8:01

ג' פרקים: הלכות טומאת צרעת פרקים יא-יג. פרק אחד: הלכות בכורות פרק ב. ספר המצוות: מ"ע קיא

SUNDAY

03/31

כ"ד אדר ב

SUNRISE	LATEST SHEMA	SUNSET
6:40	9:50	7:19

ג' פרקים: הלכות טומאת צרעת פרקים יד-טז
פרק אחד: הלכות בכורות פרק ג
ספר המצוות: מ"ע קב. קג

MONDAY

04/01

כ"ה אדר ב

SUNRISE	LATEST SHEMA	SUNSET
6:39	9:49	7:20

ג' פרקים: הלכות מטמאי משכב ומושב פרקים א-ג
פרק אחד: הלכות בכורות פרק ד
ספר המצוות: מ"ע צט

TUESDAY

04/02

כ"ו אדר ב

SUNRISE	LATEST SHEMA	SUNSET
6:37	9:48	7:21

ג' פרקים: הלכות מטמאי משכב ומושב פרקים ד-ו
פרק אחד: הלכות בכורות פרק ה
ספר המצוות: מ"ע ק

WEDNESDAY

04/03

כ"ז אדר ב

SUNRISE	LATEST SHEMA	SUNSET
6:35	9:47	7:23

ג' פרקים: הלכות מטמאי משכב ומושב פרקים ז-ט
פרק אחד: הלכות בכורות פרק ו
ספר המצוות: מ"ע קו

THURSDAY

04/04

כ"ח אדר ב

SUNRISE	LATEST SHEMA	SUNSET
6:34	9:46	7:24

ג' פרקים: הלכות מטמאי משכב ומושב פרקים י-יב
פרק אחד: הלכות בכורות פרק ז
ספר המצוות: מ"ע קד

FRIDAY

04/05

כ"ט אדר ב

SUNRISE	LATEST SHEMA	SUNSET
6:32	9:45	7:25

ג' פרקים: מטמאי משכב ומושב - יג, שאר אבות הטומאות - א-ב
פרק אחד: הלכות בכורות פרק ח
ספר המצוות: מ"ע קד. צו

THE TIMES ON THIS PAGE ARE FOR BROOKLYN, NY



Rabbi
Boruch
Merkur

MOSHIACH NEEDS YOU, THE LAMED VOV'NIK!

THERE was once a group of *shluchim* known as der Vilde Sheivet, who came to Brunoy, France with the intent of turning it upside-down. Their goal was to reconnect the *bachurim* of the *yeshiva*, whom – they felt – had slipped in their *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe. The *mashpia*, Rabbi Nissan Nemanov, renowned for his emphasis on personal *avoda* and discipline, was not amused by the shift, feeling it came at a high cost. These *shluchim* apparently saw inward *avoda* as a contradiction to *hiskashrus*. They were unruly in their approach, truly a Wild Tribe. Reb Nissan called them in for a talk and told them that it's wonderful to inspire *bachurim* to a greater, deeper connection to the Rebbe – **but at least show up on time for seider!**

If you want to make a revolution, at least demonstrate its practical benefits by committing to the *yeshiva* program, being conscientious and disciplined, being there – on time – fully attentive and engaged. It's not a contradiction to *hiskashrus*!

If I identify as a Vilde Sheivet, feeling energized and inspired to be in such an elite clan, and I manage to eke out a deeper connection to the Rebbe in the process, what could be wrong with that? – especially if it doesn't interfere with my other spiritual

priorities. There is great power in having a positive self-concept and identity. **Let people think what they want of themselves, so long as it inspires them.**



But what happens if our identity is misguided? Let's say it is in fact beneficial, but it contradicts the truth. What if I see myself as a *tzaddik*, for example, but I'm not? Is a false but positive identity preferred or is it always harmful?

We all know the opening lines of *Tanya* by heart, “*v'afilu kol ha'olam kulo omrim lecha tzaddik ata, heyei be'inecha k'rasha* – even if the entire world tells you, ‘you are a *tzaddik*,’ see yourself as a *rasha*.” In other words, don't fool yourself into thinking you are a *tzaddik*; *halevai* if you're a *beinoni*...

The Rebbe Maharash elaborates on this topic:

There is no harm in a *tzaddik* knowing he is a *tzaddik*. The harm is only for one who is not at the level of *tzaddik* – this person should not be mistaken to think of himself as a *tzaddik*, as explained in *Tanya* Ch. 13. The main warning here is not to rely on the fact that the entire world tells him he is a *tzaddik*.

There were many *tzaddikim* who testified about themselves that they are *tzaddikim*. But they knew they are *tzaddikim* not because of the accolades, etc., but by other proofs – and they were in fact *tzaddikim*. Thus, there is no harm in their identifying as *tzaddikim*. As explained in Chassidus, just as one must know his deficiencies, he should know his own virtues.

(Likkutei Biurim Vol. 2, pg. 327)

Here the Rebbe Maharash decries being swayed by public opinion, the way we are perceived by others. It is important to know our true standing, be it positive or negative, but only we can make that determination.

In a humorous tone, the Rebbe MH”M offers a fascinating, revolutionary perspective on this topic:

Regarding the *avoda* of Atzilus, it says in *Tanya* that “it is not our concern to delve into secrets”; it is relevant only to great *tzaddikim*. [...] But the very fact that *Tanya*, *Seifer Shel Beinonim*, rules out the universality of the *avoda* of Atzilus indicates that we must contemplate it, and thus have a certain connection to it, as well.

There are many people, who if approached privately – not in public but one on one – and asked if *avodas ha'tzaddikim* pertains to them, they would say yes. Some people don't need to first be asked; they have made a self-assessment and determined that the *avoda* of *tzaddikim* is applicable to them. Others may have never considered it, but when the topic is broached and explained to them, they can be convinced. [...]

In particular, if one is aware that it says there are Lamed-Vov *tzaddikim*, thirty-six righteous people in each generation, **it could well be that he is one of the Lamed-Vov!**

We spend money on lottery tickets, for example. Since he knows there are many people who buy tickets and only one of them can win, why does he buy a ticket, knowing that the odds are not in his favor?!

Moreover, he buys a ticket to **win** the lottery. Not that he will just be a winner, winning the second or third prize, etc., but **first** prize, the biggest prize! **Someone** has to win, he reasons,

so why shouldn't it be me? What makes me less likely to win than all the others?

So too in our case, he can indeed be one of the Lamed-Vov *tzaddikim*. True, he does not see his own virtues, but that itself is proof that he is (a *tzaddik*) *nistar*; his righteousness is merely concealed – even from himself. All he must do is reveal it. [...]

Considering oneself to be a *tzaddik* is a good thing. The message here is reminiscent of the well-known teaching of the Rebbe [Rashab], *nishmaso Eden*, regarding interpretations on *Tanya*: it can be done if it leads to *avodas Hashem* and fear of Heaven. The same applies here: If it brings the person to Torah study and Mitzvos observance, it is good and proper, etc. And perhaps he will indeed reach the level of *tzaddik*. It is even possible he is already a *tzaddik*.

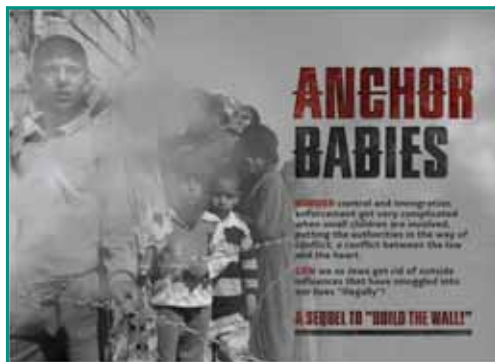
(Sichos Kodesh 5741 Vol. 1, pg. 795-797)



“We know what we are; we know not who we might be.” Our potential is beyond our imagination, yet we get stuck in a status quo of our own making. Ask someone who learns *Tanya* which of the three categories – *tzaddik*, *beinoni*, or *rasha* – most Jews fall into? *Halevai* they should say “*beinoni*” – and that's regarding others, where we are *melamed z'chus*. It is devastating and debilitating to (falsely) see ourselves as *r'sha'im*, yet we seem to embrace the stifling voice inside us that snickers, “Who are you and what are you to pursue such lofty goals?!”

If we have to err about ourselves (and certainly about others) it is best to err on the side of favor. That way we will at least be energized to do what is incumbent upon us, to summon the necessary audacity to approach the King of Kings – even if it is “*lo chad'ahs*” – and beg and demand “*es tzemach Dovid av'd'cha m'heira satzmiach*,” with the true and complete Redemption through Moshiach Tzidkeinu. ■

WE NEED BORDERS!



This generation has a problem with borders in all areas of life – “this is where I end and you begin.” The point of a border wall is to say this is the where the US ends and Mexico begins. We already have people in this country who are anti-American and want to institute their own laws and regulations here. The issue is whether someone wants to apply to be a citizen of this country, whether they want to adapt their own definition of a citizen as someone with all rights and no responsibilities, or frankly whether they want to take over this country from the inside. The concept of anchor babies should have been done away with a long time ago. Does any other country have the concept that birth is the only pre-requisite to citizenship? On the other hand, more working visas need to be made available with the beneficiaries paying taxes.

I really liked the lessons learned from this saga and would like to throw in my own two cents to this fascinating topic.

Baruch Hashem, there is an abundance of Torah and Yiras Shomayim out there in the world, and many Jews previously who had no interest in Judaism find it relevant to their

lives, but the borders are needed. People need to know that Yiddishkeit is not a free-for-all religion where you can pick and choose from what you want. There are tremendous “rights” we get from Torah, but also responsibilities and rules. Torah is inviting, but there are borders that must be respected.

Chaya, a proud USA citizen

SPEAK GOOD EVEN ABOUT GOYIM



In the short article "China: Beating their guns into shovels" – the first sentence read: "China, *not the world's best-behaved nation*,..."

The underlined is rather insulting, negative and *unnecessary* – there was no need to have that underlined part in the story whatsoever, the story stood up perfectly clear and much better without it.

It was not keeping with the Torah approach to minimize saying anything bad about anyone or even any creature, and certainly not aligned with the Rebbe MHM's approach to draw others near in pleasantness and peace, especially since *Didan Notzach*, to also bring gentiles to the 7 Noahide Laws (I'm sure you're

aware that some Gentiles, as well as Jews, may be reading Beis Moshiah).

Take for example when a former NY mayor came to the Rebbe MHM for *yechidut* and asked the Rebbe MHM how he could be helpful, and instead of asking for special favors for the Jewish community or Chabad in particular, the Rebbe MHM asked the mayor to help the Chinese population in NY as they were very hardworking and responsible people and their community needed more attention. This should be our example of how to view and speak of others, especially in a public magazine representing the Rebbe MHM.

THE REBBE LEADS ALSO THROUGH THE IGROS KODESH



This was a very good, moving and candid article. But one element was missing. When the author said he didn't have a ready answer on how is the Rebbe MHM still leading us, he never offered the option of *Igrot Kodesh*, which the Rebbe MHM himself encouraged. You could have an interview with Rav Menachem Mendel Gluckovsky how the phenomenon started and what the Rebbe MHM told him.

The Rebbe MHM is alive and leading us personally and communally through his letters, even on a daily basis if we so wish. This is so crucial, it should be added! The readership needs to learn and be reminded of how much the Rebbe *Melech HaMoshiach* is guiding his flock.

Thank you, and blessings for hatzlocha,

*Mrs. Chana Devorah and
Yisrael Ephraim Schwartz, Jerusalem*

GETTING TO KNOW MY NEIGHBORHOOD



Dear Editor,

I was born, grew up, and lived in Crown Heights all my life, yet only when I began reading your informative article did I realize I know close to nothing about this place I live in. Can't wait to read the next installment!

Keep up the good work!

Mendy Green, Crown Heights

*We would love to hear your opinions,
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DOES CHAPSTICK NEED A HECHSHER?

In connection with Parshas Sh'mini which discusses non-kosher animals, we present a collection of halachic articles on the topic of Kashrus of household non-food items and gazing at non-Kosher Animals.

By **Horav Yosef Yeshaya Braun**, Mara D'asra and member of the Crown Heights Beis Din

DOES TOOTHPASTE NEED TO BE KOSHER?

Many *poskim* maintain that inedibles do not have to be kosher. What is considered inedible halachically, though, is not completely clear. It can range from something not usually served at a meal to an item that does not qualify as food-grade.

In the past, toothpaste and mouthwash were made with many non-edible components; today they are manufactured mostly of edible, palatable ingredients we eat on a daily basis. This change, many argue, make kosher toothpaste a requirement—while there are others who say we may nevertheless be lenient. Although they might be edible, toothpaste and mouthwash are not consumed intentionally.

In practice, we should be strict with regard to flavored toothpaste, and it should be purchased only with a *hechsher*; but there is room to be lenient regarding unflavored varieties. This applies to infants too. (Halacha2go.com #589*)

NON-KOSHER PILLS

It is a rabbinic prohibition to eat something non-Kosher, even if not eaten in the normal way of eating. However, swallowing pills which may be non-kosher is permissible for a person who is unwell, for a combination of two reasons: 1) because the pills are swallowed whole, and 2) because they are tasteless. Regarding this halachah, illness is defined as a general feeling of malaise, or what is termed *miktzas choli*, a minor sickness or pain. (The halachah is different for a child; anything a child needs is considered an illness.)

However, if an alternative kosher medication is available, the heter does not apply. If a pill has a taste, a solution would be to enclose it in a kosher capsule or wrap tissue paper around it before swallowing it.

Healthy people may not take non-kosher vitamins or supplements to strengthen their bodies in any way, as the *heter* only applies in a case of illness. (Halacha2go.com #180)

LOOKING AT NON-KOSHER ANIMALS

Although it's not against halachah to gaze at non-kosher animals or at pictures of them, the *Kav Hayashar* and other *mussar* works speak of the importance of guarding one's eyes from looking at *devarim temei'im* (impure creatures). The Rebbe spoke about this at length, especially concerning the impressionable minds of babies and children, adding that our generation in particular needs to train its eyes to see only positive and holy things.

Still, there are a number of exceptions:

Meshaneh Habrios: If one wishes to make the *brachah* of *Meshaneh Habrios*, the blessing made upon seeing rare or unusual animals, although the *Kav Hayashar* cautions to look at them only for as long as necessary;

Zoo: Going to the zoo for the purpose of reflecting on the greatness of Hashem's creation;

Shul: Using the image of a lion or other animals as a motif in artwork for *shuls*—such as on the *paroches* of the *aron kodesh* or on the *mantle* of a *sefer Torah*—since these teach us to serve Hashem with the positive attributes of these animals, as well as being reminiscent of the animals in the Heavenly *Merkavah*.

Teachers: Teachers using pictures of animals to illustrate halachos or Torah stories to their students. (Halacha2go.com #566) ■

* References and Marei Mekomos are available for this Halacha on the websites: www.Halacha2Go.com and www.AskTheRav.com

Please note that these halachos apply in general situations. In unique circumstances, a different halacha may apply. If you are unsure whether the halacha applies to your particular situation, please consult a Rav.

SHORT Q&A'S

• Does Chapstick or lip balm require a Hechsher?

They are both fine without a Hechsher. However, you should only use the unflavored kind.

• Is one allowed to keep medicine and vitamins in the bathroom? And if not, if one put them there already, can they still be used?

It is permitted, as it is not food. *

• Why do we name people with non-Kosher animal names like Dov, Aryeh, Zev etc., but seeing them is avoided?

Because there are a lot of positive elements to those animals. There is a lot we can learn from them. The Mishnah tells us to learn to be bold like a leopard, light like an eagle and strong like a lion. The Gemara tells us that we could learn modesty from the cats, not to steal from the ants etc.

The issue is only seeing the animals because they have negative forces associated with them and that could affect the purity of our eyesight.

Even this is not Halachically forbidden. It is an extra measure of piety, purifying our eyes to the maximum as a preparation for the advanced level of spiritual and G-dly eyesight we will experience when Moshiach comes.

• Do butterflies go into the category of non-kosher animals, regarding children's clothing and toys etc.?

Yes. **Reason:** A butterfly is a שרץ העוף and therefore, it is included in the Rebbe's directive to use only pictures and drawing of kosher animals. *



STUMP *the*
RABBI

CAN I USE A NON-JEWISH NAME IN BUSINESS?

No, you absolutely should not.

The importance of a Jewish name is explained in many places, probably the most potent source is what Chazal say regarding the Yidden in Mitzrayim:

“In the merit of three things did the Jews go out of Mitzrayim; They didn’t change their style of dress, their language, and their names.” These are three areas through which a person defines his identity to the world around him. [Even while being idolaters and abandoning many mitzvos, even basic ones like Bris Mila,] they maintained a proud Jewish *identity* and didn’t try to assimilate into the Egyptian society.

One of the ways to explain this is the following:

To some, being a Jew is something you *do*; you do Jewish things, I do Torah, and I do Mitzvos. Therefore, the time to do it is when I’m in Shul, in Yeshiva, in the community — that’s when I identify with my Jewishness.

And then there are times when I do my *personal* things; eating, drinking, sleeping, going out and doing business. There is nothing Jewish about them — a *goy* also eats and sleeps and does business... So, in the business world, I’ll use a different name, which will make me “fit in” better and maybe be more successful.

But the truth is that this is not what Judaism is all about. It’s not something you only do and perform.

Yiddishkeit is my *essence*, it’s who I am. That’s what truly defines me, it’s what I’m all about. And everything I do in life is all part of me living as a Jew and fulfilling my purpose as a Jew. Everything I’m involved with, even if not directly “Jewish,” is there to enhance my serving Hashem.

So, therefore, if a person has two choices; to use the name Ya’akov, for example, or the name Jack, he has an important decision and statement to make, as actions speak louder than words:

The fact that a person would choose to use the name Jack indicates in a sense that he doesn’t see his Jewishness as what truly defines his essence. “There are times when I’m *not* Yaakov; there are times when I’m someone else, who isn’t a Jew” is what he’s declaring.

When, however, a person goes out to the world to work and is doing business just like everyone else, but uses his Jewish name and business associates refer to him with his Jewish name, he’s conveying this message: “Being a Jew is my essence and is what defines me unconditionally. There is no limit of time or

space or occupation on me being my true self — a Jew.

And in fact, this what it means “*Kol ma’asecha l’shem shomayim*” or “*bechol derachecha da’eihu*.” These words say that *everything* you do should be for the sake of Heaven and that you should know Hashem in *all* your ways. Hashem isn’t limited just to Davening and learning; anything and everything a person does is part of his mission as a Jew in this world serving Hashem!

So, when I’m in business with a Jewish name, I’m constantly reminded why I’m there:

I make sure that I follow all the rules that are related to honesty; I Daven *before* I go to business; I make sure that I deal with people in a proper and appropriate way; I conduct myself in a way that creates a *Kiddush Hashem*; If I have an opportunity to speak to another Jew about putting on Tefillin or about doing a Mitzvah I do so, and I try to create such opportunities.

So going to work is just another place that I was sent to by Hashem to light up with my true essence and identity which is the same from the beginning till the end of the 24 hours of the day, no matter where I am and what I’m doing.

Obviously, I will identify myself by my Jewish name, because it’s not just a matter of a name, this is a message to myself and those around me: Yiddishkeit is me. ■

“ELYE, I ENVY YOU!”

Reb Elye Abeler, a simple man of scant learning, was a Chassid of my revered grandfather, the Rebbe [Maharash]. Once, when he entered his study for *yechidus*, my grandfather said: “Elye, I envy you. You travel to regional fairs and markets, and you meet many people. When you’re amid your transactions, and you get to talk with someone about a Torah thought or a saying from *Ein Yaakov*, and you inspire them to study *nigleh* and *Chassidus*, great joy is generated Above. G-d pays up the commission for this with blessings of children, health, and livelihood. The bigger the market, the more work, and the more livelihood.”

– Hayom Yom, 16 Iyar



“ Secular Studies

are not “neutral,” they

Contaminate Pure Minds!

”

A n o n - a p o l o g e t i c I n t e r v i e w w i t h R a b b i Y o s e f Y i t z c h a k O f f e n

TO HEAR

Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Offen speak in a strong tone of voice is surprising. I was a student of Rabbi Offen, and we had this

YISRAEL LAPIDUS ◦

kind of “shtick” to try and engage him in debate during the shiurim. I can attest to it that even when the strangest questions were presented

and not necessarily innocently, Rabbi Offen kept his calm and replied in his organized and clear way.

I don’t think it requires great effort from him, it’s just who he is. But this interview was

different. The sharp style and tone of voice can be transmitted even in the written form.

It is school registration season, and many parents are facing several options of which kind of Cheder, school or Yeshiva to enroll

their children in for the coming school year. A growing trend, positive we may say, in many communities is the establishment of schools “*al taharas hakodesh*” where no secular subjects are taught at all. Beis Moshiach presented the following questions to Rabbi Offen in order to gain a perspective on what proper Chassidische Chinuch should look like.

As is his way in his captivating and edifying classes in Chassidus, R’ Offen digs deep into the roots of the matter, and offers us an illuminating look into the foundations of proper chinuch.

“The question of secular studies in Yeshivas is really a question of Bitachon” he says.

He asks to clarify up front. “Before we begin to discuss the topic of the chinuch of children, it is necessary to bear in mind that the chinuch that we bequeath to our children will affect them their entire lives. Even when the child is no longer a child, but is a teenager, a young adult and even a full-grown adult, he will always carry with him the chinuch that he was given in his childhood. It is then obvious, how tremendous is the responsibility that lies upon the parents and educators.”

WHAT’S THE PROBLEM WITH SECULAR STUDIES?

Parents who want to raise G-d fearing Chassidische children are obviously concerned mainly about the behavior of their children, their middos. Why are we so concerned with the academic elements of the education our children are receiving in school?

This subject is discussed in the early chapters of Tanya, where he lays out that every Jew,

young or old, has two souls, a G-dly soul and an animal soul. Each of these is divided into two, intellect and emotions.

If we would ask any person on the street, even someone observant: “What is the primary element of the soul? Is it the intellect, the ability to conceptualize, understand and know in its consciousness, or the emotions and their ability to experience the feelings of love, hate, and so on?” He will likely answer that the primary element of the soul is obviously the emotions and feelings. However, the Alter Rebbe in Tanya reveals an amazing, novel idea: The main element of the soul is the intellect, the brain functions in the head.

Why is this so? Because through the intelligence, it is possible to control the emotions. More so, the intellect *creates* and *forms* the emotions! A person who contemplates at length how such-and-such a person is really good to him, gives him things and treats him well, will create feelings of love towards that person, and the same applies in the inverse.

When we invest the time to conceptualize and contemplate G-dly matters, the results will be refined and holy emotive traits, or what is called the *yetzer tov* or “positive inclination.” In contrast, when the intellect is occupied with materialistic concepts, it produces materialistic emotive traits, feelings and desires for material matters, or what is called the *yetzer hara* or “negative inclination.”

Therefore, along with the emphasis on good behavior and good character, we need to be very concerned about what is occupying the minds of our children, whether the study of holy subjects or the study of mundane subjects. Every additional hour of *limudei kodesh*

develops feelings and emotive traits of holiness, and every added second of the intellect being occupied with *limudei chol*, increases – Heaven forbid – the emotional attraction to matters of this world.

I understand that the intellectual involvement in matters of holiness engenders good middos and that intellectual involvement in matters of impurity engenders forbidden emotions. But what about neutral subjects, those that aren’t holy but aren’t forbidden – what’s wrong with them?

Until the revelation of Chassidus, we knew that the world was divided into three categories: forbidden things — sins, holy things — Torah and mitzvos, and optional things which are neither a sin nor a mitzva. Chassidus came along and established that there are only two tracks, either holiness or the “*sitra achara*” — “the other side.” There is no in-between. The world is black and white; there is no gray. There is the “side of holiness” and the “other side.” Whatever isn’t from the side of holiness, is automatically considered the other side.

So are you saying that anything besides for Torah is evil?

Yes. If it’s from what Chassidus calls *klipas noga*, then it can be elevated. But a child should not be busy with that, especially if it’s an “intellectual *k’lipah*”

What do you mean by “Intellectual *k’lipah*?”

In man’s soul, Hashem created three types of intellect: 1) the intellect of the G-dly soul which wants spirituality and holiness, 2) the intellect of the animal soul

which is drawn to the pleasures of this world, and 3) the natural “intellectual” soul which is the “connecting intermediary” between the two souls.

The ideas of the animal soul are easier to get rid of since it seeks the pleasures of this world like an animal. It “stands out” and is easier to identify when it tries to drag a person into cravings and pleasures.

But the intellectual soul is problematic since it uses the intellect and logic. The intellectual soul comes along and claims that materiality is the true reality. The *yetzer hara* appears as the



“ ALONG WITH THE EMPHASIS ON GOOD BEHAVIOR AND GOOD CHARACTER, WE NEED TO BE VERY CONCERNED ABOUT WHAT IS OCCUPYING THE MINDS OF OUR CHILDREN.”

objective truth and this is a problem. A person needs to learn Chassidus to discern that this is false. This is the only way to attain the truth and not be impressed by convoluted explanations of the intellectual soul.

This also enables us to understand why Chassidus places an emphasis on refraining from permissible things if they are not completely for the sake of heaven. Chassidim would say, “what is forbidden is forbidden and what is permissible is unnecessary.”

The truth is that this principle is also brought in the revealed part of Torah. There is a halacha in *Shulchan Aruch* that “all your deeds should be for the sake of heaven,” and “in all your ways, know Him.” But in *Shulchan Aruch* this is mentioned only in passing, whereas Chassidus expands on this and turns it into one of the foundations of Jewish life.

Impurity is also called *k’lipa*. Just like a *k’lipa*, a peel covers the fruit, the “other side” covers holiness and the light of Hashem that shines in the world. Consequently, if man does something for the sake of heaven, that is holy; otherwise, it’s *k’lipa*. Even if it isn’t forbidden, it still conceals holiness.

Why is it so important that every single thing belong either to holiness or to *k’lipa*?

In order to highlight the truth that “*Ein Od Milvado*” — “there is nothing but Him.”

Without learning Chassidus, people think that the world and Hashem are two separate entities. There is a world within which we live and operate and there is Hashem who runs the world. This way of thinking leads a person to the conclusion that we need to reckon with the world and operate by its dictates.

Comes Chassidus and shows how there is no world, there is no reality other than Hashem. The world and G-dliness are one thing. Therefore, we don’t need to reckon with the world. We can focus on making a dwelling for

Hashem in this world and revealing the light of Hashem in the world.

OUR JOB: TO SANCTIFY THE MIND OF A CHILD

Can you translate these ideas into practical chinuch methods?

In chinuch, our goal needs to be to educate our children to live lives of holiness and purity, lives that are directed by the G-dly soul, so that the very being of the child, starting with the intellect, moving into emotions and ending with thought, speech and deed, are all permeated with holiness.

In earlier generations, children did not come in contact with the nonsense of the world. They were constantly under the positive influence of the education in the home and educational system. They were spared all the distractions and confusion. Today too, despite the distractions and confusion around us, it is still possible to preserve a pure Chassidic education. It’s just that we need to ensure that the school our children are learning in is run al taharas ha’kodesh.

Chinuch like this, in which children learn only Torah and matters of holiness, without being confused with the nonsense of the times and of the world, causes the students to clearly differentiate between what is primary and secondary in life; what is true and what is false; what is holy and what is *k’lipa*; what is black and what is white.

Can’t we rely on the “intuition” and purity of a Jewish child?

Not yet. A young child is drawn to the harmful things of the world due to the animal soul that desires materialism. That’s where chinuch comes in; chinuch is for instilling holiness in the brain of a child. Hashem puts His infinite wisdom into the Torah so that we can “grasp” it with our human intellect. And this is our job, to connect the child’s mind with the intellect of G-d. This is obviously done only through *limudei kodesh*.

// WITHOUT LEARNING CHASSIDUS, PEOPLE THINK THAT THE WORLD AND HASHEM ARE TWO SEPARATE ENTITIES. THIS WAY OF THINKING LEADS A PERSON TO THE CONCLUSION THAT WE NEED TO RECKON WITH THE WORLD AND OPERATE BY ITS DICTATES.

Whatever is taught to a child influences their minds and hearts. So a child whose world is comprised exclusively of Torah and mitzvos, and only this is important to him, this is what he learns in class, this is the homework, this is what he is tested on and he got good marks ... When the entire daily schedule in school revolves around *taharas ha’kodesh*, then a child becomes accustomed to seeing Yiddishkeit as the central point of everything. That is how he grows up with a mind of Torah and mitzvos, which as we explained before affects the mid-dos for a lifetime.

However, a child who grows up with a hierarchy of values that gives credence to the idea that there are other things that, sometimes, are no less important than Torah and mitzvos, i.e. worldly matters, he already does not feel that sense of G-dliness as simple reality. And this strengthens within him the outlook of the intellectual soul, which will be much harder for him to uproot than even the animal soul.

This is because the animal soul looks at food and wants the good taste of the food; it craves the pleasure that results from eating, and that is relatively easy to fight. You can understand and explain why it’s not good. But the intellectual soul comes and claims that it wants food not for the pleasure of eating but for the nutrition and vitamins in the food. That is more logical and harder to uproot.

Eating for good health alone is wrong?

Yes. It’s an approach that conceals the truth of the G-dly soul. It’s brought in Chassidus that a person does not live from the bread he eats but from the word of Hashem, as in the words

of the verse. That means that a person does not get life energy from the vitamins or minerals in the food, but from the G-dly sparks hidden within the food. It’s true, there are vitamins, but that covers the truth, because what gives life to man is the G-dliness within the vitamins.

SECULAR STUDIES POLLUTE THE CHILD’S SOUL. PERIOD.

So you’re saying to teach only *kodesh* and stay away completely from *limudei chol*?

Absolutely. This ought to be the natural ambition of every Chassid, to ensure that the Chassidic education provided is precisely the way it was in previous generations and to eschew secular studies, because with secular studies you are putting *kelipa* into the intellectual soul, directly into the soul of the pure child.

It should be clear: by learning secular subjects, the mind is polluted and it won’t absorb what Chassidus and holiness are communicating to him, because there is *timtum* – a stuffing up of the intellect. Even if the person is smart and deep, he will not succeed in properly learning Chassidus. We need to ensure that the mind is clean, pure and refined.

When the intellect will be a properly rectified intellect, the intellect of the G-dly soul that has not been corrupted by secular studies, it will naturally influence all of the emotional faculties of the soul. All seven of the faculties the Alter Rebbe lists in Tanya (*chessed, gevura, tiferes*, etc.) will be rectified and upstanding.

Not every child who learns in such a *cheder* is the best behaved child in the world...

True. The child was born with an animal soul. But even if it doesn't immediately change the *middos*, it certainly changes the actions. The Alter Rebbe demanded intellect and action of his Chassidim, because he knew that the middos will be corrected over time. As it says in the verse, "And you shall know today, and place it upon your heart," this means to say that the mind "squeezes" the heart from above and the actions "squeeze" the heart from below, and eventually it will have an effect upon the emotions. However, if the mind is not as it should be, then there is nothing to talk about.

In the aforementioned sicha of Simchas Torah 5715, the Rebbe said several times that secular studies imbue spiritual impurity into the mind of a child. This is based on what it says in Tanya that secular studies, the wisdom of the nations, is worse than ordinary idle talk because idle talk is sourced in the element of wind and that only pollutes the *middos*. The wisdom of the nations is understood by the mind and this pollutes the *chochma-bina-daas* of the *neshamas*.

One year, a few young children in the Chabad community of Montreal passed away. Rabbi Hendel, rav of the community, together with the mashpia Rabbi Peretz Mochkin, went to the Rebbe. In yechidus, they asked to arouse divine mercy on the community.

The Rebbe spoke to them about being particularly careful with women wearing sheitels (wigs) and about chinuch for children *al taharas ha'kodesh*. Right after that yechidus, Rabbi Hendel began working on classes where the learning would be *al taharas ha'kodesh*. In the meantime, he told his son not to attend secular studies anymore, until the class for *limudei kodesh*-only would be available. Some parents maintained that it would be better for the children to learn secular studies than to be idle. When Rabbi Hendel told the Rebbe, the Rebbe said that secular studies are worse than idle matters as it says in Tanya, that they pollute the *chochma-bina-daas* of the soul.

Secular studies are the opposite of the purpose for which the soul descended to this world, for the *neshamas* came down into a body in order to transform human intellect into G-dly intellect, to connect the *chochma-bina-daas* of the intellect to Hashem in the manner of a "wondrous and powerful unification," as it says in chapter five of Tanya. Studying the wisdom of the nations does the opposite.

THE REBBE RAYATZ ALLOWED IT ONLY IN UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES

If secular studies causes irreversible damage in a child's soul, how have they been taught in Chabad schools, some of them even under the leadership of the Rebbe? An agreement with the government to teach secular studies in Chabad *mosdos* was even approved of by the Rebbe Rayatz!

As far as the Rebbe Rayatz permitting secular studies in certain places, the Rebbe himself said in a sicha of 17 Tammuz 5717, "We see among the actions of the Nesi'im, such actions that in Lubavitch they would not even consider at all, but due to the exigencies of the time, they had to also be involved in these matters in order to save the sparks that are found in low places.

"One of these things was that at a certain point, they did not wage war against secular studies (at a certain age) in a school where *kodesh* is taught, even though previously this was completely out of the question. However, first they invested in the children added strength and added revelation of matters that are the opposite of secular studies, the "light source of Torah" (Chassidus), which brings to love and fear of Hashem, and then, they did not wage war against the decree of secular studies because of the need to rescue these sparks.

"But we need to remember that this was an emergency measure only, because of the situation in that place and that individual, but not as a regular system."

When speaking about the optimum, the

Rebbe's view on the matter is clear and was repeated many times: no secular studies for children! Secular studies are *k'lipa* and impurity which contaminates the soul of a child. The Rebbe never changed his mind about this and there are letters and explicit sichos about it.

The fact that the schools need to be run in a way of *taharas ha'kodesh* does not contradict the fact that there are schools which taught and teach secular studies reluctantly, such as in places where the only way to attract parents to Chabad schools is by including secular studies. So they included secular studies as the "lesser of evils," but we need to remember that this is an "evil," and very much not *l'chatchila*!

The Rebbe also refers to the laws of the country and sometimes the country requires secular studies. If there is no choice and no way to get out of it and something minimal needs to be done to enable the school to exist, perhaps it may be permitted, but we always need to remember that in and of itself, it is inherently negated.

LEARNING TORAH HELPS WITH PARNASSA

Doesn't the Gemara say that a father must teach his son a profession? These days the only way to get a respectable "livable" job requires a college degree, let alone a high school diploma which requires at least some measure of secular studies?

"IS THAT WHY HASHEM PROVIDED CHILDREN, IN ORDER FOR THE PARENTS TO STEAL THEIR LIVES FROM THEM?!"

One of the first times that the Rebbe spoke about *chinuch al taharas ha'kodesh*, on Simchas Torah 5715 (1954), he spoke very emotionally and used harsh expressions. Among other things, he said "that they claim that when a child is taught English etc, it will be practically beneficial to him, for it will make it easier for him to make it in life. This is a claim that has no basis whatsoever for nobody knows the future, and in every area of conduct we need to conduct ourselves according to Torah. Anything that offers any benefit is written in Torah, and if there were even the slightest material benefit in studying "outside wisdom," then there would have to be a law in Torah to study outside wisdom. Since there is no such law in Torah, and to the contrary, it is explicit in Torah that this is forbidden and that through this one introduces impurity into the *chochma-bina-daas* of the soul. Meaning to say, that there is no material benefit in this whatsoever, and in fact the opposite is true!

"... And therefore, the claim about the material benefits, is not an argument at all, since something that is not in accordance with Torah cannot bring any benefit; to the contrary. So it turns out that studying these things contains no benefit, not in the material realm and not in the spiritual realm. Despite all that, parents come and steal entire years from their children, a part of the lives of those children! What right do parents have to come and steal days away from their children? Is that why Hashem provided children, in order for the parents to steal their lives from them?!"

That's a familiar claim which is repeated in various ways. "How will he make a living?" "How will he support his family?" "How will he manage out in the world?"

First of all, the *Gemara* does say that we must teach our children a profession. But does it say it must be done from the moment they go to school?

In one of his letters, the Rebbe writes to someone who wants to leave yeshiva and study a trade. After telling him to continue learning in yeshiva, the Rebbe adds, "Obviously, the



One who sustains and provides for all, when the time comes and you will need to support yourself, He will also provide the source for your *parnassa*. Do not confuse yourself at your age by being involved in preparing to make a living now, which depends solely on Hashem. Consequently, connecting to His Torah and His mitzvos are an amazing stratagem to lighten the burden of *parnassa* later, and leaving the tent of Torah prematurely interferes with this.” (27 Shevat 5713)

Elsewhere, the Rebbe says that it is because of his concern and caring for the yeshiva bachurim that he demands that they not teach them secular studies; just *limudei kodesh*. When the time comes, the bachur will find the right way that he needs to do through natural means for the needs of *parnassa*. As we see that many people studied and worked hard in a field and in the end they made money in something else entirely, as Chazal say, “a person does not know from what he will earn a living,” and that “He who provides life, also provides *parnassa*.”

Parents who claim they need to teach young children secular studies so that many years

later, they will be able to support themselves, shows their utter lack of trust in Hashem!

Learning a profession has nothing to do with secular studies.

Why is teaching secular subjects a lack of *bitachon*, isn't that a legitimate measure of “*hishtadlus*” which Torah requires along with *bitachon*?

“*Hishtadlus*” means to do things that are advisable, or at least permissible, according to the Torah. Can someone say that working on Shabbos is *hishtadlus*, because otherwise he can't make an ample living?

Are secular studies that bad?

Worse in a way, they contaminate the mind!

Think about it; in Russia, the Chassidim were *moser nefesh* so that their children would not go to gentile schools. That was the only way to raise G-d-fearing boys and girls. Surely there is no comparison between the hardships then, to the point of *mesirus nefesh*, and the hardships of today. If then, they were able to rise to the need to stand strong against all the difficulties, how much more so in our generation.

Some will say that going against the mainstream today is comparable to the hardships of yesteryear ...

It is true that there are difficulties today, but still, things are much easier now. If we were given the possibility of overcoming the difficulties, then we surely must do so. We need to stand strong and muster willpower and dedication so that there will be schools that are completely as the Rebbe wants them to be, and it is in these schools that we must educate our children.

There is a story about the Kotzker Rebbe that once, a very rich person went to him. This man wasn't all that religious and this man asked, “How is it that I am so rich when it says, ‘if you will surely obey,’ then ‘I will give the rains in their right time, etc.’ and if not ... I don't keep Torah and mitzvos!”

The Kotzker Rebbe answered: If you are asking about a verse in the *Shema*, then you read it at least once in your life. You should know that all your wealth came from that reading of the *Shema* and not from your doing business. If you kept Torah and mitzvos as you should, you would be far more successful.

Those who follow the Rebbe's directives will have it good in all areas and we don't need to be impressed by the world and its assumptions.

We need to follow the path of the Rebbe, the path of Lubavitch from its earliest days, and this is how we will be successful.

Even if it entails high tuition, in private schools that are not subsidized by government funding, the Rebbe explicitly says, “Do not consider the financial output involved in the chinuch of children *al taharas ha'kodesh*, because by saving a few dollars and not providing children with the best education, you detract from the benefit of your children for the rest of their lives!” (Sicha of the first day of Rosh Chodesh Elul 5742).

Aren't there shluchim and rabbanim who learned in schools that had secular studies?

The response of the Kotzker Rebbe already addressed that: If there are shluchim who learned *kodesh* and *chol* and are successful, obviously, if they had learned only *kodesh*, they would be far more successful!

How do I know this is so? I could not know this on my own, but it is clear to me that this is what the Rebbe holds. We see that the Rebbe sent shluchim to distant countries and they did not even know the local language and they were extraordinarily successful. One would think that before going to live and work in a new place, the minimum is to know the language! How did the Rebbe do that? From this we see that when you go with the Rebbe's *kochos*, the physicality of the world does not distract and has no bearing.

Who is to say what secular studies consist of? What about basic math?

When I was a boy, I learned in the Chabad school in Tel Aviv and we learned *kodesh* all day: Mishna, Gemara, Halacha, etc. At the end of the day, we had a half an hour for math and writing. So our total math education was during one half hour every two days, basic functions of adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing. We learned letters, writing and words from the Chumash and Siddur and not from readers with all kinds of secular stories; it was all *kodesh*. We learned nothing else. We were not familiar with the foolishness of the world, just what we needed to know; that's all.

[Actually, math is a tool for *limmudei kodesh* themselves. When you want to understand the calculations and measurements for the laws of *eiruv* or the laws of *kiddush ha'chodesh*. The Rebbe points this out in the sicha of 13 Tammuz 5742. Obviously, when you learn it that way, it is not secular studies.]

[It should be noted that when Rabbi Binjamin Klein a”h wondered to Rabbi Hershel Lustig of Oholei Torah, why basic math studies that are accepted in all *frum* circles even in Israel, are not studied at the *cheder*, Rabbi

Lustig told him that he understood from Rabbi Chodakov that even this shouldn't be taught in Oholei Torah. Rabbi Klein responded that he'll speak to Rabbi Chodakov about it. When Rabbi Lustig inquired a while later on the matter, Rabbi Klein just brushed the matter off...]

All the boys who learned in that school managed nicely in the big world. Today, we can even use the many aids available so there is no need to invest hours into studying math, English, history, geography, and other secular subjects.

Any study of secular subjects by a child is superfluous; he is wasting years upon years for naught and in many cases he won't even use what he learned. In actuality, not only is there no benefit in this, there is detriment involved, as we explained at length. It turns the peripheral into something primary. If the study of Torah subjects will be exclusive, the child will easily be able to discern what is primary and what is marginal, and that is true Chassidic chinuch.

By the way, I am referring to the chinuch in school or yeshiva, as well as to the chinuch in the home, in that even in the home it has to be *al taharas hakodesh*, without any outside newspapers and without the Internet or at least, if there is no choice, with proper filtering.

THERE IS NO EXPIRATION DATE FOR POLLUTION OF THE SOUL

Everyone agrees that for very small children, three years old for example, the learning should be exclusively *al taharas hakodesh*. The question is, until what age should secular subjects not be taught at all?

There is no expiration date for the spiritual pollution of the soul. Therefore, there is no place for secular studies in our chinuch institutions for any age group. Nonetheless, it should be emphasized that the severity of the issue is all the greater with young boys and girls, because in these early ages are being built the foundation for their entire lives, and in order

for the building to be solid so that it will not budge in the face of blowing winds, the foundation has to be built in the proper fashion.

In the Rebbe's sicha of Simchas Torah 5715, the Rebbe said that they should abstain from secular studies at least until age nine or twelve. The Rebbe said that he would ask for more, except "if you grab too much you don't grab anything."

As stated, there are situations when the very existence of the school depends on it, due to government laws and the like, that it is necessary to introduce some topics of study, but in those cases it falls under the category of something permitted in a time of constraint, **but this is a last contingency option.**

We must always remember that the preferred course of action is – *if there is any way to maintain a mossad purely al taharas hakodesh, then it is a real obligation to do so.*

In your view, is it necessary to open new schools *al taharas hakodesh*, even in cases where there are existing schools in that place?

In every place, there are local rabbis and it is imperative to consult with them and to comply with their rulings. In principle, we need to know what is the will of the Rebbe, but the ways of implementing it in practice have to be in "pleasant ways" and with the approval of the rabbanim of Anash.

It should also be said, there is no doubt that when more and more schools will open that only teach *kodesh* subjects, and parents will insist on sending their children only to those schools, they will see success in all of their matters, personal and communal, and even materially, because the spiritual influence impacts the physical as well.

The Rebbe taught us how the material and the spiritual go hand in hand, and that is why you can see how many answers from the Rebbe about physical problems were to check *mezuzos* and *tefillin*. On the surface, what connection

is there between the *mezuzah* and the physical situation? The Rebbe taught us that there is a connection, and one depends on the other, and when people strengthen themselves in *ruchniyus* it does not undermine the *gashmiyus*, but to the contrary.

JUST TO FULFILL THE MINIMUM OBLIGATION

Until we have such schools in every community, should the secular studies be given support? For example, if the child comes home with homework in English or math, how are we, as parents, to treat it?

In such a case, parents need to emphasize that secular subjects are no big deal, and they are the least important subjects studied in school. Also, to place an emphasis on the homework in Torah subjects such as Chumash or Mishna as being of primary importance, as well as behavior towards others and the like. Meanwhile, any homework in secular subjects should be done only in a manner of "to discharge an obligation."

If people would have set times every day for the study of the topic of chinuch in Chassidus, and they would learn the subject of chinuch *al taharas hakodesh*, it would penetrate the consciousness of both father and son that secular studies are worthless and there is no point to it at all, and this will help have the proper effect on them. And the fact is that every parent wants his children to be better than him...

In conclusion?

Action is the main thing. We must try to see to it that the chinuch institutions in every place be exclusively *al taharas hakodesh*, and then all of the problems will be solved! In those places where such schools already exist, we need to support them and send our **boys and girls** to those schools only. And Hashem should help that everything be in accordance with the holy will of the Rebbe, who will immediately be revealed and bring us to the True and Complete Redemption! ■





Levi
Liberow

CHABAD OPERATES ON TWO FRONTS

THERE is a Yiddish idiom that says “*Ah gahst oif a vail zehd oif ah meil*” — “a guest for a short while can see for a mile.” In other words, an outsider can make us aware of things we as “insiders” could easily miss.

The following description of us, Chabad Chassidim, comes from chapter 113 of the last volume of *Daas Sofrim* — a history book written in the mid-70s by Rabbi Chaim Dov Rabinowitz, a *Litvishe* Mussar-minded pedagogue and educator.

“Chassidus clashed with modernity much later than non-Chassidic Judaism.”

“... The general response to the modern world was a categorical ‘No!’ We will not give in to the demands of the ‘new world,’ not even changing the style of dress... But the approach never was, and still isn’t, uniform. Three major blocs stand out in this area:

“One bloc hopes and believes that only by remaining strictly faithful to the ways of our ancestors, we will be able to overcome the temptations of the modern age.

“...A second bloc, while believing the same in principle, has done and is doing all it can to apply new methods within the guarded and proven inner framework.

“...A third bloc is recently very active globally in all Jewish circles, even among the non-religious. Yet it’s core followers strong-

ly retain the “inner” way of study as well as their external appearance. This group operates from the get-go in two ways — inside, using one method and outside using a different one. Every now and then they surprise even the religious world with their unique approach to the challenges of the time.

“Only one Chasidic court belongs to this bloc — Chassidus Chabad.”

THIS is how he saw Chabad in the mid-70s. And it’s the way it should look now too.

Awareness lately has risen to influences from the modern world that plague the Chabad community. No one has intentionally brought these influences in; they entered in part because the distinction between how we act in outreach and how our “own” *mosdos* and communities should be conducted, was blurred.

In Halacha, the concepts of *lechatchila* and *b’dieved* exist. An argument sometimes heard from people who seek to live a “convenient” Jewish lifestyle is, “if it is halachically acceptable, then why not all the time? Why not for everyone?”

That mistake stems from not realizing something very fundamental about the Torah: On the one hand, we must always be *ma’alin ba-*

kodesh — a Jew must always strive to be better. There is an *ideal* way of doing what the Torah requires of us. At the same time, the Torah is “practical” and recognizes that it takes time to get there.

So, there is *lechatchila* — doing things the way they should be done, and *b’dieved*, covering at least the minimum.

Chabad Chassidim who were taught by the Rebbe *Melech HaMoshiach* to be “active globally in all Jewish circles, even among the non-religious,” often find themselves in the crossroads between *lechatchila* and *b’dieved*. We use halachically acceptable leniencies the whole time to accommodate people for whom a *lechatchila*-style of life would be too hard in their first steps towards Yiddishkeit. But it was always obvious that we must hold ourselves up to a higher standard. A Chassid is defined as doing things *lifnim mishuras hadin* — beyond the letter of the law.

We put on Tefillin with a Jew and ask him to just read *Sh’má*; do we teach our own children to do the same?

THE advent of fast internet communication and a generally-positive desire to showcase the work of the shluchim around the world created a problem.

It brought publicity to situations when perhaps-legitimate *kulos* have been used, but it was neglected to warn “don’t try this at home...”

Such posts and articles, seen day in and day out by impressionable young people, subconsciously created a wrong image in the minds of the youth that Chabad is more “open-minded” and has a “modern” touch.

Let’s remember what was obvious just two decades ago: “*This group operates from the*

get-go in two ways — inside, using one method and outside using a different one.”

We operate on two fronts, and the success on the *hafatzah*-front depends on the purity of the “home-front.”

Do the pictures and reports of our events brought back to the “home-front” match the “*lechatchila*” standard?

IN a Purim sicha, the Rebbe raises an outstanding question:

Why did Achashverosh need to convene his royal tribunal to decide what should be done with Vashti after she refused to appear before the king? She was a *moredes bamalchus*, she was outright rebellious, and her verdict was clear — death!

The Rebbe, refreshingly simply yet brilliantly refers our attention to Achashverosh’s own policy for this party: *la’asos kirtzon ish va’ish* — everyone is free to do what he wishes at this party so he can feel comfortable.

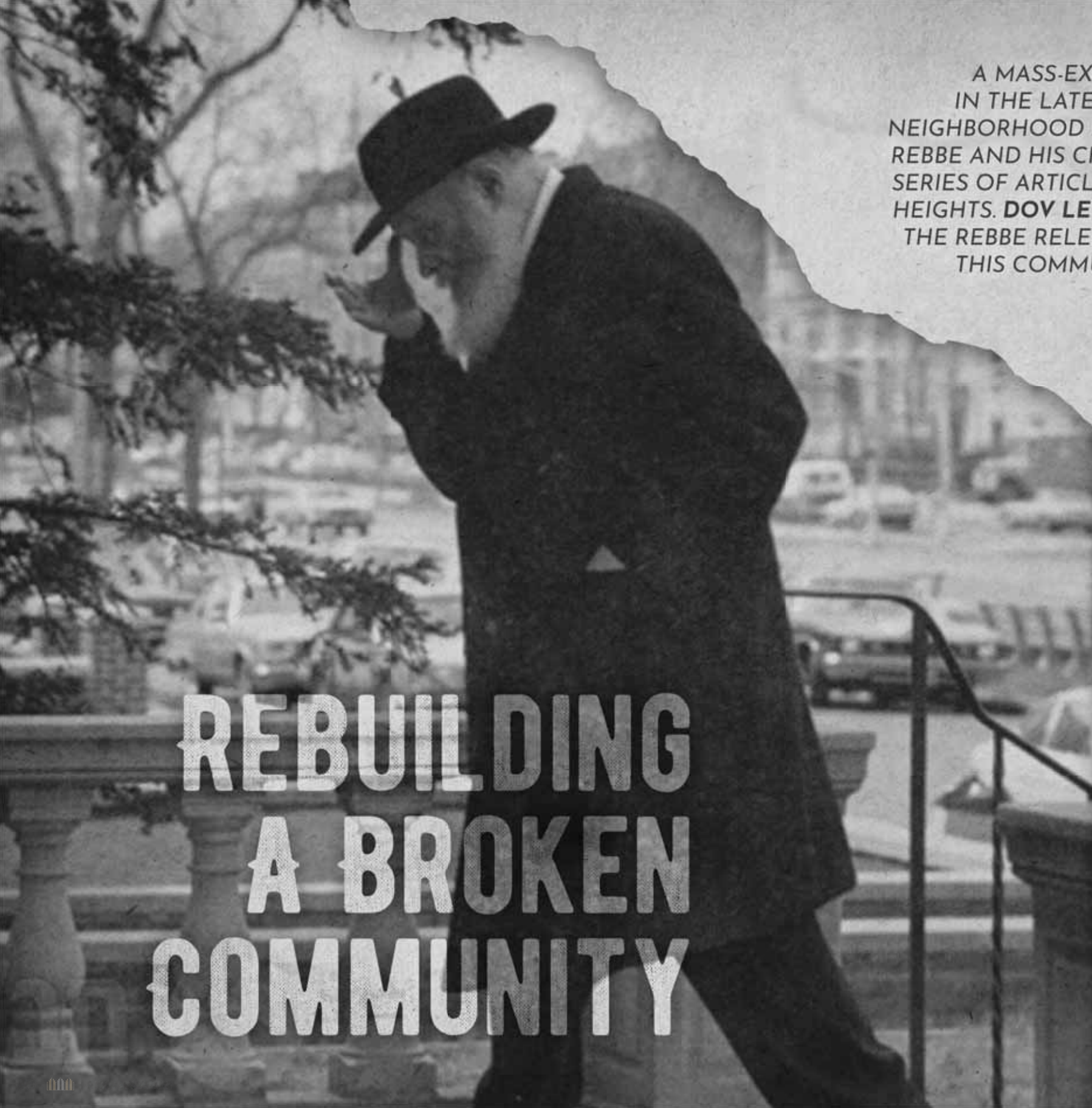
Perhaps at *this* party, Vashti could refuse the royal summons as it made her feel uncomfortable?

So the tribunal was convened. They found that the royal family is held up to a higher standard, especially if their behavior becomes an example to the citizens of the empire.

As shluchim of the Rebbe we many times use the “whatever mitzvah you do is great” approach to attract Jews to the “party” of Yiddishkeit, knowing that “*mitzvah goreres mitzvah*.”

But maybe the royal family must be held up to a higher standard and must conform to *lechatchila shb’lechatchila* standards, so they can set an example as to what an *ideal* Jewish life should look like?

Maybe. ■



A MASS-EXODUS FROM CROWN HEIGHTS
IN THE LATE '60S LEAVES A CRIME-RIDDEN
NEIGHBORHOOD IN SHAMBLES WITH ONLY THE
REBBE AND HIS CHASSIDIM. IN THIS SECOND OF
SERIES OF ARTICLES ON THE STORY OF CROWN
HEIGHTS. **DOV LEVY** TELLS THE STORY OF HOW
THE REBBE RELENTLESSLY LABORED TO BRING
THIS COMMUNITY BACK TO BE A TEEMING
CENTER OF JEWISH LIFE.

INSIDE: WHY DID THE
REBBE SELL 770 TO AN
UNKNOWN FIGURE?

**PRECISELY
FIFTY
YEARS AGO**

on the last night of Pesach
5729 the Rebbe called
for action. A call to
arms to save the Crown Heights Jewish
community from destruction.

As explained in the previous issue,
neighborhoods in Brooklyn with a
majority population of ultra-Orthodox
Jews began to fill with immigrants.
Without proper jobs, many turned to
petty crime to make an easy dollar.

What was once the American center
of traditional Orthodoxy deteriorated
almost beyond repair. The hallowed
stones of the renowned Kingston Avenue
and Eastern Parkway, once resounding
with the hurried footfalls of pious
Jews running to buy kosher meat or
reserving a spot at their Rebbe's tish now
covered in fear under the heavy tread
of the criminals that roamed them. The
storefronts that shouted their Jewishness,

REBUILDING A BROKEN COMMUNITY



holding treasures of *sefarim* and Judaica were now boarded up and abandoned. The jewelers, barbershops, and grocers who once so proudly catered to their Orthodox constituency, now quivered fearfully, hoping that obscurity would spare them being robbed and plundered.

Shuls were left vacant, Jewish schools were emptied, and many kosher businesses were closed. Even those who remained, sold their properties and leased them out, trying to squeeze as much profit as possible before the plunging market made their property worthless.

Other communities were wholly abandoned, leaving only the elderly who did not have the strength to move. Some of these neighborhoods still remain “ghost towns” of Jewish life, with only a few struggling families to make up the minyan, or worse, the beautiful shuls sold to churches, the empty *Aron Kodesh* forced to watch the pagan rituals happening before its eyes.

THE RESCUE TEAM

The possibility of this happening to Crown Heights caused the Rebbe much aggravation.

The community and neighborhood held a very dear place in the Rebbe's heart, firmly maintaining that *kedusha loh zazah mimekomah* — the holiness the Previous Rebbe imbued in 770 and in the neighborhood is immovable. And unlike others who fled without a backwards glance, the Rebbe was not willing to give up on it.

If not for the Rebbe's intense battle, Crown Heights would have followed the same path as those other lost neighborhoods. It happened in Harlem and it could have happened in Crown Heights.

Today, one can walk around more-or-less safely even in the late hours of the night after a Shabbos meal or at the end of a family simcha. In those years, the dark years of Crown Heights, it was unheard of. Walking on Kingston Avenue after nightfall was something nobody would do alone. Those who did suffered for it, often getting hurt, robbed and at times even worse...

Rabbi Chodakov, the Rebbe's chief secretary, shared a memory that once while driving with the Rebbe home from a wedding, the Rebbe noticed a group of couples walking home, an unusual sight in those fear-filled days. The

Rebbe enjoyed the sight and even commented, "Look. How beautiful! People are walking freely with no fear."

As much as the Rebbe begged and pleaded, it took some years until people actually began to take action.

JEWISH PROTECTION FORCE

To solve the problem of the rising crime, the first priority was to form a Jewish agency with a patrol system designed to protect the locals at night from break ins, robberies, and muggings. The group, established by Reb Shmuel Shraga, coined themselves “the Maccabees,” although they later become known as “Shmira.”

Aside from circling the streets after dark, they would offer rides to and from shul or even to the supermarket. The Maccabees gave the community a feeling of safety and security.

The self-directed patrol group caused a loud furor in the local media. Many reported a negative spin on the story, citing that vigilante justice was a distortion of the law. The spotlight on Crown Heights in the news caused real estate interest to drop even lower. Community members, watching their investments lose value by the minute, begged the Maccabee coordinator, Shmuel Shraga, to intercede and call off his patrols. They hoped the concession would make the media lose interest and Crown Heights could try to shed its notoriety.

However, when Shraga asked the Rebbe, the Rebbe told him that not only should he not cease his activities, he should increase patrols and try to do even more to secure the neighborhood.

Shmuel Shraga's influence and impact was felt even after he passed on. He suffered a sudden heart attack while he was relatively young, and an ambulance was immediately called. The African American EMT refused to help, saying that he would not dirty his uniform for a filthy Jew. The horrified bystanders

convinced him to do his job, but he did so with unnecessary force and brutality. Eyewitnesses later shook their heads and said, “He murdered him.”

Shraga's widow was determined that no other Jew should have to suffer the whims of anti-Semitic paramedics. She raised the funds for Crown Heights' first Hatzalah ambulance. The Rebbe donated \$120 dollars towards the truck himself.

CROWN HEIGHTS PRIDE

Once the safety and well-being of the community was addressed, the Rebbe turned to rebuilding and rebranding it, asking for events to be held within Crown Heights.

In a sicha of Parsha Vayeishev 5730, the Rebbe thanked a local organization that chose to hold their fundraising dinner in Crown Heights. The Rebbe added a request that others do the same in order to strengthen the community.

But it wasn't only public events on which the Rebbe had an eye. The Rebbe encouraged chassidim multiple times to hold their personal simchas in local halls.

When Rabbi Michoel Teitelbaum purchased the Oholei Torah building from a Conservative Jewish Center, he included a wedding hall as per the Rebbe's request.

Because of its spotty history, some refused to enter. The Jacobson family rented the hall for a wedding, but the grandfather of the kalla, Rabbi Yaakov Lipsker said that he refused to attend if it would be held there. The father of the chosson, Reb Gershon Ber Jacobson, was flummoxed and decided to make the wedding outside of Crown Heights instead. The Rebbe told him not to switch locations and asked him to find another solution. The wedding was finally held in a tent in the yard of the Beis Rivka building. The Rebbe was pleased that

// THE REBBE ADDRESSED THE ECONOMICAL SITUATION OF THE LOCAL BUSINESSES, ENCOURAGING CROWN HEIGHTSERS TO PATRONIZE LOCAL SHOPS, JEWISH OWNED OR NOT.

the wedding did not move outside of Crown Heights.

The Rebbe encouraged all other types of community events to be held in Crown Heights as well. The dinner for descendants of the Alter Rebbe, the N'shei Chabad convention, the banquet of the Kinnus Hashluchim, and Tzivos Hashem rallies were all held in Crown Heights following the Rebbe's instruction..

One specific N'shei Chabad event was geared for women of other communities. The Rebbe requested that regardless, the event should be held in Crown Heights, despite their plans to rent a hall in a more convenient location like Flatbush or Boro Park. In the end, the event was packed, with half of the participants commuting from other neighborhoods.

Through various events, simchas, and occasions being held in Crown Heights, others were attracted to the community, thereby strengthening its support and members.

LOCAL BUSINESSES

With the streets becoming safer and public events being held without fear, the Rebbe addressed the economical situation of the local businesses, encouraging Crown Heightsers to patronize local shops, Jewish owned or not. Quoting the halacha that the poor of one's own community is paramount, the Rebbe asked

chassidim to shop locally and support their resident business owners.

The Rebbe cared not only for the Chassidim of the community but for the non-Jews as well. In the year 5737 (1977), there was a blackout that affected a large area of Crown Heights. The Rebbe had the secretaries find out how much damage all the businesses suffered, including the non-Jewish stores, and offered to pay for it. In the end, the government ended up paying for it all.

THE SHULS

With the physical, emotional, and financial aspects of the community cared for, the most heartbreaking issue of all was left: its spiritual wellbeing. One of the things that deeply hurt the Rebbe were the shuls which were left vacant and abandoned. With real estate cheaper than ever, Chassidim started purchasing any shul being sold in the area.

This is how the Montgomery and Kingston "shul intersection" came to be. Three shuls were purchased one after another in the same area, to save the shuls which were once *shtibelach* of other sects of chassidim which had fled Crown Heights.

One of the few Rebbes that remained in Crown Heights even after most of his community left would come daven in 770, the one place he was able to find a minyan. One time, he joined the Rebbe's minyan for mincha on Shabbos. The Rebbe instructed the *gabbai* to give him his own *aliya* (*sh'lishi*)...

The Rebbe strongly encouraged chassidim to frequent these *shtibelach*. The Novominsker *shtibel*, on the corner of Carroll and Schenectady, was losing members and could barely make minyanim. The Rebbe instructed Reb Mendel Baumgarten, who lived next door, to attend shul there exclusively, threatening that if Reb Mendel came to 770, the Rebbe would go daven in the Novominsker shul.

Members of shuls in Crown Heights would keep it a secret from the Chassidim if they planned on selling their shul, because they knew the chassidim would stop them. Bochorim would attend the same shul for months, giving regular chassidus shiurim, only to show up one day and find the shul sold to a church.

When one particular sect planned to leave, they nearly signed an agreement with *goyim* who were interested in purchasing the building. A few *askanim* would not allow them, begging and pleading that they sell the building to them rather than to *goyim*. They couldn't match their offer, but they were determined and doubled their efforts. The owners figured that it would just be a matter of time until Chabad moved out of Crown Heights as well, allowing them to collect the extra profit from the building when they did. They signed a contract with this clause, laughing in their hearts at the poor deluded Chabad Chassidim who would never get their money's worth. This building still houses the offices of Tzach and the Crown Heights kollel, along with other small businesses.

Bochorim and members of *Anash* would walk to surrounding neighborhoods to help complete the minyanim of the abandoned shuls, guarded zealously by their obstinate gabbaim. Amongst them was Reb Michael Teitelbaum. Hearing about a shul's imminent departure, he moved in above the mikvah and dedicated the rest of his life to making sure there was a minyan.

On Shabbos, he would walk over an hour to participate in the Rebbe's farbrengen and then leave in middle in order to make it back on time to organize a minyan for mincha.

Anyone walking through African American neighborhoods now can still spot buildings adorned with Jewish symbols. Public schools have Mezuzah's encased on their doors, churches boast *goyische* symbols alongside an engraving of the *Aseres Hadibros*. With the remarkable exception of Crown Heights, these flourishing Jewish communities have dwindled into bare casings of Jewish life.

FORMING A TEAM

One of the ways the Rebbe saved the community was by forming a special team who would help purchase homes and buildings for those looking to live in Crown Heights. One of the prominent members of the team was Reb Zalman Gurary.

THE "CROWN HOTEL" ON CROWN STREET, BETWEEN ALBANY AND TROY





A FIRE RAVAGES IN '788', THE OFFICE BUILDING ON TOP OF THE 770 SHUL

Any individual looking to buy a house in Crown Heights received a long-term interest-free loan of five thousand dollars. Houses at that time would be sold for only fifteen thousand dollars. This was obviously a very significant loan for anyone looking to buy a house.

There was also another committee created by the Rebbe whose job was to try and buy up as many properties as possible so they could be sold or rented to Jews. Amongst the lead faces of this company were Rabbis Chaikel Chanin and Tzvi Steinmetz.

The company ran into financial issues and no longer had funds to purchase houses. At a farbrengen the Rebbe said that being that nobody is taking the matter seriously he will try a 'poilishe shtick'. The Rebbe said that he will buy shares in the company and pay for them with dollar bills. Any person buying a share in the company would receive one of those dollar bills. (Since this was before "Sunday dollars," such an opportunity was rare. With

this technique, the company managed to raise over a hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

Along the whole way, the Rebbe was interested in every detail of the company. At times, the Rebbe even requested details on specific houses and what their status was.

Another project that the company took upon themselves was building new homes and projects with subsidized prices for people who were unable to buy homes.

In the square on the corner of Crown Street and Albany Avenue was a large, empty lot. Elders of the community remember it as the spot where Reb Dovid Okonuv Hy"d was murdered, a horrifying event that led to a *ma'amar* that the Rebbe said in bitter tears.

In that square, on the Montgomery side, two and three family houses were built and sold at subsidized prices to Jewish families exclusively. On the Crown side, there was a plan to build a hotel, although that plan never came to fruition. Recently, Reb Mendel Drizin built the Crown Condos there.

Throughout, the Rebbe encouraged all to purchase homes in Crown Heights. Even those who just planned on living there for just a year before moving out on shlichus, the Rebbe encouraged them to buy rather than to rent. "It's always better to be a *balabos*," said the Rebbe.

SELLING 770

Upon the Rebbe's request to strengthen the community, Chassidim began working on building a new mikvah. When this was started, the original mikvah was in ruins. During construction, funding ran out. For some two and a half years families would travel to nearby neighborhoods to use the mikvah. And those that used the half-built Crown Heights mikvah would be injured on the unfinished floors and walls. The Rebbe begged and begged for action to be taken but to no avail.

Frustrated with the inaction, the Rebbe sold the building of 770 to a non-Lubavitcher in

order to cover the costs of the mikvah. This whole procedure was done very secretly with information kept confidential upon the Rebbe's request to this day.

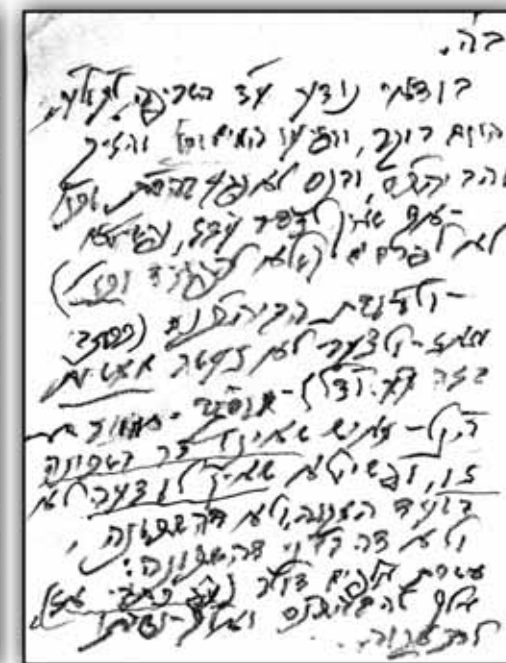
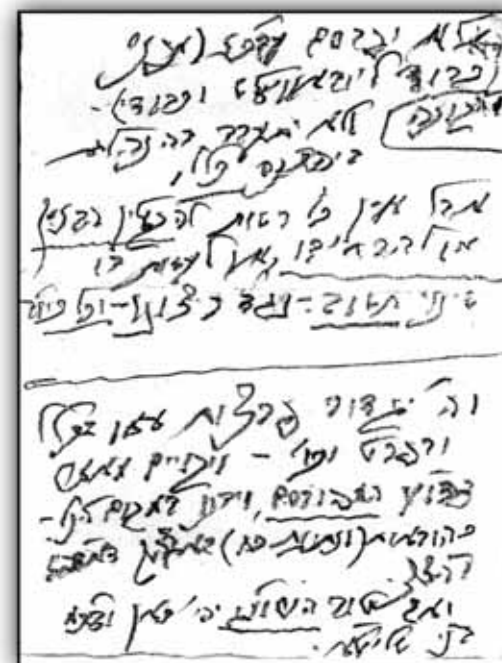
Years later, when there were federal court cases regarding the ownership of 770, this contract helped to win the battle and prove that the Rebbe is the eternal owner of 770.

As noted in a previous article in this series, the situation of the community was so important to the Rebbe that the Rebbetzin listed it as one of the three things that caused the Rebbe much physical aggravation.

Crown Heights was so important to the Rebbe that the Rebbe was willing to sell 770, the first home of the Friediker Rebbe and the Rebbe's own shul. ■

In next issue: The ongoing work of the Rebbe in rebuilding the community.

THE REBBE INSTRUCTS TO SELL 770





Rabbi
Leib Aber

WILL MY CHILD FEEL DEPRIVED?

QUESTION › I am a young parent who is well aware of the potential harms of technology and the outside influences it can bring. I am doing my best to protect my children and don't let them access social media and overuse technology. But I am concerned they will grow up feeling deprived, especially with almost everyone around them having it available. What would you advise me?

ANSWER › Many thanks for your letter. As you mentioned, you realize the harmful effect of the internet, but you don't want them to feel deprived, with all their friends having unlimited access. Parents want their children to have warm feelings about their childhood and not to look back with resentment.

Presumably, you feed your children only kosher food. Suppose you reach the lane in a supermarket which has non-kosher candies, does your child throw a tantrum when he or she is told, 'No'? I doubt it. The child simply knows that you would never buy non-kosher candies. You don't have to persuade the child that your viewpoint is correct. All you need to do is to say it's not kosher in a calm voice. The child knows that we live our lives with kosher food and it is not negotiable. The child doesn't feel deprived.

So too with the internet. In your family, these are the standards. We don't eat non-kosher candies, and we don't have unfiltered

internet. Just like the non-kosher food issue, no discussion is even necessary.

This strategy works for young children.

But as soon as the child reaches the teenage years and wants to make his or her own decisions, it becomes more difficult. He or she thinks, "why should I be deprived of (unfiltered) internet access when my friends aren't? Now that I'm older, why can't I exercise my inalienable rights for freedom?"

Maybe your teenager will listen when you tell them that internet is dangerous; that people are looking to trick him/her into clicking to sell them something; or to involve them in bad things, or to try to meet them, that it can be addictive, that it can tempt them with many *aveiros*. Perhaps they might understand that the kosher way to use the internet is with restricted access. But maybe the teenager will resent the censorship and feel deprived or ignore your request.

The only way to overcome the feeling of being deprived is to substitute it with something

better instead — like the *simcha* of Torah and Mitzvos and the pride of being in the Rebbe *Melech Hamoshiach's* army. The answer is to use this discussion about the internet as an amazing opportunity to teach the child to push away darkness by adding light. Learning at a Chassidische Yeshiva or seminary should make the teenager feel a purpose in life. They will be kept busy with positive *inyonim* and realize that they are not being deprived by not going on the internet. When the teenager is motivated to learn, *daven*, do *mivtzoyim*, create Jewish children's programs, compete in *hachanah* programs and go to farbrengens, then this light pushes away the temptation, darkness, and filth of the internet.

It is important to teach our kids that the filth of the internet is worse than non-kosher food since it is addictive. Very addictive. And it offers instant gratification.

Being realistic: even if your child only has filtered internet access (which is a halachically required and very sensible precaution) the rest of the world has access, and some friends have no filters. In a micro-second, with one click, your child can see very graphic images and be tempted to return later. Becoming addicted is too easy.

Because your child is likely to have a friend who has access, it is all the more important to educate your child how to recognize the dangers. When a child has guidance about the overall impact of the internet on people, he or she is more likely to stop him/herself from being innocently carried away.

Harping on the negative effects of the internet to a teenager will not necessarily be the most effective tool. The teenager needs to know that the internet can be very harmful, but the parent should avoid putting the child down for their temptation. That strategy could backfire. If the internet becomes too criticized, it could inadvertently create a sense of curiosity about it. Rather, parents should give constructive,

// THE ONLY WAY TO OVERCOME THE FEELING OF BEING DEPRIVED IS TO SUBSTITUTE IT WITH SOMETHING BETTER INSTEAD

realistic information that can prepare them to see the challenge through Jewish eyes.

To counter curiosity about the *goyish* world, we can encourage our children to *koch* in something positive, something that arouses the positive aspect of curiosity — the Chassidus about Moshiach. When the child (and we are all children at heart...) is motivated to want a better world, when the child is motivated that the whole goal of the world is to be a dwelling place for Hashem, then the essence of the neshama is touched. Nothing can defile this essence, not even the *k'lipa* and *shmutz* found on the internet. In the Sichos of 5752, the Rebbe spoke about how the Jewish child should be educated to want Moshiach. The motivation for children to learn can be that they simply want to bring Hashem into the world, to be able to see G-dliness, to want to make this world a home for Hashem.

The best way to accomplish this wonder in our children is to be a *dugma chaya* of it ourselves. ■

Rabbi Leib Aber has been involved in *Chinuch* for over 30 years, under the Rebbe's guidance, in *Cheder Chabad* of Sydney and elsewhere. He has taught a variety of ages.

Further *Chinuch*-related question can be addressed to him through *Beis Moshiach* by emailing chinuch@BeisMoshiach.org



The Life Story of
Reb Mendel Baumgarten

PART 2

He asked to be sent on shlichus, but the Rebbe assigned him and his wife a special mission

THE REBBE'S SHLIACH TO CROWN HEIGHTS

AVRAHAM RAINITZ ◦

IT WAS A WINTER SHABBOS

morning, Reb Mendel and fellow Chassidim in Brownsville were going about their regular Shabbos schedule when terrible news came from 770. It was the tenth of Sh'vat 5710 (1950).

Reb Mendel rushed to 770 and got there about 10:00 AM. What happened there began a new phase in his life when he attached himself to the Rebbe, with whom he already shared a close connection.

"DON'T WASTE MY SON-IN-LAW'S TIME"

Anyone who learned in 770 in the last years of the Previous Rebbe's life in this world, would encounter the Rebbe MH" M just about every day, and some bachurim received special *kiruvim* from the Rebbe, who was known then as "Ramash" (an abbreviation of the Rebbe's name, **Rav Menachem Schneerson**), Reb Mendel was one of them.

He told his children how he would see the Rebbe returning from his job at the Brooklyn Navy Yard every day, and he would go into the small *zal* with a piece of paper in his hand and begin to search for various *sefarim*. It appeared that on his way to and from work, the Rebbe would think of Torah concepts and jot down the references to various *sefarim* that he needed to look into, which he did later in the afternoon.

There were few Lubavitch families in the Crown Heights of those years, so the few children who hung-out in 770 during the afternoon hours felt comfortable enough to "test" the Rebbe. They knew that the Rebbe was proficient in the entire Talmud by heart, and they enjoyed approaching the Rebbe and asking him where a given statement could be found. The Rebbe would relate even to the little children and not

only would he answer their questions, but he would also address them with the respectful, formal Yiddish term for you – *ihr*, as you would use to address adults.

This went on until the matter became known to the Rebbe Rayatz, and he sent his personal secretary, R' Chaim Lieberman, to announce that they should stop wasting his son-in-law's precious time with pointless questions. Even in the case of more substantive questions, they should first approach the teachers and *Roshei Yeshiva*, and only in cases where they could not provide an answer was it proper to approach Ramash and ask him for his response.

After repeating what the Rebbe Rayatz instructed, the secretary added that the Rebbe Rayatz had said about his son-in-law that he is always awake at four in the morning; either he did not yet go to sleep, or he already awoke for the day.

After the Rebbe was informed about the passing of his father, Reb Levi Yitzchok, he led the weekday davening for the eleven months of the year of mourning. As mentioned, there were few Anash families in Crown Heights, and it wasn't always easy to organize a special

minyan for the Rebbe every morning. What made it extra difficult was that the Rebbe insisted on having ten *besides* for himself. R' Mendel had the privilege of davening at almost every one of the *tefillos* in the Rebbe's minyan, and hearing the Rebbe *lain* on Mondays and Thursdays for those eleven months.

He was privileged to receive many special *kiruvim* from the Rebbe in those years before the *nesius*. He said about himself that he was drawn to the Rebbe as though by a powerful magnet. At times, when he did some work for *Merkos*, he had the opportunity to be together with the Rebbe in his room and loved to observe and study the Rebbe's conduct.

ONE YECHIDUS, TWO REBBES

R' Mendel merited to witness firsthand an instance of revealed *Ruach Ha'kodesh* on the part the Rebbe.

Due to the compromised health of the Rebbe Rayatz in those years, not everybody was able to understand his speech. Therefore, a secretary, R' Eliyahu Simpson usually, would also be present at the *yeichidus* and repeat afterward what the Rebbe said.

One time, R' Mendel was waiting on line for *Yechidus*, and when his turn came, he noticed that Rabbi Simpson was not present. Having no choice, he went into the *Yechidus* alone. After he handed his *pan* (note with questions and requests for blessings) to the Rebbe, the Rebbe began to bless him, but to his great disappointment, he didn't understand the *bracha*. All he could do was take notice of when the Rebbe concluded his words, which was the indication that the *yeichidus* had come to an end.

He left the *Yechidus* with an unpleasant feeling, and being at a loss he went down to the first-floor office of the Ramash and asked if it was okay to bother him to go up to the second floor and ask his father-in-law, the Rebbe Rayatz, what he said in *Yechidus*.

To his utter shock, the Rebbe raised himself a bit and closed the buttons of his jacket, and said to him, "It is not necessary," and he immediately began to repeat the words that the Rebbe Rayatz said in *Yechidus*! As the Rebbe repeated to him the words of the Rebbe Rayatz, R' Mendel recalled some of the stray words that he *had* managed to discern in the *Yechidus* that suddenly became clear to him! It became clear to him that the Rebbe was repeating exactly the words that the Rebbe Rayatz had spoken to him in *yeichidus*. That is even though the Rebbe was not there in the room, and had not gone upstairs to ask!

THE FIRST TO CALL THE RAMASH "REBBE"

R' Mendel married Sarah Nechama Groner (the sister of *yblcht*'a Rabbi Leibel Groner, the Rebbe's secretary) in 5709 (1949). When he informed the Rebbe Rayatz about the *shidduch* idea, the Rebbe wrote him, "one who marries a woman needs to check her brothers," and then added that "they are my students," and went on to list them by name. He also had the

AT THE GATHERING FOR DESCENDANTS OF THE ALTER REBBE. R' MENDEL WITH HIS SON LEVI AND GRANDSON



privilege that Ramash said the *sheva brachos* under his *chupah*.

On Yud Shevat 5710, right after hearing the sad news about the *Histalkus* (passing) of the Rebbe Rayatz, R' Mendel hurried to 770 and arrived at about ten in the morning. He saw the Rebbe holding the arm of his brother-in-law, Rashag, as they both paced. R' Mendel, who didn't know what to do, approached the Rebbe to ask him for instructions.

Although until then he was used to speaking to him, he suddenly felt tremendous awe and trembled as he approached. He felt that from here on in, this was the Rebbe and he said: "Rebbe!"

The Rebbe turned to him and answered his questions. Several hours later, after *Mincha*, R' Mendel had more questions, and again he addressed the Rebbe as Rebbe, and the Rebbe responded to his questions. Years later, when he recounted this to his children, he noted that he was probably the first to refer to the Rebbe as Rebbe, two hours after the passing of the Rebbe Rayatz.

"CHABAD ON CAMPUS" IN THE '50S

After he married, R' Mendel began working as a *shochet*, but when he heard the Rebbe talk about the need to go on shlichus, he immediately told the Rebbe that he and his wife were ready to go wherever the Rebbe told them to go. He wrote this to the Rebbe repeatedly until around the year 5715 the Rebbe answered: **"You and your wife were drafted; you in *Tzach* (*Tzeirei Agudas Chabad* – Lubavitch Youth) and she in *N'Shei Chabad*, here in Crown Heights, for the time being."**

Even after this clear answer, R' Mendel continued to ask the Rebbe to send him on shlichus until the Rebbe told his brother-in-law, R' Leibel Groner, his secretary, to tell "your sister's husband" that they were both drafted into shlichus in Crown Heights.

|| RABBI CHADAKOV TOLD HIM THAT HE GETS A BIG YASHER KOACH SINCE THE REBBE HAD BEEN VERY SERIOUS THAT WEEK AND THIS WAS HIS FIRST SMILE IN A WEEK!

R' Mendel began working to spread Yiddishkeit and Chassidus at universities under the auspices of Tzach. He would often travel with his wife to spend Shabbos at university campuses and accomplished a lot in these places. Although it wasn't always easy for a married couple to travel for Shabbos to a university, he never refused to go. When *Tzach* called and asked him to go, he always said yes.

In the early years, he would go twice a month for Shabbos on campus. The shlichus at universities produced impressive results; many students drew close to Chabad and became Chassidim.

The Rebbe did not hold a farbrengen every Shabbos those years. When they knew the Rebbe would be holding one on a certain Shabbos, it was hard to find people willing to go on shlichus for Shabbos. On one of these Shabbosim, the only one who agreed to go was R' Mendel. That Shabbos, the Rebbe spoke sharply against those who avoided shlichus. He said that those attending the farbrengen only "heard" the farbrengen while those who were on shlichus "grasped it internally."

"YOU MADE THE REBBE SMILE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A WEEK!"

The Rebbe once received a newspaper clipping from London which spoke about Chabad's activities on campus. It had a picture of R' Mendel making *havdala*. The Rebbe gave the clipping to R' Leibel Groner and asked him

to give it to his sister, R' Mendel's wife, for she would enjoy it.

The *nachas* that the Rebbe got from R' Mendel's activities is well illustrated by the following episode that we heard from his son, R' Shneur Zalman:

"Whenever my father returned from Shabbos at a university, he would go to 770 to see and be seen by the Rebbe. One time, he met his brother-in-law, R' Leibel Groner. Rabbi Groner told him to wait until the Rebbe would leave for home. When the Rebbe emerged, he smiled broadly at him and said: 'You are coming from shlichus now?'"

"The Rebbe continued walking toward the car as he looked at my father with a big smile. Afterward, Rabbi Chadakov told him that he gets a big *yasher koach* since the Rebbe had been very serious that week and this was his first smile in a week!"

A NICHKOACH SOLOIST

R' Mendel was a pioneer in all the Rebbe's *inyanim* and when R' Michael Teitelbaum founded Oholei Torah as per the Rebbe's instructions, R' Mendel was one of the first parents to register his children in the new yeshiva.

When the Rebbe instructed to produce the *Nichoach* recordings of Chabad *niggunim*, R' Mendel, being blessed with a beautiful voice got involved and was a member of the choir. In some of the *niggunim* he even sang solo.

In later years, when they began to arrange "evenings with Chabad" in different cities in the United States, he would travel with his sons, and they would perform, using their outstanding vocal abilities.

"IF THERE IS ROOM FOR THEM ALL, I'LL FIND A SPOT TOO."

R' Mendel lived near 770 for a number of years, and like Avraham Avinu, his home was

open to guests. Whoever was in 770 and had no place to sleep, would go to the Baumgarten house and be graciously welcomed. Even after they moved to Carroll Street, they often had dozens of guests.

R' Shlomo Schwartz ("Schwartzi") now a successful shliach in California, relates that when he was first starting out, he once arrived in 770 late at night and did not know where he would sleep. One of the bachurim told him: Go to the Baumgartens. The door is open, and you can walk in. On the right side, you will see a door to the basement; you can sleep there."

He went. Coming down the steps, he was astounded to find dozens of guests sleeping in the basement. Some on beds, others on mattresses on the floor. He thought to himself: "If there is room for them all, I'll find a spot too."

During the *shiva*, someone shared that when he was in the process of coming close to Chassidus, he was hosted in their home. He can't forget how R' Mendel welcomed him, saying: "Please, treat this as your own home."

He was amazed since this was the first time they met and R' Mendel did not know him. Despite this, he welcomed everyone graciously.

"THE HOST SHOULD GET A WHOLE MATZO TOO..."

Professor Pesach (Paul) Rosenblum, one of Rabbi Moshe Feller's *mekuravim*, would stay for long periods in the home of R' Mendel. Once, when he was passing by the Rebbe for the *matzo* distribution, the Rebbe asked him if Professor Rosenblum was staying by them. When he answered in the affirmative, the Rebbe gave a very big smile and handed him a whole *matzo* saying: "If the guest receives a whole *matzo*, why shouldn't the host receive a whole *matzo*?"

On Simchas Torah 5735 (1974), when the *hakafah* of the Chassidim from France began,



AT REB MENDEL'S KABBOLAS PANIM IN GOLD MANOR. SEATED (FROM RIGHT TO LEFT) ARE, REB CHAIM NACHMAN KOVALSKY; R' ZEV BAUMGARTEN, THE CHASAN'S FATHER (STANDING); **THE REBBE**; REB MORDECHAI GRONER, THE KALLAH'S FATHER; REB MENDEL, THE CHASAN; RASHAG: REB HIRSCH KONIKOV; REB SHMUEL LEVITIN. STANDING (FROM RIGHT TO LEFT) REB TZVI YOSEF KOTLARSKY; REB SHMUEL AIZIK POPACK; REB BEREL CHASKIND; RABBI MORDECHAI DOV TELESHEVSKY; REB MORDECHAI MEIR BRYSKI

he was asked to say the verses in leading the *hakafah*. He initially refused, because he was afraid of losing his spot on the bleachers. Except, that the Rebbe himself then turned to his direction, and pointed to him with his finger that he should join the *hakafah*. The Rebbe deviated from his usual practice during that *hakafah*, and throughout the entire *hakafah* he watched R' Mendel dancing with the Torah until he returned to his place on the bleachers!

R' Mendel and his wife took their mission as shluchim to Crown Heights very seriously. The two of them organized classes at their home every evening for young women who were becoming observant with about forty young ladies in attendance. When the activities grew, R' Mendel found it difficult to continue his work as a *shochet* along with administering the classes for the girls. He asked the Rebbe about this, and the answer was to continue his work as a *shochet* and to hand over the work with the women to someone else.

He approached **R' Yaakov Yehuda Hecht**, who took it over and ultimately built the

famous Machon Chana institute from this group of girls.



The spirit of shlichus was passed by Reb Mendel and his wife **Nechama a"h** to their large beautiful family. Many of his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, serve as shluchim around the world.

He is survived by his children Rabbi **Yossel Baumgarten** – Johannesburg, South Africa; Mrs. **Shterna Rodal** – Los Angeles, CA; Mrs. **Breina Popack** – Tzfas, ER"Y; Rabbi **Leibel Baumgarten** – Hamptons, NY; Rabbi **Sholom Ber Baumgarten** – Crown Heights; Rabbi **Zalman Baumgarten** – Crown Heights; Mrs. **Chanale Posner** – Plantation, FL; Mrs. **Tzirl Suede** – Mexico; Rabbi **Levi Baumgarten** – Crown Heights; and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

"*Hakitzu v'ranenu shochnei afar*," he among them, at the immediate hisgalus of the Rebbe *Melech Hamoshiach, Now!* ■

PARADOXES of The Rebbe

RABBI HESCHEL GREENBERG

"PROPHETIC AND PRAGMATIC"

MYSTICAL & PRACTICAL

Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks referred to the Rebbe as "prophetic and pragmatic."

The Rebbe's teachings focus on the transcendent aspect of the Divine, of the Jewish soul. The Rebbe sees everything through the prism of Torah. The Rebbe is credited with thousands of miracles. The Rebbe clearly is connected to a higher, mystical and supernatural world.

Yet, the Rebbe is so connected to the same world that most other people occupy. The Rebbe established institutions in such an organized and practical way.

It was said, that a *Beinoni* (the "intermediate spiritual level" discussed in Tanya) exists *within* this world (identifies with and has all the struggles that our world provides for); a *Tzadik* is *above* the world (he is detached, aloof and transcends the conflict and darkness of this material world), but a Rebbe is above the world and in the world simultaneously.

MOST ASCETIC FOR HIMSELF BUT DENOUNCED IT FOR OTHERS

The Rebbe led an extremely ascetic lifestyle. He hardly ate and slept. Everything the Rebbe owned or did was simple.

Yet, one of the foundations of the Ba'al Shem Tov's teachings the Rebbe cited frequently was

the importance of the body and that we should not break the body.

In the Rebbe's philosophy, based on earlier Chassidic teaching, the body has an even higher source than the soul and therefore in the Messianic Age the soul will be nurtured by the body.



THE REBBE DROVE FOR MANY YEARS IN THE SAME OLD CAR. ON PURIM KATAN 5746 THE REBBE WAS "SURPRISED" WITH A BRAND NEW CAR. THE REBBE "RESPONDED" BY WAITING FOR MANY LONG MINUTES FOR THE OLD CAR TO BE BROUGHT BACK...

Yet, while the Rebbe personally lived ascetically he would denounce that approach for others.

On an occasion when he visited the women's school, Machon Chana, he instructed the administration to make sure there are mirrors, art work etc., to make the place comfortable and beautiful. ■

MOMENTS With The Rebbe

A "STANDARD" MINCHA WITH THE REBBE

1 BEGINNING 5748 (1988) THE REBBE BEGAN DAVENING WITH THE MINYAN IN 770 FOR ALL 3 DAILY TEFFILOS. BEFORE, THE REBBE WOULD ONLY JOIN THE MINYAN FOR MINCHA AND MA'ARIV. THESE FEW MINUTES WERE THE ONLY OPPORTUNITY FOR CHASSIDIM TO SPEND SOME TIME WITH THE REBBE ON A REGULAR DAY. THE REBBE WOULD DAVEN IN THE SMALL ZAL, UPSTAIRS IN 770. A CROWD OF ABOUT 100 WAS ABLE TO FIT INTO THE SMALL ROOM. AS HE ENTERED THE REBBE WOULD OFTEN GIVE A QUICK GLANCE AT THE CROWD.



4 IN THE EARLIER YEARS THE REBBE WOULD DAVEN IN THE SOUTH-EAST CORNER OF THE ZAL, NEAR THE DOOR CONNECTING THE ZAL WITH THE CHEDER SHENI. HIS CHAIR STOOD AT THE SOUTHERN WALL, UNDER THE WINDOW, AND THE SHTENDER AT THE MIZRACH VANT. THE FRIERDIKER REBBE'S PLACE WAS ALSO IN THAT CORNER, THOUGH NOT EXACTLY AT THE SAME PLACE. THE FRIERDIKER REBBE'S PLACE WAS TO THE LEFT OF THE SECOND DOOR ON THE EASTERN WALL, CONNECTING THE ZAL AND THE HALLWAY. WHEN THE CROWD GREW, THE REBBE DIDN'T WANT TO MAKE HIS WAY THROUGH TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ZAL SO HE BEGAN DAVENING NEAR THE FIRST ENTRANCE TO THE SMALL ZAL, AT THE DOOR TO THE LEFT OF THE ARON KODESH WHICH CONNECTS THE ZAL AND THE ENTRANCE LOBBY. BOCHURIM REGULARLY SAT THERE DURING THE DAY TO LEARN. THIS BROUGHT UP A DISSECTION IN ONE OF THE KOVTZEI HA'AROS WHETHER IT IS HALACHICALLY PERMITTED TO SIT AT THE REBBE'S PLACE. THE REBBE ADDRESSED THIS ISSUE AT LENGTH AT A FARBRENGEN AND EXPLAINED THAT IT ISN'T A PROBLEM SINCE IT ISN'T HIS MAKOM KAVUA (HIS DESIGNATED PLACE).



2 WHEN MANY GUESTS WERE PRESENT AND THERE WAS NO PLACE IN THE ZAL, THE REBBE WOULD DAVEN MINCHA IN THE "SHALASH" – THE ROOFED COURTYARD BETWEEN 770 AND 788. THIS WENT ON UNTIL THE BIG SHUL DOWNSTAIRS WAS BUILT. PICTURED IS THE REBBE DAVENING ON A PLATFORM IN THE SHALASH ON THE 10TH OF ELUL 5717 (1957).

3 WHEN ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER MENACHEM BEGIN CAME TO VISIT THE REBBE AT 770, SECURITY CLOSED THE BUILDING BEFOREHAND. BEING SO, ENTRANCE TO MINCHA WITH THE REBBE WAS LIMITED TO THE REBBE'S SECRETARIES AND A FEW OTHER CLEARED INDIVIDUALS. THE CHAZZEN PICTURED IS THE REBBE'S SECRETARY REB SHOLOM MENDEL SIMPSON.





MUSIC FROM THE UNDERWORLD

A SHORT STORY BY S. FELDMAN

THEY silently swept the fallen debris under the stump that was used as a couch. The shadowy figures of the neighbors scurried nearby. The silhouettes of the children playing with pebbles was a familiar scene alongside the kerchiefed women chopping a darkened salad. As evening descended bats flew eerily overhead, the flapping of their rough wings echoing through the village. Another day had gone by for the citizens of the underground.

Evening morphed into a barely noticeable morning, with thin cracks of light hardly illuminating the caves. As midday approached, the hundreds of residents huddled around the jagged circle carved into a dusty stone on the ground. They cupped their hands open just in time to catch their daily meal. Fresh bread and milk came raining down. Packets of fish and chunks of raw meat, alongside crisp vegetables and sweet fruit. The women filled their baskets.

The children munched on apples and grapes. And those who stayed long enough were able to catch the creamy pudding that rained down for dessert.

The sun shone in its glory above yet the people did not know of its existence. The birds chirped merrily overhead yet the people didn't hear. All they knew of was of their simple life in the caves of Abufansilo, where darkness was a way of life and all they could possibly need rained down upon them each afternoon.

"A toothpick, now!" Ordered his royal highness.

"Yes your majesty!" responded Phillip immediately, and scurried away to fulfill his master's menial request.

The King's chambers screamed luxury. The walls were covered in thick purple drapes riddled with glittering jewels.

The prince relaxed in the room nearby, rolling golden marbles along the lush carpets.

As the king perused The Royal Gazette, his crystal glasses perched atop his nose, he noticed an article about a strange group of his citizens. They had lived in caves for generations, not knowing what sunshine meant and had all their needs taken care of by a local group of sponsors.

Glancing at his only son, an idea flashed into his mind. A dangerous idea.

"My prince," called the king, "I have an important mission for you."

Young Adoninus's eyes sparkled with excitement. He had never really been challenged before, having everything served to him on a silver platter.

"I'm sending you away to a distant land. There people don't know about the real world. Your mission is to teach the people about the king, convince them of the truth and hold onto your princely status. I will come to pick you up in exactly one year from today."

Jittery with apprehension and excitement, the young prince packed his belongings and boarded the royal chariot. He tightly clutched his most valuable possession - the beautiful hand carved violin that filled him with joy when he would play its delicate strings.

Over rolling hills and frosty mountains they traveled. Through the dense forest and the arid desert they rode. Through the sunny day and treacherous night they journeyed. Until finally they came to halt in a dusty terrain where weeds flourished and sand was scattered as far as the eye could see.

Descending endless stairs, and passing through deep cold tunnels; the prince suddenly found himself alone. Alone and terri-

fied. He wanted to run back to the carriage, to run back home and snuggle under his safe blankets. But it was too late. His driver had vanished. "Father!" the prince cried bitterly. "Father, father, father" the walls cried in an echoing response, as if to taunt him. All alone, he didn't feel so adventurous at all. He felt like a vulnerable creature, stranded on the banks of an unknown ocean, being told to swim all the way across.

"HEY you!" Called a little boy in an khaki undershirt. "Where did you come from?"

"Just from around there" murmured the prince, as he slowly found a corner to settle in. He stuck out like a sore thumb - his royal clothing a stark contrast to the dusty attire of the inhabitants.

The curious child came closer and began to finger the prince's golden buttons. "Shiny!" he said simply. Adoninus smiled. There was something cute and innocent about this little kid. "Go play," he told him. "I'll come talk to you soon." And with that the Prince fell into a deep sleep, dreaming of the palace and his father, the king.

"WAKE up! Wake up! You're going to miss breakfast!" He stumbled out of his slumber just in time to witness the daily rain-catching-ritual. Almost laughing out loud, the prince took out a schnitzel from his bag and watched these people curiously. "Why do they live here," he thought to himself?

DAYS passed. The prince began getting used to the different lifestyle. His eyes adapted to the lack of light and he stopped

coughing from the excessive dust. But he had a mission to fulfill.

"Pardon me" he interrupted a man at work selling Flintstones. "You know there's such a thing as real light. It comes from a big round ball called the sun and it shines really brightly on earth!" "Nonsense!" the man chuckled. "Light comes from the stones we rub against each other. There's nothing more!" He shrugged and kept walking.

"Excuse me sir," he called to a burly fellow collecting his bread. "Should I tell you what's outside the caves?"

"What do you mean?" Responded the man, "this is life! This is the only world that exists! Who's been filling your head with nonsense?" He questioned and walked off munching on his sandwich.

Adonius chased after him. "But wait!" He called. "Where did that bread come from? Obviously there's something that exists outside your cave that's supplying you with it all!"

The man's rough hands stroked the young Prince's cheek pityingly. "Listen my boy. There is something called nature. Nature just happens. And one of the laws of nature is that bread falls from the heaven every day at noon."

The Prince plucked up the courage.

"Listen my friends!" He stood in the center of town and cried. "There's a real world out there with real people and a real king. There's a beautiful sun and gurgling brooks. There's fascinating creatures and lush green grass. There are colors and music and real pleasure. Come out of your cave. Come out and experience the real world!"

Laughter erupted. Pebbles were thrown.

Broken, Adonius crumpled into his lonely corner. He felt like a failure. "What am I going to do now?"

His hands led him to where he knew he could find solace - the soft strings of his violin. He began to play, a soft quiet tune at first. The beautiful music reverberated against the dense walls, and the echoes harmonized along with the melody. People stopped in their tracks, mesmerized. As he continued, the tempo quickened and soon the Prince was dancing to the tune surrounded by the stunned cavemen.

"I don't know about you, but I will soon be out of this darkness." He sang joyfully. "The king is my dear father and soon he will come and take me back to the real world. The world of truth and joy and sunshine. And for that, I rejoice!"



THE King of kings sends down our Neshamah to the dark and dingy caves of this physical world with a mission to convince its inhabitants that He exists and sustains them. Yet the inhabitants are stubborn. Although there always are small windows of divine assistance, they dismiss it as nature, refusing to accept that there exists so much more beyond our line of vision. So the Neshama perseveres.

Yet at times it can fall into despair. "What am I doing in this world? I don't belong here!" Yet every day, we have the opportunity to take out our violin and play the beautiful tunes of davening. We rejoice with the Pesukai d'Zimrah as we think about the glorious home that we came from and the home the King will lovingly take us to shortly; a world where the glory of Hashem fills it like water fills the ocean, with the coming of Moshiach! May it happen now! ■

This Mashal, given by R' Nachman of Kosov - a disciple of the Baal Shem Tov, is cited and explained by the Mittlerer Rebbe, in his momentous "Derech Chayim", chapter 36 of "Sha'ar Hatefilah".

PARASHA Of The Future

RABBI NISSIM LAGZIEL

KOSHER PORK

A JOKE TO BEGIN WITH...

A rabbi was walking down the street when he saw a member of his congregation going into a *treif* restaurant and sitting down to eat. The rabbi was shell-shocked but wouldn't dare go inside. However, when the first opportunity presented itself, he went over to this Jew and bombarded him: "What were you doing inside that non-kosher eatery?"

"Did you see me go in?" he asked.

"Yes, absolutely" the rabbi responded.

"Did you see me order the food?"

"Yes."

"Did you see me eat?"

"Yes."

"If so," the Jew said cunningly, "then everything was done under strict rabbinical supervision..."



THIS week, we read Parshas Shmini, which (as its name applies) deals with the events of the eighth day of investiture - Rosh Chodesh Nissan. The Torah portion tells us about the special *korbanos* that were brought on that day and the resulting descent of the *Shechina* upon the Mishkan. In addition, we read about the untimely passing of Aharon

HaKohen's sons, Nadav and Avihu, after they offered a "foreign fire" before G-d. As the parsha continues, there is a discussion of the subject of Kashrus. The Chumash teaches us about the birds, wild and domestic animals, and even grasshoppers that are permissible to eat, and about the signs necessary for us to confirm their Kosher status. Finally, at the end of the parsha, we learn about matters of ritual purity and impurity.

Many Jews, including those who currently don't observe Torah and mitzvos, shudder with horror at the very thought of eating pig flesh. Many of us won't even mention the animal by its common name, instead calling it "*davar acher*." Those with a sense of Jewish awareness consider this animal to be something dirty, detestable, and contaminated, far more than any other impure creature listed in the Torah. However, what has this animal done to us? Why is it any different from a bat or an elephant?

Perhaps the Jewish revulsion to this animal has its source in the Midrash explaining that the four unclean animals mentioned in Torah (hyrax, hare, camel, and pig) allude to the four exiles the Jewish People have endured: the exiles of Babylon, Persia, Greece, and finally Edom, which continues to this day. The possible comparison between a pig and the kingdom of Edom, which "destroyed our House, burned our Temple, and exiled us from our Land," has caused us to despise this creature!

The hatred for unclean animals is based on the hatred for the galus and the inner desire of every Jew for the Geulah. And interestingly so, in the time of the Redemption, the way in which Jews relate to this impure animal will change drastically. In his Torah commentary, **Rabbeinu Bachya** brings an interesting Midrash on this subject, stating that “in the future, the pig will be made pure” and “Why is it called ‘chazir’? Because in the future, G-d will return it (l’hachzירו) to Israel”!

Yet, this begs the question: How can we alter explicit mitzvos in the Torah? There are the well-known statements from the Rambam that “this Torah will not be replaced,” and “it has no change, no lessening, and no increase.” In Parshas Shmini, the Torah rules categorically and unequivocally that a pig is forbidden to eat – so how is it possible that things will change in the future?

In light of this question, there are those who reason that the Midrash is merely an allegory. For example, the **Radbaz** comments in his halachic responsa that the interpretation of the Midrash is that “the Jewish People will eat fat foods as if the flesh of pig had been permitted to them.” According to another interpretation as brought in mystical teachings, “there is a

Divine angel named Chazirei, who is the spiritual prosecutor of Israel, and in the future, G-d will return him to Israel to be their advocate,” but not (G-d forbid) that pig meat will be permitted to eat.

In contrast, there are many Torah authorities who have explained this Midrash according to its simple interpretation, i.e., in the future to come, the pig will become “Glatt Kosher”!

How can this be?

The **Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh** explains that Torah forbids the eating of pig because it does not chew its cud. However, in the future, G-d will change the pig’s anatomical structure, and... it *will* chew its cud! The Torah never forbade eating a pig *with* this characteristic sign.

Thus, we find that the Torah indeed will never change. What does need to change is the reality – us!

This innovative explanation of the Midrash teaches us a fascinating lesson on the correct and proper way to look at numerous subjects in the Torah, primarily those connected with the Geulah. Sometimes, we have a difficult time digesting a certain principle. We often encounter a mode of conduct that deeply troubles us,

// IN THE TIME OF THE REDEMPTION, THE WAY IN WHICH JEWS RELATE TO THIS IMPURE ANIMAL WILL CHANGE DRASTICALLY

and we reject it with a wave of the hand, saying, “This is against the Torah!”, “A *chillul Hashem*”, or any number of declarations of this type...

It’s possible sometimes that *we* may be making the mistake. Let’s not jump to conclusions before exercising some deep contemplation and inner restraint. We can clarify, explain, and even establish a connection between some of the strangest and most bizarre situations ... such as Kosher pork!

And what happens with the other *treif* animals? Will we, in the future, be able to drink camel’s milk, which reportedly possesses some special therapeutic qualities (or so they say...)?

The Rebbe notes in one of his letters that the aforementioned Midrash teaches us that the hyrax, hare, and camel (as all other unclean animals) will remain in their prohibited state and only the *chazir* will be permitted. However, this will only be in the initial stage of the days of Moshiach, a period when the existence of evil and impurity will continue in the world, along with those impure creatures deriving their vitality from it. In contrast, during the second period in the days of Moshiach, when the prophecy of “And I will remove the spirit of impurity from the earth” will be fulfilled, all impurity will be nullified.

And then...

There will be one of two scenarios:

1) G-d will make all wild and domestic animals, creeping insects, and shellfish permissible as they were at the beginning of Creation (for Noachides) and they will receive their vitality

from the spiritual worlds and chambers of holiness.

2) The removal of the spirit of impurity will automatically nullify and terminate the existence of all unclean animals.

TO WRAP UP WITH A STORY:

The Rebbe, *Melech HaMoshiach*, is known for his boundless Ahavas Yisroel, and we can see an example of this in the following conduct:

In the *haftarah* for Shabbos Rosh Chodesh, it is written, “Those who eat the flesh of the swine and the detestable thing and the rodent shall perish together, says Hashem.” On almost every occasion when the Rebbe reads this *pasuk*, he makes a brief pause after the words “Those who eat the flesh of,” and only then does he continue, “the swine and the detestable thing and the rodent shall perish together, says Hashem.” This is in order to avoid mentioning regarding any Jew that he (G-d forbid) “eat[s] the flesh... of the swine”!

A TAKE-A-WAY:

Let’s learn from the Rebbe, and instead of browbeating a Jew over his conduct and his opinions, thereby “justifying the unjustifiable” behavior of creating divisiveness among the Jewish People, let’s start loving and bringing our fellow Jews closer with moderation, patience, and with all our heart!

Good Shabbos!

Based on the Rebbe’s footnotes on Tanya (Chapter 50), *Likkutei Sichos* (Vol. 29, pg. 128), and *Igros Kodesh* (Vol. 3, pg. 153). ■



5



IN THE CAPITAL

Recap: The Chassidic leaders of Vilna are hoping to perhaps reach a peace agreement with the Misnagdim, but a letter they receive changes their plans, and Betzalel Baruch “the dwarf” gets to work...



VILNA. It was a rather quiet day at the Pesseles residence, the den was empty and Betzalel Baruch decided it was time to act. He had his eyes on the basket in the corner of the room and swiftly removed from it a stack of papers and began to rummage through them.

One letter caught his attention; He quickly placed it in his coat pocket and went about his regular business.

He was soon home, where he took out a piece of paper and pen and jotted down the entire letter verbatim.

Back at the Pesseles’s residence, he surreptitiously slipped the original letter

back into the basket and rushed to his next stop — to meet Reb Moshe and Reb Baruch Mordechai.

Their eyes opened wide as they read the letter. They were shocked to the core.

“Work well done, Betzalel Baruch!” they complimented him, “But remember, secrecy is now of utmost importance. Don’t tell anyone about the contents of this letter. Keep your eyes and ears open but be very careful and clever.”

“Don’t let give anyone at the residence reason to be suspicious of you at!” they sternly warned him.

Betzalel Baruch nodded in understanding.

Reb Moshe and Reb Baruch Mordechai sensed that this letter was the key to uncovering this dark scheme. But although the letter in in of itself was more than incriminating, they needed more evidence to prove it was not just a mere conspiracy theory. They needed evidence that could not be denied in any way.

Some brainstorming yielded a brilliant plan.



LIOZNO. The man rushed out of the small study. His chief mission now was to get to his hotel room, pack up and leave the town.

As he sped up, he kept glancing back, paranoia twisting in the pit of his stomach. He was expecting to see young bearded men chasing him. In his mind’s eye, lines and paragraphs of the many reports he had read, came to life.

One description, looming so close and real, arose in his mind: He saw himself being stretched across a table by a few youngsters and being spanked with a belt like a naughty child by his *melamed*.

Suddenly, just as he exited the small *shul*, the *Gan Eden Hatachton* in the lingo of the men

he so despised, a ring of five or six young men surrounded him. As they closed in on him, he imagined himself writing another of those humiliating reports to the Berlin center.

The men dragged him to the larger shul in the courtyard, but instead of a spanking, he was the center of a lively dance! “You thought you could skip the *Yechidus tentzel*!” The men rebuked him good naturedly, “You just had the merit of meeting the holy Rebbe! You must rejoice!”

For the first time, probably ever, he felt grateful for the strange ways of this group...

As they danced around him, he attempted time and again to leave the circle. He was scared that any moment his true identity would be revealed to these unassuming men, and regardless of anything he was still weak and frail, recovering from a recent bout of fever.

But they wouldn’t let him go, as if they knew something. The dance went on and on, as the lively tune climbed to higher octaves.

Finally, the dance ended. Incredibly, he had not yet been discovered. He rushed to his hotel, packed his bags and hired an express wagon to the nearby village.

His head was spinning — a whirlwind of jumbled thoughts and emotions.

Only once his ear grew accustomed to the monotonic noise of the wagon’s wheels, did he allow himself to arrange the events of the past week in his mind, from the strange beginning until the frightening end.



THE coach rolled in to Liozno on an ordinary Monday afternoon.

It was two o’clock in the afternoon, he remembered. It wasn’t that he usually recalled such trivial details. It was the scene which greeted him that etched the time in his memory.

// A RATHER LARGE GROUP
OF MEN, ALL WRAPPED IN
THEIR TALLIS AND TEFILLIN,
WERE DEEP IN PRAYER.
HE NOTICED THAT THEY
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TURNING, IT SEEMED LIKE
THEY HAD BEEN IN THAT
POSITION FOR MANY HOURS

A rather large group of men, all wrapped in their Tallis and Tefillin, were deep in prayer. He noticed that they were not all praying together. By the slow pace of their page turning, it seemed like they had been in that position for many hours, each to himself, entirely oblivious to his surroundings.

One was saying *pesukei d'zimrah*, his fingers snapping to the rhythm of a melodious tune, with hints of bitterness.

Another was saying the blessings of *Sh'ma*, every paragraph prefaced with long intervals used for singing one those many melodies he heard back in Vitebsk. Other paragraphs were followed by long stretches of meditative silence.

He stayed to observe. It wasn't before five in the afternoon until all of them finished their morning prayers. Some continued with a study-session of Mishna and Talmud, others with psalms of Tehillim, and yet others were reciting chapters of the scriptures by-heart, something

he found particularly surprising, given that the chassidim shunned in-depth study of *Nach*.

The men finally ate their "breakfast" of simple black bread and water, and a few lay down on the hard benches for a late afternoon nap.

He noticed that the large, yet simply furnished sanctuary had three antechambers. Once he finished his tour of the first, he moved on. In the second room a group of about thirty men were involved in a deep Talmudic debate. He saw a middle-aged man at the head of the table heading the discussion. Many books were open before them; he saw a Rambam, a Rashba and many more *Achronim*.

A young lad passed before him. "Tell me young man," he turned to him. "Who is the man at the head of the table?"

The boy was not surprised by the question. This town was accustomed to seeing new faces all the time. Thousands flocked from places even as far as Hungary and Romania to study from the master.

"It is the Maharil, Rabbi Yehuda Leib. He is the Rebbe's younger brother. He's an outstanding genius! The Rebbe relies on him, with almost closed eyes, to answer complicated Halachic questions."

Halachic and Talmudic discussions were the last thing he came here for; there were plenty of that where he came from. He moved on to the third room.

Over twenty young men were crowded around a table, some even standing. The same small unbound booklets he saw in Vitebsk were in their hands. They all sat listening intently to a serious looking young man with a shining face.

He later learned that this was one of the two weekly lessons that the *Maharad*, Rabbi Dovber, gave to two groups of twenty-five men.

The topic was of great interest to him. He was elaborating on a passage of chapter eight

of their leader's basic text that discussed the study of secular sciences.

"One could ask," said the Maharad to the students, "why studying secular sciences is so evil, so wrong? Why is it worse than any other mundane occupation?"

"Imagine one who isn't studying the holy Torah and is instead whiling away his time. He could either sit around and fill his time with idle talk and foolishness or spend his time reading the sciences and wisdom of the nations — which is worse?"

"A person who doesn't understand the inner working of the soul could easily make the grave mistake that so many have made— a mistake with detrimental effects, by the way—that the person studying the secular science is better off; after all he's involved in something useful... isn't he?"

The students were captivated. The Maharad was a master orator and his organized and methodical style proved themselves, as was visible on the eyes of the students that were glued to him.

"But that's the mistake!" He thundered. "Secular sciences and idle talk are both *tamei* and make your souls impure. But while the idle talk and nonsense only affect one of your *middos*, the secular sciences contaminate the *brain!*"

"I don't need to explain why *that* is worse; the brain is the "control room" of the entire body! When the brain is contaminated and poisoned, the poison spreads throughout the entire person!"

It finally began to dawn on him. The guest began to understand why it was so frustratingly difficult to penetrate this group. His movement's usual tactic was to present the "old ways" as unenlightened and backwards thinking, while they were the advanced ones.

Even the other Chassidim of Poland and Galicia, who had protected themselves from the *maskilim*, did so by warning *against* philosophical inquiry. Their courts, filled with joy, excitement and religious ecstasy, pitted the Jewish heart against the objective mind.

"Humans, at least most of them, follow their heart even when their mind says otherwise," he made a sober observation.

"But this Rebbe," he began to notice the cause of their failure over the last five or so years, "has captured the mind too!"

He analyzed what he just heard:

"Here comes a man of religion and preaches against the pursuit of secular science and philosophies, using logical arguments and philosophical methodology!" he realized.

After purchasing a copy of the text, the *kuntres*, as they called it, this conclusion began crystallizing further in his corrupted mind:

The Chabad group could not be lured by philosophy, they have one of their own. Quite a solid one, as he was able to gather from those unbound booklets, using occasional help to explain unfamiliar concepts.

This Chassidic philosophy, clear in its basic ideas, rich in its metaphors, lucid in its phraseology, polished in style and flawless in its syntax and precise language, left a tremendous impression on this man.

But as much as it impressed him, it also brought out the beast in him in its most vicious of forms.

Only time will proclaim the winner of this battle being fought in the most unenlightened of methods.

"In war," he reckoned, "most cities are conquered, but there are always one or two that must be burned to the ground." ■

TO BE CONTINUED...

THREE MIRACLES

RABBI and Mrs. Hertz and Chagit Borochov are known to many, thanks to their Merkaz Igros Kodesh that they've been operating for years.

The Borochovs have numerous miracle stories to tell.

Rina, the heroine of our story, knows where to go whenever a problem crops up. Chagit will always welcome her graciously and together they will write to the Rebbe.

Rina has seen miracles more than once. She shares three of them that happened to her:

The first miracle that happened to me through the Igros Kodesh was my shidduch. Many years ago, when I was in my late twenties, I wrote to the Rebbe through the Igros Kodesh and asked for a bracha to get married soon. The Rebbe's answer was to check the mezuzos of my home.

I checked all the mezuzos and they were all kosher. A long time passed and I was still waiting to get married.

When fourteen years passed and I was forty years old and still single, I met Mrs. Borochov. I told her what was on my mind and said, "I did what the Rebbe said. I checked all the mezuzos and they are kosher. So many years passed and I still haven't met my husband. Maybe there was a mistake?"

Chagit did not accept that. "The Rebbe does not make a mistake," she said. "You must be missing a mezuzah. I will come to your house and we will check."

Mrs. Borochov came to my house and walked all around, looking at the doorposts. She came to a small doorway and said, "There is no mezuzah here!"

I was stunned. I didn't know a mezuzah had to be placed in this doorway. I did not delay but immediately bought a mezuzah and put it up. Two months passed and I met my husband and we married.

Now for the second miracle.

Boruch Hashem, even though I was not young, I gave birth to three sons, two of whom are twins. When I learned that I was expecting twins, I had to be regularly monitored by doctors.

At one exam, the doctors discovered a serious problem with the twins and they said that they were not viable. I was devastated. Then I remembered Chagit.

Together, we wrote to the Rebbe about the serious problem with the twins and the bleak prognosis of the doctors. The Rebbe's answer was: may there be good news and that everything would be all right.

We strengthened our trust in Hashem and continued as usual, even though the doctors said otherwise. Boruch Hashem, I gave birth to healthy twin boys. The joy and excitement cannot be described. The Rebbe saved our babies!

The third miracle happened with my mother. My mother has a heart condition and she underwent two complicated operations that saved her life. Her health wasn't good and she had to undergo a third heart operation. It was a very complicated surgery and the doctors feared for her life. She was not young and the operation was dangerous.

This time too, we did nothing without asking the Rebbe. Together with Chagit, I wrote to the Rebbe about my mother's health. The answer I opened to said to check the Sefer Torah. I immediately realized what this meant. Not long before, we had had a Torah written as a merit for my father. The Rebbe said to check the Torah; maybe there was a problem with it.

I immediately contacted the shul and asked for the Torah and with Mrs. Borochov's guidance, I went to Bnei Brak to a place that checks Sifrei Torah, tefillin and mezuzos.

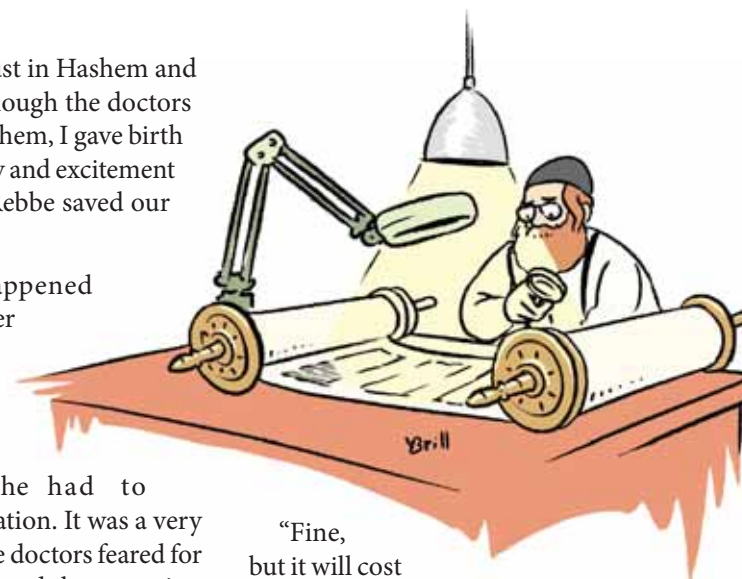
I told the man there, "I want to check this Torah as quickly as possible. My mother needs to undergo a dangerous operation and the Lubavitcher Rebbe said to check the Sefer Torah." The man said he would do it.

"It will cost \$1200," he said. I wasn't put off by the cost; my mother's life was at stake.

I was in touch with him daily. "Listen, there's a problem with this Torah," he said after he began checking it. "It is pasul!"

I was shocked.

"Please fix it as quickly as possible," I urged him.



"Fine, but it will cost you more than I told you. The price is \$1800. It's a complicated correction and I need to have experts work on it."

"That's fine, whatever it costs," I told him. "Just do it as soon as possible. My mother's life is in danger and she is waiting for an urgent operation."

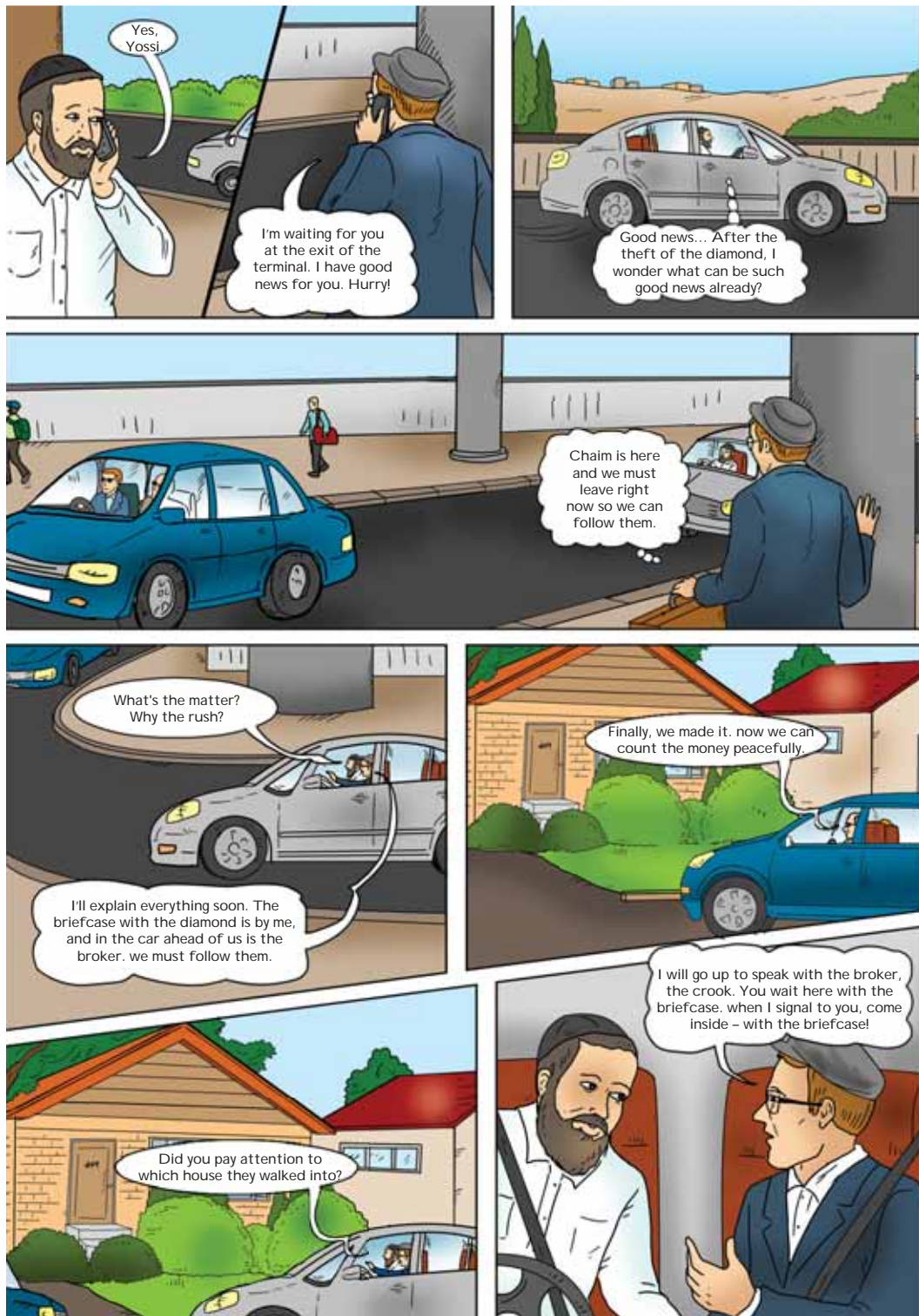
The sofrim worked on fixing the Torah and soon it was ready to be returned to the shul in perfect condition. Needless to say, the operation was a success, miraculously so. If we weren't aware of how miraculous it was, the doctors made sure to tell us.

A month later, I went with my mother to the hospital for a checkup. When the doctor saw her looking well he said, "You should know that there was a big miracle here. I tell the story about your mother at medical conferences."

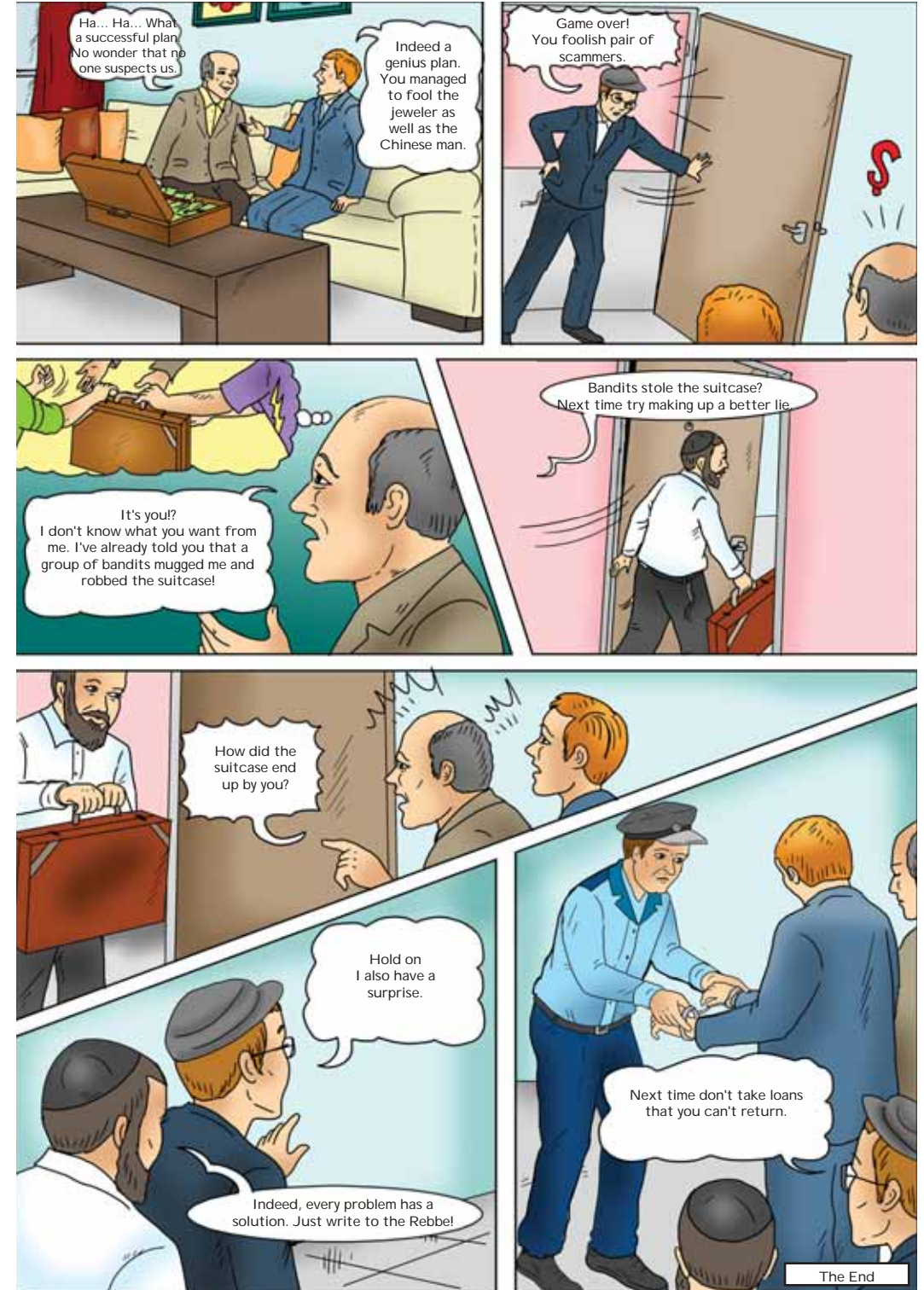
I told Chagit about the big miracle and she said, "You need to give the Rebbe the good news." We wrote to the Rebbe and were amazed to see the answer we opened to which began with the words, "After the operation was a success ..."

"How wonderful it is that we have the Rebbe to guide us," concluded Rina. "We can be confident and calm that we have whom to rely on."

4 • THE GEM WAS RETURNED



Recap: Chaim, the diamond dealer, writes a letter to the Rebbe and gets an answer in the *Igros Kodesh* that all will be fine. His Friend, Yossi, travels to Hong Kong and sees a familiar briefcase at a business partner...



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