

BEIS MOSHIACH

• • • Special Gimmel Tammuz Edition • • •

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וואס קען א
כדי'ס אל
דן טעגער אהי
צאד פאר
קוי ציך די
ואתו ע
אסו"ן

**Writing to
the Rebbe
and Getting
Answers**

"עס מוז זיין א
'משה' בכל דור
ודור אין וועלכן
ס'איז אָנגעטאָן
נשמת משה"

יחי אדוננו מורנו ורבינו מלך המשיח לעולם ועד



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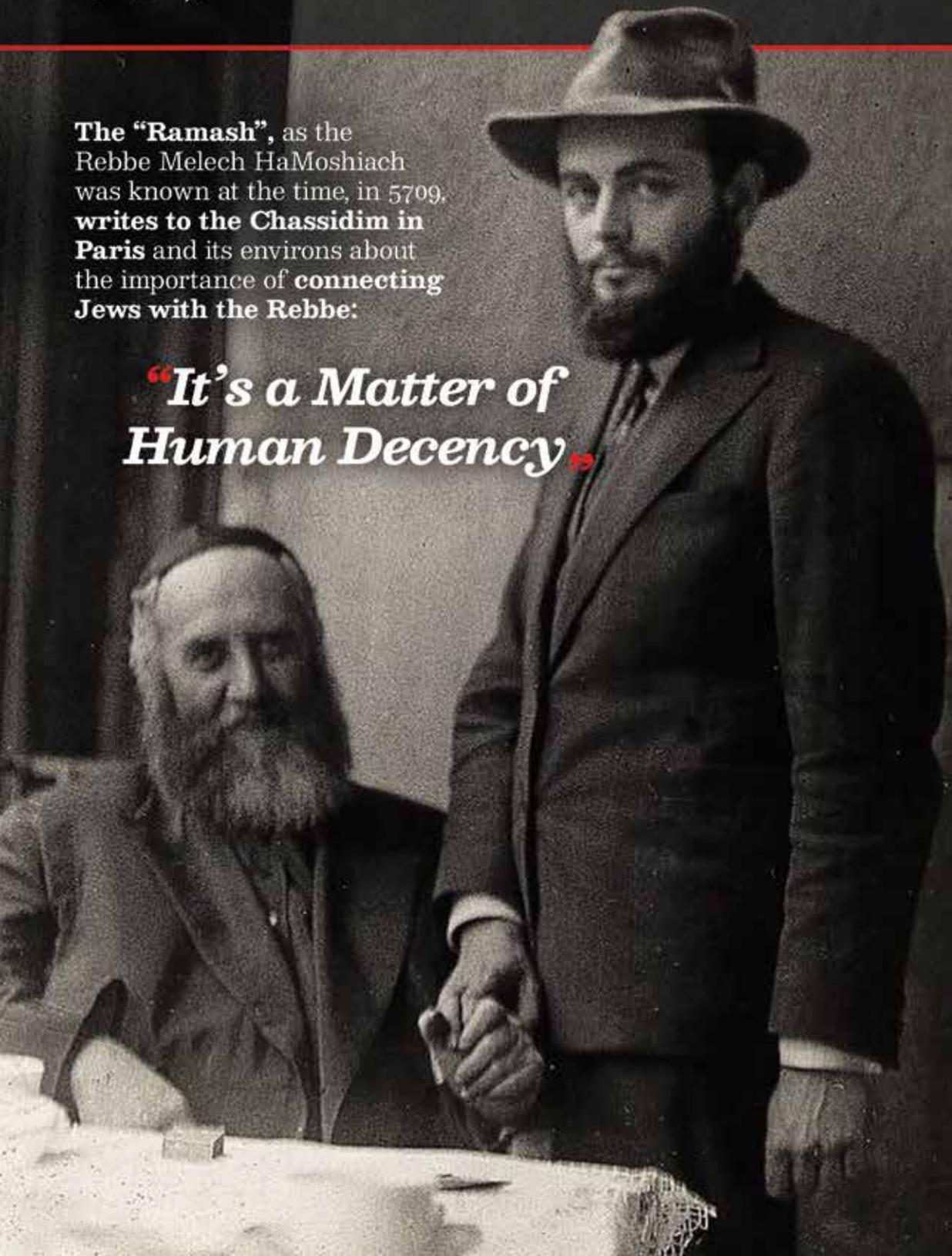
The Rebbe standing in the entrance to 770 with a package of correspondence



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The “Ramash”, as the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach was known at the time, in 5709, writes to the Chassidim in Paris and its environs about the importance of connecting Jews with the Rebbe:

“It’s a Matter of Human Decency.”



This letter was sent to R' Shlomo Chaim Kesselman, at that time, the Previous Rebbe's emissary for the collection of maamad (referred to in the letter by the code word nifneh).

THERE was a young man who was forced to flee from his location. Now this person is not one who has a connection with the Divine service of [meditative] prayer. He is not devoted to the abstract contemplation of *Chassidus* (a *maskil*), nor to the applications of these teachings in his efforts for self-refinement (an *oved*). He does not [even] have a beard. He never studied in *Tomchei Temimim* or in any other *yeshivah*.

This person journeyed to a very distant place, one far removed in both a physical sense and in its connection to Jewish life. After a short time passed, men and women from that place began sending letters to my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe *Shlita*.

For example, a businesswoman who was offered an opportunity to rent a store and a dwelling either in one part of the city or another asked the Rebbe *Shlita* to decide what she should do. She has never seen him. She knows that my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe *Shlita*, has never been in her city, nor even in her country. She is not part of the Chassidic brotherhood, nor are her roots there.

But she heard the young man [mentioned above] speak sincerely, with words coming from the heart, that there is a Rebbe among the Jewish people, that he is not bound by the limitations of nature, and that a person who wants to follow a secure path — be it in business or in directing his household — should not raise his hand without asking the Rebbe. She saw that the young man's words reflected his inner feelings, because words of truth can be recognized, and she asked that her question be written [to the Rebbe].

As a matter of course, such a woman is connected to *nifneh*. She is drawing closer

to Judaism. No doubt, in the near future, her home will be conducted in keeping with [the *mitzvos* of] *kashrus*, *taharas hamishpachah*, and the like. These are the fruits of the activities of a simple young man who did not act out of *mesirus nefesh* or *kabbalas ol*. For none of these activities runs contrary to his understanding, not even to the understanding of his mortal intellect.

Think [about this] for a moment: Based on his actual perception, it is very clear to him that the Rebbe's words are the Rebbe's words, and his blessings are blessings. Even his animal soul accepts this [premise], because it did not come to him as the result of a process of intellectual give-and-take or the analysis of texts, but from experience — his own and that of people he knew.

This provided evidence that obeying [the Rebbe's instructions] leads to a positive outcome. And when one does not do so, the results are unfavorable. As a result, just as he is not at all embarrassed to tell his acquaintances who are in need the address of an expert doctor, so, too, when he sees a person who is confused or confronted by a fundamental life question, he tells him: “The Jewish people are not without assistance, Heaven forbid. There is someone we can ask.”

Moreover, he does not wait until his acquaintances come to him to ask if there is a Rebbe, by and large they don't know what a Rebbe is. Instead, he goes to them and explains to them that they should not depend on their own understanding — not on the *shadchan*, the doctor, or the broker — for all of these involve doubts. Instead, he has a secure path with which to resolve his doubts. As our Sages commented: “Words that come from the heart enter the heart.”

To focus now on the subject of your letter: Your community contains the finest members of *Anash*; ...[After leaving Russia,] they were located in a [DP] camp among thousands of our Jewish brethren who were thirsty to hear a warm and live word [of Jewish content], something that would stir them and bring them close [to their Jewish heritage]. The young people among them were fundamentally seeking direction, [asking]: Where is the Moshe, the man who will lead us out of our boundaries and limitations and show us the path of life?

I ask you: How many [of those] people were added to [those involved in] the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov and the Alter Rebbe through your efforts and the labor of your souls during the time you stayed in the [DP] camp?



OBVIOUSLY, if you meet a person and tell him: “Sir, give [me] money and I will give it to so-and-so who is several thousand miles away whom you do not know and with whom you do not share a connection, but [he] is a person of exceptional and lofty qualities,” you will be looked at as a charlatan.

On the other hand, it is [equally] obvious that when a person who believes with simple faith — i.e., [faith] that directs all his powers — that [the Rebbe’s] knowledge and blessing have power over all matters and [this person] knows that his colleague must make a decision concerning a fundamental matter involving his children, health, or prosperity, or he is in danger, Heaven forbid, [he would try to connect that other with the Rebbe].

If there was any hope or even the shadow of a possibility that [the other person] would listen to his words, human decency, *ahavas Yisrael*, and [the risk of] danger to life would motivate him to run after his colleague and tell him: “Have mercy on yourself and on the members of your household and on all those close to you. Do not rely on your own

understanding. Study *Chassidus*. Develop a connection with [the Rebbe]. Follow his words and then you will be successful.”

As is well known, there is a promise from the Alter Rebbe: “When Chassidim will make an effort, they will be successful.”

...In Paris and its surroundings you come in contact with hundreds and maybe thousands of our Jewish brethren each day. ...How many of these thousands of people turned [to the Rebbe] with a question concerning an operation, a *shidduch*, a blessing for Rosh HaShanah or the like? If, however, you would have told them who the Lubavitcher Rebbe is, [sharing] a story, even without explanation, [and] on the second occasion [sharing] a portion of his talks and then his directives, many people — they, their descendants, and their descendants’ descendants for posterity — would connect themselves to the Tree of Life. They would increase the light in their homes and become “Moshe’s men.” ...They would take part in *maamad* and support all of [the Rebbe’s] institutions eagerly, with a pleasant disposition, not merely out of respect.



WHEN I was in Paris a year and a half ago, I spoke [about the matter] several times until ultimately it was decided (apparently, out of respect) that the Committee for *Nifneh* would become involved with the people of the city. It is evident that those involved would be the appropriate ones to deal with those who are — at present — distant [from Jewish practice]. From time to time, I inquired and investigated what was being done in this regard and I discovered... that nothing is being done...

Do you really think that the obstacle is the people of Paris and its surroundings? ■

Igros Kodesh vol. 3, letter #445; translated in “I Will Write it in Their Hearts” vol. 4

From The Rebbe's Pen



The Word of Hashem Comes Through the Mouth of the Rebbe...

In the sicha of Shabbos Parshas Shmini, Shabbos Mevorchim of the month of Iyar 5710, the Rebbe said:

“The truth is that it isn’t even possible to ask questions about the Rebbe ... as it is well known that the idea of Rebbeim is a preparation for the coming of Moshiach of which it is written, “And the glory of Hashem shall be revealed, and all *flesh* shall see” — they will see *Elokus* (Divinity) with *fleshy* eyes.

In preparation for that time, *Atzmus* (the “essence” of Hashem) — which is *Kol Yachol* (omnipotent) and *Nimna Hanimnaos* (it is impossible to ascribe anything to Him as impossible) — [is revealed to every individual] by so-to-speak enclothing Himself in a physical body, visible to *fleshy* eyes, that used to answer everyone face to face.

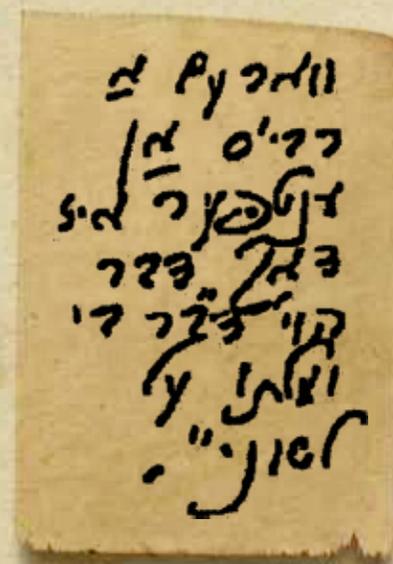
Hence, an answer given by a Rebbe is “The spirit of G-d spoke within me, and His word is on my tongue” — [though] usually spoken in Yiddish, with an odd word of English or Russian, or whatever —

If so, it is impossible to question a concept of *Nimna Hanimnaos*...

The following words were added by the Rebbe to the sicha while editing it:

ווארעם א רבי'ס אן ענטפער איז דאך "דבר הוי' דיבר בי ומלתו על לשוני".

“An answer given by a Rebbe is “The spirit of G-d spoke within me, and His word is on my tongue.” ■



STATIC HISKASHRUS & DYNAMIC HISKASHRUS

ON the 18th of Tishrei 5660, Reb Nachman of Breslov's soul ascended on high. His Chassidim, however, never appointed a new Rebbe. But that was far from signaling the demise of the group; Rebbe Nachman has left behind a glorious legacy.

To this very day, the Chassidus is led by *mashpi'im*, spiritual mentors, who unite its adherents around the electrifying teachings and writings of the first and only Rebbe of Breslov. They gather on Rosh Hashana at his *tziyun* and practice his *horaos* of a unique *derech* in serving Hashem.

They were ridiculed for this for many generations, but the last laugh is theirs. In the last few decades Breslov is one of the fastest growing Chassidic courts, and its ideas have made it into mainstream Judaism.

This phenomenon portrays more than anything else, what the Alter Rebbe writes in Tanya (Iggeres Hakodesh *siman* 27), quoting the holy Zohar, that Tzaddikim after their passing are alive and effect the world *more* than in their lifetime.

Is Lubavitch today, 25 years after Gimmel Tammuz, going in the same direction?

Chabad Chassidim cringe hearing this and rightfully so. The concept of *Yatir Mibchayohi*

is certainly true, but not for every Tzaddik and not in every generation. But why indeed?

This special edition of Beis Moshiach is an attempt to answer this question.

Ironically, this Gimmel Tammuz special-edition Beis Moshiach isn't focused on Moshiach as you would expect. It's not focused on connecting to the Rebbe either – another worthy theme for a Gimmel Tammuz issue.

It's focused on the Rebbe communicating *back to us*. It is about Moshiach, because this idea constitutes a vital component in understanding and carrying out the Rebbe's self-declared divinely inspired life mission of bringing about the complete and final revelation of Moshiach.

IN the months after Yud Shvat 5710, when the Frierdiker Rebbe was *nistalek*, the Rebbe often quoted ideas from the chapter of Tanya which speaks about *Yatir Mibchayohi*, and at the same time introduced a novel concept – the idea that if only we stand strong in our bond to him, the Rebbe will answer our queries and questions.

Writing *kvitlach* (notes) with requests for blessings to Tzaddikim who left the constraints

of this world is not new. Receiving their blessings is not new either. It is a typical fulfillment of *Yatir Mibchayohi*: A person becomes *mekushar* to a Tzaddik by going in his ways and writes to him, and in return “benefits” from the *Yatir Mibchayohi* of the Tzaddik.

But asking him *questions* and receiving personalized *answers* and guidance is a whole different story. This is something that was introduced by a *Nasi Hador*, perhaps because only a *Nasi Hador* is given such an ability.

The Midrash and Zohar reveal that every generation has a Moshe-like figure. Chassidus illuminates this concept by explaining that besides for Rebbes and Jewish leaders being sources of spiritual inspiration for their followers – a role they can continue to fill even

after their passing – the role of a Rebbe is first and foremost a *Hisgalus Elokus*, a revelation of G-dliness in the world.

The Tzaddikim and the miracles are “windows” through which Hashem shines into the world. This role is the primary mission of a Moshe of generation, who therefore must be present in *this* world.

Can the windows to Heaven be in Heaven?



THE Rebbe taught us that even at a time when our present Rebbe seems to have departed, we should continue to ask not only for *brachos*, but also for advice, and the *Nasi Hador* will find a way to communicate it to us.

Hiskashrus to a “departed” Tzaddik is static – I must go in the ways he taught me in the *past*. In return, the Tzaddik generates *Brachos* and *Yeshuos*, but the communication – from the Chassid's perspective of *Olamos B'peshitus* – generally remains a “non-personal” one.

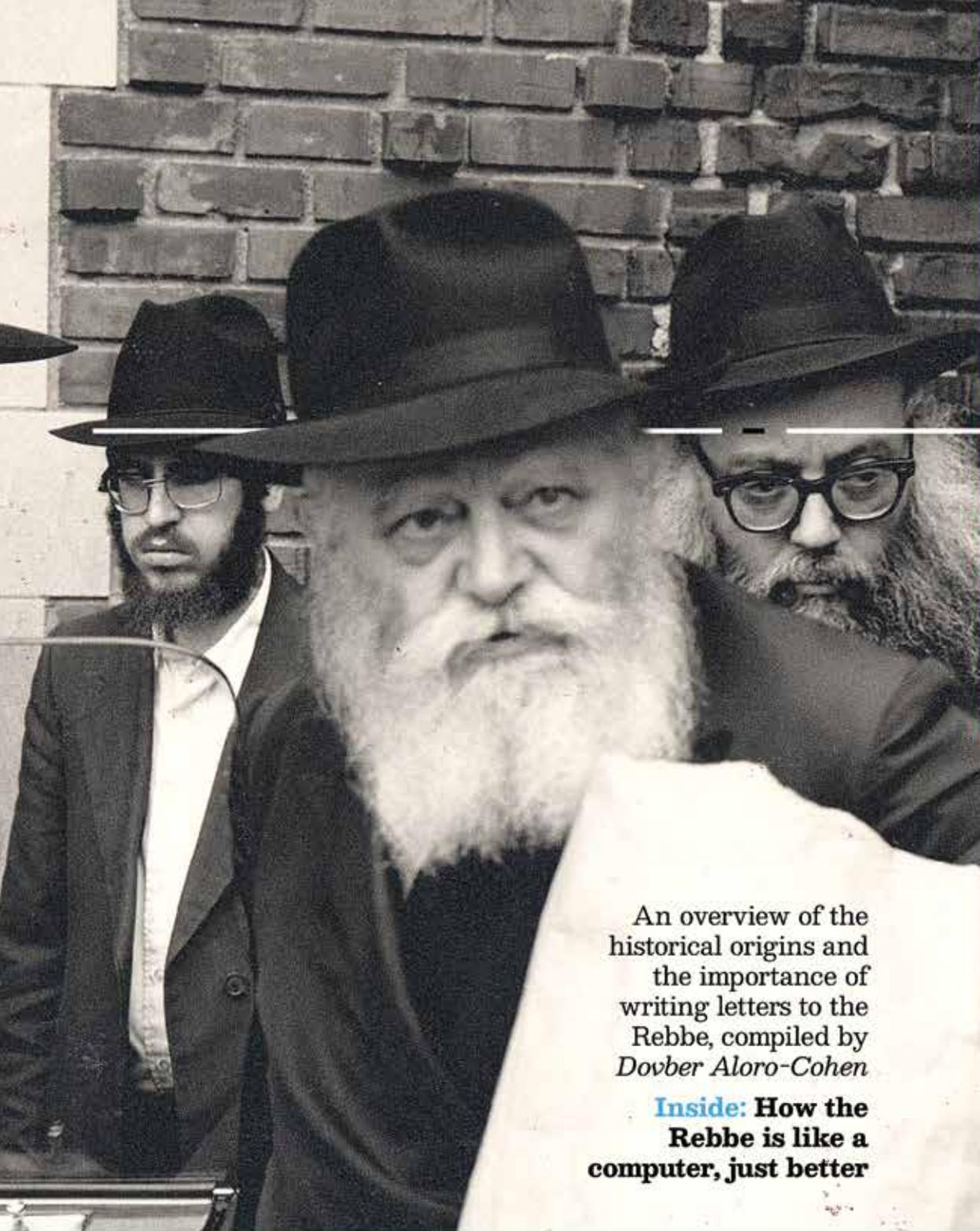
Hiskashrus to a “present” Tzaddik is dynamic. The Chassid asks, the Rebbe answers, the Chassid argues, the Rebbe insists. It's something that even to our fleshly eyes is perceived as a live broadcast, not a playback.

The fact that the Rebbe continues to answer even in a time of concealment clearly demonstrates that the Rebbe continues to serve as that “window,” revealing G-dliness in the world.

The fact that the Rebbe provides answers, not only serving as a source of blessings, shows that the Rebbe is the acting *Nasi Hador*, living in our physical world even if in a manner unknown to us.

The fact that Rebbe answers, often in very specific detail, shows us beyond a shadow of a doubt that he is “running the show” and the agenda of Lubavitch remains unchanged - with Moshiach front and center. ■





“

Your letters are
never a burden

The Rebbe
Writes About
*Writing
to Him*

An overview of the
historical origins and
the importance of
writing letters to the
Rebbe, compiled by
Dovber Aloro-Cohen

**Inside: How the
Rebbe is like a
computer, just better**

Overview

ענין הכתיבה

SINCE
THE
REVELATION

of Chassidus, writing to the Rebbe has been a key element in the bond between Rebbe and Chassid. An old

Chassidic proverb says that just as a “woman is acquired in three ways: money, document and *bi'ah*,” so too, a Chassid is acquired and sanctified to the Rebbe “in three ways: money – maamad; document – writing to the Rebbe; *bi'ah* – traveling to the Rebbe.

Over the generations, the mode of connecting through writing evolved into one of the main means by which a Chassid connects to the Rebbe. It is hard to describe the lifestyle of a Chassid without his writing to the Rebbe at every juncture of life, regarding material and spiritual concerns, as the Rebbe writes in a letter dated 15 Shevat 5709:

“There is a Rebbe in the Jewish nation and he does not enter under the limitations of nature. One who wants to tread his life path securely, in business, running the household, etc, should not lift a hand without consulting with the Rebbe.”

Writing to the Rebbe is of supreme importance and Chassidim would even draw a parallel between the day that they wrote and the day they had yechidus. Immersing in a mikva, proper preparations, and wearing a hat and jacket (married men with a gartel) characterize seeing the Rebbe for yechidus and also characterize writing to the Rebbe.

This is not simply a “Chassidic *hergesht*.” Back in the time of the Alter Rebbe, writing to the Rebbe served as a substitute for yechidus. When the number of Chassidim grew, it became difficult for the Alter Rebbe to receive them all for yechidus. “*Takanos Liozna*” (Liozna enactments) were formulated which limited

the Chassidim as far as visiting the Alter Rebbe. Instead, they were guided to write letters.

Today too, the accepted approach among Chassidim is that writing to the Rebbe is a sort of yechidus, and that the answers opened to at random in the Igros Kodesh are coming from the highest place. As the Alter Rebbe writes in his introduction, that through the Tanya it is possible to receive all answers to all questions:

“And all of them are responsa to many questions which all our faithful in our country have constantly asked, seeking advice... since time no longer permits replying to everyone individually and in detail about his particular problem. Furthermore, forgetfulness is common. I have, therefore, recorded all the replies to all the questions, to be preserved as a signpost and to serve as a visual reminder for each and every person, so that he will no longer press for admission to private conference with me. For in these he will find peace for his soul, and true counsel on every matter that he finds difficult in the service of G-d, and thus, his heart will be firmly secured in the Lord Who completes everything for us.”

Chassidim always regarded writing to the Rebbe as of supreme importance and today too, are particular to treat it with great care and awe. This is something that we can learn from the story told by Rabbi Yoel Kahn (*Anashim Chassidim Hayu*, p. 50):

“In 5709, a few tmimim from Tel Aviv came to the home of the Chassid R' Zalman Moshe HaYitzchaki and asked him to teach them how to write a pidyon nefesh to the Rebbe. R' Zalman Moshe took a pencil and paper and suddenly burst into tears. He sobbed for quite a while. After he calmed down a bit, he asked the bachurim to return the following day because he was unable to write a pidyon nefesh then.

“The next day, the talmidim returned to his home and asked him again to write a pidyon nefesh. R' Zalman Moshe took the pencil and paper and wrote the words, ‘*Ana lorer*,’ and then again, he burst into uncontrollable crying and could not continue writing the pidyon nefesh.”

THE REBBE ENCOURAGES WRITING

Before formally accepting the Chabad leadership, the Rebbe began encouraging Chassidim to write and even expressed pleasure and joy from people writing to him (Igros Kodesh, volume 3, p. 402):

“I am always glad to know what is happening with Anash. If it is good news, then this causes pleasure and joy, and even if it is the opposite, G-d forbid, this itself, i.e. being in touch through letters, provides encouragement and diminishes the feeling of being alone and feeling down.”

In addition to the importance of writing as a fundamental aspect of hiskashrus, the Rebbe points out regarding the act of writing, that when a Chassid knows that he needs to write a report to the Rebbe occasionally, this gets him to act properly. As the Rebbe writes (9 Iyar 5719), “We see that the knowledge that eventually they will write about the activities to someone, leads to an increase in activities, whether in quantity or quality or both.”

Throughout the years, on many occasions, the Rebbe insisted repeatedly, from the Chassidim in particular, and from the Jewish people in general, that they write to him frequently. To those who wrote to him after a long time, the Rebbe mentioned this in his response in this often-used line, “After an extremely long break, your letter was received ...”

As to how to write, the Rebbe asked for as much detail as possible. “I want to receive a detailed report about everyone’s activities,” the Rebbe asked on 11 Nissan 5712, of the

bachurim going home for Pesach who would be reviewing Chassidus in shuls.

“It’s a wonder that you do not write in more detail about the promoting of the published works,” writes the Rebbe (Igros Kodesh volum 14, p. 36) to R' Zushe Wilyamowsky, who disseminated Chabad sefarim among many communities. The Rebbe writes to him:

“It is explained in a number of places in Chassidus and we see tangibly that when writing in a general manner it does not add vigor to the activities, because with a description of the situation in general terms there is no compelling need to alter the description if the activities would grow many times over, or conversely if it would shrink many times over. Whereas when one knows in advance that after a brief time they will have to write in detail, as above, that this work sold so-and-so many copies and the other work so-and-so many copies, that changes the approach from the outset.

SPECIAL EXPRESSIONS FOR LETTERS

Despite the burdens and many involvements, the Rebbe was particular to personally write any responses to letters that he received, as he said, “I read all the letters that are addressed to me myself, and also answer them myself ... as has always been the custom.”

The Rebbe never complained about the many letters sent to him. In 5716, the Rebbe’s shluchim visited many Torah greats and people of renown, with the goal being to enlist their support for the residents of Kfar Chabad. One of the personalities that they visited insisted that he does not want to write to the Rebbe because he does not want to disturb the Rebbe. The shluchim explained to him that it does not disturb the Rebbe at all, and the Rebbe followed up by writing the following:

“Certainly, the shluchim were correct in that letters do not impose upon me, and if only we would merit within the entirety of Jewry that

A VIRTUAL PA'N

Chassidim tried to write to the Rebbe under all circumstances. The Chassid and mashpia, R' Mendel Futerfas z'l, told about a spiritual pidyon that he "wrote" (R' Mendel p. 44):

Throughout the interrogations, my mind wasn't free to think about myself or anyone else. All of my wits were focused on what to say and what not to say. It was only after they sentenced me on erev Lag B'Omer to eight years in exile in a labor camp, that I started to think a little about myself. Then I recalled what the Rebbe Rayatz once said, "All those in Russia, and especially those in prison, should focus their thoughts intensely on me, and I will focus intensely in thought upon them."

This is what I did. When I found myself in a prison cell, the first thing I did was stand in a corner, close my eyes and think as though I was standing in yechidus before the Rebbe, or at least sending him a letter, informing him of my present situation.

It was only when I left Russia years later, that I found out that that very day, erev Lag B'Omer, the Rebbe Rayatz sent a telegram to London addressed to my name which said, "The telegram was received."

At first, my family thought that I had managed to fool them all and that I was already out of Russia and had sent a telegram to the Rebbe and this was his response, but after a while, they found out that I was "sitting" [in jail] and they did not understand the telegram. It was only when I arrived in London in 5724 that they all understood that this was the Rebbe's answer to the yechidus I had while in jail.

the content of letters to each other be happy, in gashmius and in ruchniyus, and in visible and revealed good."

The Rebbe used a very interesting expression in a letter to a correspondent (whose name was not published, in Igros Kodesh vol 14, p 493), "It has been a pleasure for me to get to know you, at least in writing."

It is well known that the Chassid, R' Zushe Wilyamowsky the "partisan," would report frequently to the Rebbe on his activities and would receive many responses, at every step. Once, when he went in to the Rebbe for yechidus, the Rebbe told him, "You have revived me with the notifications, and whenever there is any news, you should write."

The Rebbe did not ask only for good tidings to be written. As he wrote to R' Gershon Chein, "At every time, I am pleased to know what is happening with Anash, because if the information is positive then it causes nachas and simcha, and if *ch'v* the opposite, at least that itself – being in contact through letters – strengthens."

Another aspect of the importance of writing and its significance can be derived from the fact that the Rebbe expressed his preference that any question be written by the petitioner himself. As he told one person in yechidus, who had asked a question in the name of a family member, that it is preferable for the request to be written by the petitioner himself rather than transmitted verbally through another. He explained that this is because it is possible, by giving it over verbally, the person might leave out a detail that he does not want to specify to the one presenting the question. Another reason is that by the person writing himself it adds in his inner *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe, as opposed to a letter written by someone else.

Over the years, the numbers of letters grew until they reached such huge amounts that they were impossible to deal with on this physical plane. In later years, the Rebbe instructed ever

more that the number of letters sent to him should be lessened, and that people should turn for guidance to experts in the field such as a "doctor-friend," a friend who is a "maven" or a rav that issues halachic rulings, each according to his situation.

Despite the great importance that the Rebbe attached to writing, when Chassidim began to send letters about every little thing, and when they did not have what to write of substance and would just manufacture something, just for the sake of writing letters, the Rebbe spoke out strongly against the practice. He demanded that "when people write a letter, they should think again whether there is a need for the writing of this letter, or is it a waste of time, both the time of the writer and the time of the recipient. And if there is a doubt in the matter, instead of devoting attention and exertion etc. to a doubtful matter, it is better to put the doubt aside, and be involved in something certain, to take a sefer and learn."

THE VERY ACT OF WRITING

We all know the feeling of writing a letter and not meriting to receive a response, but we

need to know that the very act of writing to the Rebbe completes the connection, and the Rebbe thinks about us and answers us, even if we don't see it. As the Rebbe himself wrote in response to someone who wrote about not meriting responses from the Rebbe:

"Finally, his letter was received. As far as his explanation for the lack of his letters since there was no response from here; it is a wonder, since I have asked Anash many times not to offer explanations about the lack of an answer from here, because in the overwhelming majority of cases it is because of the busyness, and therefore the answers to the most urgent and important issues take precedence..."

In response to a report from the shluchim gathering in South America in 5746, the Rebbe wrote, "It was received and *teshuos chein*, and I will mention it at the *tziyun*. And the time does not lend itself even to read it, but the act of giving it over is already complete and in all of the details, as per the *psak din* of the Torah of truth."

The Rebbe added an explanation to the above, "In order to make it easier to understand



even for... Specifically in our times they have shown us a vivid example, which people act upon and even in the most important and weighty matters, in how people can accomplish the above mentioned even through the use of an inanimate object. As soon as one enters a number of important details into a computer, they can instantly know all of the conclusions and rulings on what to actually do. So when it is conveyed/mentioned at the *tziyun* (of my father-in-law, the Rebbe), it is obvious that it is all the more so and incomparably greater than transmission to the previously mentioned inanimate object..."

ANSWERS THROUGH SEFARIM

As far as putting a *pidyon nefesh* or letter into a sefer and receiving answers through sefarim, there are many sources in many places for this. We will focus on a few of the Chabad sources:

There is the well known letter of the Rebbe delineating the customs of a yahrtzeit, written before the first Yud Shevat in 5711. There the Rebbe says to place the *pidyon nefesh* between the pages of a maamar or kuntres of the Rebbe Rayatz, after reading it on the yahrtzeit while wearing a gartel and picturing oneself in yechidus with the Rebbe Rayatz, and then if possible to send it to be read at the *tziyun*.

As far as the source for the practice of receiving an answer by way of sefarim, the Rebbe referenced this on more than one occasion at farbrengens in the year 5749. In the sicha of Noach 5749 (Hisvaaduyos vol. 1 p. 309) the Rebbe said: "It is known regarding the custom of many many Jews, whether Gedolei Yisrael or simple Jews and also women, that before undertaking a certain activity they open a holy sefer, and they look into the place that the sefer opened to and the eye fell upon at first glance (without intention, because they want to see where it would open to by divine providence) and based on this they would decide about doing it. For example: If it opened for them to the verse 'open shall you open,' or

'rejoice shall you rejoice,' and the like, this was a 'sign from Above' for them that there will be great success in the thing that they were about to do. Or else they understood from the sign to refrain from doing it or to delay it, and the like."

On a later occasion that year, in the sicha of Bamidbar 5749 (Hisvaaduyos vol. 3 p. 224) the Rebbe added: "And as is known the Jewish custom from days of yore when they wanted to clarify how to conduct oneself in a permitted matter (i.e. in a matter with no explicit directive in the Torah about what to do)

There is a rule that *ma'aseh rav* (actual practice is a decisive ruling), so the greatest proof is that the Rebbe himself directed people to open holy works (Heichal Menachem vol. 2 p. 217) in response to a question that he was asked: "A number of suggestion were suggested to us for X, and we are unable to decide as to which one of them to approach, what should we do?" The Rebbe answered: "There are those who have the practice of opening a Chumash or Tehillim, and they learn what to do from the first verse that they encounter..."

In the work *L'sheima Ozen* of R' Shneur Zalman Duchman, he recounts a story of the Rebbe Rashab who said, "When something happens to a Jew, every Jew has the power to open the sefer of Tanya and to say: Rebbe, help me! Apparently, that is why it is the custom to place a *pidyon* into the sefer of Tanya."

In the diary account of the arrest and imprisonment of the Rebbe Rayatz, he testifies to the use of this practice during his imprisonment, "When I was there, I did not have any sefer with me and the first sefer that they brought me was a volume of the book of Shmuel in Tanach, and when it opened I encountered the verse, 'Do not continue to go out with us to war, and [thus] the candle of Yisrael shall not be extinguished.' And when I saw that this is what I chanced upon I rejoiced with great joy and made a note of it for myself."

בס"ד

"We Used Machon Stam for our Sefer Torah"



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WHAT'S THE SOURCE FOR WRITING TO THE REBBE VIA THE IGROS KODESH?

LET us first explore the idea of writing to the Rebbe in the first place.

In the Gemara¹ Rav Pinchas bar Chama is quoted as saying: “Anyone who has a sick person in his home should go to a sage (*Chacham*), and the sage will ask for mercy for him.” The Rema cites this as a Halacha as well.²

The obvious question is, why can't I daven to Hashem directly? Why do I need the Tzadik to daven on my behalf?

A person definitely could, should and must daven himself, but the purpose of going to the Tzadik is for more than healing. Chassidim explains that Hashem wants us to connect to a Tzadik, fulfilling the mitzvah of cleaving to Hashem by cleaving to a *Talmid Chacham*. Sometimes, when this connection is weakened, Hashem “arranges” that the person experiences hardships, so he will reinstate his connection to the Tzaddik.

Now, one of the strongest forms of connection is through writing, because what I just think or say doesn't always bring out of me who I truly am, but when a Chassid writes a *Pan* or a letter to the Rebbe, he is putting his very own essence, his *Neshama* onto that piece of paper.

As a Chassidic saying goes,³ based on the Mishna at the beginning of tractate Kiddushin,

regarding how a woman is betrothed: *Haisha nikneis b'shlosa derachim: b'kesef b'shtar ub'biah* — a Chassid connects to the Rebbe in three ways, and all three are necessary.

1. With *kesef*, money — *Ma'amad* to support the Rebbe and his communal activities;
2. With *shtar*, a written document — writing to the Rebbe; and
3. With *biah* — coming and traveling to the Rebbe.

A Chassid's first connection to the Rebbe is the letter he writes to the Rebbe, the first *Yechidus*, and the ones after always begin with the Chassid handing the Rebbe his *Pan*.

Similarly, Chassidim customarily wrote and signed a *K'sav Hiskashrus* when the time came to take upon themselves and establish a connection with the new Rebbe, as was the case with the Friediker Rebbe's Chassidim after the Rebbe Rashab's *Histalkus* in 5780, and years later in 5710, when Chassidim connected to the Rebbe *Melech HaMoshiach* after the Friediker Rebbe's *Histalkus*.

The concept of communicating with and writing to the Rebbe, we see, is so important to the extent that the Rebbe says that sometimes Hashem will make something go wrong in your life just to make you write to the Rebbe! The

connection to the Rebbe is vital for you to fulfill your life's mission.

The Rebbe, of course, urges Chassidim not to wait for things to go wrong, and maintain that connection with no need for “incentives.”

So, this concept is something that always *was, is* and will continue to be for all times — a Chassid must write to the Rebbe.



NOW to the second question — the idea of receiving answers through the *Igros Kodesh*.

I want to first focus on why receiving an answer is important.

[There is value in writing to the Rebbe in and of itself, but the primary objective of writing to the Rebbe is seeking the Rebbe's direction as representing the word of Hashem and his guidance on how to conduct our life in sync with Hashem's Divine plan. For that you need to also receive the Rebbe's answer...]

Obviously, handing it or mailing it to the Rebbe directly and receiving a direct answer is preferable, but there are times when this is not possible.]

The Rebbe said in 5710⁴, that when someone has difficulty sending his letter to the *tziyun*, he can put the letter into a *kuntres* or *ma'amar* of the Rebbe. At another opportunity, the Rebbe said that we need to write, and the Rebbe, being unbound to nature, will find a way to answer...]

The obvious explanation for this is the following:

Just like we find that Hashem has *kavyachol* invested Himself and given Himself over to us through the Torah, [as the first word of the *Aseres HaDibros*, אָנֹכִי, abbreviates the words אָנֹכִי נִפְשִׁי כְּתִבִּית יְהוָה, “I have written and given Myself”] — similarly, Tzaddikim invest themselves into their Torah and *sefarim*, so by

putting a letter into a *sefer* of the Rebbe, we are directly giving It to the Rebbe.

It is not a new thing. In fact, it's a very old and widespread Jewish custom (not only among Chassidim - see p. 10 in this issue).

Among Chassidim, it was even stronger and more powerful, especially in the hard times in the former Soviet Union. Chassidim for many generations back had the custom to put their letter into a *Tanya*, or even a *Siddur* which is also a *sefer* of the Alter Rebbe!

The answer was there because the Rebbe has invested himself in his Torah, and his Torah *is* his answer. Chassidim, throughout the generations who were in situations wherein they couldn't directly communicate with the Rebbe, found answers for their questions by “randomly” opening a *sefer* of the Rebbe *B'Hashgacha Pratis*.

Like the Rebbe said, the Rebbe will find a way...



REGARDING the *Igros Kodesh*, all this and more is true:

In our times, there are tens of thousands of people who use the Rebbe's published letters to connect to him and receive *B'rachos* and guidance on a daily basis. The tremendous miracles seen coming out of this practice are in a sense like the Rebbe is giving his approval to it [as long as one follows the Rebbe's clear instructions — see *The Rules of Writing to the Rebbe* on p. 44 of this issue - Ed.]

[Chazal say that regarding some Halachos, we can rely on what people out there do because even “if the Jewish people are not prophets, they are sons of prophets,” insinuating that a popular practice of many Jews is a form of prophecy.]

CONT. ON P. 27

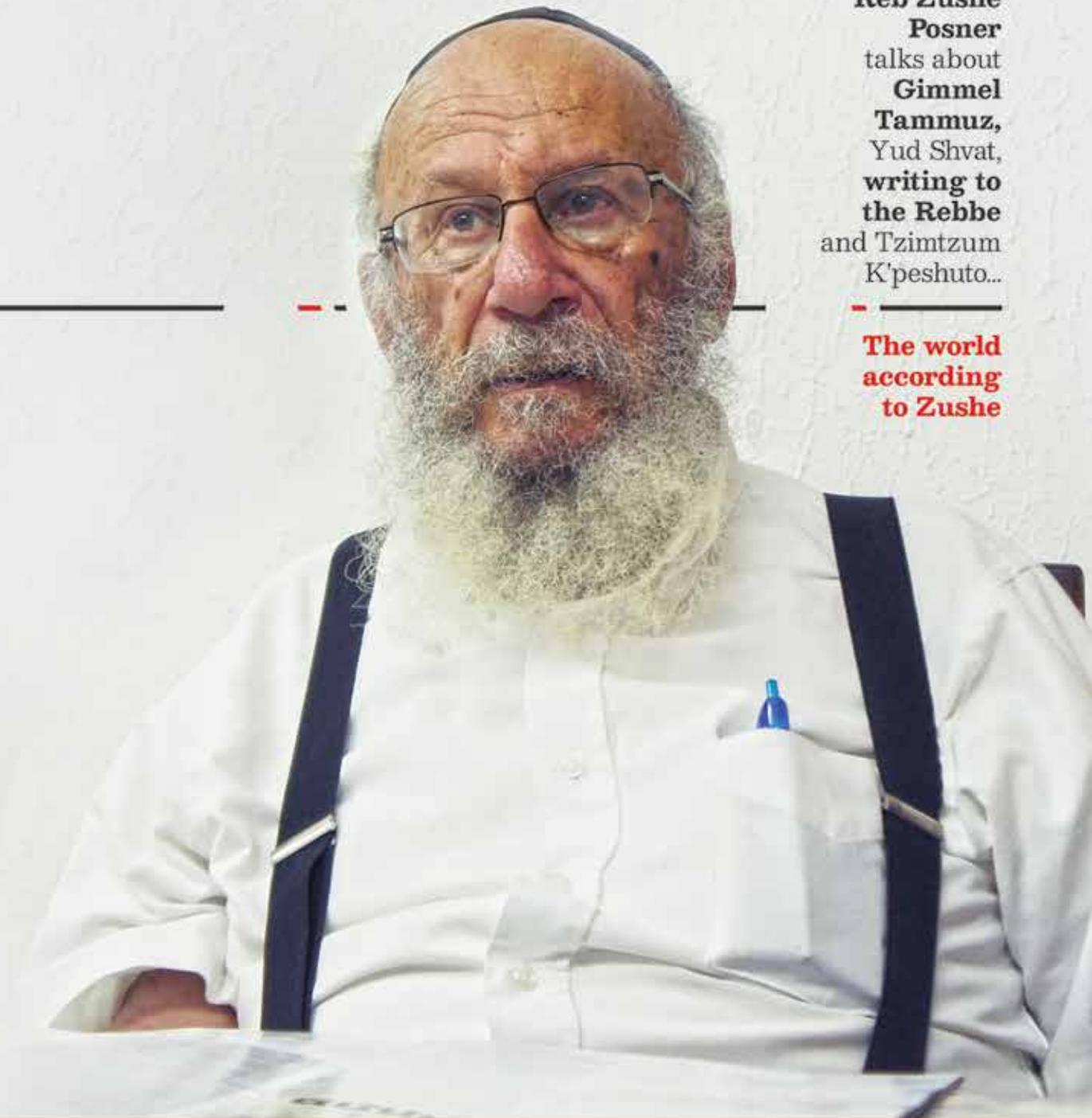
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Chabadnikim have
an explanation
for everything.

I don't

Reb Zushe
Posner
talks about
**Gimmel
Tammuz,**
Yud Shvat,
writing to
the Rebbe
and Tzimtzum
K'peshuto...

**The world
according
to Zushe**



Interview

5775 / תשפ"ה

AN INTERVIEW WITH

R' Zushe Posner is not a conventional interview. It's more like a farbrengen-style conversation. When R' Zushe shares what's on his mind and heart, he lays it out on the table, even if what he says might annoy someone. It's not that he's looking to anger anyone. It's that it hurts him and his sometimes-shocking style is the way he chooses to cry out, as the Rebbe says, "When it hurts, you cry out."

This might be the reason he is the perfect person for this interview, held days before Gimmel Tammuz, a day that shakes up every Chassid, a day of supernatural occurrences, from "Be silent, sun in Givon" in the time of Yehoshua, and down to our days, the *hechste tzait* on the one hand, and an utterly unconventional situation on the other hand.

From the deepest recesses of his heart and soul he screamed and still screams, using the same words, for fifty years. T'mimim who learned by him in Lud and B'nei Brak in the 60s, 70s, 80s, 90s, 00's, 10's, heard and hear the very same words.

He asked and asks that we care about the Rebbe, that the Rebbe's state should be something that we care about, that we understand that we exist for the Rebbe and the Rebbe does not need us, but he wants us. That we put our head into the maamer and not the maamer into our head. To him, the Rebbe is the Rebbe, and not, G-d forbid, some tzaddik, kadosh and tahor.

You don't understand? That is also part of the multifaceted personality of R' Zushe. "A Lubavitcher knows that he does not understand everything and he doesn't have an answer to every question."

MENACHEM AHARONSON ◦

What is he himself? "I'm a Lubavitcher; not a Chabadnik."

A REBBE WITHOUT A BODY – IMPOSSIBLE

How are you, R' Zushe?

There are a few times a year that I am completely crazy. One of them is now, the days before Gimmel Tammuz. I often ask people, "Tzintzum k'peshuto (literal) or tzintzum lo k'peshuto (not literal)?" In Chassidus it explains that the tzintzum (constriction) that Hashem made in the Ohr Ein Sof (Infinite Light) so there would be room for worlds, is not a literal tzintzum; it just seems that way to created beings.

I get a variety of answers, including clever wisecracks and plays on the words, but they are afraid to say what it says in Tanya, that "tzintzum – lav k'peshuto." Why? Because then I will ask, and what happened on Gimmel Tammuz? He will have to say, I don't know! And a Chabadnik who grew up on chochma, bina, and daas, cannot say he does not know!

Tell me, is it possible to live in a world without a physical Rebbe? Because if it's possible, if I don't need a Rebbe in a physical body, then I have Moshe Rabbeinu, so what do I need the Rebbe for in addition?

So how do you explain the situation we have today?

On 12 Tammuz 5717/1957, I was in yeshiva in Lud. It was a Thursday night, and I had nothing to do ... I saw a booklet about what happened the week of Yud Shevat 5710 after the funeral. It said that when they returned from the cemetery, they davened Maariv and the Rebbe said that Chassidim don't eulogize but they tell stories. So, after every tefilla I will tell something from the Rebbe [Rayatz]. One of the

things said there, and I haven't found it since, because they left it out due to instructions from above ... (I don't see it in the Hisvaaduyos but there are other versions in other places):

"Atzmus Ein Sof en clothed itself in a physical body and speaks Yiddish, English and Russian in order to be mekarev Jews to Judaism ..."

What is Atzmus? There is the story of R' Zalman Moshe who was sitting next to R' Moshe Gurary, the great maskil, and asked him to explain Atzmus. R' Moshe said it was impossible because if you give an explanation, it is no longer Atzmus. But when R' Zalman Moshe latched on to something or someone ... Half an hour later, R' Moshe gave in and he wanted to explain something. So the story goes that R' Zalman Moshe gave him a slap, "You want to give an explanation about Atzmus?!"

So what is a Rebbe and how can we explain what happens with him? I cannot explain what a Rebbe is because a Rebbe is not a tzaddik, kadosh and tahor, although those are lofty things. But a Rebbe, if I could explain it, well then that's not a Rebbe.

There is a famous story about R' Shmuel Gurary who was in some town where everyone told the miracles of his Rebbe and they asked him to tell a story too. He said that he wanted to travel to a certain city and the Rebbe told him to go to a different city and he went and lost all his money. The miracle was that he remained a Chassid of the Rebbe. I ask – says R' Zushe – whose miracle is it, his or the Rebbe's?

On Shabbos Parshas B'Haalos'cha we read about "the 600,000 *raglei ha'am* (people) in whose midst I am." We, the people, are the feet of the Rebbe, and maybe we don't want this, but the Rebbe says, "in whose midst I am" – I won't let you go. That we have a beard, tzitzis, t'fillin etc., is a miracle of the Rebbe, "the people in whose midst I am."

NOT TO WANT MOSHIACH BECAUSE I WILL BENEFIT

Talmidim who learned by R' Zushe in yeshivos Tomchei T'mimim Lubavitch, know his style and remember his heartfelt farbrengens, even if at the time they did not fully appreciate the message. There is something he regularly says, "Yechi anachnu" (may we live). He quotes what the Rebbe said on 28 Nissan 5751, that if they cried Ad Mosai genuinely, Moshiach would have come already.

"When do you cry out?" he asks. "When it hurts. And if you don't cry out, that shows that it does not hurt. It doesn't hurt anymore. What hurts most people is a problem at the bank or a problem with the kids. Moshiach doesn't hurt. And if it hurts that we don't see the Rebbe, it's because of the giluyim that we miss."

"I personally need two things that have no connection to one another. I need my wife to be well and I need Moshiach. Two unconnected things."

Then what is your reason for wanting Moshiach?

It should be good for every Jew, without any connection to Moshiach. And Moshiach doesn't need to wait so we have it good. That's not Moshiach. You need to want Moshiach because the Rebbe wants Moshiach, because that is what we should want, because the world was created for Moshiach. For the same reason I put on t'fillin. Because that is what is written.

After the Rebbe said all the birurim were taken care of, some people asked me, "What do we need to do now (i.e., what is the purpose of our mitzvos if we are not involved in refining the world anymore)?" I said, two things: First, there is the story of the Baal Shem Tov who was told from heaven that he has no share in the World to Come and he was satisfied, because that allowed him to serve Hashem without an agenda. Also, it says "And bind them as a sign on your arm," and not because of all sorts of



reasons. You say the bracha because you need to do so, because that's what it says in Shulchan Aruch, but you need to know there is a G-d. All the holiness of the Shulchan Aruch is that there is a G-d and this is the Torah of G-d.

They say that when the Rebbe Rashab sat with the Chafetz Chaim, the Chafetz Chaim said that he saw eidele faces on the T'mimim. The Rebbe Rashab said it was because they learned Chassidus. The Chafetz Chaim said he would bring Chassidus into his yeshiva and the Rebbe smiled. The Rebbe Rayatz asked him why he smiled and he said, because if there is no Rebbe, there is no Chassidus. That means, there is no Chassidus without the Rebbe.

Because it's the same thing. The holiness of Chassidus is that there is a Rebbe. Just like if there is no G-d, there is no Torah. Because the Rebbe's essence is Atzmus, so it's the same thing.

THE PROBLEM IS MINE, NOT THE REBBE'S

There are those who treat Gimmel Tammuz like Yud Shevat ...

After 3 Tammuz 5754, they came to me and asked, what now? I told them, if you say that 3 Tammuz is like 10 Shevat, then it's on one condition, that you go all the way and that means you need to find another Rebbe.

And what about when bachurim from yeshiva and people from the community and people you were in touch with outside of Chabad asked you, what did you explain to them?

I didn't explain anything. I had nothing to say. One of the bizarre things is that Chabadnikim know everything. They have an explanation for everything. I don't! In Chabad, everything is black and white, they have an opinion and explanation for everything. I don't belong to that. I belong to Lubavitch and know how to say that I don't know.

Still, what did you tell the bachurim?

I can't tell anyone what to think or feel.

If you'll say that what happened is exactly what occurred on 10 Shevat 5710, I was there in 770. They sent me to announce the

histalkus in Brownsville, where most Chabad Chassidim lived at the time. I knew Chassidim who were there on 2 Nissan 5689 (the passing of the Rebbe Rashab), who knew Chassidim who were there on 13 Tishrei 5643 (the passing of the Rebbe Maharash), and I can tell you and guide you in just what you need to do.

Or, 3 Tammuz was not like 10 Shevat, 2 Nissan, and 13 Tishrei, and then, we have a problem. 3 Tammuz is the personal problem of every one of us. I don't know and I don't understand, but it's not the Rebbe's problem! The Rebbe has no problem. I have a problem with the situation, I don't know

what happened, I don't know exactly how to explain it, because I never experienced anything like this before.

But it is not possible to have a generation without a living Rebbe in a physical body, because if that were possible, I don't need a Rebbe, because I have Moshe Rabbeinu. The *ispashtusa* of Moshe in every generation is in a physical body, otherwise, they lied to us. R' Yoel Kahn said that if the Rebbe, G-d forbid ... then we can stop putting on t'fillin, *chalila* ...

THE REBBE KNOWS EVERYTHING BUT WANTS TO HEAR FROM US

When did Chassidim start writing to the Rebbe – did the Chassidim of the Alter Rebbe write to him?

It says so, in the introduction to Tanya. And there are many stories about Chassidim who went to the Rebbe and brought letters of Chassidim with them.

In the Rebbe's letters we see that he encourages writing to him.

I once got a letter from the Rebbe in which the Rebbe writes, "Although I haven't received a letter from you in a long time, sometimes by not writing one can know more than from the writing ..."

Meaning?

You need to write to the Rebbe even though he knows everything. Due to the normal order of things, you need to write. There is a system of nature in place, and Hashem wants us to write letters to the Rebbe.

WRITING TO THE REBBE IN RUSSIA

Someone who keeps the shiurim and does whatever he is supposed to, goes on mitvtzaim, conducts himself according to halacha etc., what does he lack if he doesn't write to the Rebbe regularly but just once or twice a year?

When and how much are up to the individual. There are many things the Rebbe said about writing a lot, and as far as the Rebbe's time, we are not to worry about that. Just write. That doesn't mean that I write; writing is hard for me.

You need to write and the Rebbe wants us to write. The problem is where to send the letters. That's also a matter of *hergesh*.

Those who want to write to the Rebbe and put the letter into the Igros Kodesh have a precedent. In Russia, they would put letters into sifrei Chassidus.

My grandson, Mendy Naparstek, whose wife is the great-grandchild of R' Chaim Shaul Bruk, told me after we did the shidduch with them, that she writes to the Rebbe through the Igros Kodesh about everything she does. The first answer she got about the shidduch was the letter sent to me. In the Igros it's published without my name. And in that letter it says to look into shidduchim.

If someone were to ask you now whether to ask the Rebbe about medical matters, when some say to ask a rofeh-yedid and others say

to write to the Rebbe and there are dozens of stories for both approaches, what do you say is the right thing to do?

To write to the Rebbe the good things too, but you need to write everything. What should you do with the letter? Put it wherever you want, in the Igros Kodesh, in a Tanya, wherever you want, the main thing is the writing. They say that as soon as you write the letter, the Rebbe receives it. The act of mailing it is just part of the normal way of the world, because from our perspective “tzimtzum k’peshuto” and it’s what the Rebbe wants. In any case, as far as nowadays, everyone should do according to his *hergesh*.

WRITING TO THE REBBE IS AN INHERENT PART OF BEING A CHASSID

So the focus should be on the writing and not necessarily on the response?

In 5727, I had yechidus and the Rebbe asked me: Did you place a *tzetel* on the tziyun?

I said, I gave a letter to the Rebbe.

The Rebbe asked: Were you at the tziyun?

I said yes.

Did you read the *maaneh lashon*?

I said yes.

Then the Rebbe said, in the *maaneh lashon* it says that you need to read the note at the tziyun.

I said, I brought the note to the Rebbe!

The Rebbe looked at me and asked when I was returning to Eretz Yisroel. When I said I was flying in two days, the Rebbe said: Fine, you won’t manage to get it done by the day after tomorrow, but submit the note to the secretaries and when I will be at the tziyun, I will take the note and read it.

What are you telling us with this story?

That I went to the tziyun because you’re supposed to go, but I gave the note to the

Rebbe. I submitted a note to the secretaries – did the Rebbe read the note at the tziyun or not, I don’t care. You need to write because a Chassid needs to write, it’s an integral part of the *hiskashrus* of a Chassid to the Rebbe.

True, you want an answer from the Rebbe, but the main thing is to know there is a Rebbe, not to make the insertion into the Igros Kodesh conditional on receiving an answer. We are in a difficult, bitter state, the Rebbe should come already! These are such subtle issues that whatever you will say will never be totally correct...

THE HISGALUS WILL HAPPEN RIGHT ON TIME

Don’t we have traditions about how Chassidim dealt with things in the past? This is not the first time that Chassidim are dealing with things like these ...

There is the story about R’ Mendel who wrote to the Rebbe Rayatz in his mind and the Rebbe sent an actual letter saying he received his letter. But then, whoever was near the Rebbe, saw the Rebbe, but now, nobody sees the Rebbe. It’s a problem. There was never such a problem.

Chassidim in the past knew how to cope. What do we do today? When will the Rebbe come?

I’ll tell you when. I don’t know exactly which day, but I think I can tell you in what situation... When did the Jewish people leave Egypt? It was the last second before entering the fiftieth level ... The Rebbe is looking at us and watching us play on, and the moment that our situation becomes critical... then it will stop...

In our current situation, the main thing we need to concern ourselves with is that it should happen now, because the current situation is intolerable. And the Rebbe will reveal himself! ■

The main point, though is that *we*, on our part, need to write.

An additional advantage of writing to the Rebbe and opening his *sefer* to read his letter which can be seen clearly is that when you get an answer from the Rebbe, it leads to and becomes *poel mamash* — action.

Let’s conclude with one small story illustrating this:

About five years ago, I got a phone call a few days before Pesach. “Are you having a Pesach Seder?” a voice of man asked. “Yes,” I said.

“How much does it cost?” he asked. “It doesn’t cost, everyone’s invited. Just come!” I told him.

“Can I bring my wife? He asked. “Sure!” I told him.

“But what if she’s not Jewish?”

Now that becomes a Halachic question, as you’re not allowed to cook especially for a non-Jew on Yom Tov, but we figured that out, and they both came. Turns out he was an Israeli Jew living in South Africa who *Rachmana Litzlan* was living with a non-Jewish woman, but his *Neshama* wanted a connection with Yiddishkeit and a Pesach Seder.

They came for the *Seder*, and after Pesach, we stayed in touch. We invited him again for Shavuos. When he told us that he’s planning to visit Eretz Yisrael soon, we suggested to him to write a letter to the Rebbe, which he did.

He opened up a volume of the Igros Kodesh, and in it, the Rebbe writes that you should learn Chassidus every week.

Since then, for over five years, he’s still coming every week to my house, he puts on tefillin, and we study Chassidus., we learn sichos of the Rebbe and Tanya. We learned the whole Tanya already!

He says that he wouldn’t miss this weekly study for anything, “It’s the oxygen I breathe!”

Now imagine if we just said, “ask the Rebbe for a B’racha,” would he be in the same place now?

The fact that he opened the Igros Kodesh and allowed himself to be open to an answer from the Rebbe certainly was something that contributed to his Yiddishkeit – today he learns Chassidus every week because of what the Rebbe wrote to him! And many other things changed in his whole life as a result.

I see this playing out many times, in my life and in the life of others who I know.

I know a woman who needed a B’racha for children. She wrote to the Rebbe several times and received answers to add in Tznius, Mezuzos, Kashrus, whatever it was. These things were fixed and strengthened, and the woman was blessed with children.

It’s not only that the Rebbe gave a B’racha and the problem was solved. That could have happened without the Igros Kodesh. Something actually changed in her life through this communication with the Rebbe.

Fixing and improving these areas, coming out of *Emunah P’shuta* that these are the Rebbe’s instructions to *me*, actually changed something in the person’s life! ■

1° Bava Basra 116a; see also Taanis 8a. See at length Likkutei Sichos vol. 11 page 173.

2° Yore Deah 335:10

3° See the sicha of 20 Av 5710, Likkutei Sichos vol. 16. p. 533.

4° See letter from Rosh Chodesh Shvat 5751; Igros Kodesh vol. 4 letter #885.

In the summer of 2015, **Michal Morgenstern**, a pregnant mother of five, was facing a harsh reality. Her husband **Eliezer**, a reserve officer in the IDF, was called up to fight in Gaza.

In an **emotional journal**, Michal relates how the answers she and her husband got from the Rebbe via the Igros Kodesh **transformed the weeks of the war** from days filled with dread to days filled with a sense of mission.

A moving personal account.

He's on a Mission, She's on a Mission

Life Experiences

ה'תשע"ה / תמוז



MRS. MICHAL MORGENSTERN ◦

CHAPTER 1: WAR

It was an ordinary Thursday evening in July. Haifa, Israel.

Dinner and bath time. Picture a tired, pregnant Mommy – me, after a long day at work, outnumbered by four lively youngsters. My dear husband Eliezer, “Ezzy,” – still out studying for exams. It’s late. I’m trying to get the table cleared, the baby in the bath, the fighting resolved, clean up the food spilled on the floor, in my 8th month of pregnancy, getting heavier and heavier by the minute, in my head counting the minutes till Ezzy comes home, kids in bed, relax.

Finally, long awaited, he walks in. Yay!

I stare at him as he stands in the doorway. His face is different. “I’ve been called up”.

And my world crashes. Tears come to my eyes involuntarily, as they do again now, as I write these words.

Just an hour ago I comforted my friend and neighbor, offered to help her with her kids, as her husband, decked out in wrinkled olive-green reserve duty uniform, hopped in a taxi with an enormous army bag and waved goodbye. She is alone with a newborn and two toddlers. “Called up”, echoes in my ears. “But you have a final exam tomorrow morning”, I manage to say.

“I need to get my gear and go. I need to be on base in a few hours. Didn’t you hear the news?”

Now I am in denial. My world shrivels - I am exhausted. I need to rest, and I was waiting for my husband to take the kids to bed. This is not fair. Going? Now? But Ezzy has an exam he has been studying for so hard. An entire semester hinging on one fi-

nal exam, tomorrow morning. Why now? “For how long?”

“They told us to be ready for three weeks. But no one knows at this point. It’s a war.” Thoughts circled in my mind, as I watched him pack a bag. Three sets of wrinkled olive-green reserve duty uniforms. Dusty boots. A bullet-proof vest. Tears fill my eyes, the background noise of the children – how did they get to bed? – recedes, and I fall into self-pity. How can they take my husband away now? The father of my children!

A million “what ifs” forced their way into my consciousness, and I couldn’t understand why this is happening to ME, to HIM, it must be a mistake.

Of course, this was not the first war we have endured, nor the first reserve duty Ezzy has been called up to. Of course, when we met, and married, Ezzy was a combat officer in the IDF; Of course, I knew back then that serving in the army was his way of doing *shlichus*, always helping other soldiers, putting Tefillin on with them, encouraging, giving a *dvar Torah* on Shabbos. When we met, Ezzy was married to the army. Then he married me. And now, in the middle of our life, the army called him back.

I couldn’t take it. I went outside to take out the trash. Worries flooded me. I felt incapacitated. Sobbing, I called my rebbetzin, my *mashpiah*.

“He got called up.” It was all I could say, weeping hysterically. She heard the news and understood immediately. Her son-in-law also... “Can this be for real? What does Hashem want of us? This is so unfair, he has responsibilities, he needs to pass his exams... and finish his training for *parnassah*, for the family. He has a combat position and you know what that

means. They are going down to Gaza. Maybe tonight. What should I do, and how can I understand this?”

“Can he defer?”

“No, don’t you know him? He’s adamant. He’s committed to the unit. It’s his responsibility to be there. He’s an Officer, they need him... They trained for this... there’s absolutely no talking him out of it in any way.”

“Perhaps you should write to the Rebbe, both of you, ask your questions and ask for a *bracha*. Be strong”. I agreed, and we hung up.

I walked back in, dried my tears, and took out a Tehillim. I told Ezzy I had to write to the Rebbe, and suggested he do the same. His bag was packed, and he was dressed in that wrinkly olive-green uniform, boots laced.

I wrote a *Pan*, poured out my heart, asked for advice, and that Hashem should protect my husband, keep him safe and that he should be successful. I put a sum in Tzedakah, and randomly opened up a book of the Rebbe’s letters, the “Igros Kodesh” volume 5. Ezzy did the same.

CHAPTER 2: MY ANSWER FROM THE REBBE

In his letter to the anonymous correspondent, the Rebbe starts by offering a blessing for success. He then analyzes that the correspondent has fallen into a dark place in his thoughts, and offers him and his wife advice, that they overcome this dark spell by studying Torah, which will both keep the mind off the physical situation and offer spiritual benefit. The Rebbe finishes off by wishing good health for his wife, may it be even through *kabalas ol*, that they should both take upon themselves to serve Hashem in a way of *simcha* (happiness).

Ezzy’s letter from the Rebbe:

In this letter, dated 1952, the Rebbe speaks about the developments in recent years especially in Eretz Yisrael. The Rebbe states that it

is clearly visible that these events cannot be interpreted according to the rules of history.

The conclusion, says the Rebbe, is that most often, the spiritual will defeat the physical, to the point where we see that victory even in the physical realm is achieved by the side which is stronger spiritually. Since this is the case for the *klal*, we learn and apply it to the individual, especially to each one of *Am Yisrael*, especially since after the horrific events of recent years (alluding to the *Shoah*), the responsibility upon each and every one of us (male and female), towards *Klal Yisrael* has increased, especially if one is in a situation where the leadership of this private individual will serve as an example which others surrounding him can learn from, in which case the responsibility increases even more so, since many individuals will be influenced by him. The Rebbe alludes to the individual having learned at the *Tomchei T’mimim* Yeshiva, saying that nothing is lost from what he learned there, and since Hashem has blessed him and given him the opportunity to live in *Eretz HaKodesh*, the Holy Land, of which the Torah states “*Eretz asher einei Hashem Elokeinu ba mreishis hashana ad achrit hashanah*”, — that G-d’s eyes are upon it at all times, and he is in a position to influence the public, and his example serves to a known group, certainly with the slightest introspection, he will feel the immense responsibility resting on his shoulders... the responsibility towards himself, and his household, which means towards the *Nefesh Elokis* that is inside every one of the *Bnei Yisrael*, which

” MY CHILDREN PICKED UP ON THIS MESSAGE AND WERE PROUD OF ABBA, WHO WAS IN THE TZAVA OF HASHEM “FIGHTING THE RESHAIM”

yearns and thirsts to utilize its powers and abilities in daily life and action...

Having read these two letters, the first in which I received instruction on serving Hashem through happiness, and “snapping out” of this dark spell with Torah learning, and the second which spoke to Ezzy about the immense responsibility towards something larger than himself, larger than our family unit, and yet not dismissing himself or the family unit, but including it, I felt suddenly a great relief.

I had my answer. I had a sense of understanding, of context, of purpose.

Israel was at war. The southern border was being attacked by rockets from Gaza. *Am Yisrael* was united. Since the horrific kidnapping of the three boys *Hy”d*, *Am Yisrael* was united in prayers, increasing in Tehillim, candle lighting, you name it.

Now this gave way to war, and my husband simply had the *zechus* to be part of it, to lead *Am Yisrael* in it. Furthermore, his ultimate responsibility was not to finish his final exams, or to help take out the trash, etc, it was to generations back, and generations forward. Even his responsibility to the family and to himself had a deeper meaning – i.e. the responsibility to the *Nefesh Elokis* of the family and of himself. And furthermore, my husband actually having been a student at *Tomchei T’mimim Lubavitch*, as stated in the letter, and actually being in a known position to influence others, both at school at the Technion, in the army where he serves, among his friends, neighbors, and at the Chabad House, this letter made sense!

The Rebbe explained that the spirit transcends the physical reality, as Tanya teaches us. This is true both on a macroscopic national level and on a personal level. This meant for me that I must take charge and decide how to view the situation.

CHAPTER 3: LIFE DURING THE WAR

Over the course of the next 45 days, Ezzy was away at the Gaza border, without access to a phone, let alone text, email, WhatsApp etc. The next 45 days and more, the south endured heavy artillery fire, sirens went off on an hourly basis, (in the south of Israel by the minute!), days in which we found ourselves routinely running to bomb shelters, and all the while I had not much information as to where my husband was (was he inside Gaza? The news was terrifying; ground forces such as his unit were exposed to booby traps and snipers). How long would this reality last? I went back to the Rebbe’s guidance often, and I summarized for myself:

1. Be *B’simcha*, snap out of this dark spell. If needed, have *kabalas ol* – know that this is Hashem’s will.
2. History does not play itself out according to the rules. The spirit is what decides if we win or lose: individually and collectively.
3. I can and MUST decide where my spirit is.
4. Leadership and personal example.
5. *Zechus* to live in *Eretz Yisrael* — “*Eretz Asher Einei Hashem..*”
6. Responsibility – to *Am Yisrael*.
7. Responsibility to self and family means responsibility to *Nefesh Elokis* – to the higher self, to the potential we yearn to fulfill.
8. Having these tools readily available, my spirits were high.

Hard to believe, but I felt charged, on a mission. I felt strong. Would I let me spirits fall, and consequently his? Would I abandon a soldier on the front? (And the kids at home?) NO! I had to be strong, optimistic, happy.

My children picked up on this message and were proud of Abba, who was in the *Tzava* of Hashem “fighting the *reshaim*” (*Tzahal* – *Tz’va Hagana L’Yisrael*, also can read *Tz’va Hashem La’ad*, and that is what it meant for us). And they too are in *Tzivos Hashem*.

We clearly felt that every good deed we did would help. This was the battle of the spirit. We held a *Mivtzah Mezuzah* in our neighborhood, re-checking our mezuzahs, and encouraging our neighbors to check theirs. We held rallies for the children, with Tehillim, the 12 Pesukim and tzedakah. The kids packaged Shabbos candles, colored signs for the soldiers and we hung up banners in the playground with *pesukim* from Tehillim which deal with winning the war. Our spirits were high. Since most women’s husbands were away, we took turns helping one another; one offered to grocery shop, another lent a car to those who didn’t have. I clearly remember one Erev Shabbos in which Ezzy was supposed to come home for Shabbos, after being away for over two weeks straight. He called Thursday, and I waited up all night for him. Friday morning, he said he’d be leaving later... I bought presents for the kids (from Abba, of course), cleaned, and made Shabbos meals that Ezzy liked.

Then at 12:47 PM, as I was on my way to pick the kids up from Gan (school), Ezzy called and said he couldn’t leave the base. They needed him, and they would probably be going into Gaza that night.

For a few minutes I was devastated. Shattered. Broken.

I sat down on the bench outside and let the tears come to my eyes. I didn’t feel I had the strength to get up.

Then I remembered that I had a choice. And Chassidus clearly teaches us what it must be. I picked up my kids, and we immediately gathered all the kids on the block and made a Shabbos party in the playground. My eldest, then six years old, ran and got the box of *Neshek* (Shabbos candles – *Nerot Shabbat Kodesh*) we hand out, and we handed them out. “Please light candles for our soldiers” we asked. And even people who we didn’t expect to, took candles and promised to do so. We were all dressed for Shabbas and ready to light 45 minutes early.

On Shabbos morning, I came outside to the playground only to find that the kids in the neighborhood had organized themselves to say Tehillim and recite the 12 p’sukim, something



we lead every week. This week they did it all on their own!

I was so proud of them. We were on a roll, and we were not stopping. Every act counted. Shabbos afternoon was Tehillim in the park. Shabbos Mevarchim – I said the whole Tehillim while the kids napped (note to self – “not so hard! I can do this! Why have I not been able to do this before?!”).

Friends and family from America donated money for gear for the soldiers, and we sent it down south with brave friends. We were on a mission as well.

The elation, the tangible sense of unity and purpose, was conveyed to and shared by my friends and neighbors. This all came thanks to the teachings of Chassidus. I felt in every bone that we are on the verge of Geulah, that this was the awakening the Rebbe so wanted us to feel. To wake up and feel alive because every second counts! We are at war, at the front, and we can't allow ourselves to sleep. The physical reality of news, sirens, bombings, paralleled the spiritual reality of being at war with apathy, at war with the *Yetzer Hara*, at the end of galus, ushering in Moshiach. It finally sunk in.

I was so far removed from my initial reaction when Ezzy was called up, that my friends and colleagues were shocked. “How do you manage?” they asked. “Aren't you worried sick?” or “can't he ask to come home?”

“Hashem sends strength” I answered and meant it more than ever before. Strength that I didn't know I had, *could* not have had in a rational way, but did.

I had internalized that this was our *zechus*, to be part of, to do our job, to be our higher selves. Our *Nefesh Elokis* was yearning for this! We (the kids and I) were so busy doing *mitzvaim*, handing out candles, making Tehillim parties, sending *mezuzahs* to the *sofer stam*, I could no longer even relate to an attitude of “why was this happening to me”.

And whenever I felt, at a moment of silence, or when the news was unavoidably horrific or tense, that I just might fall back into that “black spell”, or that I just couldn't take the worries any longer, I would open up the letter the Rebbe wrote, and review: *Ruchnius* will govern *Gashmius*. We have a responsibility to *Klal Yisrael* and to our *Nefesh Elokis* – our potential. We are put in this situation due to *Hashgacha Pratis*. And because of all this, we are serving Hashem *b'simcha!*

Ezzy came home a few days after Tisha B'Av, after they called a cease-fire with the Hamas *yimach shmam*.

Seeing him safe and sound made me realize how important he is to me, how we cannot take one another for granted, how we must strive to love and respect one another so much more.

CHAPTER 4: TAKE HOME MESSAGES

In *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 36 on Parshas Shemos, the Rebbe discusses the idea of fear. The Rebbe discusses the question of how Moshe Rabbeinu, after killing the Egyptian, and Yaakov Avinu, when confronting Eisav, were filled with fear (even though both of them had been promised by Hashem that He would be with them and protect them), and why the Torah takes lengths to tell us this.

The Rebbe explains in this *sicha* the idea of the famous Chassidic saying “think good and it will be good”. Thinking good does not imply passively accepting, or even passively saying “it will be ok”, rather it is an *avoda* in and of itself – to place all of our trust, our *bitachon*, in Hashem, and actively work on this.

We are taught further that when we do this 100%, we are guaranteed to see good results, in a revealed way. In my situation, I applied this, and saw how well it worked.

I was confronted with an almost paralyzing fear. There were two courses of action possible – either succumb to fear and anxiety, which

would have then been conveyed to my family and surroundings, and escalated from there, perhaps causing psychological damage; conversely, once I realized, through reading the letter from the Rebbe, that there was another course of action – to actively and truly believe that it IS good, and that it will BE good – the outcome was immediate.

Not only was I infused with extra strength to continue and survive, but I found extra strength to go out and be active, and do *mitzvaim*, and influence those around me. This affected my kids, who I clearly felt were also infused with special strength to get through this time.

This is also an example of the concept the Rebbe highlighted in the last *ma'amar* given to us as of yet — “*VeAta Tezave*.” A Jew in *galus* is like an olive: when squeezed to the brink, that is when the great potential which is given to everyone emerges.

I realized through this difficult time, that Chassidus is not something to be left in the books on our bookshelf. It is alive, applicable to every moment, to breathe, survive, and flourish by.

Those 45 days this past summer could have been unbearable (and I would venture to say they were for most people in Eretz Yisrael), and while I would not volunteer to relive those worries for a million dollars, the lesson I hope will remain with me for life:

We are here on a mission; we are carrying the torch of previous generations and must not fail. We do not have the luxury to sink into self-pity. Yes, even (and especially) when reality is tough, “unfair”, and we don't understand, it is because Hashem believes in our abilities and potential. If we are challenged, perhaps it is because we can and must serve as an example, an inspiration to others. Our reality is literally formed by our mindset.

Lastly, every act we do is of utmost importance to bring Moshiach. When there is

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an actual physical war, and snipers are sitting around you, rockets pointed at you, and your loved ones on the front line, you don't sleep or fall into self-pity or apathy. You act. Then, it is easy to feel the importance of saying Tehillim, *davening*, and giving *tzedakah*, lighting Shabbos candles early, and helping your neighbors prepare for Shabbos. It is a matter of life and death! This is the way the Rebbe taught us to live – to feel the urgency of every good deed, in the final stages of ushering in the Geulah. If we can continue to do this now that the physical war is over, we won't need another war, Moshiach will be here before.



Michal Morgenstern was born in Haifa, Israel, and grew up in San Diego, CA, where she connected to Chabad through Chabad of UC. Michal studied engineering at UC Berkeley and then made Aliyah and joined the IDF, where she met her husband, Eliezer. Michal and Eliezer are proud parents of Nesyah Chaya Mushka, Avigayil Rivka, Michael Elimelech, Shirel Tamar and Menucha Rachel. Michal currently works as the head engineer of Ramat Yishay Local Authority. ■

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Kosher-For-After-Pesach Beer

Manhattan Beer Distributors dominates the beer market in the NYC area. The problem was that its Jewish owner, **Simon Bergson**, a Jewish Holocaust survivor refused to sell his company's chometz for Pesach »

» **With guidance from the Rebbe** via the Igros Kodesh and a heimishe kokosh cake recipe, **Rabbi Kalman Weinfeld** from OK Kashrus made Manhattan Beer **Kosher for after Pesach!**

יש בעל הבית לבירה זו...



Story

22.01.2017

MENACHEM ZIEGELBAUM ◦

IF YOU LIVE IN THE

United States and you like beer, then you most likely have encountered beers sold by Manhattan Beer. The company is one of the biggest beer distributors in the United States with annual sales of tens of millions of bottles and cans.

If you are American and like beer and are religious, then you have a problem buying beer from this company for several months after Pesach. This is because the owner of the company, Mr. Simon Bergson, is Jewish. He was asked to sell his chometz but always refused.

Why? He had many good reasons. First, why should he sell his business to a stranger when he built it up himself? Second, being a Jew unfamiliar with religious life, he did not understand why chometz had to be sold. Third, being a law-abiding American citizen, he knew that he could sell his business only to someone who had a license to sell alcohol. Someone like that was probably one of his competitors. Only a nut would sell his business to his competitor.

When there isn't any beer, this is a problem for many Jews who consume this beverage as well as for event halls that host simchas, and of course for anyone making a shalom zachor.

PESACH PROBLEM

The story began during a Shabbos HaGadol drasha in the Beis Eliezer Yitzchok shul on Kingston, corner of Montgomery in Crown Heights. Rabbi Don Yoel Levy is the rav of the shul and is also the head of the OK kashrus organization.

During his drasha, R' Levy spoke about the problem of buying beer after Pesach. According to the data that he had, most beer sold in New York was distributed by Manhattan Beer which is owned by Simon Bergson.

"This is full-fledged *chometz sh'ovar alav ha'Pesach*," said R' Levy. He said that over the years, various kashrus organizations approached Bergson but were unable to convince him to sell his chometz. Therefore, they would be publicizing a letter, warning one and all, including supermarket owners, owners of halls and restaurants, not to buy beer from Manhattan Beer after Pesach. Whoever needed beer had to buy a lot of it before Pesach and sell it with the rest of his chometz, for after Pesach it would be prohibited to purchase it for a long time. R' Levy referred to it as almost a "decree that the public could not withstand."

Rabbi Kalman Weinfeld is rabbinic coordinator of the restaurant, hotels and catering department at the OK. He was sitting at the drasha. Next to him sat Rabbi Nosson Sternberg, a businessman and askan, son-in-law of the askan, Rabbi Eli Slavin. When they heard this, R' Sternberg whispered to R' Weinfeld that previously, he had been in charge of computers and programming at a bottling plant. In his work, he had annually attended a beverage association conference in New York where he got to know the representative of Manhattan Beer. This rep was a religious Jew.

Said R' Weinfeld, "If you know him, maybe, being frum, he would be willing to help arrange a meeting with Mr. Bergson so we can explain to him the importance of this matter?"

That very night, R' Sternberg called the man that he knew. It turned out, the man no longer worked at Manhattan Beer. The man said that he himself had tried talking with Mr. Bergson about selling the chometz, but to no avail.

R' Sternberg asked the former employee whether it was possible to show up at the main office of Manhattan Beer without an appointment, in order to meet with Mr.

Bergson. The man said that wasn't possible. As far as he knew, they would not even allow him to park there, never mind walk into the building without an appointment.

R' Sternberg hung up the phone with a sigh. He didn't think there was anything they could do and he called R' Weinfeld to report.

Nevertheless, R' Weinfeld kept thinking about it. The next day, after he completed a supervisory visit in New Jersey, he didn't stop wracking his brain – how could Mr. Bergson be convinced to sell his company's chometz to a gentile, thus saving tens of thousands of Jews from transgressing a prohibition.

He decided to write to the Rebbe in detail and ask for a bracha and guidance for how to proceed. He put the letter into a volume of Igros Kodesh as many Chassidim do.

The letter he randomly opened to was a letter from Purim 1944 in which the Rebbe explains the mitzvos of gifts to the poor and *mishloach manos*; when you are trying to get someone to influence a friend in Torah and mitzvos, there are two ways of doing so. One way is "*matanos la'evyonim*," by telling the person how disgusting evil is, as well as the punishment of gehinnom for someone who transgresses. This way, says the Rebbe in the letter, is the mussar approach. The other way is to explain the greatness of the Creator, how great Torah and mitzvos are, and how to come close to the Creator of the world. This way is the way of Chassidus.

The differences between the two ways, says the Rebbe, is that with the first way, when you present it to someone, it's not a mitzva in and of itself; it's a means to draw him close to Torah and mitzvos, which is why

it's the aspect of "gifts to the poor." The second way, the presentation itself is a mitzva for it is a mitzva to know the greatness of the Creator, "know the G-d of your father." This way is not only "gifts to the poor" but also "*mishloach manos ish l'rei'eihu*."

R' Weinfeld immediately understood which approach he had to take. He fortified his bitachon that in the merit of the clear guidance from the Rebbe and the brachos, he would be successful.

Since the Rebbe spoke about *mishloach manos*, he thought this would be the right way to approach Mr. Bergson.

WHO MAKES KOKOSH CAKE EREV PESACH?

If you know R' Weinfeld, you know that he is gifted not only with charisma but also with nonstop original ideas. He decided to go straight for Mr. Bergson's heart before reaching his mind.

MR. BERGSON PUTTING ON TEFILLIN FOR THE SECOND TIME IN HIS LIFE



Since he heard that Mr. Bergson was born in Europe after the war, he assumed that he knew what kokosh cake is, which is why he called his mother in Yerushalayim and asked her for the recipe.

“My mother had never heard of normal people baking kokosh cake the week before Pesach, but I begged her and explained that it was for a holy purpose. Boruch Hashem, it came out great.”

After R’ Nosson Sternberg located the address of the main offices of Manhattan Beer in the Bronx, R’ Weinfeld headed over there. As anticipated, he was not allowed to even enter the company parking lot and was politely asked to leave. He drove off while strengthening his bitachon, knowing that this was a difficult mission and it wouldn’t be easy.

Although it was one of the busiest weeks of the year, erev Pesach, and the kashrus of restaurants and hotels, as well as overseeing more than two hundred mashgichim was his responsibility, he decided to visit Mr. Bergson’s home. Once again, it was R’ Nosson Sternberg who, through his contacts and siyata dishmaya, located the address. It was a luxury apartment in an exclusive Manhattan high-rise building.

At the entrance, he was stopped by the building’s security guard, who asked who he was and why he was there. R’ Weinfeld said he had come with a present for Mr. Bergson. The guard told him to wait and called the Bergsons and said that a friend named Kalman Weinfeld was waiting in the lobby with a present. After a few seconds, the guard put down the phone and told R’ Weinfeld to leave the present with him. “The Bergsons asked that you leave it here,” he said.

Not having a choice, that is what R’ Weinfeld did, but he did not leave. With permission from the guard he waited in the lobby for half an hour, as he said Tehillim for the success of his mission. He davened to Hashem that Mr.

Bergson come downstairs so he would be able to meet with him directly.

His prayer was accepted. The elevator opened and out came Mr. Bergson with his wife and their guests. They headed for the exit.

R’ Weinfeld knew this was the critical moment. He had a few seconds to catch the attention of Mr. Bergson. As he quickly walked in his direction, he whispered the prayer, “Hashem, open my lips; may my mouth relate Your praise.” This was his mother’s advice. She had told him in the past that whenever he needed to speak to someone important, to say this brief prayer.

As he approached, he held out his hand and said in Yiddish, “Shalom aleichem Reb Shimon.”

A surprised Mr. Bergson looked at the bearded man with the black hat and suit. He held out his hand and said, “Aleichem shalom Reb Yid.”

“I am not a shnorer and I don’t run an organization. I came to give and not to receive,” said R’ Weinfeld, knowing that the first words he uttered would make it or break it.

“I left a kokosh cake for you with the guard.” Mrs. Bergson looked pleased. She knew what that was.

“I just ask that you finish it before Pesach so it won’t be chometz on Pesach,” he added. He took the opportunity to say, “The second thing I came to give you is the ability to do a good deed for the Jews of New York and this is because I heard that you do many good deeds.”

Mr. Bergson’s sharp business sense was intrigued. “What is the matter regarding?” he asked.

R’ Weinfeld quickly explained the subject of selling the company chometz of Manhattan Beer.

“I was already approached a number of times on this subject,” Bergson answered. “I never understood why I should sell my business. And in general, I am prohibited by law to sell my business to someone who does not have a New York State liquor license.”

Mr. Bergson spoke quickly, as he pulled out a personal business card. “I am going now to the restaurant with my guests. I would be happy if you called my office tomorrow and we will see if we can work something out.”

R’ Weinfeld appreciated the opening offered by Mr. Bergson, something which had never happened before, but he also understood that an appointment for tomorrow might well be a polite way to get rid of him, so he politely and with pleasant insistence deflected the offer by saying, “I accept your permission to call you tomorrow, but please allow me to wait for you here until you return from the restaurant, since the matter is extremely important.”

Mr. Bergson gave a short laugh and disappeared through the exit.

STARTING FROM NOTHING

Shimon Bergson’s story is unusual. His parents, before the war, both lived in the Polish city of Chechinov, but did not know one another. They first met in Auschwitz. It was when the Nazi guards sent his father to the woman’s camp to fix something.

After surviving the death march to Mauthausen, they were liberated by the Allies and returned to their hometown where they married. Shortly thereafter, they left Poland. Their son Shimon was born in a DP camp in Austria as his parents waited for a visa to the United States.

When they finally arrived in America, his father opened a business that sold rugs and clothing. When Shimon was old enough, he started working in the beer business. “I started with gornisht,” he told a reporter. His father

obtained a loan from friends for him which Shimon repaid a year later.

He became a dominant figure in New York’s beer market. He turned his storefront on the Lower East Side into a beer empire. Over the years, he acquired more exclusive distribution rights to more popular brands and in the last decade, he became the biggest wholesaler in New York with an annual sales of close to a billion dollars.

Despite this amazing success, he did not completely forsake his roots. His father had left Judaism and tradition behind after the war, but Shimon observed a little bit. His conversation is peppered with Yiddish phrases. “Even if I’m not shomer Shabbos, that doesn’t mean I don’t observe mitzvos,” he says, as he cites his attendance at Yomim Noraim services.

FATEFUL MEETING

How long should he wait? This, R’ Weinfeld did not know. It could take an hour and could also take half a day, which was particularly concerning right before Pesach when his other responsibilities increased significantly.

Either way, he made use of the time. He took out his cell phone and called a number of renowned halachic experts in the field of kashrus, Rabbi Levy, Rabbi Weissmandel and Rabbi Asher Eckstein, who work in kashrus year-round, and asked them for halachic guidance. What were the best, most mehudar ways to sell the chometz?

Although they were also busy before Pesach, with numerous halachic questions posed to them, the three understood the significance of the situation and gave him as much time as needed to clarify the halacha.

Nearly three hours passed before the Bergsons returned. R’ Weinfeld saw the look of surprise on Mr. Bergson’s face as he saw R’ Weinfeld still standing in the lobby, waiting for his return.



MR. BERGSON WITH THE OK STAFF

This time, he was more patient and listened as R' Weinfeld described the problem and the difficulties caused to thousands of Jews, as well as possible solutions. "I told him what the rabbis suggested, that he give me power of attorney through a *kinyan sudar*, so I could sell all his chometz interests and that the goy would be one of the managers of his business."

He agreed to discuss this idea and invited R' Weinfeld to his office the next day at one o'clock, to arrange the deed of sale and the other details.

R' Weinfeld reported to R' Nosson Sternberg and the two agreed to go together to the meeting. That night and the following morning, they worked to formulate a sale of chometz document with the optimum wording. He received the final version from Rabbi Eckstein and took the document to the offices of Manhattan Beer.

The meeting took place as arranged, with one of the company managers in attendance. The conversation between the parties was conducted with all seriousness, and covered every detail of the sale process.

Mr. Bergson, the owner of the beer giant, appointed R' Weinfeld to be his shliach to

carry out the sale according to halacha and in accordance with the law. He followed every detail of traditional practice, and learned all details of the sale. He understood that this is not a matter of circumventing halacha, but a real sale.

The goy who bought the chometz was the director of the purchasing and sales department, and it was made clear to him that he would be the real owner of the business.

To remove any doubt, R' Weinfeld repeatedly said that the matter was exceedingly serious, and that the deposit given by the purchaser was sufficient to complete the sale, making him the true, absolute owner of all of the chometz, with the rest of the payment to be made after Pesach based on an accounting of the expenses and profits.

The two of them, the buyer and seller went out of the room occasionally to consult with their people and when they wrote the deed of sale, they carefully recorded all the addresses of the plants, properties and warehouses of the company.

A moment before the conclusion of the meeting, Mr. Bergson asked R' Weinfeld, "How much do you get for this deal?"

R' Weinfeld replied, "You insult me; this was not for money." It took Mr. Bergson some time to digest that this was purely for the mitzva.

The atmosphere in the conference room was celebratory. They all warmly shook hands and R' Weinfeld couldn't help but suggest that Mr. Bergson put on tefillin.

"The last time I put on tefillin was at my bar mitzva, 57 years ago," he said thoughtfully.

R' Weinfeld interpreted this as his consent, rolled up his sleeve, put a yarmulka on his head, and put tefillin on him. After the tefillin were taken off, they danced and sang, "Siman Tov U'Mazal Tov."

"I am moved by having put on tefillin," he admitted. He said he was pleased that he helped many Jews refrain from the prohibition of *chometz she'ovar alav ha'Pesach*.

R' Weinfeld gave him shmura matza for the entire Pesach. He also gave him the Rebbe's *HaYom Yom* in English and the book about the life work of Rabbi Berel Levy a'h, which tells his life story and his work over decades in fortifying kashrus around the world.

At just that moment, in walked the director of sales who said that one of the biggest supermarkets in Flatbush, that a few days earlier had canceled a big order of beer that was going to be shipped right after Pesach, heard about the sale of chometz and reinstated the huge order. This was because rabbis in Flatbush who heard about the sale of chometz, gave their approval.

"I felt this was a sign from heaven," said R' Weinfeld to *Beis Moshiach*, "that our actions were pleasing and that we were answered from Above."

JEWISH AWAKENING

A few days after Pesach, R' Weinfeld and R' Nosson Sternberg went to the offices of the

company again, in order to thank Mr. Bergson for what he did. Mr. Bergson welcomed them with a friendly hug like an old friend. "Thanks to you, I did two mitzvos on one day," he said emotionally. "The mitzva of tefillin, for the first time in 57 years and the mitzva of Pesach, that you helped me prevent many Jews from transgressing the prohibition of *chometz sh'ovar alav ha'Pesach*."

He told them that since they had visited him the previous time, he used the free moments that he had to familiarize himself with traditional Jewish sources and matters relating to Torah and mitzvos. He pointed out that during the first days of Pesach, he went on a family vacation and did not go to work at all. During the following days, when he went to the office he did not act like the owner ...

"Anyone who asked me any decision-related questions about the business, I referred to the real owner," he said proudly. "After the holiday, I even gave the buyer the profits according to the accounting that we made at the end of the eight days."

R' Weinfeld concluded the story in the conversation that I had with him, "A year has passed since then and Mr. Shimon Bergson has become more involved in his Yiddishkeit, and I hope there will be a continuation.

"I thank Hashem that I am privileged to be a Chassid of the light of the generations, the Rebbe, who implanted Chabad and middos in me so I would use them with the proper understanding and feeling, so that when I would meet a lost Jew, I would reveal his better qualities and provide him the opportunity to perform mitzvos.

"Thank G-d I merited to be from those who are engaged and involved in the holy work of kashrus supervision. I hope that I merit to always be among those who provide merit to the many, and that all my actions be for the sake of Heaven and pleasing to Hashem." ■



Rabbi
Shalom Yaakov
Chazan

THE RULES OF WRITING TO THE REBBE

IN Shevat 5748, the Rebbe delivered some sichos in which he established the rules about writing to him. He said that medical questions should be asked of an expert doctor, and even better – to a doctor-friend, and in special cases, to consult with two top doctors.

Some years later, the doctors thought there was a complication in my wife's pregnancy. They recommended a certain medical procedure. Since we were used to asking the Rebbe before doing things like this, I wrote in and asked one of the secretaries to give the letter to the Rebbe. I said it was an urgent medical question. The secretary told me that he was very sorry but the Rebbe told him not to give him medical questions, as he had said in the sicha.

I thought this was the approach of that particular secretary so I tried my luck with another secretary with whom I had a better relationship. To my surprise, his response was the same, i.e., that the Rebbe said to consult with a top doctor or a doctor-friend. Of course, after listening to the Rebbe and consulting with doctors, you could write to the Rebbe about what the doctors said and ask for his bracha.

I wrote a new letter in which I informed the Rebbe about the doctors' recommendation to do a medical procedure and asked for a bracha.

THE REBBE'S DIRECTIVES ARE ETERNAL

Today too, when we write to the Rebbe and we open to an answer in the Igros Kodesh, it is important to remember that the Rebbe's horaos are eternal and do not change. Therefore, as in the past, writing to the Rebbe cannot be a substitute for following explicit horaos and guidance that the Rebbe gave (in the sicha of 21 Adar 5748, Hisvaaduyos vol. 2 p. 429) which are:

“Regarding questions in avodas Hashem, Torah and mitzvos, ask a rav moreh horaa (or a beis din) in your town, including also the instruction of the Mishna, ‘assai lecha rav.”

“Regarding questions about parnasa and the like, ‘counsel with many advisors,’ consult with knowledgeable friends.”

“Regarding medical questions, ‘and guard etc. your souls,’ conduct yourself in such a way that you won't get sick to begin with, including, when necessary, doing as an expert doctor says ... and even better, a doctor-friend, and in special cases, ‘counsel with many advisors,’ two top doctors, and where there is a difference of opinion, as the majority says to do.”

Obviously, after doing as the Rebbe instructs and consulting with a doctor expert/friend, someone knowledgeable etc. - then you can

write to the Rebbe that you did as instructed and are now asking for a bracha. There is no question that doing as the Rebbe said is one of the proper vessels for receiving the Rebbe's bracha.

As the Rebbe himself said in the sicha where he set those guidelines, “Regarding requests for a bracha, pidyonos, etc. - we are repeating and informing once again that in these matters there is the ‘chazaka’ [i.e., established norm] that they will continue with Hashem's help to fulfill the requests etc.”

ASKING ABOUT OTHER MATTERS

In addition, since these are answers in the Igros Kodesh, it is proper to note another guideline the Rebbe emphasized, that asking by opening a holy book is only when, “you want to clarify how to act in optional matters (in those things about which there is no instruction in the Torah to do things a certain way) (Shabbos Parshas BaMidbar 5749, Hisvaaduyos vol. 3 p. 224), or put another way, “An important point needs to be clarified: searching for signs in Torah about how to act is only for those things where there is room for doubt etc., and more generally, in optional matters ... in which there is a need to seek a ‘sign’ ‘in heaven’ (Torah) about how to conduct ‘your deeds.’ But in a matter in which you know for a certainty that you need to act according to Torah, an actual matter pertaining to Heaven, there is no need to seek signs etc. and obviously one should not postpone something because of some sign etc.” (Shabbos Parshas Noach 5749, Hisvaaduyos vol. 1 p. 310).

Along with the Rebbe's request of Chassidim that they write detailed reports about their

Chabad work, the Rebbe asked that they not write letters about trivial matters: “There are those who think that priority should be given to writing me letters and the more the better, without it mattering who is writing, what his position is, and what he is writing about, etc. ... Therefore, it is necessary to clarify that before writing a letter to think yet again whether this letter is necessary or it's a waste of time, both of the writer and the recipient” (27 Cheshvan 5749, Hisvaaduyos vol. 1 p. 263).

CONSULTING WITH A MASHPIA

Since sometimes one can draw various conclusions from the Rebbe's answers, it is proper not to rely only on oneself, but to show it to a mashpia, a rav posek halachos, a friend, etc. as the Rebbe said to do in these sichos and in the sicha of 2 Adar 5748, or as the Alter Rebbe himself concludes his introduction to Tanya:

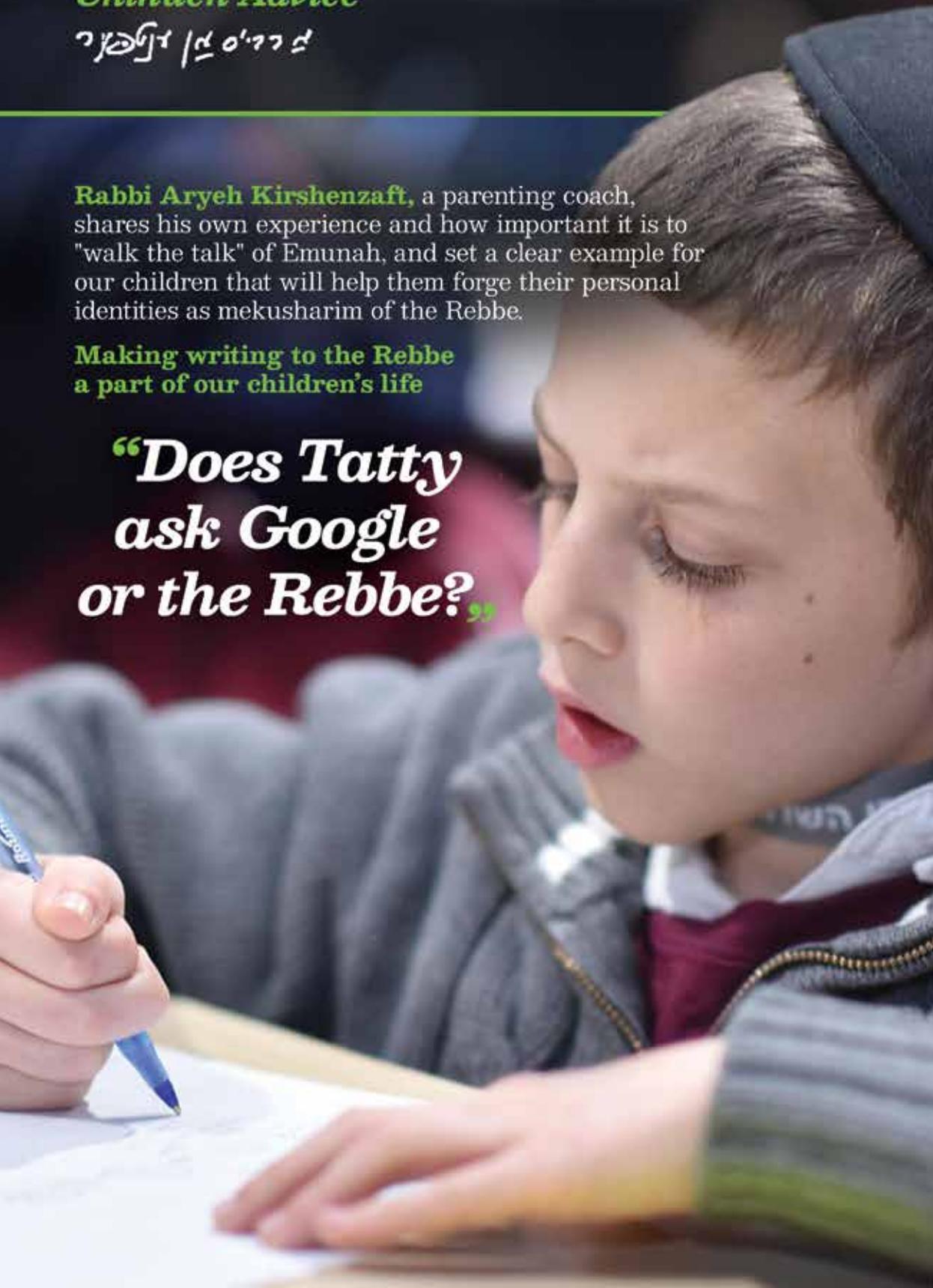
“He whose mind is too limited to understand how to derive advice from these pamphlets, let him discuss his problem with the foremost scholars of his town and they will enlighten him. Of [these scholars] I request that they not lay their hand upon their mouth, [i.e., not to keep silent when asked for advice, for fear of appearing to be proud in their knowledge], to conduct themselves with false modesty and humility. It is well known how bitter is the punishment of one who ‘withholds food’ [i.e. withholds Torah knowledge from him who seeks it], and also how great is the reward [for one who provides that knowledge], as per the saying of the Sages on the verse ‘Hashem enlightens the eyes of them both.’ For Hashem will shine His face upon them, with the life giving light of the face of the King.” ■

” TODAY TOO, WHEN WE WRITE TO THE REBBE AND WE OPEN TO AN ANSWER IN THE IGROS KODESH, IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THAT THE REBBE'S HORAOS ARE ETERNAL AND DO NOT CHANGE.

Rabbi Aryeh Kirshenzaft, a parenting coach, shares his own experience and how important it is to "walk the talk" of Emunah, and set a clear example for our children that will help them forge their personal identities as mekusharim of the Rebbe.

Making writing to the Rebbe a part of our children's life

“Does Tatty ask Google or the Rebbe?”



ELUL 5775. My five-and-a-half-year-old decided that he must go to the Rebbe for Hakhel. Our financial situation at the time did not enable us to get up and go, and yet how could we not go in a Shnas Hakhel? We could not decide what to do.

One evening in Elul, I was sitting in the living room and was deeply engrossed in learning, when my son came over to me with a volume of Igros Kodesh.

“Abba, what did the Rebbe answer me?”

Something about how the page looked seemed off to me and I realized that he had handed me a volume of the letters of the Mittlerer Rebbe. I took another look and saw his letter to the Rebbe written in big letters with brown crayon on a white paper. Somehow, he managed to form the words, “Rebbe, I want to go to you!”

He so badly wanted to travel that he took matters into his own hands to move things along. After writing his letter, he climbed on the couch and pulled out the first volume of letters he reached. “Today’s kids are something else ...” I marveled.

“Abba, nu, what did the Rebbe answer?”

I began reading the letter. The Mittlerer Rebbe wrote about certain limitations in connection with traveling to him. Still, when they arrived, they should come in large groups, not as individuals.

Needless to say, when my son heard this answer, he went to my wife and gaily announced that the whole family was flying to the Rebbe.

That’s the way it is with the generation of Geula. The five and a half year old takes a crayon and scrawls one letter at a time, climbs on the couch, and you start packing suitcases.



I was recently witness to a fascinating shidduch discussion.

Mother: He is an amazing bachur.

Shadchanis: To what extent is the Rebbe in his life?

Mother: What do you mean?

Shadchanis: When he is uncertain, does he think what of what the Rebbe wants?

Mother: Of course! He is a Chassidische bachur!

Shadchanis: I mean, tell me, when was the last time he wrote to the Rebbe?



“TO what extent is the Rebbe in his life?” is a question that we as parents need to ask ourselves from the moment a baby is born. As parents, we have the responsibility of inculcating within the child the basic premise that the Rebbe, and only the Rebbe, is the one who sets the course for our lives. It is hard to explain to children all the deep matters that we learn in Shaar Ha’Yichud V’Ha’Emuna, but it is very easy to show them how to implement it for real in the everyday details of life.

A woman once went to a rav with a slaughtered chicken and the question, “Is this chicken fit to be eaten?”

The rav took the chicken and examined it closely. After a few minutes he asked the woman to wait, since he had to look into some s’farim in order to be able to pasken. The rav went to an inner room and a few minutes later he returned with his answer. “I am sorry. According to Shulchan Aruch, the chicken is treif and you need to throw it out.” The woman accepted the p’sak and turned to leave.

Suddenly, the rav said, “One minute. I didn’t look at what the Rema says yet. Maybe the ruling is different according to him.”

He went back to the inner room and a few minutes later emerged with the good news.

“According to the Rema, there is no problem. You can cook and eat it. It’s fine.”

The woman happily thanked the rav. Then the rav said, “One minute, we’re not done. I need to see what the B’er Heiteiv says about this.”

The woman said, “I don’t understand. Please tell me just one thing. Does this chicken go into my pot or into the garbage?”

The Rebbe explained this story thus. To the woman, the kitchen is the “simplicity,” the core reality. It’s her life; it’s what interests her. She wants to know the Halacha, but to her, the answer is the “newness,” the outside factor intruding itself on reality. The discussion among the poskim plays less of a role in her world and daily life. To the rav, it’s the other way round. He is very interested in these details. To him that is the “simplicity.” Of course, he would be happy if the chicken could be used, and he would be sorry to see it thrown out, but it is far from his reality. To the rav, a halachic discussion is the “simplicity” of reality and the cooking in the kitchen is the “newness” factor.



PROPER chinuch is when it is obvious to the child that we conduct ourselves solely according to what the Torah says, and not according to worldly assumptions. A child hears as his father come into the house and tells his mother about the latest controversy on the internet or he tells her what he learned in the Chassidishe parsha. The child can discern the difference in tone and enthusiasm in how it is said, as well as in his mother’s response.

A girl knows whether her mother is dressing her neatly and cleanly because that’s the way it needs to be, or she is urging her to wear a flower headband to look like everyone else. If the home broadcasts that the world is important, the world will be seen by the child as the “simplicity,” G-d forbid. When there is the proper chinuch in the home and the parents

care what the Rebbe says, what the Torah says, and what the rav says, then the children are raised from the outset to care about ruchnius; these are children of the generation of Geula!

When the father is at a crossroads in life and he checks Google to know what to do, his child absorbs worldly assumptions as the “simplicity.” But when the father faces a dilemma and he asks his mashpia and sits down to write to the Rebbe, the child understands that G-dliness is the “simplicity” and consequently, the world represents “newness.”

People today are looking for a way to raise healthy, stable children in a new, confusing world, but no educational advice or tip can be as effective as laying a G-dly foundation in the child’s life which will build up his resistance to negative influences. And the most powerful way to instill in our children the abstract concept of “G-dliness as simplicity” is when we parents write to the Rebbe often, and guide our children to do this too. It can be from very young ages with a picture that the child draws for the Rebbe.



JUST as writing to the Rebbe was always a fundamental aspect of hiskashrus between Chassid and Rebbe, a pure Chassidishe chinuch is also based on the children writing to the Rebbe. The way children write to the Rebbe can be divided between the practical side and the essence of the process.

The practical side is very much like that of the adults: washing hands, giving tz’daka, looking at a picture of the Rebbe, picturing his face, saying the Rebbe’s perek, making a good hachlata, etc. Of course, it is important to make the proper preparations, and children want to do this and understand its importance. At the same time, there is no need to pressure children to do things that they aren’t ready for. The preparations depend on the age of the child

and his abilities, and every parent has to make that assessment.

But when it comes to the essence of the writing, it is very important to remember that a child is innocent and accepts the truth as it is, and so we need to say things in the most natural, simple way and beware of mixing in our adult intellect into their pure world. Even if it seems to us that the child wants to write about something that may not be of immediate relevance like, “We should have a new car,” “That we should move,” and the like, we don’t need to explain to him why this isn’t the time for that, etc. If he wants to write, he wants to connect to the Rebbe, so let him connect!

For the same reason, a child can write to the Rebbe whatever he wants, draw a picture, tell the Rebbe a secret, or show the Rebbe a test with a good mark that he got. Let him connect the way he wants.

The question that adults have, “How does it work that you put it in a book and the Rebbe receives it and answers?” should not be brought up with children. It is important to downplay the emotions and intellect, and present the writing in a genuine and straightforward way. G-dliness illumines openly in a child and he matter-of-factly accepts that the Rebbe receives his letter and answers it.

With older children who have started asking how it works, it’s an indication that the intellect is starting to work and then we need to provide explanations. Even then, the explanation should be simple and clear; the Rebbe himself spoke about writing in this way and by Divine Providence, the page you open to is where the Rebbe’s response is.

Older children can be told that there are things you ask your parents, a rav, a mashpia, and things you don’t ask the Rebbe at all because the Rebbe gave clear instructions about them.

Obviously, when a child misuses writing to the Rebbe, you need to intervene and gently



redirect them. For example, this would apply when a parent gave an instruction, and the child is asking the Rebbe for the purpose of seeing the Rebbe say something else so that the parents will have to change their mind.

Writing to the Rebbe in our generation is a very powerful, personal, and essential component of hiskashrus. Our children instinctively relate to the Rebbe in a personal way and mostly manage without us. We need to show them that we write, and include them and give them the opportunity to write too. This is the right way to connect them to the source until the complete hisgalus. ■

One-Sided Correspondence

Mrs. Tziri Levanoni wrote a letter to the Rebbe, but forgot to mail it...

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מנחם מענדל שניאורסאהו
ליובאוויטש

770 איסטערן פארקוויי
ברוקלין, נ. י.
ביה, ייב אדי"ש תשמ"ו
ברוקלין, נ. י.

מרה חיי צירל ת"י

ברכה ושלוש

במענה על ההודעה אודות מצבה,

השי"ה ימלא ימי הריונה כשורה ובנקל
והלד זחור"ק בעתה ובזמנה כשורה ובקל.

הפ"נ שבמכ" יקרא בעת רצון על ציון
כ"ק מו"ח אדמו"ר זצוקלה"ה נבג"מ זי"ע.

ברכה לבשו"ט בהענינים אודותם
כותבת

HOW SURPRISING CAN IT BE

to open an envelope of letters collected over the years? It's nice to go down memory lane and recall special moments, to reread blessings from the Rebbe, to relive the events in diaries describing years of learning in the Rebbe's mosdos.

But as important as it is to remember uplifting Chassidishe experiences, they are usually not surprising. However, Mrs. Tziri Levanoni of Kfar Chabad was surprised.

It all began while preparing for Pesach one year. As Mrs. Levanoni cleaned out some drawers she came across a drawer in which she kept an envelope with letters and various envelopes that had accumulated over the years.

Mrs. Levanoni did not usually go through all the pages, letter by letter, for Pesach, but that year she decided to do so. Not that it was necessary for Pesach, since the drawer was clean and not used for chometz.

She removed a letter out of one of the envelopes with trembling hands and read it again and again. She found it hard to believe her eyes. It was a letter in her handwriting and on the envelope she had addressed it to the Rebbe. The letter contained her request for a blessing for an easy birth and a live, viable child.

She remembered the circumstances in which she had written the letter. At the time, she was on bed rest at her mother's house in Kfar Chabad before the birth of her third child, Menachem Mendel, who today serves as shliach and director of the Chabad House in the HaRishonim neighborhood in Ramat Gan. She had written this request, as Chassidim do.

Was it possible that the letter had not been mailed to the Rebbe?! But the Rebbe answered it! We got a letter in response!

She quickly searched for the Rebbe's letter and found it. It was addressed to her and the Rebbe wrote, "... In response to informing me of her situation, may Hashem complete her pregnancy properly and easily, and may she give birth to a healthy, viable child in the right time properly and with ease. The p'n with her letter will be read at an auspicious time at the gravesite of the Rebbe, my father-in-law. With blessings for good news in the matters of which she writes ..."

She remembered that after writing her letter to the Rebbe, she had put it in an envelope and waited for her husband to return from Tzfas, where they lived at the time and where he worked all week, so she could give it to him to mail. Later on, she could not remember for certain whether she had given it to him and assumed that she had.

Now, four years later, it turned out she hadn't. The letter was still in her house. But she had written to the Rebbe and even if the letter hadn't been mailed, it had arrived ... The Rebbe received her request and had sent a response and the blessings were fulfilled.

"I received a standard response from the Rebbe for a letter that was not standard at all. But it reached its destination."



When I heard this story directly from Mrs. Levanoni, I was excited by the message it illustrates. There is no difference between then and now. Writing to the Rebbe gets the letter to its destination. Because the Rebbe "feels" a Chassid, always, in every situation, any place. "And the Rebbe will find a way to answer." ■

The Incredible Story the Rebbe censored from the Kfar Chabad Magazine in 1984 | By Yerachmiel Tilles

Kidnapped in Moscow

RABBI PINCHAS TEITZ

of Elizabeth, New Jersey, made twenty-two trips to Russia in the '60s, '70s and '80s. Even during the height of the Communist empire and the secret police, he managed to secure permission for his visits. He had good contacts in the government, and they trusted him. Nevertheless, he was often able to utilize his visits to secretly smuggle in important Jewish paraphernalia, such as *tefillin* and prayerbooks,

for the benefit of the oppressed Jews of the USSR.

Although Rabbi Teitz was born, raised and educated in Lithuania and its *yeshivot*, which rarely associated with Chabad chassidim, it was impossible to be involved in Jewish life in the Soviet Union in those days and not laud the activities of the Chabad chassidim, who had dedicated their lives to the preservation of Torah Judaism there. Thus, many times he

merited to bring objects from the Rebbe to his chassidim in Russia, and vice versa.

One summer, when he was preparing for another trip, a representative of the Rebbeshowed up at his house, bringing him a package of prayerbooks, Bibles and several pairs of *tefillin*. This was no surprise; he was already used to, and even expected, the arrival of an emissary and the usual package.

But this time the messenger from the Rebbe

also took out a small-sized volume of *Tanya*, the foundational book of Chabad teachings, and handed it to the rabbi. He explained that the Rebbe asked that Rabbi Teitz take it and carry it with him while in Russia—but didn't say whom to give it to.

"I was astonished," related Rabbi Teitz afterwards. "To cooperate with the Rebbe to deliver basic Jewish necessities to the deprived Jews of Russia was one matter, but to go with

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Rabbi Mordechai Pinchas Teitz [1908–1995] was the well-respected, innovative leader of the Jewish community in Elizabeth, New Jersey, for many decades. A scholar, educator, early pioneer in the use of modern technology to teach Torah, and tireless behind-the-scenes activist on behalf of Russian Jewry, a biography of him has recently been published by Ktav, titled *Learn Torah, Love Torah, Live Torah*.

a copy of *Tanya* in my luggage? To Russia? It seemed unnecessarily dangerous. The KGB knows very well what a *Tanya* is. What plausible explanation could I give if it were detected?”

In the end, he decided to take it. If the Rebbe was making such an unusual request of him, he must have a good reason.

On the third day of his stay in Moscow, in the evening, while he was walking back to his hotel from the Great Synagogue after the evening prayer, two young men suddenly approached him as he passed through a dark side street. They took him by the arms and forced him to quickly go into a nearby parked car. The rabbi was taken by surprise and, of course, frightened. Were they the KGB? Was this a kidnapping?

His fears were soon dissipated, however, as his two “snatchers” turned out to be local Chabad chassidim. They apologized for the rough treatment, explaining that this was the only means by which they could possibly bring him to a safe house to talk to them without arousing suspicion, and they needed to discuss urgent matters with him.

Only after they were safely in the house did the two introduce themselves. They said they had investigated and discovered that he could be trusted, and what they wanted of him was

that he should deliver a message to the Rebbe for each of them. They had major life decisions to make, for which they needed the Rebbe’s input, and they couldn’t wait for an official emissary.

The older one had recently found out that the KGB was actively pursuing him. He wanted to know whether the Rebbe thought he should flee Moscow and move to another city, or remain, despite the obvious danger, in order to maintain and further his important educational activities in the Jewish underground, of which the Rebbe was already aware.

The second, younger man wanted the Rebbe’s advice whether he should apply for an emigration visa to Israel. Recently, a number of such requests had been approved. On the other hand, he currently held an excellent position as a top engineer, and as soon as he would submit his application, he would be fired from his job; if the request was refused, he would be left without any means of support.

Rabbi Teitz was very moved by the encounter, and especially by the fiery dedication of the two chassidim. He promised to commit to memory their names, their mothers’ names and their questions for the Rebbe, because it would be much too dangerous to write them down and have such a paper in his possession.

After this, the three men relaxed and engaged in conversation, marveling at the differences between their lives. The rabbi happened to mention that soon before his departure from home, the Rebbe had given him a copy of *Tanya* to keep with him on the trip, but hadn’t explained what should be done with it.

The eyes of the two chassidim opened wide. “Do you mean to say that you have this *Tanya* from the Rebbe in your possession? Now? Here?” they exclaimed enthusiastically.

Rabbi Teitz silently took the *Tanya* from his coat pocket and showed it to them. They grabbed it from him and eagerly examined

it from all sides and angles. Their increasing excitement was palpable. Clearly, they were overjoyed to be holding a book that less than a week ago had been in the Rebbe’s own holy hands.

However, it turned out there was more to it than that. While fondling the book, one of them shouted out in amazement. Too excited to speak, he pointed to what their intense scrutiny had uncovered: a page had been slightly crimped by folding down the top corner, as a person sometimes does in place of a bookmark.

They opened to the page and were awestruck by the very first words: “. . . **He is extremely pressed for time, and finds it utterly impossible to delay . . .**” (p. 323 in the standard edition; p. 634 in the bilingual edition—near the end of the fifth book).

“That’s it! That’s my answer from the Rebbe!” cried out the older chassid, visibly shaking with emotion. “The Rebbe is telling me to hurry and escape from here.”

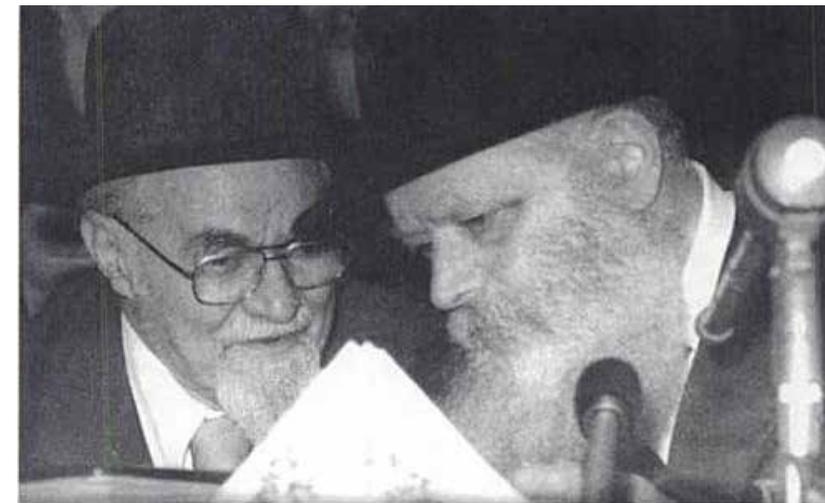
The younger chassid quickly picked up the book and eagerly examined it even more closely, hoping to find another crimped page. And there was one! Again they were overwhelmed. This time it only took two words: “. . . **to enter the Land . . .**” (p. 74 in the standard edition; p. 130 in the bilingual edition—near the end of chapter 29 in the first book).

“That’s the answer for me!” he shouted excitedly. “I should apply to make *aliyah* to the Holy Land now.”

The two pleaded with Rabbi Teitz to allow them to keep the book. He refused, saying that

the Rebbe had instructed him to carry it with him but had said nothing about giving it to anyone.

“To this day,” related Rabbi Teitz to Aharon Dov Halperin, the editor of *Kfar*



RABBI MORDECHAI PINCHAS TEITZ WITH THE REBBE

Chabad magazine, “whenever I study something from this volume, or even happen to glance upon it, I recall this extraordinary episode and get excited all over again.”

Rabbi Teitz warned the editor not to publish the story, so as to not damage the rabbi’s relationships with his valuable contacts in Russia and the government’s trust in him. The editor transcribed the story in its entirety and submitted it to the Lubavitcher Rebbe on 17 Av 5744 (1984). He received a reply that same day: “I am pleased to receive this, but absolutely do not publicize it in any form at this time.”

For over a decade the story was suppressed, but when Rabbi Teitz passed on to his Heavenly award in the final weeks of 1995, it quickly found its way into print. ■

Reprinted from KabbalaOnline.org

WHETHER YOU ARE a very Chassidische youngster who doesn't start your day without an hour of learning Chassidus, and concludes the day with another shiur or two in the evening, or whether you are a youngster who works hard and makes do with "one chapter in the morning and one chapter in the evening," *how much time are you really devoting to our main job – preparing the world to welcome Moshiach?*

Since we are Lubavitcher Chassidim, we need to learn inyanei Moshiach and Geula (to hasten the Geula), to try and understand it and internalize it (to live Moshiach), and even to try and connect what we learn with the reality in the world (to open our eyes and see how the world is progressing toward Geula). In addition, we need to teach our family members and our mekuravim and of course, to ensure that at home there is an atmosphere of Moshiach, that people should talk about Moshiach as much as possible. All this needs to go along with accepting the rule of the Rebbe MH"M and publicizing that he is the prophet of the generation and about his prophecy, that *hinei Moshiach ba*.

But how can we do so much in so little time?

This is precisely what *Beis Moshiach* is about:

A group of talented people work full time throughout the week, on this magazine which you are reading now. All this, for us! Every one of us.

1. LEARNING ABOUT GEULA – BRIEF AND FASCINATING

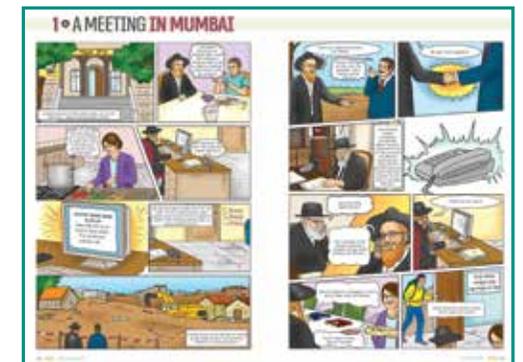
Every week, they sit and think and plan about how to take a topic in Geula and present it in an interesting, appealing way so that even if we come home after a long day of work, we can still sit and read the excellent column or interesting article that will teach us a topic in

Geula, clearly, so that it gets through to us and gets us to start living Geula.



2. GEULA CONCEPTS – ADAPTED FOR CHILDREN

Beis Moshiach does not suffice with that. They understand that you have children, who also need to be educated to live Geula and Moshiach. So they invest some additional quality time, and provide your children with comics containing clear messages of Moshiach and Geula. Your children will eagerly read it, and suddenly we will hear them talking about Geula concepts in the context of their childhood world. It penetrates. It works.



3. SEEING GEULA – IN WORLD EVENTS

That is not all. The Rebbe wants us to see the Geula in terms of its effects on the world.



7 Reasons You Need Beis Moshiach At Home

FOR A MERE \$15 A MONTH IN CROWN HEIGHTS, AND \$18 IN THE REST OF THE UNITED STATES, YOU CAN RECEIVE THIS PUBLICATION EVERY WEEK!

That is a somewhat complicated task even if we had the time, especially for a Chassidishe youngster whose entire world is Likkutei Sichos and Maamarim and is not up on what is going on in the world. Even for a working man who is more exposed to world news, it is usually coming at the expense of time that he could have used for learning subjects related to Geula. Okay, major problem here. How do we bridge the two subjects? For that as well, *Beis Moshiach* has come up with one, two or three, who succeed in contemplating world events from the perspective of Geula. In turn, they present the results to you in easily accessible form.



4. THE REBBE'S PROPHECY – GENERAL AND SPECIFICS

The writers for *Beis Moshiach* provide us with the means to place the prophecies of the Rebbe front-and-center within our consciousness.

This is done through interesting articles on the general prophecies of the Rebbe addressed to the entire Jewish people, along with prophetic miracle stories that the Rebbe continues to perform these days after Gimmel Tammuz. These amazing miracle stories strengthen us, and provide light material suitable for children and mekuravim.

5. THE WHOLE PACKAGE

– REBBE AND CHASSIDISHEIT

Although, as the name attests, *Beis Moshiach* is focused on the topic of Moshiach, but obviously, it is all presented in an atmosphere of hiskashrus to the Rebbe and suffused with highly charged Chassidishkeit. From the cover that provides a new picture of the Rebbe every week with the proclamation of “Yechi Adoneinu,” to the very last page, it is all saturated with Moshiach, Rebbe, hiskashrus and Chassidishkeit.



6. A STEADY DIET OF GEULA

As long as we haven't merited the complete hisgalus, we are still in galus. And the galus, unfortunately, knocks at our door every day, regularly, and has a negative influence on all of us. In order to fight the galus, we need something Geula'dik which will also arrive regularly and influence us with its positive, Geula message. If only *Beis Moshiach* could be a daily publication, providing daily chizuk! But at least it arrives once a week and each time, it helps us vanquish the galus.



7. THE POWER OF HISKASHRUS

The media is one of the most powerful tools that galus uses, to suck us into the galus-world. After Gimmel Tammuz, all the media was enlisted on the behalf of galus. The general atmosphere was “we erred all along” or “we did not err, but we definitely did not merit.”

Various media outlets waxed nostalgic over the past and did not see a future for the continuation of Chabad as led by the Rebbe. It's all over, the trip to Beis Chayeinu is out of the question. Nor can we write to the Rebbe and receive brachos. So, people went back to the past and organized trips to the gravesites of our Rebbeim.

In the midst of this grief and depression, there were many individual Chassidim who withstood the test and did not get swept up in the general mood. They believed that the Rebbe is chai v'kayam, and continues to lead us personally, and he is Melech Ha'Moshiach who will redeem us. But each of them was isolated. The general talk was the opposite of what they thought and the individuals who thought otherwise had no way of knowing that there are thousands of Chassidim who think just like him.

A person, by nature, is a social being and is affected by his environment. When the environment constantly bombards us with a galus outlook, we are affected. If the situation continued that way, all those thousands of “individual” Chassidim would have caved in,

one by one, to the psychological crush that was imposed on them. When “everyone” thinks a certain way, how long can someone stand alone?

Beis Moshiach took this information tool in the opposite direction. While using mass media, *Beis Moshiach* connects the thousands of isolated Chassidim and makes them into one, big movement. *Beis Moshiach* delivers reports on the ground about the activities of the shluchim that are permeated by Moshiach and suddenly, we, those isolated Chassidim, realize and sense that it's not just us. It's all of us! It's Chabad!



HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

Now that we have a fuller appreciation of all the benefits that we derive from *Beis Moshiach*, and how important it is to subscribe to this magazine, so that we can live with Moshiach and so our families can live with Moshiach, the truth is that even if it cost a hundred dollars a month, it would be worth the investment.

However, for a mere \$15 a month in Crown Heights, and \$18 in the rest of the United States, you can receive this publication every week! That is 0.25% of the average monthly salary. Yes, not even one percent and not even half a percent. A quarter of a percent!

The atmosphere in your home will change into one of Geula and Moshiach and it's all a click away. So, no need to think twice. **Go to www.BMoshiach.org or call: 718-778-8000 and subscribe now!** ■

SHABBOS

07/06

ג' תמוז

CANDLE LIGHTING	SUNRISE	LATEST SHEMA	MIDDAY	SUNSET	SHABBOS ENDS
8:11	5:31	9:15	1:00	8:29	9:20

ג' פרקים: הל' טוען ונטען פ' טז, הל' נחלות פ' א-ב. פרק אחד: הל' מטמאי משכב ומושב פ' יב. ספר המצוות: מ"ע רמו. רמח רלד

SUNDAY

07/07

ד' תמוז

SUNRISE	LATEST SHEMA	SUNSET
5:31	9:16	8:29

ג' פרקים: הלכות נחלות פרקים ג-ה
פרק אחד: הלכות מטמאי משכב ומושב פרק יג
ספר המצוות: מ"ע רמח

MONDAY

07/08

ה' תמוז

SUNRISE	LATEST SHEMA	SUNSET
5:32	9:16	8:28

ג' פרקים: הלכות נחלות פרקים ו-ח
פרק אחד: הלכות שאר אבות הטומאות פרק א
ספר המצוות: מ"ע רמח

TUESDAY

07/09

ו' תמוז

SUNRISE	LATEST SHEMA	SUNSET
5:33	9:16	8:28

ג' פרקים: הלכות נחלות פרקים ט-יא
פרק אחד: הלכות שאר אבות הטומאות פרק ב
ספר המצוות: מ"ע רמח

WEDNESDAY

07/10

ז' תמוז

SUNRISE	LATEST SHEMA	SUNSET
5:33	9:17	8:28

ג' פרקים: הלכות סנהדרין פרקים א-ג
פרק אחד: הלכות שאר אבות הטומאות פרק ג
ספר המצוות: מ"ע קעו. מ"ל ת רפד. מ"ע קעה

THURSDAY

07/11

ח' תמוז

SUNRISE	LATEST SHEMA	SUNSET
5:34	9:17	8:27

ג' פרקים: הלכות סנהדרין פרקים ד-ו
פרק אחד: הלכות שאר אבות הטומאות פרק ד
ספר המצוות: מ"ל ת רפב. מ"ע רכט. רכח

FRIDAY

07/12

ט' תמוז

SUNRISE	LATEST SHEMA	SUNSET
5:35	9:18	8:27

ג' פרקים: הלכות סנהדרין פרקים ז-ט
פרק אחד: הלכות שאר אבות הטומאות פרק ה
ספר המצוות: מ"ע רכז. רכד. רל. רלא. מ"ל טו

THE TIMES ON THIS PAGE ARE FOR BROOKLYN, NY

KIDS Corner

STORY TIME

A DUCH? ONLY TO THE REBBE!

R' Shneur sat, bent over the table. He had a white paper and a pen and he would think and write a line, think for a while and then write another few words. He wanted to fill the page with many lines but only managed to get a few words down in writing.

Our story begins nineteen years ago. R' Shneur and Chani T, a young couple with a baby, Mushka, went on shlichus to Germany.

The place they were sent had a Jewish community but it wasn't a community as we know it. The Jews who were registered there knew hardly anything about Torah and mitzvos. There was no shul in the area and forget about Jewish schools.

The local Jews, although not religious, wanted to feel their Judaism a bit more and they asked the local head of the community, "Why don't we have any religious programming?"

The head of the community thought and said, "We will bring you a rabbi." He contacted the shlichim office in New York and asked for their help in finding a shliach/rabbi.

That is how R' Shneur and Chani got to that foreign place. They did not even know the language and they were unfamiliar with the mindset which is so different than that of the Jews of Eretz Yisrael. The Germans,

for example, are reserved and very particular about time. They prepare for every event half a year in advance, while most Israelis are warm, show up late to events and do things at the last minute.

The young shlichim lived in a small house among gentiles and from there, they spread the light of Judaism.

"Here is a list of fifty people. They are Jews who live here in the area," said the head of the community.

R' Shneur took the list and looked it up and down. They were all strangers to him but each one was a world, a pure Jewish soul, and it was his mission to ignite the light of Judaism in them.

"Every week, I will want a detailed report about what you did the previous week," said the man.

R' Shneur still had no idea what could be done. He had just arrived in the city. He knew nobody and it would take him time to connect with people, but he placed his trust in Hashem and the Rebbe who sent him to this out-of-the-way place where, it seemed, ever since the Holocaust, the fire of Torah had been extinguished.

R' Shneur took the list with the phone numbers and began making calls.

“Hello, this is Rabbi Shneur. I want to invite you to the Friday night services at my home,” he said and gave his address.

“Who gave you my phone number? Don’t call me!” said an angry voice.

It wasn’t pleasant getting a response like that but R’ Shneur ended the conversation pleasantly. Then he went on to the next number on his list.

“Why are you calling me? What do you want from me? There is nothing for you to do here!” shouted the man.

R’ Shneur did not give up. He called the entire list. The results were three people came to his house Friday night.

When Shabbos was over, R’ Shneur sat down with a paper and pen since he had to report to the head of the community. What should he write? That I called fifty people and three people came Friday night? That I sat and spoke with ... ? It sounds pathetic ...

“This is what I did this week?” he thought and felt sad. He tried to fortify his trust and hope for progress but it happened very slowly.

Every week, when he sat down to write his weekly report, he felt very frustrated. He tried to get the community leader to free him of the task, but the man insisted.

“What do you want me to write you in the report – what I served?” R’ Shneur asked sarcastically.

“Write as you have been writing, i.e. how many people showed up to pray, who you called, who you spoke to; everything you did.”

A half a year passed in which there was some outreach and R’ Shneur had to write his weekly report to the community leader.

There was nothing he could take pictures of and show off. There was just reaching out to one Jew and another Jew. There were some Jews who had emigrated from Poland and knew Yiddish who joined in activities but not many beyond that. It took a long time for the local people to warm up and participate.

One day, he thought, “I write a report for the head of the community every week but only write a report to the Rebbe once a month. That’s not right! It should be the opposite way round, i.e. I should write to the Rebbe every week. As for the community, if only I didn’t have to write ... From now on, I will write to the Rebbe every week.”

That very week, he wrote a report to the Rebbe about the low-key work he did with the local Jews. To his surprise, the following week, he received a letter from the local Jewish community office which said: Dear R’ Shneur, we rely on you and value the work you do with the Jews here. You do not need to write a weekly report any more. It is enough for you to report once in a while. Carry on and be successful ...

R’ Shneur was astounded by this change. Since then, he writes a weekly report to the Rebbe. After nineteen years on shlichus, one page is hardly enough space for him to write an update.

At first, the shul was in his home. After a while, they rented a place for a shul and slowly it became too small for all the people who attended. A beautiful, large building was built which has minyanim every weekday and Shabbos. There are also holiday programs, a kollel and shiurim for young and old on a daily basis, weekly activities, evening programs for women, day camp and more.

The Jews of Germany are ready for the Geula. ■

THE REBBE KEEPS HIS PROMISE!





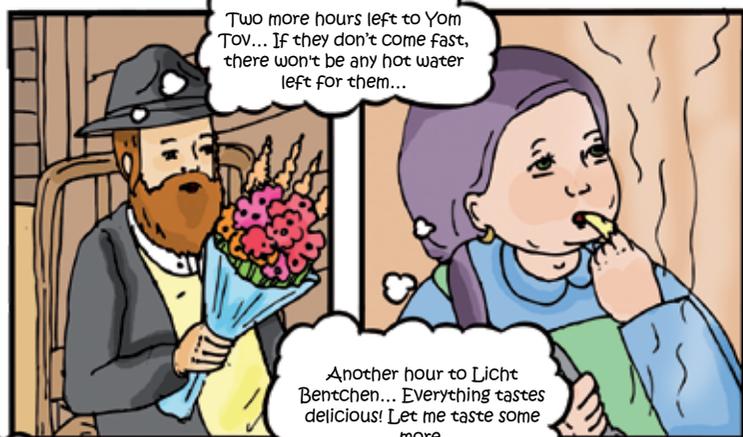
Genendi!! Continue cleaning, we have a large group of guest coming.



That's it, all is ready!



Two more hours left to Yom Tov... If they don't come fast, there won't be any hot water left for them...

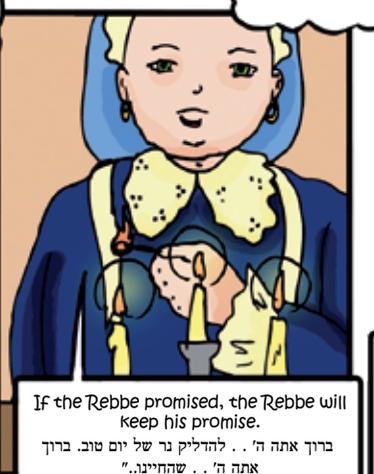


Another hour to Licht Bentchen... Everything tastes delicious! Let me taste some more.

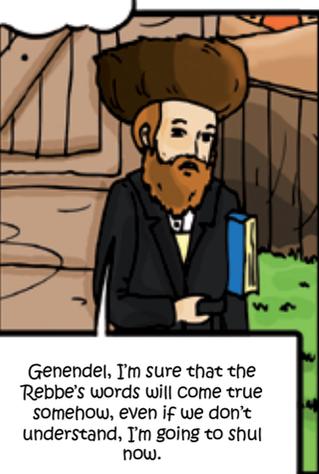


If this group doesn't come fast, they might not have any food left for them.

The Rebbe promised. I'm sure that the guests will end up coming!



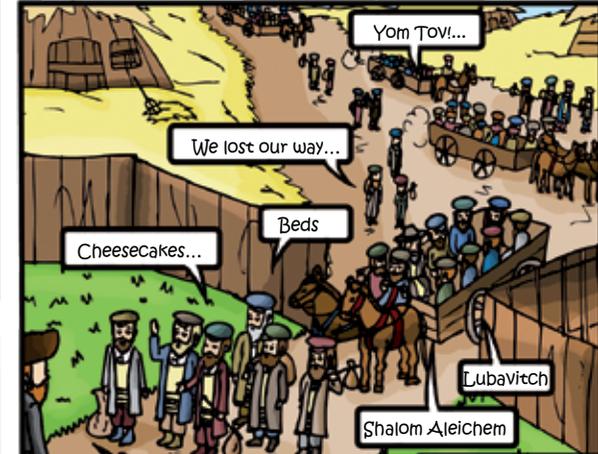
If the Rebbe promised, the Rebbe will keep his promise.
ברוך אתה ה'... להדליק נר של יום טוב. ברוך אתה ה'... שהחיינו.



Genendel, I'm sure that the Rebbe's words will come true somehow, even if we don't understand, I'm going to shul now.



An earthquake?! Let me go see what happened!



I don't get what's going on over here!



We were on the way to the Rebbe for Shavuot, but we got lost on the way, and we traveled much extra, and here we made it at the last second, sorry for the short notice. Anyway, can we stay in your inn? We're about 200 Chasidim, no more. We will work out the payment after Yom Tov.



Genendel!! Quickly!! The Rebbe fulfilled his promise!! A hundred guests! I got all the towels already, I'll make beds on the grass...

Everyone had a most uplifting Shavuot:

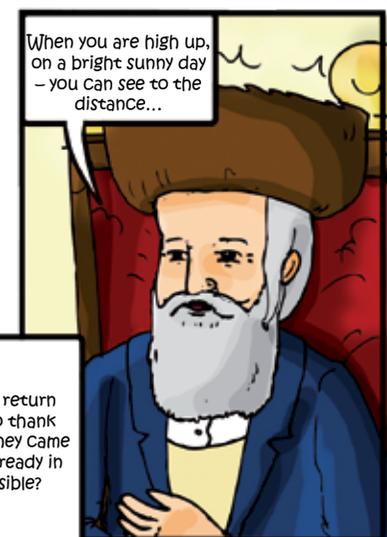


Motzoet Shavuot:

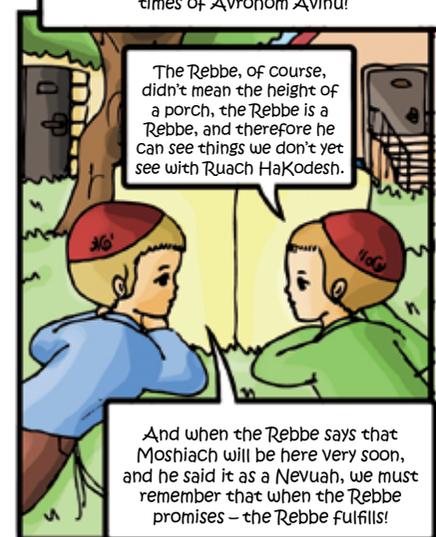
Thank you so much Reb Mottel, such great hospitality hasn't been witnessed since the times of Avrohom Avinu!



Rebbe, thank you. I've come to return the 5 rubles you gave me and to thank you. But I don't understand; if they came so late, how did you see them already in the morning? How is that possible?



When you are high up, on a bright sunny day - you can see to the distance...

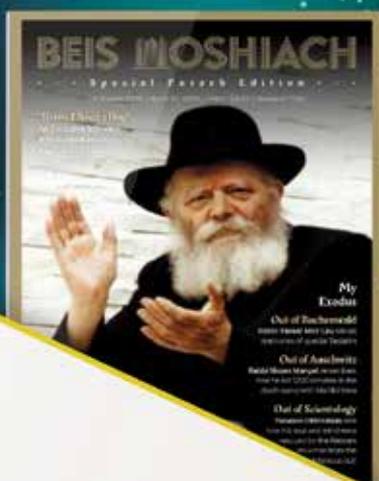


The Rebbe, of course, didn't mean the height of a porch, the Rebbe is a Rebbe, and therefore he can see things we don't yet see with Ruach HaKodesh.

And when the Rebbe says that Moshiach will be here very soon, and he said it as a Nevuah, we must remember that when the Rebbe promises - the Rebbe fulfills!

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