

HATUMIM

THE BEIS MOSHIACH SUPPLEMENT FOR TALMIDEI TUMMIM



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The Six Day War, a centuries-old debate — and the Rebbe's surprising psak

THE CHOMETZ THAT WENT TO SLEEP & WOKE UP

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**Do Good
for the Good**



**היטיבה ה'
לטובים**

A free adaptation of the sicha of Chof Marcheshvan, 5745 (1984), delivered in honor of the Rebbe Rashab's birthday — presented in conjunction with the Rebbe's 124th birthday, Yud-Alef Nissan 5785, the year we begin reciting Kapitel 125.

The Posuk and the Midrash

Kapitel 125 in Tehillim — corresponding to this year's birthday — states: “Do good, O Hashem, to the good and upright of heart.”

The Medrash Tehillim expounds: “Let one who is good come and receive good, from the Good One, for those who are good.” The Medrash identifies four elements: Moshe (“she saw that he was good”), HaKadosh Baruch Hu (“Hashem is good to all”), the Torah (“I have given you a good teaching”), and Yisroel (“Do good, O Hashem, to the good”).

Drawing Down Good: A Lesson from the Kapitel

Hashem operates measure for measure. To draw down *good* from Above, Yidden must first embody *good* themselves — thereby awakening the divine flow in kind.

This quality of *good* must find expression specifically in Torah study. The Torah's *good* means bringing blessing into the world without limitation — “good for

Heaven and good for all creatures” — in the manner of the *korban shelamim*, which bring peace to all.

In practice: one must approach Torah with the character of “a Torah of kindness,” and consequently conduct oneself entirely in the mode of *chesed* — drawing near those who are far, and all the more so those who are close. This applies inwardly as well: even while making an honest reckoning of one's faults, one must act toward oneself in the spirit of “you shall surely help him” — loving one's inner “Tzion,” the soul's deepest point — and extending that same love outward to every neighbor.

The Psak Follows the Person

One might ask: conduct must follow halacha regardless — “let the law pierce the mountain” — so what difference does one's disposition make?

The answer: in many areas of Torah, the ruling depends precisely on the learner's approach and character. This is not abstract — it has direct practical consequences.

Here are several examples:

(1) Look for the answer, not the question. When Rabbi Yehuda ben Beseira offered a reasoning that upheld a tradition of the Sages, Rabbi Eliezer praised him: “you have upheld the words of the Sages.” The point is not that the truth needed his support — it didn’t. The point is that his *approach* from the outset was to find resolution rather than contradiction. As the Baal Shem Tov taught: regarding any matter, one can find proof or raise a challenge. The question is what one *wants*. The intellect follows the will. In learning — and in life — the person who looks for problems will find them; the person who looks for solutions will find those instead.

(2) Default to leniency. The Torah teaches that “*the power to permit is stronger.*” Where a ruling genuinely depends on approach, one should lean toward the permissible. The practical lesson: don’t be quick to declare something impossible, forbidden, or beyond reach — in halacha or in how you view other people.

(3) Your nature shapes your learning. Beis Hillel ruled leniently and Beis Shammai stringently, rooted in the difference between *chesed* and *gevura* in their very *neshamos*. Character shapes learning; learning shapes *psak*. The practical lesson: cultivating a generous, warm character is not separate from becoming a better Torah scholar. They are the same work.

(4) Harshness distorts judgment. One extremely advanced in years may not sit on the Sanhedrin, because age can weaken the natural capacity for *rachmanus*, allowing harshness to gain the upper hand — and the Torah requires “the congregation shall save.” A feeling of the

.....
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.....

heart inevitably shapes the weighing of the intellect. The practical lesson: before rendering any judgment — of a situation, a halacha, or another person — check your emotional state. Harshness is not objectivity.

The Baal Yom Huledes — and the Horaah for All of Us

This connects directly to the birthday celebrant’s lifelong conduct in *tzedaka* and *gemilus chassadim* — including organizing the sending of matza to Jewish soldiers during the Russo-Japanese War — as elaborated in the maamar “*Kol HaMerachem al HaBrios.*”

The lesson for each of us: pursue *tzedaka* and *gemilus chassadim* in all forms, and especially “*neiros l’hair*” — bringing Torah’s light to every Jew — entirely in the mode of kindness and goodness.

Through this, we draw every manner of good from Above — measure for measure — until the ultimate good: the true and complete Geula through Moshe Rabbeinu, “*the first goel is the final goel,*” speedily in our days. ■

Chumma

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שערי
תורה



ros

The Chometz That Went to Sleep & Woke Up

UNDERSTANDING
THE HALACHIC
UNDERPINNINGS OF
THE MOST POPULAR
PESACH CHUMROS

PRESENTED BY
RABBI ISSER
SHPRINGER

Before diving into the sources behind certain *chumros*, let's establish some background to the general question: why are we so stringent on Pesach? On Sukkos we rely on various halachic leniencies, yet on Pesach we don't just avoid those leniencies - we go far beyond that.

Our Rebbeim discussed why Chazal were so strict about chometz on Pesach, forbidding even the tiniest amount, and their reasoning can shed light on our broader question: Why do we go so far beyond what Chazal themselves required?

The simplest explanation is found in the words of the Alter Rebbe (in connection with Chazal forbidding even a "*mashehu*" chometz): "Since the Torah was so strict about chometz - punishing it with *kareis* and the prohibitions of 'it shall not be seen' and 'it shall not be found' - and since people are accustomed to it all year long, they are prone to forgetfulness."

In other words, the severity of the *issur* chometz is greater than other prohibitions, and the risk of accidentally violating it is also greater. This combination led to a special rabbinic enactment that chometz renders any mixture forbidden and is not nullified even in a thousand times.

Beyond this straightforward explanation, we find several others:

A. The Alter Rebbe cites in his responsa that the Arizal wrote to "be stringent with all the *chumros* on Pesach," and the Rebbe cites in the Haggada in the name of the Arizal that "one who is careful about even the slightest chometz on Pesach is guaranteed not to sin the entire year."

(And the Rebbe adds: "Perhaps it means that he will not transgress unintentionally, for surely he is someone with free choice even then.")

B. The responsa work *Shailos U'Teshuvos Min HaShamayim* (ש"ת מן השמים), offers an interesting explanation. In order to understand his explanation, we will first introduce the dispute among the *poskim* regarding one of the fundamental principles of Pesach - "*chometz on Pesach is forbidden even in the tiniest amount (b'mashehu).*"

Is this principle universally accepted?

The **Tur** writes: "Regarding chometz on Pesach, most of the commentators agreed that it renders a mixture forbidden - whether it is mixed with its own kind or with a different kind - even in the slightest amount (*b'mashehu*), except for the **Sheiltos**, which rules according to *nosein taam* (that the prohibition depends on whether it imparts flavor). And this is not the prevailing custom."

The **Beis Yosef** comments there that this is not only the opinion of the *Sheiltos*; in addition there are other Rishonim who maintain that chometz on Pesach does not forbid a mixture in the smallest amount.

In light of this, we can understand the question posed in the responsa *Min HaShamayim*: "Is the halacha in accordance with the words of the Gaon, who rules that it [a mixture] is forbidden even in the slightest amount (*b'mashehu*), or is the halacha in accordance with those who disagree with him and say that it depends on *nosein taam*?"



The answer received from Heaven is most interesting: “The mitzvos of matza and chometz were the first mitzvos given to Yisrael, and the Jewish people accepted them with love and affection, being meticulous about every detail. The Torah itself was stringent about chometz - that it should not be seen and not be found - unlike any other prohibition... And one who is careful in their details will have long days and years.” In short, the chumros come from an abundance of joy. These were the first mitzvos we received from Hashem, and so we observe them with special devotion.

C. Another explanation is found in the words of the Radvaz who was asked why chometz - both biblically and rabbinically - is treated more severely than all other prohibitions. After attempting rational explanations and finding them

unsatisfying, he concludes: “I rely on what the Sages said in the Medrash, that chometz on Pesach is a symbol of the *yetzer hara* - it's

the 'leaven in the dough.' Therefore one must completely drive it away, searching for it in every hidden corner of one's thoughts, and even the smallest amount is not nullified.”

In summary, we have found four reasons for the special chumros of Pesach: (1) the severity of the *issur* combined with the risk of forgetfulness; (2) being careful about chometz guarantees one will not sin all year; (3) an abundance of joy - because these were the first mitzvos; (4) chometz symbolizes the *yetzer hara*.

With that introduction, let's go to the chumros themselves.

Preparing Food Before Pesach

One well-known stringency is to prepare foods before Pesach - cooking as much as possible in advance, making sure milk was produced on erev Pesach, and the common old practice of filling barrels of water before Pesach - and so forth.

What is the reason for this stringency?

We begin with the well-known rule (mentioned earlier) that unlike nearly every other Torah prohibition, chometz on Pesach is forbidden even in the most minute quantity, as the Gemara states: “Rava ruled: the law is that chometz during its time [of prohibition] - whether mixed with the same species or a different species - is forbidden even in the smallest amount... outside its time [if it's only prohibited due to the Rabbinic prohibition of chometz that remained over Pesach] it is permitted.”

In other words, while other Torah prohibitions can sometimes be nullified in sixty times the quantity, or when the forbidden substance doesn't affect the flavor, chometz during Pesach is uniquely strict - however it became mixed into food, it renders the entire mixture forbidden regardless of quantity.

In the early generations, this Gemara was read simply: it doesn't matter when the mixture occurred, only when you want to use it. If the question is whether one may eat it during Pesach, the answer is no. But if the question is whether the mixture may be eaten after Pesach [*chometz she'avar alav ha'Pesach*], the answer is yes.



This was the understanding of the Geonim and early Rishonim. We see that the Bahag and the Rif cite this Gemara as written, and the Rambam added and emphasized: “Something that has chometz mixed into it... is forbidden to eat until after Pesach. Even if the chometz is only a tiny amount, it is forbidden.” The *Maggid Mishneh* explains that many Geonim agreed with the Rambam - even if the mixture occurred long before Pesach, it is forbidden to eat during Pesach...

When Did the Chometz Enter the Mixture?

Then comes a surprising development.

The *Maggid Mishneh* continues: “But some Acharonim disagree, saying that anything mixed before Pesach... is not forbidden in the smallest quantity (*b’mashehu*).” According to these authorities, the Gemara’s rule about chometz forbidding a mixture even in the tiniest amount applies only if the chometz was mixed in during Pesach itself. If the mixture was created before Pesach, the chometz is nullified like any other Torah prohibition, and the mixture may be eaten during Pesach.

Who were these “Acharonim” and why do they say differently than the Gemara?

It appears this idea was arrived at independently by two of the greatest scholars of the same generation who did not see one another:

The first is Rabbeinu Tam, Rashi’s grandson and one of the towering figures among the Baalei Tosafos. Rabbeinu Tam was known for his bold original rulings and his willingness to disagree with earlier authorities. His view spread widely through the Tosafist literature.

The second is the Raavad, author of the famous glosses on the Rambam, who wrote in his responsa that “the chometz had already been nullified before the time when its prohibition applies at the trace amount level, and it does not ‘reawaken.’”

[Parenthetically: Those Rabbis whom the *Maggid Mishneh* refers to as “Acharonim” are what we call “Rishonim.” There is no disagreement here - it is all relative. Relative to us, who are the “latest of the latest,” they are called “Rishonim.”]

The reasoning: the special stringency that chometz forbids even the tiniest amount - rooted in the severity of *kareis* and “shall not be seen” - only applies when those *chumros* are actually in effect.

Before Pesach, when those extra-strict prohibitions don’t yet apply, chometz becomes nullified in a mixture like any other Torah prohibition.

This ruling of Rabbeinu Tam and the Raavad is enormously significant with wide-ranging implications.

The Source

Where do the Baalei Tosafos and the Raavad find support for this distinction? After all, one could argue that once Yom Tov begins and the stringency kicks in, the



The Responsa ‘Min HaShamayim’

This responsa work is entirely unique. The typical ‘teshuvos sefer’ involves a Rav receiving questions and compiling his answers - thousands of such collections exist. Occasionally an author writes both questions and answers himself. Rarer still is a collection where the author writes the questions and receives answers from others. This work stands alone in all of responsa literature. The author asks the questions - and receives the answers directly “from Heaven.”

The first question this raises is whether such answers can be relied upon legally, given the principle that “the Torah is not in Heaven.”

The Rebbe addresses this in a sicha said on Shavuot 5740: “There is the rule that ‘the Torah is not in Heaven’.. how can we suddenly speak of ‘Responsa from Heaven,’ some of which are relevant to *halacha l’maaseh*? One of the explanations is: after hearing what was said from Heaven, the author studied it with his intellect, in understanding and comprehension, until it became part of the mind of the human scholar.”

Meaning, we rely not on the heavenly origin, but on the fact that the scholar then internalized and analyzed what he received, making it his own reasoned conclusion.



Generally, the sefer contains no dates. In only a very few responsa does a date appear, and in one of them it states: “After seeing all this, I asked on the night of Tuesday,

the 19th of the month of Kislev,” after which the question is detailed. In the response it says, within the text, “and today is a day of good tidings (*yom besorah*).”

The Rebbe emphasizes that we do not find any particular good tidings that occurred on that day, and apparently the reference is to the Geula of the **Alter Rebbe**, which took place many years later.

In the Rebbe’s writings we find that the expression “*yom besorah*” became a common title for Yud-Tes Kislev, sometimes even without citing *Shu’t Min HaShamayim* as the source, but simply as an established name (see, for example, the letter addressed to “Anash who are gathered on the luminous day, the day of good tidings for us - the *Chag HaGeula* of His Holiness our master, the Alter Rebbe, and our redemption and the deliverance of our souls” — *Igros Kodesh*, vol. 7, p. 95).



The sefer was published in several editions; the most widely known today is the edition of Rabbi Reuven Margolis, who added notes on the responsa and an introduction dealing with various levels of *ruach ha’kodesh* that existed even after prophecy ceased in Israel. The Rebbe refers to this introduction multiple times in his sichos on the subject.



entire mixture should become forbidden because of the chometz within it.

They base their position on an explicit Mishna which, in their reading, states their view - and on that basis they reinterpret our Talmudic passage. This approach of reinterpreting a passage in light of another source is one of the hallmarks of the Tosafist method. The Maharshal famously said that the Baalei Tosafos made the Talmud "like a single ball" - before them the Talmud seemed like "a riddle

without a solution," but they "turned it and rolled it from place to place until it appeared as one, without



contradiction..."

The Mordechai, citing Rabbeinu Tam, identifies the source in the laws of shaatnez. The Mishna states: "Camel wool and sheep wool that were mixed together - if the majority is from camels, it is permitted." The Torah forbids shaatnez, mixing sheep wool with linen in a garment - even a single thread of linen in a wool garment renders it forbidden. Yet the Mishna teaches that if sheep wool is mixed with a different, permissible type of wool - camel wool - and the permissible

type is the majority, the resulting mixture may be woven with linen.

From here the Baalei Tosafos derive the principle: just as the sheep wool can be nullified before it is combined with linen, so too chometz can be nullified before Pesach begins. After the wool is nullified, even when woven with linen it is no longer considered forbidden wool. Likewise, chometz that was mixed before Pesach is no longer considered chometz when Pesach arrives, and it does not "reawaken" on Pesach.

However, from the plain meaning of the Gemara it does not appear so, as stated above. Yet the derivation from the laws of *shaatnez* leads the Baalei Tosafos to explain the Gemara not according to its simple reading, and to clarify that the prohibition of chometz in the smallest amount (*b'mashehu*) applies only during Pesach itself, and not before Pesach.

The Practical Halacha

What is the halacha - if chometz became mixed in before Pesach, is it nullified in sixty (*batel b'shishim*) or not? Was the view of the Tosafists accepted, or should the straightforward meaning of the Gemara be preferred, in accordance with the opinion of the earlier authorities?

The Alter Rebbe rules in accordance with the Baalei Tosafos: any chometz mixed before the Yom Tov begins is nullified in sixty times its quantity, and even when Pesach arrives the mixture remains permitted.

If so, it would seem preferable to prepare foods before the holiday - because even if a crumb of chometz were somehow present, it would have been nullified before Pesach. Whereas if one cooks only

during Pesach, any chometz crumb would render the entire dish forbidden. The Alter Rebbe writes in a related context: “The custom already exists, out of concern for this, to bake everything before Pesach” - to prevent the risk of chometz mixing in during Pesach, when it would render everything forbidden.

Chumros in Pre-Pesach Food Prep

In light of all this, a question arises about a further stringency. If everything is nullified before Pesach, one would seemingly be permitted before Pesach to use spices, unpeeled vegetables, and even industrially produced products - since any trace of chometz in them would be fully nullified before the holiday begins.

If so, why avoid processed products produced before Pesach? Why not add spices to the food we prepare before Yom Tov begins? Why peel vegetables for dishes prepared on Erev Pesach?

The short answer is that we defer to the view of the Geonim and early Rishonim who read the Talmudic passage plainly - it doesn't matter when the mixture occurred; the mere presence of chometz in a mixture renders it forbidden. We are stringent because of this opinion.



‘Reawakening’ (Chozer V’Neior)

Over time, the framing of the Rambam's view evolved. Since the Baalei Tosafos who disagreed with him wrote that chometz does not “reawaken,” subsequent authorities began explaining the Rambam's view using that very term - that he holds that the chometz “reawakens” when the holiday enters.

The Maggid Mishneh appears to be among the first to use this language to explain the Rambam: “Many Geonim agree with our master that even if the chometz was mixed in long before Pesach, it is forbidden to eat during P e s a c h , because it reawakens.”

[T h e halachic concept of

chozer v'neior (becomes reawakened) exists in several contexts even prior to the explanation of the **Maggid Mishneh** - either through addition of a greater quantity of the prohibited substance, or through doing a specific action. However, its application to a mixture containing chometz - where there is neither any addition in quantity nor any action performed, but merely the arrival of a time in which a greater stringency applies - was used only as a response to the dissenting opinion.]

The Alter Rebbe analyzes the logic of both positions. On one hand, there

is reason to say that once chometz is mixed with permitted food it should not reawaken: "Since the forbidden substance is dissolved into the permitted substance and nullified within it, it is as if it does not exist in the world at all, and does not reawaken on Pesach." This is indeed the primary legal ruling.

Yet the Rambam and other Rishonim hold that even chometz mixed in at the beginning of the year is forbidden on Pesach or, in other words, it "reawakens" on Pesach. The Alter Rebbe explains their reasoning: "Since there is a trace amount of actual chometz in the mixture during Pesach, even though it is dissolved into the permitted substance, it reawakens on Pesach and renders the mixture forbidden." Though the forbidden substance has dispersed completely throughout the permitted substance, it still exists and takes effect when Pesach arrives.

The Alter Rebbe also cites the Pri Chadash who goes even further: even if there is no actual chometz substance in the mixture - only chometz flavor - it still reawakens and renders the entire mixture *assur* when Yom Tov begins. For example, a cooked chicken in which a leavened grain was found - if the grain was removed before Pesach, the chicken is forbidden during Pesach, because the trace of flavor that seeped into the chicken reawakens and renders it all forbidden.

The primary ruling follows the Baalei Tosafos - chometz mixed before Pesach is nullified in sixty times its quantity

and does not reawaken. But the Alter Rebbe writes that one who wants to be stringent like the Rambam - that chometz reawakens whenever it was nullified - or even like the Pri Chadash - that even chometz flavor alone can reawaken - "may be stringent for himself, but should not rule this way for others."

It appears that the stringency regarding pre-Pesach food preparation is grounded in this concern - that even chometz flavor alone might reawaken.

Why Does Chometz 'Reawaken' but Wool/Linen Does Not?

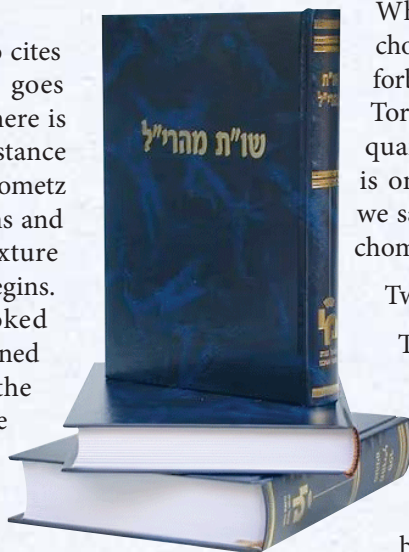
Those who hold there is no reawakening raised a strong proof from the *shaatnez* comparison: linen nullified before being woven with wool does not reawaken when it enters the garment. What is different about chometz? In fact, *shaatnez* is forbidden at any quantity by Torah law, while the trace-quantity rule for chometz is only rabbinic - how can we say linen is nullified but chometz is not?

Two answers among many:

The Maharil writes that one can make a distinction between something eaten and internalized versus something whose benefit is purely external.

Food is different from clothing, "but we still need to explain the reason for the distinction."

The responsa *Simchas Yehuda* answers that *shaatnez* requires an active human



deed - weaving the wool with linen - without which there would be no *issur*. Chometz, by contrast, becomes prohibited without any action whatsoever - merely through the passage of time. It is specifically in such a case - where the *issur* arrives without any deed - that we say the substance reawakens.

Ultimately, no answer fully resolves the difficulty. Hopefully, when we eat from the Pesach offerings in the Future to Come, we will hear a satisfying resolution from the Rishonim themselves.

Actual Practice

The primary ruling does follow the Baalei Tosafos - chometz does not reawaken. Yet many *poskim* in practice ruled stringently like the Rambam's view, that chometz does reawaken on Pesach.

The Kaf HaChaim gathered opinions on the matter. In the name of the Birchei Yosef (Chida) he wrote that "most sages practiced the law of reawakening," and in the name of the Kapei Aharon he noted that "it is on the lips of all residents of Yerushalayim that our custom is according to the view that there is reawakening."

It appears that our practice as well gives weight to this stringent view.

To summarize: Ideally, it is good to cook and filter before Pesach, because the primary ruling is that chometz mixed before Pesach is nullified and does not reawaken. But we observe all the related chumros even before Pesach, out of deference to the view that even chometz flavor alone can reawaken.

Beyond Reason and Understanding

We have surveyed the reasons for Pesach chumros as understood through legal analysis and the opinions of *poskim* across the generations.

It is fitting to close with a special story about Reb Yissachar Dov of Belz:

Once, a new vegetable was brought to him that had not existed in earlier generations. He said: chometz on Pesach is forbidden in the smallest trace, and it is impossible to succeed in this without divine assistance. We must

pray - and we rely not only on our own prayers, but on the prayers of our ancestors. Our ancestors never prayed concerning this vegetable. As such, he declined to eat it.

From this story we learn an additional reason to prefer home-prepared foods over industrially produced products on Pesach. It is not only the concern of reawakening - it is also that home-prepared foods are made with feeling and prayer, which cannot be said of the products of large companies.



May we merit the removal of chometz - both physical and spiritual - leaving not even the smallest trace capable of reawakening, with the true and complete Geula. ■



RAV YISSOCHOR DOV
OF BELZ

התאחדות חסידים ירושלים

פסח ראשון ופסח שני לא לה שהיו בדרך רחוקה

הפסח שני הוא פסח שני בירושלים, ופסח ראשון הוא פסח ראשון בירושלים. הפסח שני הוא פסח שני בירושלים, ופסח ראשון הוא פסח ראשון בירושלים. הפסח שני הוא פסח שני בירושלים, ופסח ראשון הוא פסח ראשון בירושלים.

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WHY DID DOZENS OF CHASSIDIM LEAVE YERUSHALAYIM ON EREV PESACH?



Every year on Erev Pesach, as families rushed through last-minute preparations for the Seder, dozens of Lubavitcher men and boys would leave their homes in Yerushalayim - destination anywhere, so long as it wasn't Yerushalayim. They would return only after nightfall, when the day had ended and with it any possible obligation to bring the Korban Pesach. This unusual practice began on Erev Pesach 5729 - the second Pesach after the Six Day War - by explicit instruction from the Rebbe. Seven years later, they stopped.

Two questions frame the story: Why did they leave? And why, seven years later, did they stop?

The answers lie in a centuries-old halachic debate that the Six Day War suddenly made relevant and urgent - and in a sicha of the Rebbe on Acharon shel Pesach 5728 that no other posek in the world had the clarity, or the courage, to give.

The Rambam's Ruling: A Kedusha That Never Left

The foundation of the entire discussion is a ruling of the Rambam in Hilchos Beis HaBechirah (6:14-15). The Rambam writes:

“We may offer all the korbanos on the Temple site, even though the Temple itself is not built ... because through its original consecration, it was consecrated for that time and for eternity...”

In practical terms: the Rambam holds the Har HaBayis (Temple Mount) retains its full sanctity even today, and that sacrifices may be brought there even in the absence of a Beis HaMikdash. The Raavad disputes this,

arguing that the original kedusha lapsed when the Temple was destroyed and that a new act of consecration would be required. According to the Raavad, bringing sacrifices today without proper reconstitution of the Beis HaMikdash would be halachically invalid or worse.

The entire subsequent debate - from the 13th century to the 20th - proceeds according to the Rambam's position. It is only because the kedusha remains that the question of bringing the Korban Pesach can even be raised.

A Question Centuries In The Making

Around the year 5017 (1257 CE), Rabbi Yechiel of Paris - one of the great Baalei HaTosafos - traveled to Eretz Yisrael with the explicit intention of bringing the Korban Pesach. A talmid who accompanied him confessed afterward that he had never managed to raise the critical questions - “What do we do about our *tumah*? And where is the verified Kohen?” - because he had been too preoccupied with other matters. The Korban was never brought. But the story became a landmark in the halachic literature: proof that a major Rishon had seriously contemplated bringing the Korban Pesach long after the Churban.

Did Rabban Gamliel Bring the Korban Pesach After the Churban?

The Gemara in Sanhedrin records that Rabban Gamliel once cited the condition of the lambs and doves as a reason to add a month to the year - a consideration that is only relevant when there is an actual Korban to bring. The question posed to

א. אמרו"ל בניסן נגאלו ובניסן עתידין להגאל¹. ושאלה הלכה למעשה:
 כשנבנה בית המקדש בין מסח ראשון לשני², אם נחחיבו בעשיית מסח שני.
 והנה פלוגתא דתנאי היא בירושלמי³: "ניחן לישראל לבנות בית הכהריר
 (בין מ"ר למ"ש) כו", ולדעת ר' יודא - עושין מ"ש,
 - הנחה. בלחי טובח -

THE REBBE'S HANDWRITTEN NOTE TO RABBI ZEVIN ON A COPY OF THE SICHA SENT TO HIM

the Yaavetz (Rabbi Yaakov Emden) was sharp: since this Rabban Gamliel appears to be Rabban Gamliel d'Yavneh, who led the Jewish people after the Churban - why would the fitness of the lambs matter?

The Yaavetz offers a striking primary answer: sacrifices were in fact brought after the Churban, at least for a period, while the Mizbeach still stood even without the Beis HaMikdash around it. A Mishna in Pesachim lends further support, recording that Rabban Gamliel instructed his servant Tavi to roast the Korban Pesach - and the Yaavetz argues this too was Rabban Gamliel d'Yavneh, meaning it occurred post-Churban. The Yaavetz calls this his primary answer, and it became a cornerstone for those who argued that bringing the Korban Pesach today is at least theoretically possible.

But the Yaavetz offers a second answer as well - one that cuts even deeper. Perhaps Rabban Gamliel had never brought the Korban at all. He cited the condition of the lambs not because he intended to bring a Korban that year, but because "every day we await salvation and redemption coming soon." Living in anticipation of the imminent rebuilding of the Beis HaMikdash, Rabban Gamliel

felt it necessary to prepare properly for the Geula - to ensure the flocks would be ready and fit when the moment arrived. Since the calendar was still in the hands of Beis Din, he added this as a factor in intercalating the year: so that by Pesach, when the Beis HaMikdash might - please G-d - already stand, the korbanos would be in proper condition.

The two answers represent two very different worlds. The first tells us that Jews brought the Korban Pesach even in the ruins of history. The second tells us that even when they could not, they lived as if they soon would.

Centuries later, the question erupted into full-scale controversy - triggered by a rare window of opportunity. For roughly four hundred years (5260-5674/1500-1914), Eretz Yisrael languished under Ottoman rule, with Jews harassed and Har HaBayis entirely inaccessible. Then, in the early 19th century, came a brief interlude: the Egyptian ruler Ibrahim Pasha conquered the land (5590-5600/1830-1840), and conditions for Jews improved markedly. It was in this climate that **Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch Kalisher** of Thorn (Prussia) advanced his bold proposal: to renew the offering of the Korban Pesach.

He lobbied politically, approaching the philanthropist Anshel Rothschild with a request to purchase Har HaBayis or secure permission from the authorities to bring sacrifices there. Simultaneously, he developed the halachic framework in his work *Derishas Tzion*. Rabbi Kalisher sent his arguments to his rebbi, **Rabbi Akiva Eiger**, who brought in his son-in-law, the **Chasam Sofer**. Both raised serious halachic objections. The resulting exchange - spanning multiple responses and pamphlets from leading halachic authorities across Europe - established the landscape of the debate the Rebbe would engage after the Six Day War.

The Four Halachic Obstacles

The debate around bringing the Korban Pesach today revolves around four major obstacles, each of which must be addressed before the question can proceed:

1. Sanctity of the Har HaBayis

As noted above, the entire discussion proceeds according to the Rambam's ruling that the Har HaBayis retains its sanctity. The Raavad's dissent - that the kedusha lapsed with the Churban - would preclude the question entirely.

2. The Location of the Mizbeach

The Rambam writes that the location of the Mizbeach is precisely fixed and may never be changed. Without knowing where it stood, there is no way to approach the avoda.

Rabbi Kalisher proposed two methods of measurement. The first: begin from the Kosel, the Western Wall, whose position is known, and measure inward using the dimensions recorded in Maseches Midos.

The problem is that the Mishna gives only approximate figures - "most" of the Har HaBayis was on the south, "a portion" on the west - not the precise numbers needed for a definitive calculation.

The second proposal, attributed to **Rabbi Eliyahu of Greiditz**: measure from the *Even HaShesiyah* - the Foundation Stone beneath the Dome of the Rock, traditionally identified as the spot where the Aron stood in the Kodesh HaKodashim. From there, one could count outward the known dimensions of the Heichal, Ulam, and the space between the Ulam and the Mizbeach to pinpoint the altar's location.

The difficulty: the identification of the rock beneath the Dome as the *Even HaShesiyah* comes from Arab tradition, not from a verified Jewish chain of transmission. While the **Radvaz** accepted this identification; others disputed it. Another problem: The rock itself measures roughly 13 by 18 meters - far larger than the entire Kodesh HaKodashim, which was only 20 amos wide. The unresolved dispute about the size of the amah (cubit) adds yet another layer of uncertainty to any measurement-based approach.

3. Tumas Meis

In our times, we are all *tamei meis* (ritually impure from contact with the dead), since we no longer have the *para aduma* to purify ourselves. However, the resolution adopted by all authorities who permit bringing the Korban is that *tumah* is "*dechuyah b'tzibbur*" - when the entire community is impure, the prohibition is set aside and the Korban may be brought. This applies specifically to *korbanos tzibur*, public sacrifices; the Korban Pesach is treated as a communal offering in this regard.

4. Bigdei Kehuna - Priestly Garments

A Kohen who performs the avoda without his proper vestments is considered a “zar” - a non-Kohen - and his service is invalid. The four garments of a regular Kohen include an *avnet* (sash), which according to halacha must contain *techeiles* - a specific blue dye derived from the *chilazon*. Rabbi Kalisher argued that the Rambam’s silence on the source of the dye in the context of priestly garments implies it can be obtained from any source. This was rejected by **Hagaon R’ Dovid Friedman** in his work *Sheilas Dovid*, who cited an explicit Tosefta requiring the same *chilazon*-derived *techeiles* for both *tzitizis* and priestly garments.

Beyond these four, the authorities who discussed the matter raised many more unresolved questions, among them: whether a Kohen of reliably established lineage could be found; which *korbanos* would require a *machatzis ha’shekel* contribution beforehand; and whether the *minchas chavitin* - the inaugural offering brought by a new Kohen - must precede all other avoda and is not overridden even by communal *tumah*.

The Proofs Against Bringing The Korban Today

The four obstacles above are practical difficulties. But several of the *poskim* the Rebbe referenced raised a more fundamental objection: perhaps bringing the Korban Pesach today is simply wrong - not merely impractical but halachically prohibited, or at minimum wholly premature. Their arguments:

1. The Pasuk in Vayikra: The Torah states: “And I will make your sanctuaries

desolate, and I will not smell the fragrance of your offerings” (Vayikra 26:31). The Mishna in Zevachim rules that a sacrifice must be brought “for the sake of a pleasing fragrance.” If Hashem has declared He will not accept our offerings during the time of exile, then bringing them may be intrinsically invalid.

2. The Order of Shemoneh Esrei: The blessings of Shemoneh Esrei follow a deliberate sequence: first “Boneh Yerushalayim,” then “Tzemach Dovid” (which includes the coming of Moshiach and the rebuilding of the Beis HaMikdash), and only then “Retzei” (the restoration of the avoda). The sequence implies that the Beis HaMikdash must first be rebuilt before the sacrificial service can resume.

3. The Rambam in Hilchos Melachim: The Rambam writes explicitly that Moshiach will first build the Beis HaMikdash, gather the exiles of Israel, and only then will the sacrifices resume. The order is unambiguous: Mikdash first, *Korbanos* second. No independent initiative to bring sacrifices before Moshiach arrives is contemplated.

4. The Yerushalmi: The Rebbe himself cites a passage in the Yerushalmi (brought in Likkutei Sichos vol. 12) which states that the question of Pesach Sheini only arises “once the Beis HaMikdash has been built.” The plain reading is that the prerequisite for any discussion of communal Korban Pesach - including Pesach Sheini - is the existence of the Beis HaMikdash itself.

The Halachic Debate After The Six Day War

For centuries, the question of bringing the Korban Pesach remained theoretical.



Under the Ottoman Empire, under the British Mandate, and under Jordanian rule of the Old City (5708–5727/1948–1967) - when Jews were barred even from the Kosel - Jewish sovereignty over Har HaBayis belonged to the world of prayer, not halachic calculation.

Then came Iyar 5727 - June 1967 - and the Six Day War. In six days, Israel captured the Old City, the Kosel, and Har HaBayis. For the first time in nearly two thousand years, Jews exercised sovereignty over the Har HaBayis. The theoretical became practical.

Halachic authorities in the months after the war were compelled to revisit whether the Korban Pesach could now be brought. Most major *poskim*, led by the Rambam, agree that the Korban Pesach can be brought even without a Beis HaMikdash standing. As for the location of the Mizbeach - the *poskim* rule that uncertainty alone does not preclude

bringing the Korban. On the other hand, many of the other factors were missing.

A number of halachic works were published on the subject, but none of them addressed a related critical point: if bringing the Korban is even possibly obligatory, then remaining in Yerushalayim without doing so is itself a potential violation. Only someone who was *b'derech rechoka*, distant enough to not be able to reach Yerushalayim on time, was exempt. Otherwise, if the whole *tzibur* was *tamei*, a serious potential *issue kareis* was present.

A widespread custom of going to the Kosel on Erev Pesach to recite the passage describing the Korban - “to remember the offering our fathers brought” - developed, but considering the above, it may have been placing well-intentioned Jews in precisely that position.

Why The Rebbe Said: Stay Out Of Yerushalayim

This is what the Rebbe addressed on that Achron Shel Pesach. The Rebbe's sicha did not rule that the Korban Pesach must be brought. Nor did it rule that it may not be. It ruled that the uncertainty itself created an intolerable risk: the *safeik* that one might be obligated - combined with the severity of the potential transgression - required removing oneself from the situation entirely.

The Rebbe was explicit about why the majority of *poskim* forbid bringing the Korban today. He cited the proofs listed above, and noted that they had been accepted by many leading authorities. This was not a ruling that the dissenting *poskim* were right - it was a ruling that their position was serious enough that no one could afford to ignore it.

The Rebbe was crystal clear:

“My conclusion is that there is a safeik and a s’feik s’feika in this matter. Therefore, those who are far away should not go up to Yerushalayim - and preferably, those who are there should leave.”

Two proofs that the Rebbe's ruling did not follow the permissive opinions: First, his own explicit language - “since many forbid bringing the Korban Pesach today and have rejected the arguments of those who permit it” - makes clear he was not endorsing the permissive view. Second, the language of *safeik* and *s’feik s’feika* throughout the sicha is the language of doubt, not of definitive ruling. The Rebbe was not saying: bring the Korban. He was saying: the risk of being obligated is real enough that you should not be there.

The ruling was thus a precautionary one - driven by the severity of potential *kareis* - not a positive ruling in favor of the permissive opinions.

The Rebbe's Sicha

In that sicha of Acharon shel Pesach and subsequently edited by the Rebbe for publication - the Rebbe addressed the issue at length. Since Pesach Rishon of that year had already passed, the sicha focused on Pesach Sheini: the Rebbe argued that just as the Korban Pesach can be brought in a state of *tumah* on Pesach Rishon when the whole community is impure, the same applies on Pesach Sheini - raising the same halachic question about remaining in Yerushalayim without bringing it.

The Rebbe's ruling: “In my humble opinion, one should refrain from being within fifteen *mil* of Yerushalayim on 14 Iyar.” Fifteen *mil* corresponds to approximately 8.9 miles or 14.4 kilometers - the halachic definition of “near” for purposes of the Korban Pesach obligation. In his *hagaha* (editorial notes) to the published sicha, the Rebbe added explicitly that everything stated about Pesach Sheini applied equally to Erev Pesach itself.

Why only now, and not throughout all the centuries since the Churban? The Rebbe's answer was direct: “Until after last year's war, the hand of the nations was strong.” As long as a foreign power ruled the Har HaBayis, the practical possibility of bringing the Korban did not exist. Now that Israel exercised sovereignty, the obligation came into force, and with it the prohibition against remaining in the city without fulfilling it.

The Correspondence With Rabbi Zevin

In an unusual gesture, the Rebbe sent the sicha to the gaon **Rabbi Shlomo Yosef Zevin**, a leading Chabad rav in Eretz Yisrael, an acclaimed halachic author, and editor of the Encyclopedia Talmudis. The sicha was accompanied by a handwritten dedication wishing him a refua shleima.

Rabbi Zevin - himself a towering halachic authority - responded with a lengthy letter dated 3 Sivan 5728, raising numerous objections. Among the most pointed: "Does this mean that all the residents of Yerushalayim - some quarter of a million people - must leave the city on Pesach Sheini?" Rabbi Zevin also pressed a "*sheilas tam*" - a 'simple' question: where do we find a din of *derech rechokah* on Pesach Sheini at all? The Torah only mentions it in connection with Pesach Rishon. Rabbi Zevin concluded with characteristic humility: "I ask the Rebbe's forgiveness for daring to express my surprise. 'This is Torah and I need to learn it.'"

The Rebbe replied in detail. The full exchange was later published in *Igros Kodesh*, vol. 24. On the question of large numbers leaving, the Rebbe wrote: "Thousands and tens of thousands - G-d-fearing, punctilious Jews - [must consider this]. It is a foundation of my reasoning that since this matter entails (1) a possible *kareis*, while (2) the burden on males from age thirteen and up is only a few hours away from Yerushalayim, this is not such a great imposition - all the more so for those already on the road who need only refrain from pressing forward into the city at that precise time."

On the absence of *derech rechokah* from the laws of Pesach Sheini - the Rebbe's answer was sharp and elegant: the Mishna in Pesachim lists all the differences between Pesach Rishon and Pesach Sheini. The fact that "*derech rechokah*" does not appear on that list, and no authority ever noted it as something "the Tanna omitted," implies that the exemption applies to Pesach Sheini as well. The Rebbe noted this was consistent with the Tosafos in Pesachim, which lists the differences that were in fact omitted from the Mishna - and *derech rechokah* is not among them.

What Lubavitchers Actually Did

For eight years - from 5729 until 5735 - dozens of Lubavitcher Chassidim acted on the Rebbe's ruling and left Yerushalayim on Erev Pesach and Pesach Sheini. The logistics were strikingly different for the two occasions: on Pesach Sheini, one could take a bus out of the city and return at nightfall. Erev Pesach was far more demanding - leaving the house in the middle of final preparations for the Seder was no small matter.

The well-known mashpia **Rabbi Moshe Weber** spent the first Pesach after the Rebbe's *horaa* (5729) at the home of **Rabbi Yeshaya Hertz**, one of the founders of Nachalas Har Chabad, and continued this practice every year until 5735. **Rabbi Shmuel Shneersohn**, head of Kollel Chabad in Eretz Yisrael, traveled either to his brother-in-law in Kfar Chabad or to Hadassah Ein Kerem hospital - far enough to satisfy the halachic requirement - and made a point of publicizing both his departure and the reason for it.



Rabbi Yisroel Glitzenstein recalls: “Not all of Anash were able to leave - it was no small matter to uproot yourself on Erev Pesach. But dozens did. On Pesach Sheini, even more people left. As a bachur, I would leave from midday on 14 Iyar and stay until the evening hours. There were groups of Anash who would walk back from Motza to Yerushalayim, timing their return for after sunset, when the time for the Korban had already passed.”

Rabbi Shlomo Dovid Cohen recalls that those who couldn't travel to relatives in other cities found another solution: they would calculate carefully where “*derech rechokah*” began, spend the critical afternoon hours outside the boundary, and walk back in only after nightfall. One year when Pesach Sheini fell on Shabbos, Rabbi Cohen stepped off the bus at Motza before midday on Friday the 14th of Iyar, verified he was carrying nothing *muktzeh*, and began the walk home only toward evening.

Rabbi Zevin himself did not leave - it was not feasible for him - but he stopped going to the Kosel on Erev Pesach to read the Korban Pesach passage. His grandson, **Rabbi Nachum Zevin**, recalls asking him why he had not followed the Rebbe's suggestion. “My grandfather answered: ‘If the Rebbe had said it as a directive of a Rebbe, we would have gone immediately. But since the Rebbe framed it as a halachic concern - a matter of *safeik* and *s'feik s'feika* - there was room to be lenient.’”

Rabbi Tuvia Blau, rav of the Chabad community in Neve Yaakov, put it simply: “The Rebbe is a man of pure halacha. He measures everything by halachic criteria alone. Here, as soon as Israel was in a position of power and the theoretical possibility of bringing the Korban Pesach arose, it became a real issue - and the Rebbe pointed it out. Not one other rav or *posek* raised this concern. That tells you something about how precisely the Rebbe

מכתב כ"ק אדמו"ר שליט"א

ב"ה י"ג אייר ה'תשל"ה
 הרה"ק וכו' לנאס פו הרה"ק טאליא
 שלום וברכה!
 בשעת שאלת ערמשיך ונאמר בשיחת אחש"פ. תשכ"ח.
 זעור (פ"ו) אמת' גריוק הי' (אש-א פריזיס) אמי האל... זעור
 נשתנה המצב ואין עתה היכולת והאפשריות לשנות (ולבנות) כפי הדרוש
 להקרבת ק"פ וכו' —

ולכן גם אין מקום שלא להיות בער"פ או בי"ד באייר קרוב לירות"ו.
 ויה"ר שיקויים בעגלא דידן בלשון הרמב"ם (תשובה פ"ז. ה"ה) ישראל
 ערשין תשובה ומיד הן נגאלין — וגם עשיית התשובה מיד — ויבנה ביהמ"ק
 במקומו ויקבץ נדחי ישראל כ"י (הלי מלכים ספי"א).

זעור וברכה אלו זעור איר (זעור)
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 כ"ד. משיחת אחרון של פסח, תשכ"ח.

"THE SITUATION CHANGED" - THE LETTER TO RABBI ZEVIN WITH HANDWRITTEN NOTE

measures every detail of halacha, even the doubtful cases.”

The halachic discussion also reached the wider frum press. The well-known writer **Rabbi Betzalel Landau, a'h** - a regular contributor to *HaModia* whom the Rebbe held in great esteem (at a dollars distribution the Rebbe told him, “I read your articles in *HaModia*”) - devoted two articles to the subject, published on Yud-Alef Nissan 5750. The first addressed the general question of bringing the Korban Pesach today; the second focused on the Rebbe’s suggestion to be *b’derech rechokah*, writing: “Many of us still remember the proposal of the Lubavitcher Rebbe at that time, to those who live in Yerushalayim, to be at a distance from Yerushalayim on 14 Iyar.” He quoted the Rebbe’s answers to Rabbi Zevin’s objections one by one, and

concluded with the Rebbe’s 5735 letter which is presented below.

A Precedent From Before The Six Day War: The Belzer Rebbe

The Rebbe was not the first to take this concern seriously. When the Belzer Rebbe, **Rabbi Aharon Rokeach, zt'l**, arrived in Eretz Yisrael in the winter of 5704 (1944), he insisted on settling in Tel Aviv rather than Yerushalayim - and was emphatic that he would not be in Yerushalayim over Pesach. His brother, Rabbi Mordechai of Bilgoray, zt'l (father of the current Belzer Rebbe), explained the reasoning in detail: the Belzer Rebbe was concerned about the halachic obligation to bring the Korban Pesach and wished to be in a state of *derech rechokah*.

It is worth noting that the Belzer Rebbe's own view, expressed in his responsum that appears in the aforementioned *Sheilas Dovid*, was that the Korban Pesach should not be brought today. His leaving Yerushalayim was thus precautionary - the same logic the Rebbe would articulate twenty-four years later: even if one holds that the Korban should not be brought, the *safeik* that one might be obligated is sufficient reason to remove oneself from the situation.

The Rebbe Rescinds The Ruling

In a general letter written on 13 Iyar 5735 - Erev Pesach Sheini of 1975 - the Rebbe announced that circumstances had changed: it was no longer possible to rule over the Har HaBayis, and the halachic concern was therefore no longer applicable.

In a letter to Rabbi Zevin, to which the Rebbe added a handwritten note, he explained: "Due to our many sins - beginning already on the seventh day, when [the government] effectively said 'he is my brother' and gave [the Arabs] a foothold - the situation has changed, and there is no longer the ability or practical possibility of instituting the necessary changes to bring the Korban Pesach. Therefore, there is no reason to avoid being near Yerushalayim on Erev Pesach or on 14 Iyar. May it be fulfilled in our time, as the Rambam writes: 'Yisroel does teshuva and is immediately redeemed' - and the Beis HaMikdash will be rebuilt, and the outcasts of Israel will be gathered."

The Rebbe's reference to "the seventh day" was pointed: from the very day after the Six Day War ended, Israeli leaders had signaled their willingness to return the Har HaBayis to Arab control. In the

Rebbe's halachic framework, that moment marked the end of *yad Yisroel takifa* - and with it, the practical possibility of bringing the Korban Pesach.

What happened? On the very day the war ended - the "seventh day" in the Rebbe's language - Defense Minister Moshe Dayan handed administrative control of Har HaBayis back to the Waqf, the Muslim religious authority. The phrase the Rebbe later used to describe this moment comes from the story of Achav and Ben Hadad in Melachim: "*Achi hu* - he is my brother" - the moment when an enemy was treated as a partner and given a foothold he should never have been given. Whether *yad Yisroel takifa* - genuine Jewish sovereign authority over the site - had truly been established even in those first days became a question the Rebbe would return to.

In a remarkable act of halachic generosity, the Rebbe retroactively excused all those who had not left Yerushalayim in the preceding years. Since real Jewish sovereignty had arguably never truly been established from the very first day, there had perhaps never been a full obligation to begin with.

The Rebbe concluded his sicha of Acharon shel Pesach 5728 with a prayer that captures the deeper longing behind the entire episode: "[May we merit,] quite a bit of time before Pesach Sheini and afterward, to see the good of Yerushalayim, our holy city, and the place of our holy Temples."

Amen v'amen. ■

Note: *References and marei mekomos for the topics discussed in this article can be found in Issue #44 in the Hebrew "Hatomim" supplement of Beis Moshiach, available on RebbeDrive.com*

האמנתי
כי אדבר



He Had No Doubts, Even When He Had No Answers

A portrait of a Chassidishe Rosh Yeshiva

RABBI YOSEF YITZCHOK A"H WILSCHANSKY WAS NOT A MAN WHO JUMPED TO CONCLUSIONS. THE ROSH YESHIVA OF YESHIVAS CHASSIDEI CHABAD IN TZFAS HAD A FORMIDABLE ANALYTICAL MIND AND BROUGHT IT TO EVERY QUESTION — AND INYANEI MOSHIACH WAS NO DIFFERENT. IN A VISIT TO 770 FOR YUD ALEF NISSAN 5752, HE CLOSETED HIMSELF WITH HIS CLOSE FRIEND AND COLLEAGUE FROM THEIR YEARS TOGETHER AT THE VAAD L'HAFOTZAS SICHOS, יבלחט"א,

RABBI LEIBEL ALTEIN, FOR HOURS — COMBING THROUGH THE SICHOS UNTIL THE PICTURE WAS COMPLETE AND THE CONCLUSION UNAVOIDABLE: THE REBBE IS MOSHIACH TZIDKEINU AND ONE MUST ACCEPT HIM. FOR A MAN RAISED BY THE LEGENDARY BRUNOY MASHPIA **RABBI NISSAN NEMANOV** TO TAKE THE REBBE'S WORDS WITH PURE KABBOLAS OL, THAT CONCLUSION WAS NOT THE BEGINNING OF A DEBATE — IT WAS THE END OF ONE. AFTER THAT, THERE WAS NOTHING LEFT TO DISCUSS. HE NEVER WAVERED — NOT FROM OPPOSITION, NOT FROM ISOLATION, AND NOT FROM THE UNANSWERABLE QUESTIONS POSED BY GIMMEL TAMMUZ

BY RABBI YISROEL BRANDLER

Rabbi Wilschansky was on a high, speaking loudly about the need to be connected to the Rebbe's train, which is moving and advancing. The locomotive - that is, the first car leading the rest - has already whistled and begun to move! Unfortunate is one who is not connected to it and not traveling, for he remains at the station...

These lines were written by the tamim, Avrohom Chaim Mizrachi (today a shliach of the Rebbe in Givati) in the days following Yud-Tes Kislev 5753, authentically documenting the farbrengen of the Chag HaGeula that took place at the Chabad-Lubavitch Yeshiva in Tzfas.

These words aptly define and capture the *chayus* and fervor in inyanei Moshiach of the renowned Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Wilschansky *a'h*, the Rebbe's shliach to Eretz Yisrael and Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivas Chassidei Chabad Lubavitch in Tzfas. Also the unique character of this enthusiasm: the Rebbe is advancing, and Rabbi Wilschansky, as a Chassid connected heart and soul, advances with the Rebbe, while ensuring to attach all the 'cars' to the 'locomotive' - connecting all under his influence to the Rebbe who heralds the Besuras HaGeula and encourages the Chassidim's proclamation and singing: "*Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu v'Rabeinu Melech HaMoshiach l'Olam Va'ed.*"

Much has been written and will be written about Rabbi Wilschansky. In the following lines, we will attempt to highlight unique aspects of his dedication to the primary mission of the Rebbe - "to bring about Yemos HaMoshiach" - and to shine a spotlight on his extensive work in empowering the vanguard of the King -

the tmimim and Anash - to internalize the Besuras HaGeula and spread it to all people of the generation. And let the living take it to heart.

Emuna Peshuta

It is no secret that among the Chassidim prominent in their *chayus* for Moshiach, there were those who waited and longed from time immemorial with the thought "when will it come to my hand so I may fulfill it." The complete faith of every Chassid that the Rebbe of their generation is the Moshiach of the generation burned within them; the signs of Moshiach in Hilchos Melachim were constantly on their lips, and they longed to share this with all of Klal Yisrael - whether from their Chassidic *hergesh*, or even from conclusions drawn through contemplation of the Rambam's halachos and similar sources.

Other Chassidim connected with emuna and action in inyanei Moshiach from their nature as 'Nachshons' and trailblazers. As passionate and effervescent Chassidim of the type of '*Oros d'Tohu*' - their personal character served as fertile ground for great momentum in inyanei Moshiach, particularly through various activities to publicize the Besuras HaGeula and *kabbolas ha'malchus*.

By nature, Chassidim of both these types can also at times miss the mark of the Rebbe's holy will entirely. When one's personal nature and 'own reasoning' interfere - even when dealing with nature and reasoning of holiness (as in our case) - there is room for error. Thus we find that Chassidim of the aforementioned types 'got ahead of their time,' issuing publications and taking action even in



times when this was not desired, and indeed the Rebbe decisively rejected such actions.

Rabbi Wilschansky, who was among the leading bearers of the banner of emuna and *chayus* in the *hisgalus* of our Melech HaMoshiach, belonged to a different category. His unique passion in inyanei Moshiach stemmed from pure *hiskashrus*, free of independent opinions and considerations, and from *kabbolas ol* and devotion to the Rebbe. With him, everything began when the Rebbe came forth with the *Besuras HaGeula* and the encouragement of “*Yechi Adoneinu*.” From that moment, he devoted himself to this with his entire being, with complete *kabbolas ol* and *emuna peshuta*. And when we are speaking of a man of broad knowledge and genius like Rabbi

Wilschansky, the absolute *kabbolas ol* and *emuna* are astonishing...

On a certain occasion, he attributed this to the *chinuch* he received in his youth from the renowned *mashpia* Rabbi Nissan Nemanov and from his father Rabbi Raphael Wilschansky, secretary of the European Lubavitch office:

“Reb Nissan educated us to take things with kabbolas ol. Though in farbrengens he did not elaborate extensively on the topic of hiskashrus (in Yiddish they say: ‘it wasn’t his cognac’...), when his son had already come to the Rebbe and was regularly sending him the sichos - he began every farbrengen with a sicha of the Rebbe, reviewing the latest farbrengen he had received. In any case, he generally educated us to kabbolas ol, and for me this was always before and after everything. There was also the chinuch of my father in our home - what needs to be

done, is done. I was always in the psychical mode: there are the Rebbe's instructions - they must be fulfilled as they are, with kabbolas ol and emuna. And so it is also in inyanei Moshiach."

On one occasion, he was asked about the special spirit that prevails in the Tzfas yeshiva regarding inyanei Moshiach - a spirit that came of course from the rosh yeshiva... In response, he elaborated on the aforementioned point, attributing it to the shlichus to Eretz Yisrael, and certainly these words are true and teach us about him personally:

"In order to clarify things, I wish to preface and highlight that the yeshiva in Tzfas, from the moment of its founding, was a 'shlichus' yeshiva - a yeshiva established by the Rebbe's shluchim, in order to fulfill his holy will and direct instruction 'to restore the crown to its former glory' by establishing Chabad institutions in Tzfas.

"In the yeshiva's early period, all the married shluchim to Eretz Yisrael resided in Tzfas, creating the special atmosphere of 'hiskashrus' that added to and influenced the yeshiva's unique character. At that time, the talk among students in yeshivas was that whoever wants to experience passion in hiskachrus to the Rebbe should travel to Tzfas... because there they direct and stoke passion regarding hiskachrus. Boruch Hashem, this atmosphere impacted other yeshivas, and subsequently some of the shluchim went on to serve as roshei yeshivas and mashpiim in other yeshivas, infusing them with that spirit of hiskachrus.

"The fact that the yeshiva proudly and strongly bears the banner of faith in the Rebbe as Melech HaMoshiach stems from the same point. The topic of Moshiach is one the Rebbe agitates about without limit; this is what he demands, what he drove

home above all things. Naturally, from true hiskachrus and uncompromising devotion to the Rebbe, it is of course obvious and simple that the moment the Rebbe comes out with all the directives regarding Moshiach and places them at the top of the agenda - then in the most natural way, this takes top priority for us.

"Many call the yeshiva a 'Meshichist' yeshiva. It is important to clarify: it is not that we took upon ourselves the 'Moshiach banner,' that a decision was made among us that we are the ones to place the emphasis and take responsibility for the inyan of Moshiach - that is absolutely not the case! This is a continuation of the same policy platform upon which the entire yeshiva is built and founded from the start: loyalty to the Rebbe, loyalty to the Rebbe's directives, and devotion to them. And from the moment the Rebbe demands Moshiach and the avoda of Moshiach with full force - it is understood that this is what we do! It simply 'grows' from the fact that this is simply what the Rebbe demands..."

In this spirit, Rabbi Asaf Chanoch Frumer, mashpia of the Chabad Haifa Yeshiva, tells us that Rabbi Wilschansky once said to him about the students in the yeshiva: *"Why are they 'koching zich' (burning with passion) in inyanei Moshiach - is it because they studied extensively the words of the Chofetz Chaim [who dealt passionately with anticipation of the Geula and preparations through studying the laws of the Mikdash]?! This comes from studying the Rebbe's sichos!"*

Also when he was asked to explain why it is important that a person know who Moshiach is, and not enough to know generally that he will come - after explaining wisely and insightfully that this makes the entire topic of Geula a present reality, he immediately reiterated forcefully



in accordance with his aforementioned approach: *"All these explanations are only on the level of 'lower understanding,' for the essential chayus must come from the very fact that the Rebbe encouraged this so greatly, and this itself indicates that there is purpose and importance in it."*

It is no coincidence that he referred to the *"gevaldige osiyos"* of the sicha of Shabbos Parshas Vaeira 5752: *"The bittul and hiskashrus to the Rebbe, Nasi Doreinu, 'the Nasi is everything,' through which in each and every individual their existence and all their affairs become sanctified to the Nasi HaDor - through being filled and permeated with fulfilling the mission of the Nasi HaDor, Moshe Rabeinu of our generation, 'the first goel is the final goel,' whose primary inyan is 'to bring about the Yemos HaMoshiach' in actual practice."* This is what he lived and implemented in practice.

'What do I say? What does the Rebbe say!'

Rabbi Shlomo Halpern, Mara d'Asra of the Chabad community of Tel Aviv, studied at the Tzfas yeshiva in the years 5751-5753. In subsequent years as well, he maintained close contact with Rabbi Wilschansky, particularly regarding inyanei Moshiach. He shares an anecdote from those days: *"I remember that during the Gulf War, in the winter of 5751, while missiles were falling on the Land and 'Yisrael was shaken and frightened,' Rabbi Wilschansky lived by and invigorated us with the Rebbe's words that Eretz Yisrael is the safest place. The entire war is part of the revelation of Moshiach as per the famous Yalkut Shimoni, and he eagerly looked forward to hearing what the Rebbe would say at the Shabbos farbrengen regarding the situation."*

This line of "we have only the words of *ben Amram*" continued to find expression throughout all the events in those years of the early 'nuns,' as Rabbi Wilschansky always lived by and invigorated the talmidim in yeshiva to cling to the Rebbe's words. When asked what the Rebbe says about the matter at hand, he would say: *"What do I say? What does the Rebbe say!"* So many times I heard from him the line: *"The words speak for themselves..."*

His son, Rabbi Chaim Eliezer Wilschansky, head of the Chanoch L'Naar yeshiva in Tzfas, relates: *"My father always 'lived' with the Rebbe and the Rebbe's Torah. One can say he was connected to it by 'IV'... Before Shabbos, a brown envelope would arrive with the new 'kuntreisim' (of sichos and maamarim, etc.), and my father would not put it down until he finished the booklets several times. Wherever he went, he took them with him - whether going down to the yeshiva or anywhere else. He would go to sleep with them beside his pillow, and in the morning immediately returned to the booklets... This is how it was always, in all the years and inyanim, and so it was in recent years regarding inyanei Moshiach."*

"After the famous sicha of Chof-Ches Nissan 5751, he was 'shaken' and did not know what to do with himself. However, he was not among those who were busy with saying 'we don't understand exactly what the Rebbe wants' and that one needs to investigate further, etc. - on the contrary, he tried to act because it was clear that one needed to act. So he cried out 'We Want Moshiach Now,' spoke about it everywhere, and began to study the sources on the matter. I remember him speaking at a gathering held then in the Chabad quarter of Tzfas, exclaiming that this is what the



Rebbe wants and one must throw himself into it, etc.”

One of the earliest and most important activities in the days following the sicha of Chof-Ches Nissan was the *psak din* of Chabad rabbis in Eretz Yisrael, that the Rebbe is the “final redeemer” and he must redeem the Jewish people immediately. Rabbi Mordechai Shmuel Ashkenazi, Rabbi Wilschansky’s brother-in-law, formulated a written halachic ruling on the matter, with several Chabad rabbis adding their signatures. R’ Dovid Nachshon, R’ Shmarya Harel, and the late R’ Avi Taub traveled to the Rebbe with the *psak din*, and the Rebbe accepted it with thanks and even said he would take it to the *tziyun* – as is well known.

This was followed by a reading of the *psak* at holy gravesites. After Shavuot 5751, R’ David Nachshon and R’ Avi Taub were sent by the rabbanim to read the *psak* at the gravesites of our Rebbeim in Russia,

and they had the privilege of receiving encouragement and responses from the Rebbe regarding their *shlichus*. Before 5 Menachem Av, R’ Nachshon thought it appropriate and worthwhile to read the *psak* at the gravesite of the Arizal on his *yahrtzeit*, and he wrote to the Rebbe about it and received his holy blessing: “*Azkir al ha’tziyun.*”

Rabbi Wilschansky participated in carrying out this mission (as did his father-in-law, Rabbi Moshe Ashkenazi). And so we read in the detailed report that R’ Dovid Nachshon sent to the Rebbe: “*As I wrote, the plan was that we had a minyan with us - R’ Avi Taub, R’ Shmarya Harel, Rav Moshe Ashkenazi, and Rav Yosef Yitzchok Wilschansky, and several more tmimim... We said together Perek 90 and then read (by me in a whisper) the psak din for the hisgalus of the Rebbe MH’M immediately and truly, and for the building of the Beis HaMikdash immediately and*

truly (the entire psak as it was read at the gravesites of our Rebbeim). I also said that we came on behalf of the Beis Din, and we again said three times Vihi Noam, Yechi, etc. We placed the psak on the tziyun and it went up in flame heavenward.” On this report the Rebbe gave a unique response: “May it be His will that all this accomplish its effect... and the time is propitious... I will mention it at the tziyun!”

About these days, Rabbi Frumer relates: “I cannot forget how already in 5752, Rabbi Wilschansky lived inyanei Moshiach with unusual passion. To this day I can see before me the scene of how the he reviewed in the Tzfas yeshiva, Shabbos morning, one of the ‘fresh’ sichos which said that only ‘opening the eyes’ remains, and he emphasized how the Rebbe ratchets up the language from Shabbos to Shabbos.”

Yechi, Yechi, Yechi!

One of the stages in Rabbi Wilschansky’s internalization of the change the Rebbe was making regarding identifying Moshiach - as he described in later years to his family - was the famous response to Rabbi Nachman Meir Bernhard from South Africa. The latter raised in his letter to the Rebbe the hesitation of the shluchim in his location as to whether to join signatures on acceptance of the Rebbe’s malchus as Melech HaMoshiach. For on the one hand, the Rebbe had previously rejected such things, while on the other, it was being said that there were signs that now this was indeed desired. On the eve of the 15th of Shevat 5752, the response was: “Depends on local conditions - the local Chabad leadership should clarify this” (and he marked with an arrow the name of the local shliach mentioned in the letter).

This response really ‘grabbed’ Rabbi Wilschansky at the time, and from it he

concluded (like many other distinguished individuals) that even though previously the matter was completely ‘internal,’ now a change had occurred and the matter was, in principle, fitting and needed for publication. Over the years, he pointed several times to this response as decisive proof that there is a need and purpose in identifying Moshiach. He even added and highlighted that since then the matter had been strengthened even further when, in the year 5753, the Rebbe began encouraging the singing of “Yechi” publicly before all the nations, in every location...

Rabbi Halpern shares with us his memory of a conversation with Rabbi Wilschansky on Chof-Zayin Adar I, 5752: “That very night, after the Rebbe’s ‘health episode,’ I spoke with him and he was very pained. He knew exactly and in full detail what was happening (which doctors and equipment had been brought, etc.)... He said that according to natural means this was no simple matter, contrary to the rumors that had spread then... and yet he emphasized that we believe and are confident that immediately the Rebbe will be revealed.”

Rabbi Frumer also relates about the period after Chof-Zayin Adar 5752: “I remember well that when at various events in the summer of 5752, after the incident of Chof-Zayin Adar I, the Rebbe was blessed for a full recovery, Rabbi Wilschansky stood and whispered ‘Yechi, Yechi, Yechi.’”

‘Write This in the Book - The Rebbe is Moshiach Tzidkeinu’

The ‘makkeh b’patish’ came during his trip to the Rebbe for Yud-Alef Nissan 5752 - the conclusion of of ‘Shnas HaTzaddik’ [90th year] of the Rebbe - in

the turbulent days following the 'health episode.' During his visits to the Rebbe in 770, Rabbi Wilschansky would follow the regular practice of going up to the office of the *Vaad L'Hafatzas Sichos*, in which he had served as a member until being sent by the Rebbe to Eretz Yisrael, located in the office building at 788 Eastern Parkway, adjacent to 770. During his visits he would 'catch up' in friendly conversation with his friends on the committee, especially with Rabbi Yaakov Leib (Leibel) Altein, whom he greatly esteemed.

During this visit, he and Rabbi Altein sat together for many hours, clarifying the general progression emerging from the sichos of the entire recent period. Their deep study put all the pieces together to form a clear picture whose clear conclusion was: there is a Moshiach - *Nesi Doreinu* - and one must accept him.

At the central farbrengen held in 770 on that special day, one of the secretaries spoke, and he related his conversation with the Rebbe in his holy room several months earlier. During that conversation, the Rebbe told him that Moshiach needs to be informed from Above that he is Moshiach and this has not yet been revealed to him, and therefore it is unknown and not yet determined. According to this, the secretary wanted to say that the prayers and the cry of "*Yechi HaMelech*" should be directed heavenward, as a request that the Rebbe receive the instruction and shlichus to redeem the Jewish people.

The story and its conclusion stood in apparent contradiction to the aforementioned progression emerging from the sichos, and Rabbi Altein, who was sitting beside Rabbi Wilschansky at that moment, immediately reacted: "Well, so perhaps at that hour it had not yet been communicated to the Rebbe. How does he

know what happened afterward?" This statement too left a profound impression on his thought process.

Later in that farbrengen, when he was honored to speak in Lashon HaKodesh, he spoke sharply and clearly, and with words that "come from the heart" he spoke about the need to implant in our minds that we are in the last generation of galus and the first of Geula - the generation of Malka Meshicha, in which Moshiach is already present:

"After all the pilpul we heard from the secretary, ultimately the things were stated clearly by the Rebbe. 'Write this in the sefer' - the Rebbe said and wrote and transmitted to us in his sichos: Moshiach is already present, the Rebbe is Moshiach Tzidkeinu, and there is even reason to publicize this! We were raised on the emuna in Hashem and in Moshe His servant and with this we continue. Amalek tries to cool us down but will not succeed! Nothing that has occurred will cool our faith in the Rebbe as Moshiach Tzidkeinu, our longing for the coming of Moshiach, and our actions to actually bring the Geula through the Rebbe, King Moshiach - Yechi l'olam va'ed!"

Rabbi Wilschansky concluded his words with an appeal to those present to join in emuna in *Nesi Doreinu*, while clarifying that the emuna continues in full force after Chof-Zayin Adar. "On this day, *Yud-Alef Nissan*, let us all decide that we are 'within the cloud.' We have no doubt, we all live it. The askanim will deliberate about how to transmit this further, but within ourselves we must believe in this and strengthen our faith more and more. Despite the things that have occurred and can, G-d forbid, bring a person to a certain weakness - we have no questions on this matter. Davka today, the matter was determined in halacha, the things were

transmitted in the Rebbe's presence, and we all together accepted upon ourselves: 'Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu v'Rabeinu Melech HaMoshiach l'Olam Va'ed!'"

'This Will Continue and Intensify'

On the 5th of Menachem Av 5752, all of Israel was flooded with notices bearing clear and explicit messages that the Rebbe is Melech HaMoshiach, with a detachable form to join and sign on *kabbolas ha'malchus* of Moshiach. This was the private initiative of the 'tankist' R' Yigal Hoshiyar, who blazed a trail in nationwide print publicity regarding the identity of Moshiach. The campaign that stirred the country provoked opposition from many Chassidim - including those who were active in publicizing the Besuras HaGeula and *kabbolas ha'malchus*, who felt that R' Yigal had gone overboard and stepped out of bounds with his publication. In their view it was too explicit and clear, and on too large a scale... Rabbi Frumer relates that he remembers that actually Rabbi Wilschansky viewed this positively and even determined without hesitation: "*This will continue and intensify!*"

As can be seen in his aforementioned address on Yud-Alef Nissan at 770, the proclamation of 'Yechi Adoneinu' was regularly on his lips (as it was on the lips of other Chassidim) even before the Rebbe's regular encouragement of the singing of "Yechi" beginning from Simchas Torah 5753. But of course, from that point on, the matter became sacred to him beyond measure.

The following episode was told to us by Rabbi Frumer: "*I remember a farbrengen in the yeshiva where Rabbi Wilschansky and Rabbi Ofer Myodovnik farbrenged*

together. This was at a relatively early stage in the inyan of 'Yechi Adoneinu,' and Rabbi Myodovnik argued that while the content of 'Yechi Adoneinu' is indeed needed (kabbolas ha'malchus, etc.), it is not necessarily a matter of the specific wording. But Rabbi Wilschansky responded against him forcefully: 'The wording is essential!'"

About the degree to which he stood out as an activist in inyanei Moshiach from the outset, one can learn from what Rabbi Frumer recalls - that after the the Rosh Yeshiva returned (most likely) from the Kinus HaShluchim 5753, he related at a farbrengen in yeshiva to his talmidim that on this trip to the Rebbe he was surprised to discover he had a new title: "*Meshichist...*"

Speaking about the daily encouragement of the singing of "Yechi" in 5753, many times Rabbi Wilschansky would recount what happened on one of those holy occasions - the lighting of the fourth Chanuka candle, the 27th of Kislev, 5753. The Rebbe came out to daven Mincha with the Chassidim in the 'special room,' and after *chazaras ha'shatz* moved to the balcony to light the menorah. The crowd sang "*Haneiros Hallalu*" and the Rebbe encouraged the singing, and suddenly the Rebbe signaled with his holy hand in a way that led them to think he wanted to leave, but by raising his palm the Rebbe signaled to stop and with hand gestures indicated to the crowd to continue. The crowd said "*Aleinu Leshabeiach*," etc. - until at the conclusion of the final Kaddish, the crowd broke into the singing of "Yechi Adoneinu" and the Rebbe encouraged it, and only afterward signaled for the curtain to be closed.

"*From here [we see that],*" emphasized Rabbi Wilschansky, "*if someone doubted whether the Rebbe wants and waits for*

them to sing 'Yechi' specifically - here is a clear example that the Rebbe waited (after the Chassidim had already sung another niggun and the Rebbe encouraged it), until they would sing this, and he encouraged it, and only afterward did he leave."

Before the satellite broadcast - the global *kabbolas ha'malchus* planned for around Yud Shevat 5753 - there was no small confusion among Chassidim. The lofty occasion was preceded by a hullabaloo created by activists and various forces, and so a flood of faxes with opposing messages were sent to Anash, creating confusion about what exactly the Rebbe wanted and what was the ruling of the rabbanim. [Rabbi Betzalel Kupchik remembers that Rabbi Wilschansky was among those who arrived at the gathering of rabbanei Chabad held shortly before the broadcast, a gathering that was ultimately decided by Rabbi Mendel Futerfas in favor of proceeding with the broadcast.]

Family members relate that at a certain stage Rabbi Wilschansky decided to "study the sugya." He secluded himself and examined all the various faxes, aiming to reach the truth: whether the 'holy will' was indeed for such worldwide dissemination. The conclusion he reached was that everything depended on whether the Rebbe would come out for the occasion. In practice, the Rebbe did come out, and Rabbi Wilschansky "roared" *Yechi* with all his strength while jumping with tremendous enthusiasm... When he returned home afterward, his children heard him repeatedly reciting to himself the words of the holy proclamation, as if seeking to fix the words in his mind and heart forever. And indeed, from that point he remained attached to it always, never deviating right or left.

Living Moshiach

Since the Shnos HaNiflaos [the early 'nuns'], thousands of Tmimim were educated under the influence of Rabbi Wilschansky (and the yeshiva's staff of rabbis in general) to live with *chayus* in inyanei Geula and Moshiach - specifically in the spirit of the "maaseh rav" of the years 5753-54 of encouraging the singing and proclamation of "*Yechi*." This was expressed both within the yeshiva's regular schedule, which includes organized and in-depth shiurim on inyanei Geula and Moshiach, and outside the regular sederim, in various initiatives for studying and spreading the Besuras HaGeula that the yeshiva encouraged and continues to encourage. The yeshiva is known for its uniqueness in maintaining contact with alumni, and this is naturally utilized to preserve vitality in inyanei Moshiach and devotion to bringing about the Yemos HaMoshiach.

Another area he impacted regarding inyanei Moshiach was the Chabad community in Tzfas, to which he was sent by the Rebbe "to restore the crown to its former glory." As is known, Rabbi Wilschansky had a wonderful sense of Ahavas YIsrael and would honor and listen warmly to each and every person. As such, combined with the fact that most of the community members are yeshiva alumni, he had a decisive influence on shaping the community, even though he did not bear formal leadership responsibility. Indeed, the community being a living example of fulfilling the instruction "to live with Moshiach" is largely attributed to his credit.

Rabbi Yitzchok Lipsh, director of Tzach in Tzfas, relates that Rabbi Wilschansky always encouraged him to approach the

Mara d'Asra, Rabbi Levi Bistrisky with the various notices and publications, and to always invite the rabbi (and later his son) to all events that the yeshiva would organize together with Tzach. The general approach was to kindle passion in inyanei Moshiach as much as possible while maintaining respect for the Mara d'Asra.

Several times, he remarked regarding what was said at the Shabbos Parshas Vayakhel 5752 farbrengen in connection with Ahavas Yisrael, that the order of things is not coincidental. The fact that the Rebbe chose to say these things specifically then, after all the sichos and wondrous expressions of 5751-52, is because Ahavas Yisrael and unity are indeed the 'pinnacle' of the Besuras HaGeula! And indeed, he himself acted and conducted himself in this spirit.

L'Olam Va'ed

After the bitter experience of Gimmel Tammuz, he sprang into action like a devoted soldier to lead the way in activity in inyanei Moshiach. While many good people turned their hearts away, he did not budge and led a clear policy of continuing the campaign of the Besuras HaGeula and emuna in the Rebbe as Melech HaMoshiach. He was among the founders of the "Matteh Moshiach" in Eretz Yisrael in 5755 and served as a member of its board, always participating in various gatherings and encouraging the continued spreading of the Besuras HaGeula.

This demanded of him great inner strength, since his close friends and natural surroundings did not necessarily continue in this direction. He also received insults and humiliations for this, and being particularly sensitive

and warmhearted, it affected and even "shook" him. But he repeatedly studied and meditated on sichos and strengthened himself that this is the truth and this is what must be done.

In the days after Gimmel Tammuz, he was invited to speak before the students at Beis Chana in Tzfas, who asked about the situation - how could this be, etc. His answer was clear: "*There are questions I have no answers to. What is clear is that there is a niggun the Rebbe encouraged - 'Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu v'Rabeinu Melech HaMoshiach l'Olam Va'ed,' and everything connected to this remains forever, 'l'olam va'ed.'*"

At that time, at symposiums and various events held at 770 and in Chabad communities, he positioned himself to answer questions and encourage the tmimim and Anash at 770 to continue clinging to the Besuras HaGeula with greater strength and might. He took a prominent part in the series of major gatherings held then to strengthen emuna, some of which he also led with great skill.

On Shabbos HaGadol 5751, toward the beginning of Shnas HaTzaddik, the Rebbe explained the instruction from the divine meaning of the letter 'tzadi' (as it is customarily referred to in Chazal), whose meaning is "my side": since in the descent of the soul into the body there is a world that conceals and hides divinity and free choice is in his hands to act as he wishes - such that it is as if he is standing to the side. The Jew is told that he must "take a side" in the matter and be on the "right side" - "Hashem's side" of Torah and mitzvos - and specifically through this will he have the power to transform the world and work within it so that it belongs to Hashem, Torah, and mitzvos.

Rabbi Wilschansky fulfilled these words in the subject that was at the top of the agenda - kabbolas pnei Moshiach Tzidkeinu. Together with his constant encouragement for unity among Chassidim, consistently avoiding the use of divisive definitions and similar terms, when for the sake of devotion to inyanei Moshiach it was necessary to take actions that would appear as "taking a side" - he did not shy away from this.

That the Rebbe Should Conquer the World

In closing, we saw fit to quote Rabbi Wilschansky's on a certain occasion in which he depicted the mindset and education of a Chassid of the seventh generation that lead him to publicize the Besuras HaGeula:

"Among Chassidim, every word of the Rebbe is the Holy of Holies! A foundation and basis from which one cannot move even a hair's breadth. What is written explicitly in a sicha is 'Shema Yisrael.' In the Rebbe's teachings there is a definitive reference to most of the topics that are discussed and debated. The Rebbe's sichos, from recent years in particular, are our 'Shulchan Aruch' for the current period. And just as a person cannot express 'opinions' in the laws of kashrus without first having studied the laws of kashrus in the Shulchan Aruch - so it should be absurd for a person to express opinions on the topic of Moshiach before studying the Torah of Geula. For some reason, the topic of Geula is perceived by people as an open topic for discussion, where anyone can determine a view and say 'this is how it should be because this is how it seems to me, because this is how I think...' - an absurd situation that has

accompanied us since 'Mivtza Moshiach' began.

"Great is study that brings to action.' Learning inyanei Geula and Moshiach, particularly the recent sichos, brings the learner to 'live with Moshiach,' and by personally 'living' it, he also becomes 'chai l'hachayos - alive to vivify' others.

"We were educated to be proud of the fact of being Chabad Chassidim, and to feel a need to tell the entire world about the great joy that we merited to be Chassidim, and the even greater and more elevated joy that we have a Rebbe - and that everyone must know what he has said and what are his instructions. The goal of every Chassid was always that the Rebbe should conquer the world. That all Jews should be Chassidim of the Rebbe. From time immemorial it was clear to every Chassid and shliach involved in spreading the wellsprings, that in every action performed - an event or material published - the Rebbe's image must appear prominently and respectfully.

"This approach is not an invention of Chassidim. This is the approach the Rebbe teaches and guides us in through tens and hundreds of sichos. The Rebbe repeatedly emphasized that Lubavitch must conquer the world. The Rebbe stated explicitly that every shliach must know that his goal is to transform the location into Lubavitch.

"This point also finds expression in edited sichos, such as in Likkutei Sichos Volume 10 in the sicha on Parshas Vayeishev (I), where the Rebbe explains that 'binding sheaves' is the avodas ha'shlichus, and from this we learn an instruction from the pasuk 'and behold your sheaves gathered around and bowed down to my sheaf' - that 'the shleimus of the avoda in his effect on others is when he will act to bring him to the sheaf of Yosef HaTzaddik, who is

Hold On To The Dollars

I remember a farbrengen in the yeshiva in Tzfas when Rabbi Wilschansky a'h related the following:

I heard an amazing thing from a Chassid who was in charge of printing and putting together the kunteisim that the Rebbe gave out to the Chassidim. The kuntrus "V'Ata Tetzave" was given out by the Rebbe on erev Purim Kattan 5752, two weeks before Chof-Zayin Adar. This kuntrus is the last one we received from the Rebbe. The kuntrus was placed in a plastic holder and with it were two dollars for tzedaka and a piece of lekach.

This Chassid was given many dollars by the mazkirus so he could prepare the packets. When he went back to the mazkirus after the distribution in order to return the remaining dollars, he was told that the Rebbe said he should hold on to them for the next kuntrus distribution.

I remember that Rabbi Wilschansky said that when this Chassid told him this story, he didn't want it publicized (apparently because he didn't want people to know he had these dollars) but Rabbi Wilschansky said to him: This story must be publicized in order to increase and strengthen the emuna that teikef u'miyad the Rebbe will be revealed and will give out kunteisim, so he would davka publicize the story but without a name.

the ruler over all the land of Egypt - Nesi Doreinu - to bring about in him the bowing and nullification to the Nasi.'

"Similarly in Likkutei Sichos Volume 11 in the sicha on Parshas Pekudei (III), the Rebbe says: 'There must be the involvement and work of each and every one in Torah and mitzvos with his own strength, and nevertheless he must know that this is only the preparation, and he must bring all his work and labor to Moshe [who is in each and every individual, and through this to the extension of Moshe in our generation] - the wise men of the generation, the eyes of the congregation, for the 'Moshe' of the generation has the power to erect the Mishkan in the soul of each and every one.'

"Because of this, one must ensure that in every possible place the Rebbe's name

is publicized. Whether in a brochure or news bulletin that will include his image or specific articles about the Rebbe and his activities, all the way to special rallies in honor of the Rebbe, etc. As it is in publicizing the Rebbe's name - so too in publicizing his holy words: our task is to be the shofar that raises high the Rebbe's view on every matter on the agenda. We must ensure that all obey his words and instructions.

"When the Rebbe proclaims that behold, Moshiach is coming and he himself is the final redeemer - our task is to inform everyone about this, and to ensure that they indeed internalize the tidings and prepare for the Geula b'poel mamosh!" ■

דברי ימי
החסידים

From Leeds to Lubavitch



RABBI AHARON COUSIN — THE FIRST ENGLISH BACHUR TO LEARN AT 770 — SHARES HIS REMARKABLE STORY: A CHILDHOOD UNDER GERMAN BOMBS IN LEEDS, ENGLAND YEARS OF BRUTAL ANTISEMITISM, LOSING HIS MOTHER THE DAY AFTER HIS BAR MITZVA, AND THE MOMENT FIVE HAPPY CHABAD BACHURIM AT THE MANCHESTER YESHIVA MADE HIM WONDER: WHAT IS THEIR SECRET?

PHOTO: RABBI AHARON COUSIN FARBREINGING WITH TALMIDIM OF SHIUR DALET AT YESHIVAS TOMCHEI TMIMIM – QUEENS, WHO VISITED HIS HOME TOGETHER WITH THEIR MASHPIA, RABBI YISROEL NOACH VOGEL



The year was 1938. The entire world stood on the edge of an abyss, with only a year and a half remaining until World War II. I was born in the city of Leeds in northern England, into a reality that the word “hardship” is too small to describe. I was a toddler of just 18 months when the sounds of war began to echo, and with them came the first and most significant separation of my life; my father was conscripted into the British Army.

For long years - almost my entire early childhood - my father was for me a faint memory or a distant photograph. He was sent to faraway fronts, fighting in the ranks of the British Army against the Germans. In fact, until I was about seven or eight years old, I hardly knew what it meant to have a father at home. He was a soldier, and we were a family struggling for its survival on the home front.

As the war progressed, the situation in Leeds grew worse and worse. German aircraft would arrive every night and drop bombs relentlessly. It was not merely a distant noise; death was very close. Houses across the road were bombed, houses two gateways away from us were destroyed, and people we knew were killed inside the ruins of their homes if they had not managed to flee to the shelter in time.

The main reason Leeds was such a favored target for the Germans was a large munitions factory that stood right at the end of our street. There they manufactured shells and bombs for British tanks and aircraft. The Germans tried again and again to destroy the factory, but they could not fly low because of the “barrage balloons” - enormous balloons that floated in the sky, tethered to the ground by strong steel cables. If a plane

tried to fly low, its wings would be caught in the cables and it would crash.

Because they were forced to bomb from thousands of feet up, they were not accurate. The technology of those days was nothing like today; they simply dropped bombs and hoped to hit their target. And so the bombs fell on the residential homes surrounding the factory - on us. In the end, the government decided to evacuate all the residents of our neighborhood. They transferred us for three months to the countryside, to a remote farm. We lived there among non-Jews; there was no other choice.

People sometimes ask me: “What is the earliest thing you remember from your life?” My earliest memory is from that evacuation. I remember my mother *a’h*, carrying me in her arms. I was a very small child then, perhaps three or four years old, and I could not walk fast enough. I had an older brother and two sisters, and they clung to our mother’s clothes as she walked along the platform at the train station, searching for an empty carriage for us. That image - of my mother holding me at the station on the way toward the unknown - is the point at which my memory begins.

The war finally ended, and my father came home. But the quiet did not last long. As a Jewish child in post-war England, I was about to discover that the real front for me was only just beginning - the bitter front of antisemitism in the streets and schools.

Antisemitism in Leeds

In those years, between 1947 and 1948, England was not a safe place for Jews. Events in Eretz Yisrael directly affected us, the children in Leeds. The British were

ruling Palestine at the time and behaving terribly toward Jews; they would not allow Holocaust survivors to escape from the camps in Germany and enter Israel, because of the Arabs. The Jews in Israel began to fight against the British, and that tension seeped deep into the English street.

Antisemitism was around every corner. On my way to school in the mornings, gangs of goyim would be waiting for us simply to beat us up. When I was eleven, I moved to a secondary school where there were 600 boys, and only 40 of them were Jewish. We were a persecuted minority. The situation was so bad that during every break, all forty of us Jewish children would huddle together in one corner of the playground. We knew that only when we were together would they not dare to start up with us. But if any of us needed to step out to the bathroom or move away from the group for a moment - the goyim were already waiting for him there. More than once we came back with black eyes.

But the harshest antisemitism came from the teachers. They were all goyim and they simply hated us. In my class there were 40 boys, and only I and one other child were Jewish. The teachers would pick on us over every small thing. It was enough for the non-Jewish pupils to hide our books or tear them up and report us to the teacher, and we would immediately be summoned for "punishment." It was terrible. I could not concentrate on my



AHARON COUSIN AFTER HIS BAR MITZVA

studies; I was always afraid that something was about to happen.

The Breaking Point and Becoming an Orphan

Within all this harsh reality - frightened, hating school, feeling stifled - there came the hardest blow of all, one that shook my world to its foundations. My mother fell gravely ill. I remember the chilling timing: she was hospitalized exactly one day after the celebration of my bar mitzva. For six months she fought for her life, and on Erev Rosh Hashana 5712 - she passed away.



RABBI AHARON COUSIN

I was only 13 years old, a young boy who had lost his only support. From that moment, life became for me a relentless nightmare. If before I had hated school and feared the goyim, now everything seemed way darker. The home that had once been a place of warmth became a large, empty, and dark house.

My older brother had already been drafted into the Royal Air Force since he was 18, and my two sisters were at university and were not at home. I would come back from school to that large, empty house in the evening hours of the English winter. Every small noise

in the house made me jump in terror. I was the youngest in the family, and suddenly I found myself alone, coping with an enormous loss and with fears.

I hated everything: I hated school, I hated the hours after school. Nothing gave me any rest. The only thing that kept me going in some way was the need to go to shul to say Kaddish for my mother.

There, in the shul, in the midst of grief and pain, the first hashgacha pratit took place - the one that led me toward a new path. I met two bachurim who were learning at the Manchester Yeshiva. Until then, I had no idea what a "yeshiva" was. I had never heard of the concept and did not know what it meant to truly "learn." In the cheder where I had studied in the afternoons, they taught Zionism and not Judaism, so

the world of Torah was completely foreign to me.

These bachurim approached me and said: "You must come and learn at the yeshiva. It's really good there." I looked at them with puzzlement. "Yeshiva? What is that?" They described to me a place of learning and Jewish fellowship, and I, in the darkness of Leeds, could not believe my ears. I asked myself: "Wow, can there really be a better place than where I am right now?"

That hope - that something else was possible - ignited a fire within me. I felt this was my only chance to be saved from

the hell of Leeds - from the fear of the goyim, from the beatings by teachers, and from the loneliness of the empty house. I said to my father with a resolve I had never known in myself before: "Father, you must take me to the yeshiva. I want to go and learn there."

My father saw my distress and agreed. He arranged an appointment with the Rosh Yeshiva of the Manchester Yeshiva. One Sunday morning, we boarded the train from Leeds to Manchester. I sat on the train with my heart pounding; I knew I was traveling toward something I did not know, but I had no idea how fateful that meeting was about to be.

"I Want to Learn!"

When we arrived at the Manchester Yeshiva and entered the office of the Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Yehuda Zev Segal, I encountered a figure I had never seen the likes of before: a Jew with a thick beard, a man of majestic bearing, who had studied at the famous Mirrer Yeshiva in Lithuania.

The Rosh Yeshiva looked at me warmly and asked: "So you want to learn?" "Yes, Rosh Yeshiva," I answered with reverent awe. He began an examination: "Which Gemara have you studied?" I looked at him with wide eyes. "Gemara? What is Gemara?" I had not the faintest idea what that word meant. The Rosh Yeshiva did not despair. "Well, and which Mishnayos have you learned?" "Mishnayos? I don't know what that is," I answered again. He raised an eyebrow. "Have you learned Chumash? Chumash with Rashi?" "I learned Chumash about Yosef and his brothers in cheder," I said, "but I don't know what Rashi is."

The Rosh Yeshiva sighed, took out a Chumash and asked me to read. I could

read the words, since in cheder they had taught us technical reading, but I understood nothing beyond that. He looked at me, closed the Chumash, rose from his chair and walked toward the door. "I am sorry," he said to my father in a firm voice, "I cannot accept him. He knows nothing. This is a yeshiva for Talmudic study at a very high level, and I have no class for him. I have no one to teach him and no place to put him."

I saw my father pleading before him. "He is an orphan," my father said in a broken voice, "there is no one at home for him, he is alone. Please, have mercy on him." But the Rosh Yeshiva remained firm: "I wish you blessing and success, but I simply cannot."

I stood there between them, a boy of 13, feeling as if my world had collapsed. In my terms, returning to Leeds meant returning to "hell" - to antisemitism, to loneliness, to darkness. In those days, children did not speak unless they were addressed, but at that moment I felt something stronger than myself pushing me to speak. I am certain that my mother was looking down at me from above, and perhaps the Rebbe - who was in New York but already knew everything - gave me the strength.

For the first time in my life, I raised my voice with a resolve I had never known: "But I want to learn!" I did not even know what it meant to "learn," but that cry came from the very depths of my soul. "I want to learn!"

The Rosh Yeshiva froze. He looked stunned. He gazed at me with piercing eyes and asked: "Do you really want to learn?" "Yes!" I answered. He fell silent for a moment, and then a remarkable change came over his face. "All right," he said, "today is Sunday. Tomorrow is Monday.

Go home, pack your things, and come back here on Tuesday.”

The Secret of Michel Shor

When I returned on Tuesday, I felt I had entered Gan Eden. Suddenly I was surrounded by Jewish children, good and nice bachurim, without a trace of antisemitism or fear. Everyone helped one another. The Rosh Yeshiva, understanding that I arrived without the slightest background in learning, assigned to me an older bachur - a Chassidishe, G-d-fearing bachur by the name of Michel Shor. Michel was a unique personality; he was a genuine talmid chacham, a masmid and possessed of a deep Chassidic feeling. In later years, sadly, he suffered greatly from mental afflictions, but in those days he was my rescuing angel.

I remember the very first moment we sat down to learn. Michel opened a Chumash and chose for me a simple and straightforward pasuk: *“And G-d spoke to Moses, saying.”* He read the pasuk and translated it, and then asked me: “Aharon, repeat that.” I repeated the words exactly as I had heard them. The moment I finished, Michel reacted with an enthusiasm I had never encountered. “Wow! You are simply fantastic! You are brilliant!”

I froze on the spot. I looked at him and could not believe my ears. “Me? Brilliant?” My whole life - especially in the non-Jewish school in Leeds - I had heard only words of contempt. The teachers had always put me down, the non-Jewish pupils had tormented me, and I had always felt inferior, that I was worth nothing. And suddenly, here in the Beis Medrash, a bachur, a lamdan, told me I was “brilliant” simply because I had repeated a single pasuk.

That word, “brilliant,” brought about an actual physical change within me. I felt something inside me awakening. Years later, when I had already studied Chassidus in depth, I found a wonderful explanation for that moment in the teachings of the Tzemach Tzedek, who asks: What is the reason we praise the Holy One, blessed be He, and say to Him “Blessed are You” or “Merciful and Gracious”? Does He really need our praises? Rather, explains the Tzemach Tzedek, when a person praises someone and calls them by a certain title - such as “merciful” or “wise” - he awakens within that person that very quality.

This is exactly what happened to me with Michel Shor. The fact that he called me “wise” and “brilliant,” even though at that time I knew almost nothing, awakened within me the midda of chochma. Suddenly I felt that I was capable. My self-confidence, which had been ground to dust, began to rebuild itself. I started to learn one more pasuk and then another, and I progressed at an unbelievable pace. From a boy who did not know what Rashi was, I became a bachur who thirsted for every word of Torah.

The Chabad Group

The lessons with Michel were only the beginning. In those years - the early 1950s - the Manchester Yeshiva was full of bachurim who were survivors of the Holocaust. I saw Chassidishe bachurim with numbers on their arms, survivors of the concentration camps. There were Chassidim of Belz, Ger, Satmar, and also Chabad Chassidim. Each group had its own customs, its own dress, and its own niggunim.

Naturally, everyone got along with one another, but there was one small group



RABBI AHARON COUSIN RECEIVING KOS SHEL BRACHA FROM THE REBBE

that drew my attention. These were five Chabad bachurim: Avremel Shemtov and his younger brother Yisroel; Shalom Ber Gurkov and his brother Shmuel Dovid; and Berel Futerfas, son of the famous Chassid, Rav Mendel Futerfas.

I watched them from the side and noticed something strange. For 90% of the bachurim in the yeshiva, Yiddishkeit was perceived as a heavy burden. Truly, that was the general feeling. We felt that Torah was a collection of prohibitions: “Don’t do this,” “You’re not allowed to eat that,” “It’s forbidden to go to movies,” “You’re not allowed to go there.” Everything we wanted to do - the Torah said it was *treif* or forbidden. Every single thing.

But the Chabad bachurim were an entirely different story. They were happy. Genuinely happy. They did not look as though Yiddishkeit was a burden

upon them; on the contrary, they loved Yiddishkeit more than any of us. They were more serious, more sincere, and above all - happier. I looked at them and wondered: “How can this be? Why do these bachurim love Torah and mitzvos, while for us it feels like a burden?” The curiosity burned within me. I began to ask them what their secret was. Their answer was short and simple: “We learn Chassidus.”

That was the moment I decided I wanted to try it. I turned to one of the rabbis of the yeshiva, Rabbi Yitzchok Dubov. He was a *maggid shiur* in Nigleh and he was a veteran Chabad Chassid who had studied back in the town of Lubavitch itself. I asked him: “Rav Dubov, I want to learn a little Chassidus.”

He agreed and began to learn with me. The moment I opened the Chassidus

sefarim, I felt something in my soul beginning to expand. Suddenly the prohibitions were not merely a “do not” but part of a larger and brighter picture. The attraction to Chabad transformed from watching from the sidelines into an inner and deep connection.

The Battle Over the Beard

As the days in the Manchester Yeshiva went by, the decision in my heart deepened: I belong to Lubavitch. The learning with Rav Dubov and the bond with the Chabad bachurim had done their work. When I was 18, I began to grow my beard. In those days, in a Litvishe yeshiva like Manchester, that was a highly unusual step.

The Rosh Yeshiva noticed immediately. One day he turned to me and said in Yiddish: “*Ich zei az du vakst a bord*” (I see that you are growing a beard). I answered him honestly that I wanted to be a Lubavitcher Chassid, and that according to the Tzemach Tzedek this was a Torah prohibition. The Rosh Yeshiva reacted sharply: “No, no, no! Take it off!”

I was terrified. In those days, we feared the Rosh Yeshiva with a mortal dread. If you did not obey him, he was capable of throwing you out of the yeshiva that very moment without batting an eye. I was obligated to listen to him, but my neshama wanted otherwise.

To understand the *nisayon*, one must understand the prevailing mindset in the yeshiva. Almost all the bachurim shaved every Friday in honor of the holy Shabbos. Since electric shavers were forbidden, they used a special powder. They would mix it with water, apply it to the face for a quarter of an hour, then scrape everything off with a piece of wood. The face would

be left completely smooth. I remember entering the Beis Medrash on Friday night and feeling as if I had entered a mikva; everyone was walking around with smooth, gleaming, completely beardless faces.

With a heavy heart I went to Rav Dubov, the Chabad maggid shiur, and asked him: “What should I do? The Rosh Yeshiva has instructed me to shave, and I do not want to.” Rav Dubov - a Chassid of the old school who had never known a razor - answered me with confidence: “*Zolst lozn*” (Leave it). Do not shave.

A few days later the Rosh Yeshiva encountered me again. “I told you to shave - why have you not done so?”

“I asked Rav Dubov,” I answered carefully, “and he told me not to shave.” The Rosh Yeshiva did not want to enter into a direct confrontation with Rav Dubov, who was a greatly respected figure, and he left me alone. And so my beard was saved - thanks to Rav Dubov.

The Rebbe’s Pound Note and the Voyage to Beis Chayeinu

Days passed, and my heart was already across the ocean with the Rebbe. I waited impatiently for the moment I could leave Manchester and arrive at the source of the living waters. In order to reach the Rebbe, I needed two basic things I did not have: a student visa and money for a travel ticket. I waited long months in tense anticipation, until at last the long-awaited form arrived.

Now I faced the financial problem. I was a bachur without a single penny to my name - literally. The only thing I had in my possession was a one-pound sterling note.

This pound had an enormous spiritual significance: it had come from the Rebbe. The Rebbe had given pound notes to Reb Bentzion Shemtov to distribute to bachurim who were studying Chassidus, and so I too merited to receive “a pound from the Rebbe.”

It was hard for me to part with that note, but there was no choice. I needed to obtain a passport, and obtaining a passport cost exactly one pound. And so the pound that had come from the Rebbe was the one that opened for me the first bureaucratic gate on the road to him.

But a passport alone is not enough to cross an ocean. I went to a travel agent and asked what the cheapest way to get to New York was. “The cheapest way,” he said, “is to sail on the ship the *Queen Mary*. It takes four and a half days to cross the Atlantic Ocean.” The price? Sixty pounds sterling.

For me, sixty pounds sterling was like a million dollars. I didn’t have sixty cents, so where would I get sixty pounds sterling?

Here, hashgacha pratis appeared in the form of my sister, Esther Leah Klein (today she lives in Eretz Yisrael). In those days my sister had already completed her university studies and had begun to work. Her wages were very modest - only three pounds sterling per week. She saved penny by penny, week after week, until she managed to accumulate sixty pounds sterling in her bank account. That was the equivalent of five months of hard-earned wages.

Without hesitation, my sister gave me all her savings. Thanks to her self-sacrifice, I was able to buy the longed-for ticket. (Incidentally, in later years she became a central figure in *N’shei U’Bnos Chabad* in Manchester and merited receiving many letters from the Rebbe - all because of that

initial connection that was forged through me.)

And so, in the month of Cheshvan 5717, I boarded the *Queen Mary*. Four and a half days of sailing on the open sea, with my thoughts already on the corner of Eastern Parkway and Kingston. I had no idea what awaited me, but I knew I was sailing home.

Wait Until Rosh Chodesh Kislev

I landed on the shores of the United States in Cheshvan 5717. A short time after my arrival, I merited my first yechidus with the Rebbe. The date was the 27th of Cheshvan. As someone who had grown up in a distinctly Litvishe family and had davened nusach Ashkenaz all his life, one of the central questions occupying me was the question of the nusach ha’tefilla. I knew that a Chabad Chassid davens with nusach Arizal, but I wanted to receive the Rebbe’s explicit agreement and blessing for this.

I wrote this on the note that I submitted to the Rebbe. I asked whether I should change my nusach from Ashkenaz to the Arizal. The Rebbe read the note, looked at me, and answered in Yiddish: “*Yo, zolst yo baytn*” (Yes, you should indeed change).

But then came an instruction that greatly surprised me. The Rebbe continued and said: “*Ober... zolst vartn biz Rosh Chodesh Kislev*” (But... you should wait until Rosh Chodesh Kislev).

At the time, this seemed puzzling. Rosh Chodesh Kislev would fall in only three more days. Why wait? After all, the principle states that “one hour sooner is better,” and especially when it concerns something as good and holy as changing



RABBI AHARON COUSIN FARBRENGING WITH TALMIDIM OF YESHIVAS TOMCHEI TMIMIM – QUEENS

one's nusach to the Arizal - why delay three days?

The question is compounded by the fact that other Chassidim received a completely different response. Rav Eliyahu Vogel, for example, asked the Rebbe the exact same question in a yechidus, and the Rebbe instructed him to begin immediately! The Rebbe even asked him during that same audience: "Have you already davened Maariv?" When he answered in the affirmative, the Rebbe said: "In that case, begin tomorrow at Shacharis. If you had not yet davened Maariv, I would have told you to begin from Maariv already."

In my case, by contrast, the Rebbe set a target date: Rosh Chodesh Kislev. I have no simple explanation for why the Rebbe instructed me to wait those three days, but it showed me even then that the Rebbe has a precise and personal accounting for each and every soul. With the Rebbe there is no fixed template; every bachur is an entire

world, and each one has their own precise moment to grow.

Continuing the conversation about switching the nusach, the Rebbe asked me a practical question: "*Du host a siddur?*" (Do you have a siddur?) "*Nein, ober ich vil koifn*" (No, but I will buy one), I answered. The Rebbe looked at me and said: "*Nein, nein, ich vel dir gebn*" (No, no, I will give you one).

The Rebbe began searching on his desk, which was laden with piles of sefarim, to find a siddur for me. He searched and searched, but apparently could not find an available siddur among the stacks. The Rebbe did not give up; he pressed the buzzer that was fixed to his desk.

Within a few seconds, Rabbi Chodakov - the Rebbe's secretary - entered the room. The Rebbe said something to him, and Rabbi Chodakov left the room, apparently to look for a key to one of the cabinets or to find a siddur at the Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch.

Meanwhile, the Rebbe continued to ask me questions about my sister and various other matters. Time passed, and Rabbi Chodakov did not return. The Rebbe looked at me and said: "*Ich veys nit farvos er brengt nit, ober ich vel zen du vest es bakumen*" (I don't know why he hasn't brought it yet, but I will see to it that you receive it).

I understood that the audience had come to an end. As is customary, I left the room walking backward, without turning my back to the Rebbe, and closed the door. I entered the small *zal* and sat down in a corner to write down what had transpired in the audience. I wanted to remember every word, every expression, and every turn of phrase the Rebbe had used.

"Daven with Joy" - Motto for Life

I sat there for about ten minutes, absorbed in writing, when suddenly shouts were heard in the corridor. A bachur of Russian background ran into the *zal* and shouted: "Kazen! Who is Kazen?" I did not respond immediately, because my English name "Cousin" was pronounced differently, so I did not think he meant me. The bachur went out and returned a minute later, even more agitated: "Kazen! Where is Kazen? The Rebbe wants you!"

I leaped to my feet. Could it be? The Rebbe was calling me back inside? I had completely forgotten about the siddur in all the excitement. I ran to *Gan Eden HaTachton*, where Rabbi Leibel Groner was standing. He looked at me and said: "*Nu, gei arein*" (Well, go in).

I opened the door with awe - and my heart sank. Inside the room stood someone else in the middle of his own private audience! It was Rabbi Yitzchok Ushpal, a special Chassidic personality and a member of the yeshiva's administration. As an English "gentleman," I felt embarrassed to the depths of my soul. How could I barge in like this during another person's private conversation with the Rebbe? I immediately closed the door and said to Rabbi Groner: "There's someone in there!"

But Rabbi Groner was unmoved. "*Nein, gei arein!*" (No, go in!) I had no choice. I went in again. The sight I saw was astonishing: Rabbi Ushpal was standing right up close to the Rebbe, reading his *pidyon nefesh* aloud. Normally Chassidim would stand on the other side of the desk, but he was standing on the Rebbe's side of the desk, right beside the Rebbe, so close that the Rebbe was forced to raise his head to look at him.

Despite being in the middle of Rabbi Ushpal's audience, the Rebbe stopped everything. I saw that the Rebbe was holding a siddur in his hand. Evidently the siddur had arrived while I was sitting in the small *zal*, and the Rebbe had not wanted me to wait one moment longer.

Then something happened which I will never forget: the Rebbe rose to his full height. It is known that the Rebbeim explained that the most difficult thing for them during *yechidus* is the matter of *halbasha v'hafshata* - "dressing and undressing" - the ability to clothe oneself in the troubles and situation of the Chassid standing before them, and then to strip away from those in order to clothe oneself in the situation of the next Chassid. I saw

cont. on p. 63



The Rebbe took out
a calendar and said:

***“On Yud Alef
Nissan, I have a
personal matter.***

***EVERYONE WILL TRAVEL
TOGETHER TO THE OHEL.”***

The following memories and stories were shared during farbrengens by Harav HaChassid Hatomim R' Shlomo Zarchi, Menahel of the central Tomchei Tmimim – 770. They were recorded by one of the Tmimim, edited by the editorial board, and under their sole responsibility

Adorn Yourself

Reb Leib Sheinin was the rav of Dokshitz, and his Shabbos HaGadol drasha was: “A place where chometz is brought in requires checking; a place where chometz is not brought in does not require checking - *you* brought the chometz into yourself, not into someone else, so therefore you need to check yourself...” And that was his entire drasha.

One Must Not-Want

There is a tradition in the name of Chassidim regarding the saying of the Alter Rebbe, “*I do not want Your Gan Eden... I want only You Yourself.*” Why did he not simply say “I want only You Yourself,” and instead added the negation of what he does not want?

Rather, it seems that in order to say that I want only You Yourself, one must first *not want* something else... We want all of this world, with the lower and upper Gan Eden - and also G-d Himself...

The Point of “Samech Vov”

In 5723–24, when we were young bachurim in the central Tomchei Tmimim yeshiva, Reb Shmuel Levitin called us over and asked what we were learning. We answered, “the Hemshech Samech Vov.” He asked, what is written there? We answered: Sefiros, Tikunim, free choice, the neshama...

He said to us: “*You should know this for your entire lives - the central point of the Hemshech 5660 is: ‘There was one clever person [pikeach] there!’*”

This was several years before the Rebbe said the maamar of B’Yom Ashtei Asar 5731 [where he elaborates in great detail about the ‘cleverness’ of the ‘pikeach’ in that analogy cited by Chazal].

What to Write to the Rebbe?

There were years when the Rebbe spoke about not traveling to weddings overseas because of the great expense involved. There was a young bachur at the yeshiva who came from a Religious-Zionist *background*, and that year his sister got married. He told us that his mother never imagined that her son wouldn’t come to the wedding, and she was afraid she would have a heart attack if her son didn’t come.

We suggested to that bachur that he write to the Rebbe and ask for a bracha that this should not harm his mother and that she should not have a heart attack... That he was not traveling was a given.

The Rebbe’s Advice Not to Look in the Pots

Once I farbrenged with Reb Leibel Kaplan, the Rebbe’s shliach in Tzfas, and the entire farbrengen was about the idea that when one thinks about Chassidus,

one must not forget the 'osiyos ha'rav' [the exact wording used by the Rebbe in the maamar].

His birthday fell in the middle of Chol HaMoed Sukkos, and since the Rebbe did not receive people for yechidus during Chol HaMoed, he would enter before Chol HaMoed in anticipation of his birthday.

When we were young bachurim learning in the mesivta on Bedford (in the year 5721-22), we farbrenged one of the days in the sukkah, and in the middle of the farbrengen he jumped up on the table and began to relate something the Rebbe had told him in yechidus:

He was at the time only a fourteen-year-old bachur. The schedule in the yeshiva was that after the evening meal at the yeshiva, the bachurim would remain for a seder Chassidus and then go to sleep at home. He asked the Rebbe what he could do to break his habit: when returning home after the Chassidus seder, he would open the refrigerator and the pots to see what his mother had cooked that day, even though he had already eaten just two hours earlier and was not hungry.

The Rebbe answered him: "*Contemplate the fact that in a few years you will be the head of an entire city, or the rav of an entire city, or the leader of an entire city and it is not becoming for such an important person to look in pots... When you contemplate this, it will affect you so that you will not look in the pots.*"

Demand What Bachurim Are 'Holding By'

The Rebbe once told one of the mashpiim of a Tomchei Tmimim yeshiva in yechidus not to speak at farbrengens

about matters that are not relevant to the bachurim.

The Rebbe gave him an example of two bachurim who entered for yechidus, both of whom had heard from their mashpia at the farbrengen that they should ask the Rebbe about these matters. The first bachur asked the Rebbe about these things, the Rebbe answered him, and he went away happy. The second bachur, who was closer to and more genuinely engaged with the matters being discussed, asked; "When will I climb out of this already?" - and the Rebbe, seeing that he truly meant it, answered him at length.

The Rebbe told the mashpia to be careful not to speak at farbrengens about matters that the bachurim do not genuinely hold by, because afterward they would enter for yechidus and ask about things that were not truly relevant to them (like the first bachur who asked briefly and the Rebbe answered briefly and he was happy...).

What to Ask in Yechidus

In the early years, it was customary for bachurim to enter yechidus before their bar mitzva and before their birthday.

Since we were young bachurim at the time, we did not know what to ask in yechidus, and we went to our mashpia Reb Yoel to receive guidance from him. When we approached him, he began to farbreng with us about the very question itself - and he "gave it to us over the head"...

The gist of the farbrengen was: the entire world is falsehood, and Hashem created four cubits of truth in this world - that is the Rebbe's room. What is the preparation of a bachur before going in for yechidus? He asks what he should ask the Rebbe in yechidus?! That is to say: how



can he bring his own falsehood into the four cubits of truth?! On the other hand, however, Chassidim know that one must tell the Rebbe everything.

‘She Asked for Nothing...’

Rabbi Mentlick told me several times that when he entered for yechidus he would write only his name and his mother’s name. Matters related to Tomchei Tmimim he would write in letters - but for yechidus he wrote nothing at all, and whatever the Rebbe wished to say, he would say.

‘All Day Long, Where Is Your G-d?’

At the farbrengen of Chanuka [Mikeitz] 5713, the Rebbe mentioned what is written in *Derech Chaim* [on the pasuk in Tehillim]: “My tears have been my bread day and night, as they say to me all day long: where is your G-d?” - and the Rebbe wept greatly. “All day long, where is your

G-d? - during the time of learning and davening, Elokus is felt. But all day long, where is your G-d? Where is the Almighty when you eat? When you sleep? When you walk in the street? And the proof that you do not feel it - why do you put salt on your food?!”

And the Rebbe’s expression was: “A *beheima loves salt.*”

Lo Tiheyeh Meshakeila

On Shabbos Parshas Mishpatim 5712, the Rebbe said the well-known maamar “*Lo Tiheyeh Meshakeila,*” and spoke about the verse “*Yamim yutzaru*” - that each day has its own task and purpose, and if a Jew wastes even one day or even one moment in idleness during the day, he is in rebellion against the King of Kings, the Holy One Blessed Be He - and the Rebbe wept greatly at the time.

Reb Moshke Gurary was there and wrote a letter to the Chassidim in Eretz Yisrael that the Rebbe said in the maamar

that once a year there must be a “*hazaza atzmis*” [a ‘shake-up’ of one’s very essence] and he added: “*What ‘hazaza atzmis’ is - I do not know, but I have seen hazaza atzmis...*” (meaning, when the Rebbe shuddered and broke into weeping while speaking).

At the Purim farbrengen, he approached the Rebbe, and it was not clearly heard what he said to the Rebbe. Some say he said: “*Never mind that when it comes to understanding I do not understand; at least let me believe.*” The Rebbe said to him: “*To understand - one must; to want to understand - one must not.*”

‘The Bachurim Are Sleeping and the Rebbe Is Davening’

In the year 5725, the Rebbe would regularly lead the davening before the Amud after his mother the Rebbetzin passed away. There was a small crowd that participated in the minyan since not all the bachurim were careful to wake up on time...

(Even when the Rebbe wept on Asara b’Teves and struck the Amud, there was barely a crowd. There were at the time two recording devices, but one tore up the tape of the other, and only Sholom Yisroel Chodakov’s remained. The Rebbe wept then during Selichos, and every word was an “utterance.”)

Reb Michoel Teitelbaum would come in from time to time to Shacharis or Mincha, and when the Rebbe would say (in *Hashiva Shofteinu*) “*Remove from us sorrow and sighing*” - with a tune and tears - or when the Rebbe said “*Shema koleinu [hear our voice], Hashem our G-d*” - Reb Michoel would stand to the side and

pour out his heart in weeping, and the zal would be empty... (and even at Mincha!).

Once Reb Michoel took a little mashke and said: “*You don’t understand what this is. Where in all of history has such a thing been heard - you walk in on an ordinary Monday for Mincha and the Rebbe is ‘pouring himself out’ at the Amud, and the crowd is not here!*”

Reb Zalman Duchman would also come for every tefilla, and once farbrenged in 5725 and said: “*Today at the Shir shel Yom the Rebbe wept when he said, ‘He who implants the ear - shall He not hear? He who forms the eye - shall He not see?’*” (In general, for the Rebbe it took longer after the Shemoneh Esrei than before.) “*Sometimes one must labor to perceive hashgacha pratis - but when you hear the Rebbe say it, you feel it concretely.*” And he could not understand how the bachurim remained sleeping.

In general, the elder Chassidim were careful and were present for every tefilla: Reb Yochanan Gordon, Reb Zalman Duchman, and Reb Shmuel Levitin.

Pesach At the Rebbe

Regarding the year of *Kevutza*, they asked the Rebbe when it would be best for the Kevutza to arrive - from Tishrei to Tishrei or from Nissan to Nissan. The Rebbe said: “*It is better to have two months of Nissan than two months of Tishrei*” (meaning Yud-Alef Nissan and Pesach, when they would be present at the Rebbe’s Seder).

One year, the bachurim had to return to Eretz Yisrael before Pesach because that year was a leap year, and the Rebbe reprimanded the Kfar Chabad committee for failing to arrange for the bachurim to be with the Rebbe on Pesach. In the



Rebbe's holy words: "So that the bachurim should see ah kosher'n un ah yiddish'n Seder."

Afterward, the administration of Tomchei Tmimim in Eretz Yisrael wrote to the Rebbe that it was more convenient for them if the bachurim arrived for Tishrei, as that is closer to the beginning of the school year, and the Rebbe agreed.

Whoever Disqualifies, Disqualifies With His Own Blemish

In one of the years, there was a group of bachurim in Tomchei Tmimim 770 who had complaints against Rabbi Mentlick and wanted to remove him from the administration on the grounds that he was not sufficiently mekushar (this was already after I had been appointed as mashpia).

When this reached the Rebbe, the Rebbe reacted with great sharpness, and said: "Once, people were passionately engaged in *hiskashrus*; today they are passionately engaged in 'separate things.' Whoever disqualifies, disqualifies with his own blemish. There is a *menahel*, a *mashpia*, and a *rosh yeshiva* that the *shver* [the Previous Rebbe] appointed."

Sleeping in the Middle of the Day?!

One of the bachurim was engaged in 'avoda' though he did not genuinely hold by it, and he was accustomed to davening at length until around 2 o'clock every day, and ate nothing until then. Once he wrote to the Rebbe describing his entire daily schedule in his 'avoda' and so forth, and among other things noted that at midday he would go rest for ten minutes in order

to have strength, and then return to 770 - and he asked about his approach.

The Rebbe did not respond to the other matters, but said that this was the first time he had ever heard of a young bachur who goes to rest in the middle of the day!

And the Rebbe continued (in substance): "Never mind on *Yud-Tes Kislev* and *Simchas Torah*, when it is a Chassidic custom to stay awake all night - one may lie down for 15 minutes to half an hour in order to daven with a clear head. But to simply lie down and rest in the middle of the day?!"

A Fine for Violating the Gezeira on Mashke

Once, bachurim wrote to the Rebbe and asked for a tikkun for having drunk more than three 'shots' and thereby violated the "decree." The Rebbe answered that at the upcoming *farbrengens* over the next half year, they should drink only two as a penalty.

Malkus for the Rebbe?!

In addition to the privilege that Rav Kalmanson merited each year of preparing the Rebbe's wine, he also merited to serve as the *shochet* for Kapparos on Erev Yom Kippur, and also to administer the *malkos* (lashes) that are customarily given - because no one wanted to do it until the Rebbe said that whoever began the *avoda* of Yom Kippur (*shechting* the chicken) should complete it.

[Originally Reb Yochanan Gordon would give the Rebbe *malkos*. Once he was late and someone else entered - and that same year he died in an accident. When Reb Yochanan passed away, no one wanted to take his place. Reb Leibel



Groner asked Reb Shmuel Levitin and he refused, so Reb Leibel returned to the Rebbe and said no one was willing. The Rebbe said to go to the shochet and tell him that since he had begun the avoda Erev Yom Kippur, he should complete it.]

Ten Years of the Rebbe Maharash

The Tzemach Tzedek sent Rashbatz on two missions: (a) to print the Likkutei Torah, and (b) to bring a pidyon nefesh to place at the 'Ohel' of the Baal Shem Tov and that of the Maggid.

The Tzemach Tzedek instructed him to go first to deliver the *panim*, but since Rashbatz had a personal matter to attend to along the way - which happened to be near the place where the Likkutei Torah was being printed - he deviated from the Rebbe's instructions and went first to print the Likkutei Torah.

In the meantime, he heard that the Tzemach Tzedek had passed away. When he opened the pidyon nefesh, he saw that the Tzemach Tzedek had written to the Baal Shem Tov and the Maggid asking

for a blessing for long life. Rashbatz was devastated and went to the Baal Shem Tov and wept so greatly that he saw the Baal Shem Tov while awake, and took this as a sign that he had been forgiven.

Nevertheless, years later the Rebbe Maharash called for him and said that it is known that the Alter Rebbe passed away ten years before his time - (as in the story which is known, with Reb Nachum who made an error, and the Alter Rebbe descended from the wagon and walked outside and said "I instructed to travel a different route," and the Alter Rebbe sighed). The Rebbe Maharash continued: "*How much light was missing from the world because the Alter Rebbe departed before his time - and likewise my father, the Tzemach Tzedek, also departed ten years before his time because you did not go straight to the 'Ohalim' - and consequently much light is lacking in the world.*"

And the Rebbe Maharash concluded: "*Now I need you to go on my behalf to the 'Ohalim' - but I am afraid you will not fulfill the mission precisely...*" - and because of this the Rebbe Maharash asked Reb Zalman Zlatopolsky to watch over

Rashbatz and ensure he went straight to the grave-sites. And the Rebbe Maharash lived another ten years after that.

Because of the above, Reb Zalman Zlatopolsky bore a grievance against Rashbatz - and also because he had educated the Rebbe Rashab very strictly, to the point that once blood ran from his nose in the middle of davening and he did not notice, and his father the Rebbe Maharash had to stop the bleeding.

The Rashbatz's reasoning for educating so strictly was that since this was the Rebbe's son, he wanted to raise a "Rebbe" - while Reb Zalman Zlatopolsky maintained that the Rebbe's child must not be caused suffering to such a degree... [Reb Zalman was a big mekushar.]

The Successor of the Tzemach Tzedek

After the passing of the Tzemach Tzedek, three thousand Chassidim gathered in a certain city to appoint a new Rebbe. There was a Chassid of the Tzemach Tzedek who was ninety years old, called Reb Yechezkel, and he was the chief speaker. In his remarks, he explained that they must specifically appoint the Maharil, and in order to fulfill a formality he mentioned a few other names of the Tzemach Tzedek's sons - but circled back and said that he held they must specifically appoint the Maharil.

One of the Chassidim asked: "And what about the Maharash?"

The elderly Chassid said: "*Aha! I wanted to guard the honor of the Tzemach Tzedek's children - I did not mention his name...*" [insinuating that he did not think very highly of him] - and the conclusion was accordingly that the Maharil should be chosen.

Then a Chassid who was a simple Jew stood up and said: "*Reb Yechezkel, you are indeed the elder of the Chassidim - but you have not yet shed the 'garments' that your mother gave you, and you understand a Rebbe the same as I understand, even though you are the oldest Chassid of the Tzemach Tzedek. When the Tzemach Tzedek was at his greatest heights and holiest times [when he raised the Maharash who was much younger than the others] - who are you to express an opinion?*"

And the entire gathering dispersed and went home...

'Leniency' on Mashke

In the years when the bachurim kept the gezeira, the Rebbe would occasionally lift the decree. In 5724 - which was the first year of the decree - the Rebbe lifted the decree on Simchas Torah, Acharon shel Pesach, and the 17th of Tammuz when it fell on Shabbos. And likewise in 5725 on Shabbos Parshas Bereishis.

A 'Personal Matter' on Yud-Alef Nissan

On the day of the yahrtzeit of the Rebbe [Rashab], Beis Nissan 5710, the bachurim asked the Rebbe to farbreng. The Rebbe took out a calendar and said: "*On the 11th of Nissan - in ten days - I have a personal matter, and everyone will travel together to the Ohel. And on Beis Iyar we will farbreng.*" And then the Rebbe farbrenged three times with the bachurim: Beis Iyar, Pesach Sheini, and Lag B'Omer.

Soldiers in the Palace

When Reb Nissan Nemanov would come to 770, he would farbreng with great fervor about the fact that the bachurim learning in 770 are like soldiers stationed

in the king's palace - they are held to a different standard, and even if the buttons are not shining brightly enough, one is punishable for it.

The Berditchever of Our Generation...

Once someone wrote to the Rebbe speaking disparagingly about one of the bachurim in the yeshiva. When the hanhala had yechidus, the Rebbe took the pencil that was on the table, threw it, and said: "*If it could possibly be true that a bachur had a connection to such an act - what have I accomplished?*"

Reb Shmuel Levitin, who was a wise man, said: "Rebbe, first of all it is not true, and I know clearly that there is no truth to the matter. Second, after all, in Lubavitch too there were such things..."

The Rebbe replied: "*Are you the Berditchever of this generation?!*" Reb Shmuel answered: "*For me, it is a zechus to take on such a matter...*"

A Beis Nissan Surprise Sicha

Every year, several weeks before Pesach, there was a distribution of matzos that the Rebbe sent around the world and to Eretz Yisrael, shipped by airplane, and the Rebbe would often conduct the distribution in the library.

On Beis Nissan 5741, the distribution for Eretz Yisrael took place in the library, and suddenly the Rebbe walked to the balcony and began to speak. Everyone ran to the library, and in the rush and commotion they broke the whole balcony, and the Rebbe then said a sicha.

A Special Maamar for the 'Chozrim' of Chassidus

On Yud-Alef Nissan 5712, the Rebbe said a maamar in his room and wrote down ten names of those who would be present during the maamar. Three of them were bachurim who were designated for the review of Chassidus (*chazaras dach*), and Reb Dovid Raskin was one of those bachurim. Reb Yoel was present as a chozer, along with *shadarim* and Reb Shmuel Levitin. Reb Dovid Raskin would record each week who was going to review Chassidus in the shuls.

'Teshuva Ila'ah' in Dor Hashvi'i

Reb Zalman Duchman once farbrenged and said that in previous times people were even afraid to say the words "*teshuva ila'ah*" (sublime repentance), while the Rebbe speaks with a 'koch' about *teshuva ila'ah* at farbrengens.

The Closer One Takes Precedence

In 5727 or 5728, on Acharon shel Pesach, the Rebbe spoke about two things: (a) the takana about *arba kosos* - [drinking four cups of wine at the 'Moshiach Seuda'], and (b) that those who went on 'tahalucha' should say l'chaim. The Rebbe said then that the Haggadah states: "*Who redeemed us and redeemed our forefathers*" - meaning one begins with what is closer to us. Therefore one must begin with the tahalucha, which belongs to the Rebbe Rayatz - as opposed to the four cups, which belong to the [Rebbe] Rashab. ■

that between one audience and the next, the Rebbe would raise himself slightly in order to “strip away” from the previous state. Here, the Rebbe stood up completely - in order to hand me the siddur.

The Rebbe leaned over the desk, extended the siddur to me with his holy hands, and said to me a sentence that is seared in my heart to this day: “*Zolst davenen b’simcha un matzliach zayn*” (May you pray with joy and be successful). When I left that night after the audience, holding the siddur the Rebbe had given me with his very own hands, those short yet powerful words reverberated in my head: “*Zolst davenen b’simcha un matzliach zayn.*”

There is no person in the world like the Rebbe, who diagnoses with precision the essence of every matter. As someone who had grown up in an environment where Yiddishkeit was often perceived as a burdensome yoke - as a collection of “thou shalt not” directives and a system of limitations and prohibitions - this instruction of the Rebbe was revolutionary for me. The Rebbe did not merely ask me to daven with *dveikus* or with *kavana*; he asked me to daven with joy.

That *simcha* is the foundation of everything. To be happy that you are a Jew, to be happy that you are a Chabad Chassid, to be happy that you stand within the *dalet amos* of the Holy One, blessed be He. The Rebbe gave me as a gift not only a siddur, but the correct way to approach *tefilla* - and life in general. The blessing that I would succeed was bound up with and dependent upon that very joy.

Ashreinu!

I often reflect on the remarkable transformation I underwent. How does a Jewish child from Leeds - without any Chassidic background - find himself at the very heart of Chabad? I am filled with gratitude and thanksgiving to Hashem for this tremendous privilege. The joy that the Rebbe commanded me in that audience is what has accompanied me for seventy years already, reminding me always that we must be grateful that the Rebbe chose us and drew us close.

I sit here today and look back at the road I have traveled. When I close my eyes, I can still hear the air-raid sirens of the war and feel my heart pounding before the closed door of the Rosh Yeshiva of Manchester Yeshiva. But above all of that shines the holy gaze of the Rebbe and the words that have accompanied me from then until this day: “*Zolst davenen b’simcha.*”

When I see the young generation of *bachurim* today, I remember those Chabad *bachurim* in the Manchester Yeshiva - *Shemtov*, *Gurkov*, and *Futerfas*. They were my magnet, because they were happy. They did not see Yiddishkeit as a burden, but as a privilege. This is my message to you: Yiddishkeit is the best thing in the world. To be a Chabad Chassid, to be *mekushar* to the Rebbe - there is nothing greater than this.

Ashreinu ma tov chelkeinu! ■

לזכות

הוד כ"ק אדמו"ר
מלך המשיח שליט"א



לזכות

הרה"ח הרב ירחמיאל שי' וזוגתו מ' חנה תחי'
וב"ב: חי' מושקא ובעלה הרב מנחם קלמנסון
ובנם שלום מענדל ובתם בת שבע -
שלוחים במוסדות חב"ד "שניאור", אובערוויליע צרפת

דבורה לאה ובעלה הרב ארי' לייב פעוונזנער

ובנותיהם חי' מושקא ושיינא -

שלוחים במוסדות חב"ד סיני פריז, צרפת

שיינא ובעלה הרב לוי יצחק לויין ובתם חי' מושקא -

שלוחים בבית חב"ד קנסינגטון, ברוקלין

מנחם מענדל, חוה רבקה, דוד, שיינדל גיטל, מנוחה סימא, צבי הירש,

יקותיאל דובער שיחיו

בעלינאוו

שלוחי כ"ק אדמו"ר מלך המשיח שליט"א ב"חי מנחם" -

מרכז חב"ד בס. פאולו, ברזיל

הצלחה רבה ומופלגה בעבודת השליחות

לנח"ר כ"ק אדמו"ר מלך המשיח שליט"א

נתרם ע"י הרה"ת ר' שמואל וזוגתו מרת שטערנא שרה שיחיו

שפריצער