

# HATOMIM

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Rosh Yeshivas  
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Johannesburg, South  
Africa



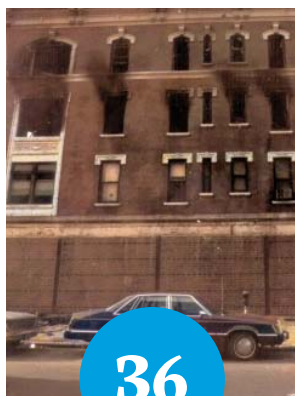
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## Gaining A Matured Outlook on Moshiach

understanding  
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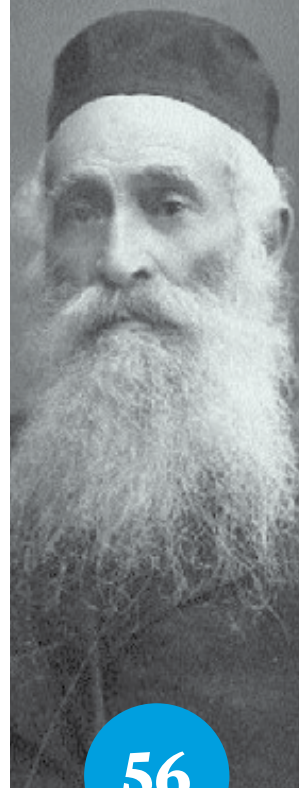
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talmidim

## BEIS MOSHIACH

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# Why Was a **“Zecher”** Not Established For **Hakhel**? פֹּתֵחִין בְּדִבּוּר מַלְכוּת

Harav **Mordechai Savitzky** was an alumnus of the Chafetz Chaim's Yeshiva in Radin and a musmach of Vilna's famed rav, R' **Chaim Ozer Grodzensky**. As a young bachur, he corresponded with the Rogatchover Gaon and published this correspondence in one of his many sefarim. After arriving in America from war-torn Europe in 5699 (1939), he was appointed av beis din and rabbi of Boston, a position he held for more than forty five years. In the United States, he formed a special bond with the Rebbe Rayatz and later with the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach.

After recovering from a severe medical condition, he came to 770 on 4 Kislev 5748, Shnas Hakhel, to thank the Rebbe for davening for him. After Mincha, the Rebbe requested that they “talk in learning” which they did in “Gan Eden HaTachton,” the hallway outside the Rebbe's room.

The Rebbe and Harav Savitzky discussed a variety of topics, among them the mitzva of Hakhel. We present here a translated transcript from the Yiddish conversation that was recorded on tape.

[After mincha, Rabbi Savitsky approached the Rebbe Shlita and gave him “Shalom Aleichem”. The Rebbe apologized for not making adequate preparations for his visit and added that it is not possible to enter his room, but they can talk in learning near the room “because when two Jews meet they should talk in learning.”

**The Rebbe Shlita:** Since the matter of “Hakhel” was mentioned, and considering the extent of the fondness for this matter — this year being “the year of Hakhel” — there is a question that I have been bothered with for some time:

The mitzva of Hakhel only is in effect while the Jews are on their land, but after the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash and the Jews being exiled from their land, the mitzva is void. But why was a ‘zecher’ (remembrance) not established for Hakhel (in the Mishna and Beraisa, or among [the works of] Gedolei Yisrael over the generations) in the same way we observe a “zecher l'Mikdash” in several matters, even matters of practical customs and actual Halacha.

In our case the question is stronger: the mitzva of Hakhel is (to quote the Sefer HaChinuch) “a strong pillar and a great honor for religion” – then surely they

should have established a memorial for Hakhel, if such ‘zecher l’Mikdash’ acts were established for *particular* mitzvos!?

There is a *kuntres* that appeared in Yerushalayim with many answers to this question, but I still haven’t found an easy and simple explanation that isn’t “lomdus.” An answer to this question ought to be understandable and suitable for all those included in the “Hakhel” – men [as well as] *women and children*!

**Rabbi Savitsky:** Perhaps the reason for this is because at this time “there is no king in Israel”.

**The Rebbe Shlita:** According to many commentaries “At a time when there is no king ... the greatest of the Hakhel reads [the Hakhel Torah-reading, which can mean] either the “greatest in his generation” or “the greatest in Israel” or the greatest in that particular crowd of “men, women and, children.”

**Rabbi Savitsky:** Maybe because we are not in Eretz Yisrael.

**The Rebbe Shlita:** This only explains the fact that we do not do a “Hakhel” in the Beis HaMikdash. But now in the Diaspora —even if we’ll claim that there is no king and not even a “greatest in his generation” — the question arises: after all, the purpose and the goal of Hakhel exist now too; Namely - “so that they may hear and learn and fear Hashem their G-d and observe to do all the words of this Torah.” Why then should there not be a ‘zecher’ for this just as we have such a ‘zecher’ for many other [Beis HaMikdash] observances?

More so:

The Alter Rebbe writes in his Shulchan Aruch (regarding the prayer for rain in Eretz Yisrael which begins on 7 Mar-

Cheshvan, “fifteen days after the festival so that the last of Israel will reach his home and the rain should not stop him”) that **“after the *churban*, they would gather from all the Yerushalayim suburbs for the pilgrimage as is still done today.** Therefore, the Sages did not change the practice of asking for rain only after 7 Mar-Cheshvan in Eretz Yisrael.”

We see then, that – at least at certain times – there was a ‘zecher’ for the *Aliya l’regel*. Why then does Hakhel not deserve a ‘zecher l’Hakhel’?

**Rabbi Savitsky:** Perhaps Simchas Torah is a kind of Hakhel?!

**The Rebbe Shlita:** This is indeed what the Abarbanel writes: “Hence the custom remains these days that on the eighth day of Sukkos — Shemini Atzeres — which we call the day of Simchas Torah for on that day we complete the Torah, the greatest person in the congregation rises and completes it, and he himself reads the portion of V’zos Ha’bracha without an interpreter to imitate the king at that time [at Hakhel].”

However, his words are very questionable according to Nigleh. It is a great *chiddush* to say that what in the *Torah Sheb’ksav* is required to take place on “the festival of Sukkos” — which in *Torah Shebal Peh* is interpreted to mean at the start of the festival and at the very least no later than *Chol HaMoed* — according to him - takes place after *Shemini Atzeres*, the other extreme [of the date written in the Torah]!

**Rabbi Savitsky:** If it would be done on Chol HaMoed, it might be misrepresented as indeed what actually happened in the Beis HaMikdash and not just as a ‘zecher’. An example of this: Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur are also a ‘zecher’ for Yovel,

but they are not observed exactly as they were back then so as not to have people consider it Yovel itself!

**The Rebbe Shlita:** Firstly, we are after all discussing also Jews in the Diaspora, and secondly, that claim proves the opposite: Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur are observed on the same day that they were observed back then, while here — according to the Abarbanel — they changed the day?!

And as was mentioned, just as one makes a ‘zecher’ in many matters,

— e.g., on the Seder night one of the signs of the seder is “Korech”, which is a “remembrance to the Beis HaMikdash;” we reenact how Hillel [observed the mitzva of Korban Pesach] by sandwiching the matza, maror, and Korban Pesach and eating them together. Therefore, matza and maror must be wrapped together as a “remembrance for the Beis HaMikdash” –

why should they not make a “zecher” for Hakhel?! –

If you find a suitable explanation for this question, I’ll be very satisfied.



Here, it must be clarified that all the questions and discussions are only about making a ‘zecher for Hakhel’ [with unique practices] the way other “zecher l’Mikdash” practices are done. But when it comes to “congregating communities in Israel” – simply gathering Jews (in gatherings of men, women, and children) and instilling in them *Yiras Shamayim* – then all the discussions and debates don’t matter: action is the main thing.

And as you can see in reality: wherever Jews are gathered and you talk to them about Jewish matters — not necessarily in

the year of Hakhel, but also on Shabbos (as per the Jewish custom cited as a ruling in the Shulchan Aruch which calls “to gather gatherings every Shabbos”) and on Yom Tov and on every appropriate occasion — and encourage them to strengthen themselves in practical Jewish observance, then “words that come from the heart” do their work and leave an impression and fulfill within listeners the goal and purpose of Hakhel — “to fear Hashem.”

The situation in America is the greatest proof of this: the sermons delivered by the rabbis before “Yizkor” have accomplished worlds-full of good effects. There are many who without these sermons would have nothing to do with Jews and Yiddishkeit – even [to something as simple as] answering “Amen” etc.

When a Jew comes to the shul to recite “Yizkor” on Yom Tov and undertakes to give charity and answers “*Amen Yehei Shmei Raba*” while saying the Kaddish (before or after “Yizkor”) — this makes an impression on him (and even if he was to wish he could forget it, his son would make sure to remind him...)!

**Rabbi Savitsky:** My argument has been, for a long time, that when reaching out to a Jew to bring him closer to Torah and mitzvos, we should mainly teach him practical mitzvos. “Don’t forget your mother’s teachings”...!

**The Rebbe Shlita** (smiling): I see that the fact that you daven in the Nusach Chabad had a huge effect on you. After all, you see what it says in the Chabad books. This is the correct approach, which avoids [unnecessary] questions, etc.



**The Rebbe Shlita:** In continuation to what we discussed, there are those who

“seek an excuse” [to argue and debate] and make claims against the awakening [and campaign] of Hakhel by saying, “How comes are you making a *shturem* about Hakhel at a time when it is not possible to make a true Hakhel? ‘New innovations are forbidden by the Torah’?! ”

And the answer to that is:

In addition to the fact that it is not about having a physical ‘zecher’ of the mitzva of Hakhel, these activities are in truth a fulfillment of clear obligations in the *Torah Sheb’ksav* of “Rebuke your fellow man” and “Love your fellow man as yourself.”

What it says in Jewish works is well known: that the test to determine if whatever it may be is good and right and from the side of holiness, etc. is examining the results of the matter, and in our case, as mentioned, there is no need to go far to examine the results of this campaign.

**Rabbi Savitsky:** The “Chafetz Chaim” organized groups as such in Russia, and it worked! He also learned Seder Kodshim [in such a manner]. He would “tie up *yetzer hara* with a *papir*’l” – pages with letters of the Torah.

**The Rebbe Shlita:** We find in the *Drashos HaRan* an explanation why when the prophets were called upon to prophesy a certain prophecy, Hashem commanded them to perform a physical action similar to the subject of the prophecy, such as “Lie down on your right side” or “Lie down on your left side” and so on. [He explains that] in order to connect the prophecy with the physicality of the world and thus ensure that it will come true and be realized in practice, such action was required.



Afterward, Rebbetzin Savitsky entered the room and the Rebbe mentioned that he knew her father and brother in Leningrad and was close to him. He served as a rabbi and accomplished a lot there, in Russia even though this involved *mesiras nefesh*.

Then he continued:

I heard from my father-in-law the Rebbe upon leaving Russia, that he would not exchange [the suffering] he went through there for anything, his *mesiras nefesh* was more precious than anything else. And on the other hand, if he had a choice (and the things were within the category of a mitzva that could be done by others) he would not initially seek to enter it. Literally two opposites!

Now, however, in the United States, it is possible to work in matters of Torah and mitzvos in comfort and abundance — especially when memories and encouragement are coming from such illustrious parents.

In particular, this is related to the year of the Hakhel, which has a special relevance for women as explained in the Torah, “gather the men and the women” and it should be utilized accordingly, to work and awaken Jewish women and girls.

And as mentioned, the restrictions that were in “that country” don’t exist here and since we are in free countries, we ought to utilize this to produce something good - one should be able to “with joy and good-heartedness” accomplish twice, three times as much as another would in such [circumstances].

Before his departure, the Rebbe wished Rabbi Savitzky “Besuros Tovos — Good news”!

# A "Hakhel" Frame of Mind:

A collection of answers  
concerning Hakhel in the  
Ksav Yad Kodesh of the Rebbe  
Melech HaMoshiach



מענות  
בכתב יד  
קודש

## More Kids and Babies!

The Rebbe's hagahos (edits) for the cover page of the Tishrei 5748 edition of "The Moshiach Times" as were copied down by the mazkir:

יתוסף עוד שיהי' נראה יותר ילדים וטף

Add more people so there can be more children and babies visible

When the answer was written on the cover page it was submitted again into the Rebbe and he double-underlined the words "more children and babies." On the left appears the cover after the Rebbe's comment was incorporated.



"You shall gather together all the people, the men, the women and the children..."  
Deuterim, 10:12



"Gather together all the people, the men, the women and the children..."  
Deuterim, 10:12

ויתוסף עוד שיהי' נראה יותר ילדים וטף



## Emphasize It's Hakhel!

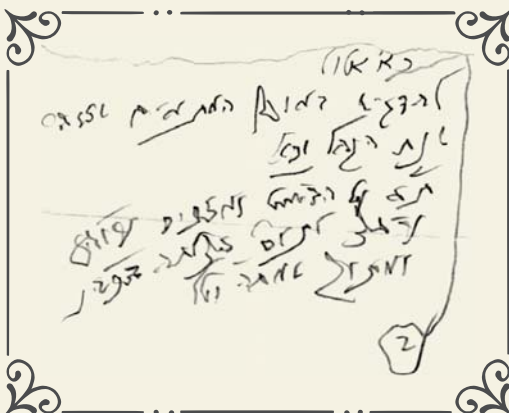
*The Rebbe's instruction regarding emphasizing Hakhel in various events:*

להדגיש באופן המתאים שזוהי שנת הקהל  
וכו'

ת"ח על הבשור"ט ואזכיר עוה"פ עה"צ  
לתוס' הצלחה בכה"נ[ל] ומתוך שמחה  
וט"ל

Take care to emphasize in a befitting manner that this is a year of Hakhel etc.

Thanks for the good news. And I will mention it once more at the Tziyun for added success in all the above, to be done out of joy and gladness of heart.

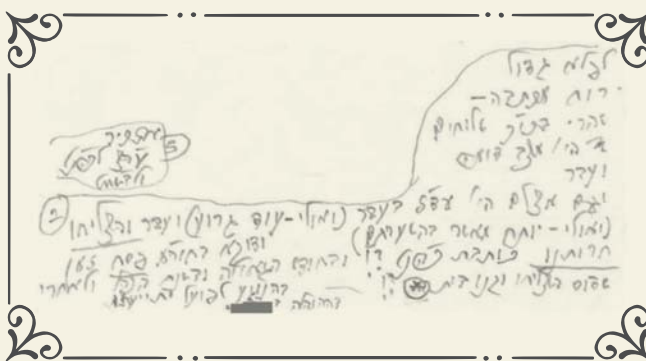


## Hakhel – Not a Time For Melancholy!

The Rebbe's answer from Nissan of 5741 (1981) to a shlucha who wrote to the Rebbe about various difficulties and opposition she and her husband are encountering in their shlichus. She ended the letter writing that "We await the Rebbe Shlita's reply, because we cannot continue this way."

(2) The spirit of your letter evokes great astonishment, since many shluchim experienced similar situations which have come to pass.

Even you alone had such troubles in the past (and perhaps even worse ones) which have come to pass and you succeeded (and perhaps — even more than you estimate).



And now, of all times, on Chol Hamoed Pesach – the time of our liberation – you write all the above?! In the month of Redemption and in Shnas Hakhel, after you finally were successful in purchasing a house?!

As to what to do in practice, consult with the hanhala in ....

(3) I will mention you at the Tziyun concerning all the aforementioned and for good news.

עשה לך רב



## Who & What Is Behind the Yeshiva Dress Code?

**Rabbi Noam  
Wagner, Rosh  
Yeshivas Lubavitch  
in Johannesburg,  
South Africa**

### **Q. What is the source for restrictions on what yeshiva bachurim can and cannot wear?**

**A.** The source for restrictions on what yeshiva students can and cannot wear comes from the concept that a *talmid chacham* must be different, similar to the role of *Shevet Levi* and the *Kohanim* in ancient times who were set aside and designated to serve Hashem.

The Rambam writes (Hilchos Deos 5:1) “Just as a *chacham* is recognized through his wisdom and his temperaments and in these he stands apart from the rest of the people, so, too, he should be recognized through his actions ... his speech, manner of walking **and style of dress** ... all of these actions should be exceptionally becoming and befitting.”

A bachur too should be different in speech, manner of walking and manner of dressing. This does not mean that the yeshiva considers certain styles to be bad or non-Jewish, but rather that the bachur is a soldier and a soldier has a uniform that respects his unique status.

The uniform of a bachur is also the expectation that he will adhere to a certain type of look. The Gemara also states that Jews have always dressed differently than non-Jews, as an example of humility. Similarly, there may be things that are befitting for Jews in general to wear, but not necessarily for a yeshiva student. The yeshiva requires a certain uniform, a certain way of dressing that projects “I am a *Tamim*, I am a soldier in Hashem’s army, I am different.”

The idea of a standardized one-style-suits-all dress code of limited styles and cuts is a declaration of a very important aspect in a bachur’s life: a yeshiva bachur cannot “*lig*”, be invested into fashion and clothing, that isn’t



his reality. His reality is about matters of *pnimiyus* - learning Torah and davening, not *chitzoniyus'dike* clothing.

Specifics of the dress code will vary by individual yeshiva and some decisions are made by many yeshivos together, deciding in unison that certain things are too loud, or not suitable for a bachur. For example, when I was a bachur in yeshiva everyone wore blue or striped button-down shirts, it was the norm amongst Lubavitcher bachurim, eventually the *hanahalos* world-wide felt that it was becoming a fashion statement, so they universally decided to put a stop to it and then they all brought in the white shirt rule.

Bachurim sometimes feel that this is stifling to an extent and feel that they are being judged by what they wear and not who they are. While this isn't really the case as described above, it still is important to understand the bachur's perspective, that judging someone by how they dress is wrong, especially in Chabad

where it is believed that it is all about what is inside, *pnimiyus*, *Yiras Shamayim* etc.

Someone who indeed judges others by external factors is revealing their own emptiness and lack of understanding of the inner essence. It's not about the width of the brim or not, but rather the inner essence.

To summarize, the yeshiva needs to demand a dress code from the bachurim and bachurim must adhere to it *b'simcha* with an understanding that it is there to protect their self-image as yeshiva bachurim, but it is important to understand that it is not about judging the person, but rather about projecting a certain image of a *Tamim*, a soldier in Hashem's army.

*Rabbi Noam Wagner is Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivas Lubavitch in Johannesburg, South Africa. This column was transcribed and edited from a video answer on StumpTheRabbi.org, funded by the Chanin Family Foundation ■*

**Art:** The letters in this article's headline were taken from a facsimile of Tefillin parshiyos written by Reb Reuven Hasofer, the Alter Rebbe's scribe whom he taught the ksav

שער  
תורה



# The Ksav T Halacha &

Myth & Fact About TH



כתב  
מ

**Rabbi Yaakov Taieb,**  
Sofer Stam and Maggid  
Shiur in the Chabad  
Semicha Institute  
in Ohr Yehuda



# What Bridges Kabbalah

the Alter Rebbe's Ksav

The story of the birth of the Alter Rebbe's 'ksav' (the shapes of the letters to be used in writing Sifrei Torah, tefillin and mezuzos; 'Ksav Chabad') is based on the following story: Once, the Maggid of Mezeritch held back the Alter Rebbe from heading home and asked him to institute a ksav that would align with the views of the great *poskim* as well as Kabbalah. The Alter Rebbe did just that. Immediately afterward, the Maggid called a sofer to write *parshiyos* [for tefillin] in accordance with the ruling of the Alter Rebbe.

On his way home, the Alter Rebbe passed through Anipoli. He was amazed to see the sofer Reb Moshe of Anipoli writing the letters in the exact shape that he had just instituted a few days prior. When he inquired, the sofer told him the Reb Zushe sent for him and ordered him to write new *parshiyos* for him using these shaped letters. According to another version of the story, the sofer was Reb Dovid of Anipoli (not Reb Moshe) whose writing was very dear to the tzaddikim, the students of the Maggid. In yet another version, the sofer told the Alter Rebbe that Reb Zushe had ordered him to rush and finish the writing by Rosh Chodesh Shevat, since starting from then the Maggid would begin to wear such tefillin.

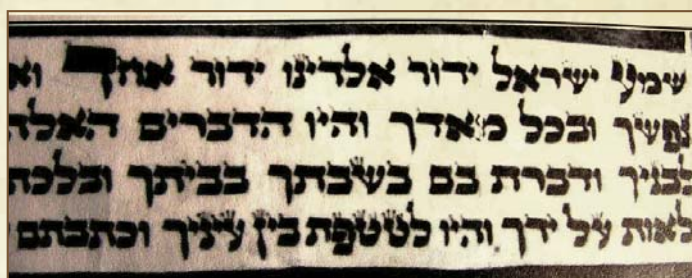
Reb Volf Greenglass sent the above version to the Rebbe Rayatz in a letter, to which the Rebbe responded: **I heard that which is told in his letter fifty years ago and I recounted the substance at the simchas Yud-Tes Kislev this year. The reason for the request of the Maggid that he order the shape of the letters according to the views of the Kabbalists in a way of Chabad was because when the Alter Rebbe came he contemplated beginning the rectification of the**

***partzuf Chabad* (the structural 'persona' of Chochma, Bina, Daas in the world of Atzilus) to be the rectification of the *sefiros* until the coming of Moshiach, and the Alter Rebbe made the 'kesher' (knot of the tefillin) as is customary among Chabad Chassidim.**

## RECTIFICATION OF THE 'SEFIROS'

From the letter of the Rebbe Rayatz it is clear that the matter of instituting the ksav was not some incidental matter, that the Maggid wanted to add some general improvement to Judaism or the like, but it contains a crucial aspect which began the rectification process of '*partzuf Chabad*' to enable "the rectification of the *sefiros* until the coming of Moshiach." This letter should be sufficient to clarify the great importance of this ksav, and that obviously any person who sees himself as a Chassid of Chabad has the privilege and obligation to use this ksav. Why should the ksav of the founder of Chabad Chassidus be any less than the nusach of the Siddur that he instituted and the like?

However, it is most painful to note that there are Chabad Chassidim who do not have the practice to use this ksav, some from lack of knowledge and others who even purposely refrain "from getting involved with this ksav" with various arguments, which are also mostly rooted in lack of knowledge. That is why we have set out here in an attempt to open up the topic to the broader public, to raise the awareness of the importance of using Ksav Chabad, as well as to address the various claims that crop up from various quarters in opposition, as it were, to the ksav of the Alter Rebbe.



WRITING OF THE SOFER, REB DOVID,  
THE SOFER OF REBBE ZUSHE OF ANIPOLI

## THE REBBE'S VIEW

First off, before analyzing the issue itself, we need to figure out what the Rebbe's view is on the subject, how he related to the whole matter of ksav in general and how he instructed people to act.

In 5714, the Rebbe began to investigate if anybody had a tradition in the shape of the letters that was handed down from person to person. The reason why you need a direct tradition and it's not sufficient to just inspect in detail the *parshiyos* about which there is a tradition that they were written by Chabad sofrim, the Rebbe explained, is because it's not always clear what is exact and intentional or what is happenstance or only an embellishment.

From these letters [that the Rebbe wrote] it would seem that the deficiency in learning the ksav from careful study of these *parshiyos* is only that one can't know what is deliberate and what is not. Which is to say, we can't know which details were instituted by the Alter Rebbe and therefore we need to be particular about those details in Ksav Chabad, but that does not mean that there is any deficiency in directly copying the shapes of the letters from these *parshiyos*. Thus it would seem to be more of a theoretical issue and not so much a practical issue, since it's pos-

sible to copy all of the details even if some were only done for the sake of aesthetic enhancement and nothing would be lost by doing so.

In a letter from 5715, the Rebbe writes, "It's already months that I am trying to

clarify a tradition in writing among the sofrim of Anash... and to date I have not raised a pearl in my hand because there is no clear information regarding this."

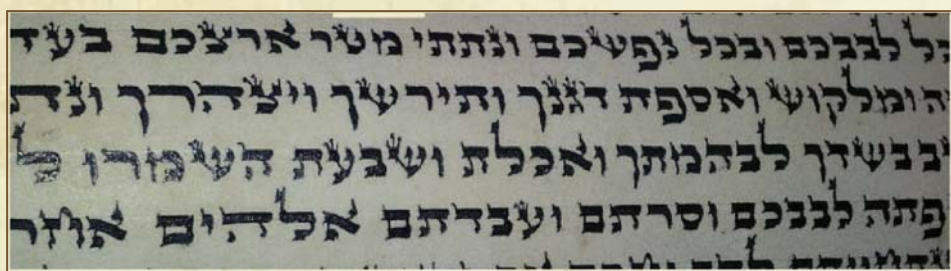
In 5717, the Rebbe inquired by a sofer from Anash in Kfar Chabad, "At this opportunity, I would be interested to know if he knows clearly the shape of the letters that is customary among Chabad Chassidim based on the Alter Rebbe, and if so, from whom did he receive this tradition and the authority of the one who passed it along. Whoever spells out in greater detail in a matter such as this is praiseworthy."

It would appear that to this day there has not been found any person who has a direct tradition in the details of the ksav, and the important question – which details did the Alter Rebbe institute – what is in particular and what is not, remains unanswered.

Although no person-to-person tradition has been discovered, there are many responses from the Rebbe to be particular in using this ksav, at least for Chabad Chassidim.

In a letter from 5717, to a Jew who had doubts as to what type of tefillin to order for his family members who are descend-





MEZUZA WRITTEN BY RABBI ARONOW OF TORONTO

ed from Chabad Chassidim, the Rebbe answered:

The doubt in this matter is astonishing, since the rule and the psak din is that in the place of Rav – including all of those connected to Rav – the custom is like Rav. And the question that he asked, that in his view the practice that is desirable in the eyes of HaKadosh Baruch Hu is that which is practiced by most of Klal Yisrael, this question is astonishing, since the Alter Rebbe also wanted to establish tefillin in a manner that would be desirable in the eyes of HKBH. And it's obvious that in the time of the Alter Rebbe there were fewer [people] who practiced according to how he ruled than there are now, since Toras HaChassidus has spread to a number of demographics, and yet he still instructed to institute specifically in the manner that he ruled. If only he would abandon his path of seeking out questions and contradictions and begin to go in the straight path with the prefacing of 'we shall do to we shall hear,' namely the path that we were instructed by Rabboseinu Nesieinu which is also the general path for Klal Yisrael. Along the lines of what is explained by the Maggid... regarding the quality of the 13th gate that includes all of the other

**12 gates, see the introduction to Shaar Hakolel on the Siddur.**

Here, the Rebbe clearly instructed to order *parshiyos* specifically in Ksav Chabad, despite the lack of direct tradition.

Parenthetically, here would be the place to respond to the strange claim that has been put out there that the intention of the Rebbe was not the special ksav instituted by the Alter Rebbe, but rather the ksav that he described and ruled upon in his Shulchan Aruch. This argument is completely absurd even in and of itself as should be obvious to any serious student, all the more so from this letter that speaks of a special ksav of the Alter Rebbe that is different than that practiced by most of Klal Yisrael.

If that's not enough, it's explicit in the letter in Igros Kodesh (vol 11, pg 364): "In regards to the shape of the letters which is the common practice in Chabad, there are a number of differences from what the Alter Rebbe writes in his Shulchan Aruch, and as discussed in a number of places the reason for the change between the rulings of the Alter Rebbe in his *Shulchan Ha'tahor* and his rulings in his Siddur and in the practices that he instituted in actual practice... as relate



to tefillin in particular, it is known that which is written in Beis Rebbe chapter 10 that the Alter Rebbe instituted the tefillin according to the Kabbalah of the Rishonim and the Kabbalah of the Arizal, in how they are written, constructed and laid, see there.”

So, there you have it black on white, the shape of the letters as is the custom in Chabad is different than what the Alter Rebbe wrote in his Shulchan Aruch.

## THE REBBE'S INSTRUCTION TO SOFRIM

In addition, there are a number of stories that we heard from a reliable source about sofrim who received explicit instructions from the Rebbe to write in Ksav Chabad:

In the year 5712, the Rebbe reached out to the sofer Rabbi Mendel Aronow and suggested that he write mezuzos for Merkos L'inyanei Chinuch, while emphasizing that “most likely he writes in accordance with the view of the Alter Rebbe.” Although it was not specified that the intent was the special ksav, that is how the sofer understood it and that is how he wrote (see photo) and the Rebbe purchased mezuzos from him to benefit the public.

Rabbi C. Marinovsky asked the Rebbe in Tishrei 5728 whether he should study and be involved in safrus. The Rebbe answered him, “It’s a proper thing and since they will say that he is a Chabad sofer he should learn Ksav Chabad.”

Rabbi Shimshon Kahana began to write Ksav Chabad in the beginning of the 1970s. In 5733, he brought into yechidus a mezuzah and the letters of the Alef-Beis that he had written himself, and he asked of the Rebbe, “Since I have some

uncertainties about certain details, could I receive guidance from the Rebbe, perhaps through the secretariat?” The Rebbe only looked at the mezuzah, closely, as well as from the back, and answered: In general, I am not a maven in the details of the ksav. Rabbi Matlin and Rabbi Aronow are here and he should discuss it with them.

R' Kahana spoke with them and did not resolve his doubts to his satisfaction. He sent in a note to the Rebbe, “I discussed it with them and they did not resolve the doubts. The Rebbe sent out a response, “He should write with success tefillin and mezuzos, and also Sifrei Torah.”

About two years later, Rabbi Eliyahu Gabbai of Kiryat Gat told the Rebbe in yechidus that he writes StaM in Ksav Sefardi. The Rebbe instructed him, “To study in Kfar Chabad the ksav that is *meyuchas* to the Alter Rebbe.”

The renowned sofer, Rabbi Eliezer Tzvi Zirkind of Crown Heights, recounted in an interview with *Kfar Chabad* magazine, “The Rebbe instructed me to learn Ksav Chabad... The Rebbe asked that I write mezuzos in Ksav Chabad for his house, which I did. He also ordered from me three pairs of tefillin in Ksav Chabad for Mr. David Chase.”

## INSTRUCTIONS TO PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS

In Elul of 5750, a problem was discovered in the mezuzos of the Scharf family in Crown Heights, and the checker said that it was necessary to ask a rav about it. The lady of the house – Mrs. Chana Scharf – wrote about this to the Rebbe, who answered: “She should buy new mezuzos and he (i.e. the Rebbe) will pay for them, and if possible they should be in the ksav of the Alter Rebbe.”

The Cohen family of Afula received a directive from the Rebbe in the year 5751 to check the mezuzos in their home. They changed their mezuzos to especially *mehudar* ones in Ksav Arizal (\$110 dollars each back then). At the beginning of 5754, they wrote again to the Rebbe about a certain problem. The secretary, Rabbi Leibel Groner called them up and told them that “the Rebbe instructed them to buy mezuzos in Ksav Chabad.”

## COPYING RENOWNED SOFRIM

As mentioned previously, there is no problem copying from a ksav without having an explicit tradition handed down from person to person (although that would be preferable in order to know which details are particular). Sadly, there are those who challenge this by harping upon the fact that the Rebbe sought out such a tradition in the early years. They willfully ignore the fact that the Rebbe himself instructed people to write that way and to buy that type of ksav.

To put the question to rest, we will cite both a halachic source and a story of the Rebbe that will prove that his view is that one can write in that manner without any problem:

**Halacha:** The Shaarei Teshuva writes at the beginning of Siman 32 in Orach Chaim, “As far as the shape of the letters and the crowns described there, it’s proper for G-d fearing sofrim to learn them person-to-person... however one can be exacting in making the shapes of the letters as they were written by renowned sofrim... although we do not know their hints and secrets, as the mitzva operates in a ‘segula’ manner and leaves an impression up above even if it was done without the specific intent.”

**Story:** I heard this story from my father-in-law who heard it from the son of the story’s protagonist, Reb Itche Meir Gurary. The Rebbe personally asked Reb Zalman Gurary to send the *parshiyos* that he owned (from which all of the sofrim of Anash who write Ksav Chabad today copy from, and about which there is a tradition that they are from Reb Reuven HaSofer himself or from his student) to Rabbi Yaakov Silberman so that he could copy from them, and the Rebbe bought parshiyos from him.

[Editor’s note: A sefer written by R’ Silberman to defend the Alter Rebbe’s ksav entitled Chiddush Sofrim was published last year, three decades after his passing, with many impressive approbations from the leading halachic rulers of the time, including Rabbi Moshe Feinstein. His student Rabbi Raphael Tennenhaus, shliach to South Florida, published translated selections from the sefer in a ‘teshura’ in honor of the Bar Mitzva of his son last Iyar, which can be found online.]

Additionally, the Tzemach Tzedek writes explicitly in his Teshuvos that, “Indeed, I saw in our STaM that the bent *nun* is as RM’G wrote (which is like a *vav* and not like a *zayin*).” Here again, we see that in practical halacha the Tzemach Tzedek relied on visual evidence (even without an oral person-to-person tradition).

## THE SOURCE MATERIAL

We will now address the obvious question that follows all of the above which is, what ksav samples do we have today that we can rely upon to copy from?

After all of the analysis and research done by the leading Chassidic sofrim of the previous generation, we are fortunate to have a number of written sam-



ples whose provenance can be traced to the sofrim used by Rabbosenu Nesieinu, and even the *ksav yad kodesh* of the Rebbe Maharash himself.

The following is a list of those samples with a photocopy attached:

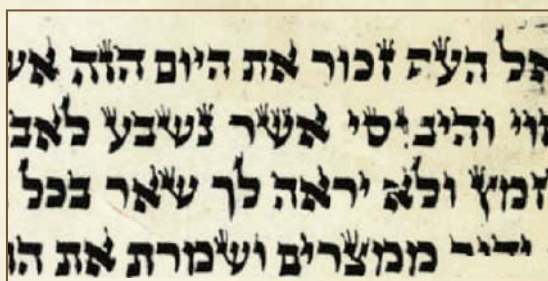


THE KSAV OF REB REUVEN, THE SOFER FROM YANOVITCH, OR POSSIBLY HIS STUDENT.

The ksav from which it is customary to copy nowadays: This ksav is from the *parshiyos* of tefillin that were in the possession of Reb Shneur Zalman Gurary. It is told that, in the early 1940s, the Rebbe Rayatz requested that photocopies be made of various *parshiyos* and to clarify the shape of the letters according to the ksav of Reb Reuven. When they showed him these *parshiyos*, the Rebbe Rayatz said that he is in doubt as to whether they were from Reb Reuven himself or his student, who was known to write like his teacher Reb Reuven, but never succeeded in producing the ink as well as Reb Reuven. It was these *parshiyos* that Reb Zalman Gurary gave to R' Yaakov Silberman to copy from, as per the Rebbe's instruction.

*The ksav of Reb Zundel (see below) according to R' Mendel Aronow (who the Rebbe bought mezuzos from for public use) which he copied from.*

These samples match in almost every detail the ksav being written today by the sofrim of Anash who write Ksav Chabad. There are a few details that some argue are not deliberate, such as the middle head of the *shin* being thinner than the one on the right, so that are those who insist on doing it that way and others do not. Either way, there would seem to be no problem, as this does not appear in all the writing samples. In any case, it is preferable than using the Ksav Arizal as it's written nowadays, as we shall explain. Of course, the main point being that the Rebbe instructed that this copying should be done, as discussed at length.



THE KSAV OF REB ZUNDEL ACCORDING TO R' MENDEL ARONOW

## NO HALACHIC CONCERNS

For some reason, there are those under the mistaken impression that there are halachic problems with the Ksav Chabad of the Alter Rebbe. This claim apparently derives from a lack of knowledge, as the

people who trumpet these claims usually lack basic knowledge of the laws of STaM and are just being fed rumors.

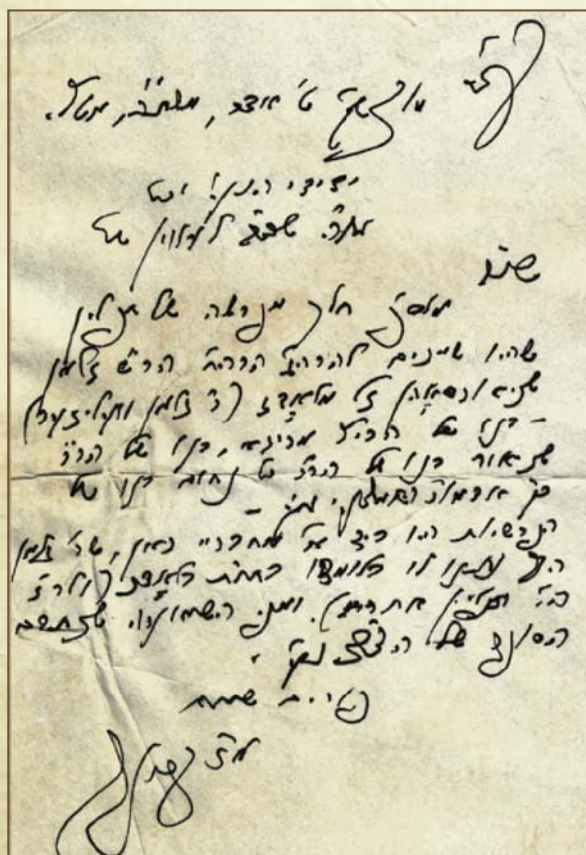
In truth, there is nothing to these claims to warrant a response and they lack any legitimacy whatsoever. However, since there are many among Anash who have concerns, we must make clear that there is no halachic issue with Ksav Chabad that might possibly, G-d forbid, render it *passul* according to Shulchan Aruch. The only thing is, as cited previously from the Rebbe's letter, "there are a number of differences from what the Alter Rebbe writes in his Shulchan Aruch, and

as discussed in a number of places the reason for the change between the rulings of the Alter Rebbe in his *Shulchan Ha'tahor* and his rulings in his Siddur and in the practices that he instituted in actual practice." So yes, there are differences but they are not halachic impediments, but more importantly, we follow "the practices that he instituted in actual practice."

An example would be what was cited partially before from the responsum of the Tzemach Tzedek, "Indeed, I saw in our STaM that the bent *nun* is as RM'G [Rabbi Moshe Galanti] wrote (which is like a *vav* as in the Sefardic writing and not like

a *zayin*), since the head of the *zayin* extends over both sides as opposed to our bent *nun*," and this despite the fact that in *Shulchan Aruch Admor HaZaken* siman 36 it says clearly that *l'chatchila* it needs to be like a *zayin*.

This all is in addition to the obvious fact that the Alter Rebbe would not institute anything that is contrary to halacha, *ch'v*. To better understand, let's look at what the Alter Rebbe writes in his *Shulchan Aruch* siman 36 regarding the letter *ches*: "And both its legs should be like two *zayins* *l'chatchila* and according to the Kabbalah of the Arizal, the right leg needs to be like a *vav* in tefillin." That is to say, the Kabbalah of the Arizal differs from what it should be *l'chatchila* according to the *poskim*, but there is no loss *ch'v*, since it is kosher



LETTER OF RABBI GREENGLASS TO R' BEREL LEVIN SENT WITH THE PARSHA MEYUCHAS TO REB ZUNDEL



even according to the *poskim*. The entire debate is over what is *l'hatchila*. As the Rebbe's grandfather writes in *Shaar HaKolel*, "It's not possible that the *mekubalim* would rule against the Talmud (or the *poskim* who learned what they decided from the Gemara, which in this all Jews are equal as explained in Shulchan Aruch siman 68)."

Truth be told, there is a concern that perhaps a sofer who is not sufficiently expert is likely to produce some letters that are *passul*, but this concern exists with every ksav and there are checkers who, on a regular basis, discover STaM that are *passul*. It's true that in our ksav there is a greater concern, which is why one should be certain not to buy from someone who is not an expert and that it go through a careful checking by an expert checker.

However, it's clear as day that this is no reason to abandon the ksav instituted by the Alter Rebbe and which the Rebbe instructed many times should be written and purchased. Thankfully, nowadays the awareness has grown and there are many more experts in this ksav, more so than at any other time, and this phenomenon continues to grow.

## CLEARLY PREFERABLE TO THE CURRENT KSAV ARIZAL

Another important point that bears clarification, in that there are those who mistakenly think – also from lack of knowledge of the facts on the ground – that there is a preference to using the ksav of the Arizal since it is certain that it's from the Arizal as opposed to that of the Alter Rebbe about which there is some uncertainty. Therefore, it's worth bringing to light a basic issue that exists regard-

ing the ksav called Arizal as it's practiced today.

First, for the broader public who are not particularly knowledgeable about the field of STaM, it's not the case, as some think, that the Arizal instituted every detail of the ksav and shapes of the letters, but rather only a few changes. Thus, any ksav that incorporates these changes is in fact Ksav Arizal. Based on this, Ksav Chabad is Ksav Arizal according to the Alter Rebbe, just as the nusach of the Siddur that we use today is the nusach that the Alter Rebbe instituted based on the nusach of the Arizal.

The difference is that the ksav of the Alter Rebbe was established [as the Rebbe writes in his letter] "according to the Kabbalah of the Rishonim and the Kabbalah of the Arizal," or as in the story we started with, "align[ed] with the views of the great *poskim* as well as Kabbalah," so that the ksav satisfies both views. A classic and famous example of this is the shape of the left 'heads' of the letters *shin*, *ayin*, *tes*, *gimmel*, *tzadik* [שׁעטג], which according to the *poskim* should be like a *zayin* and according to the Arizal like a *vav*. In Ksav Chabad, it's like a *vav* in that the top part does not extend over both sides like a *zayin*, but the head does extend out to the right in a curve [as can be seen in the pictures attached to the article].

If someone were to argue that this is not a *vav*, since the head curves and sticks out, we already have the testimony of the Tzemach Tzedek regarding this very claim, "Indeed, I saw in our STaM that the bent *nun* is as RM'G [Rabbi Moshe Galanti] wrote" - that the head has to be like a *vav*" [which is only according to Ksav Sefardi, whereas both the *poskim* and the Arizal say it should be like a *zayin*, as apparently the Alter Rebbe even wanted to satisfy

## IGROS KODESH REBBE RAYATZ VOL. 13 P. 325

His esteemed father, R' M. Sofer, was among the mekusharim of the Rebbe Maharash and was very dear to him. And he said, that he is the third generation in matters of the writing from the Alter Rebbe because he learned to write from the renowned sofer and Chassid, R' Zundel, the *talmid muvhak* of the sofer who was extolled and praised by all of Avoseinu Rabboseinu HaKedoshim – the renowned Chassid, R' Reuven of Yanovitch – to whom the Alter Rebbe taught the shapes of the letters and revealed to him the secret of the ink.

### ANOTHER LETTER – DATED 24 SIVAN 5691

On the matter of the tefillin... it is difficult to attribute them to the sofer R' Reuven... it fits more, according to the recognition of the letters of the ksav of the sofer R' Zundel, who was in the time of the Rebbe, the Tzemach Tzedek, whose sons bought *parshiyos* by him, and these were held at the time in the same regard as the *parshiyos* of R' Reuven in the time of the Alter Rebbe.

the view of Sefardic Kabbalists]. As he explains there why it's still considered like a *vav* despite the fact that the head curves, "since the head of the *zayin* extends over both sides as opposed to our bent *nun*." [So here we have the Tzemach Tzedek saying explicitly that such a shaped head fits the criterion of both a *vav* and a *zayin*, as per the Arizal in those other letters],

which is to say that Ksav Chabad is Ksav Arizal in a mehudar fashion according to the Alter Rebbe.

Also, without getting into all the particulars, the ksav aligns more with what the Alter Rebbe writes in his Shulchan Aruch than the commonly written Ksav Arizal.

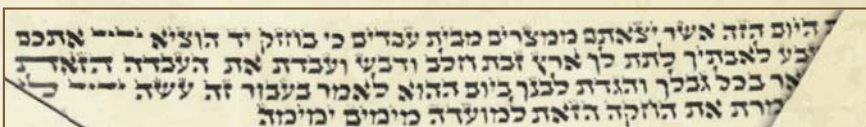
As far as the claim that Ksav Arizal has more of a tradition and therefore it's preferable to use that, besides for the fact that they are ignoring all the above cited directives, it's important to note that from a halachic perspective the ksav of the Alter Rebbe has more of a tradition ('mesora') than that of the modern incarnation of Ksav Arizal. As those in the know, know, the Ksav Arizal practiced today in Eretz Yisrael is dissimilar to how it was written in Europe before the Holocaust (the Alter Rebbe's is far more similar).

The current ksav was passed on by the Yerushalmi sofer, Rabbi Nesanel Tefilinsky, who learned this ksav from the sefer *Kesov L'chaim* (also *Kesiva Tamah*) written by a sofer from Minsk [who described the shapes of the letters] based on the *parshiyos* of the sofer of the Gra. We do not find anywhere that writing STaM based on a description of a ksav is considered having a 'mesora,' whereas copying the handwritten work of famous sofrim is, as we cited from the *Shaarei Teshuva* earlier who writes, "However, one can be exacting in making the shapes of the letters as they were written by renowned sofrim."

### DID THE REBBE RAYATZ USE TEFFILLIN KSAV ARIZAL?

There are those tell a story about how the Rebbe Rayatz, during his visit to Eretz Yisrael in 1929, bought tefillin from a





COPY OF THE PARSHIYOS OF THE REBBE RASHAB

It is told that the Rebbe Rashab would wear tefillin that R' Moshe the Sofer, who needed parnassa, would write for him. After the Rebbe Rashab would use them for some time, the sofer would exchange the parshiyos for new ones and the Rebbe would give him the old ones to sell for large amounts of money. Above is a photocopy of part of a parsha purchased directly by R' Shmerel Feldman from that very same sofer. I received the photocopy from my father-in-law, who received it from the renowned sofer, Shimshon Kahana.



COPY OF THE PARSHIYOS OF THE REBBE RAYATZ

R' Eliezer Zirkind wrote about the above: I have a photocopy of the parshiyos of the tefillin of the Rebbe Rayatz, which R' Yeshaya Matlin gave to me, and they are Ksav Admor HaZakein! R' Y. told me that the Rebbe Shlita gave them to him and personally testified that they are the ones of the Rebbe Rayatz.

sofer who wrote Ksav Arizal. Also, there is a letter from the Rebbe Rayatz to someone in Eretz Yisrael in the year 5703 asking him to prepare for him tefillin *mehudaros*, as well as a letter from that person back to the Rebbe. They assume that these were for the Rebbe Rayatz or his son-in-law, the Rebbe.

To this there are two answers:

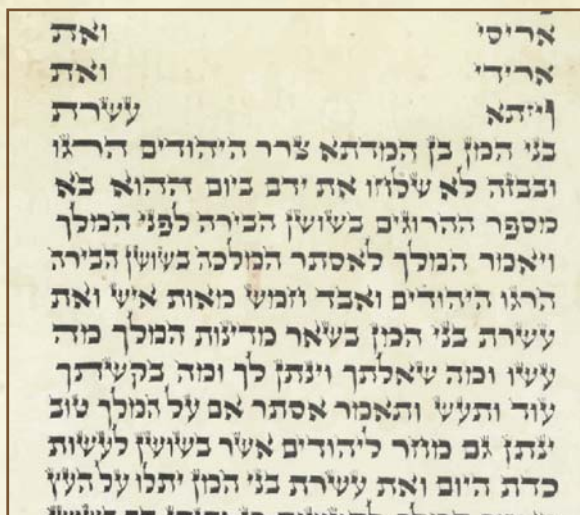
1- We actually have a photocopy of the *parshiyos* of the Rebbe Rayatz and they are Ksav Chabad (see box).

2- There is no way to know from the letter who the tefillin were for (especially as the size that the Rebbe ordered is not the size that is customary in Chabad).

More importantly, we cited earlier the many times that the Rebbe explicitly instructed to write and to purchase in Ksav Chabad, all the way to the latest years, so that is what applies to our times.

Aside from all that, there is no shortage of responses to their argument. First of all, one story (whose details are murky)





HANDWRITING OF THE REBBE MAHARASH  
(CARLEBACH MEGILLA)

In the Rebbe's library, there is the Megilla that the Rebbe Maharash wrote for the Rebbe Rashab. However, this Megilla was given in to be fixed by the Rebbe Rayatz when he came to America due to the effects of aging, and the sofer 'corrected' many things and changed the shapes of the letters. It is said that the Rebbe Rayatz was very pained by this.

This Megilla, called the Carlebach Megilla, was written by the Rebbe Maharash for one of his other sons and ended up in the hands of the Carlebach family. The way the story is told is that R' Zalman Schneerson of Paris took care of a grandson of the Rebbe Maharash and received from him the Megilla as a gift, which ended up with his son-in-law R' E. C. Carlebach. ■

does not have the power to undermine everything that the Rebbe Rayatz himself wrote about Ksav Chabad. For example, in a letter from the year 5702 the Rebbe Rayatz wrote to Reb Volf Greenglass, "And he should write to me if he knows the writing in the special shape of C"K Admor HaZakein..."

And in a letter two weeks later he writes, "It's a shame he has not trained in the beautiful writing in the script form of R' Reuven HaSofer which is a very beautiful writing, because in this country there is an urgent need for sofrim."

Secondly, it's quite possible that since, as the Rebbe wrote "in this country there is an urgent need for sofrim," there were no sofrim at the time in America who wrote Ksav Chabad, or sofrim in general, which is why he ordered from Eretz Yisrael. In fact, I heard (in the name of Rabbi Feigelstock) that this was the reason that the Sefer Torah shel Moshiach was not written in this ksav.

Boruch Hashem, we have been privileged that in our

times there are many Chassidic sofrim who write Ksav Chabad beautifully, and we are able to fulfill the express desire of Rabboseinu Nesieinu. May we immediately merit "the rectification of the *partzuf Chabad*" with the coming of Moshiach, very soon.

Rebbe suddenly brought up the topic of the unfinished *mikva*.

“There is a certain matter,” the Rebbe said, “that I have mentioned at least a hundred and one times. For three years I’ve been talking about building the *mikva*, and despite all the meetings that have been convened and a great deal of discussion, it is not yet finished.

“Of all the times I visited the *mikva*, not once did I see someone in charge actually on site! I have visited many, many times, at different times of day – early, late, and at the beginning of the day (at least at the beginning of my day, which is still before noon) – and only on one occasion did I encounter someone in charge. And this was only within the past two weeks: the individual must have appeared only to ensure that I wouldn’t mention it at a farbrengen.

“But I *have* mentioned it at farbrengens, and the contents of farbrengens are written down, and people are aware of what must be done. Yet no one thinks that my words are directed to him – only to the next person...

“After all this was to no avail, a dreadful incident occurred to one woman, and even this seems to have had no effect!

“Then another incident occurred to a second woman, and this was also ignored, as was a third incident involving another woman!

“Then a small fire broke out very suddenly. No one knew how it started, and there is no natural explanation for it. But even this did not have any effect.

“Then a big fire broke out, may G-d protect us, and the whole neighborhood is talking about it. This blaze was also

miraculous in origin: there is no natural explanation of how it started. But this too is insufficient to make an impression.

“I see that I have no other option. The building must be saved, and I have sold it...”

The Rebbe continued: “They do me a favor and record my words in print, and describe it as [the menorah’s] ‘knobs and flowers,’ but when it comes to actually doing something, my words have no effect. What good are all these words if they do not result in actual deed? People talk, they ask each other questions, they offer explanations – but nothing is brought down to the level of ‘below ten handbreadths.’”

Needless to say, the public was shocked beyond words by the Rebbe’s comments.

That Friday, the sale of the Beis Medrash of 770 was conducted in absolute secrecy. That morning, the Rebbe issued a full-page directive to his secretariat that the sale be concluded that very day. Many of the details have never come out publicly.

The Rebbe instructed that the legal transfer be conducted by Rabbi Zalman Shimon Dworkin, the late *rav* of Lubavitch. The transaction was completed so quickly that when the buyer claimed that there was no time to assemble cash, the Rebbe instructed his secretariat to provide him with it!


The buyer, as per the Rebbe’s instructions, was not a member of Anash, and the Rebbe told the *gabbaim* that any proposed change in the building would henceforth have to receive the new owner’s permission. As the new owner’s identity was a secret, the Rebbe said this meant that no changes could be made. ■

שערי  
גאולה

# Gaining A Mat On Mo

An overview of three general  
Yemos HaMoshiach and





A Chapter From The  
Acclaimed Book  
Inyano Shel Moshiach  
by **Rabbi Sholom  
Dovber Wolf**

# Featured Outlook Moshiach

approaches to understanding  
their connecting points

**Y**emos HaMoshiach and the Geula Shleima are a broad and central topic in Torah, and like every other subject in Torah, there are layers within layers; overt implications, deeper implications and even deeper than those. That being the case, it's possible to find in the words of the Prophets and the Sages various descriptions of the events of Yemos HaMoshiach along with various explanations of the significance of the coming of Moshiach, which appear on the surface to contradict each other. The truth however is that these are different levels and themes that do not negate one another, but actually complete one another.

We should all know the fundamental rule that the Rebbe taught us on many occasions, namely that just as Hashem is the One Truth, so too, the Torah which is His wisdom that is completely unified with Him is all One and is the Torah of Truth. Therefore all of the explanations and divergent views which appear in the Torah should be seen as a reflection of that Truth on different levels or from differing angles. As such, all of the explanations regarding the significance of Yemos HaMoshiach are different levels or different perspectives of the same one idea.

In this work, we will attempt to summarize and order the topics, to explain both the revealed and inner aspects of Moshiach, from the simple to the more complex, from the external to the internal. However, in order to properly integrate the revealed and inner dimensions, we first need to distinguish between the two and understand each one on its own. Only after that will it be possible to find the points of connection between them, how

they join together and complement each other. That is why in this chapter we will present a general structure of the various views to be found in the words of Chazal regarding the coming of Moshiach, and how these views connect with and complement each other. This will serve us a basis for the broad and deep exploration of the details that will appear in the coming chapters, G-d willing.



After a proper analysis it would seem that, according to all opinions, the Days of Moshiach are a state in which the Jewish People and the entire world reach the ultimate possible perfection. However, in this conclusion itself there are various approaches to understanding what exactly is the ultimate perfection that the world will attain. These in turn are reflected in diverse descriptions of world perfection in the Times of Moshiach. In general, we can count among these three basic approaches:

1) The Philosophical Approach of the Rambam: The ultimate perfection of creation is that human beings should recognize and grasp with their intellects the greatness of the Creator.

2) The Halachic/Torah Approach: The ultimate purpose of creation is the revelation of Hashem's kingship in the entire world, specifically through the fulfillment of the mitzvos (not out of intellectual understanding, but expressly by negating the intellect and doing them) in a manner of accepting the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven.

3) The Chassidic Approach: The ultimate purpose of creation is to be a dwelling for Hashem in the lowly realms, such that Hashem Himself who cannot be



apprehended in intellect at all, will, as it were, 'dwell' and be revealed in His entire essence here in this world.

From the above we understand that accordingly there are three ways to explain the unique significance of Yemos HaMoshiach, regarding which it is said that this is the ultimate purpose of creation:

1) In the Days of Moshiach, the knowledge of G-d will encompass all of humanity, and all will attain an intellectual recognition of His existence and greatness. As in the words of the Navi (Yirmiya 31:34), "No longer will a man say to his fellow saying 'know G-d,' because they will all know me," and (Yeshaya 11:9) "For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of G-d." 2) In Yemos HaMoshiach, Hashem's kingship will be revealed in the entire world and all will serve Him and fulfill His commandments, as it says (Zecharya 14:9) "And G-d will be King over the entire earth." 3) In the Times of Moshiach, Hashem will be revealed in His full presence in this physical world as it says (Yeshaya 30:20) "No longer shall your Teacher hide Himself [i.e. no longer will He hide Himself from you with a robe and garment – Tanya ch. 36] and your eyes shall see your Teacher."

## PURPOSE OF CREATION – KNOWING G-D

The Rambam (Igeres Techiyas HaMeisim) testifies regarding himself that his way is "to collect among the Torah and the intellectual." When he speaks of the 'intellectual' he mostly means the laws of nature and the wisdom of 'chakira' (lit. investigation, i.e. exploring ideas through the application of reason) and philosophy, which he discusses in his work Moreh Nevochim and many of those principles

are incorporated in many places in his halachic works.

In his general introduction to his commentary on the Mishna, the Rambam writes that through contemplating the material existence it is manifestly clear that it's one entire system that contains levels upon levels which serve each other, and all of them are directed towards one goal and perfection. Based on this, the Rambam writes that the ultimate purpose of all created beings in the world and their perfection is to serve man, and the ultimate purpose and perfection of man is when he is engaged in the pursuit of wisdom in general, and in particular the knowledge of G-dliness. In his words:

"Know that the ancients investigated a great investigation... until it became established for them that everything that exists needs have, at the very least, a purpose for which his existence came to be, because not for naught do things exist. And when this general rule became established for them, they began to discern all of what exists to know the purpose of all of the species in existence... however, in general, one should know that all that exists under the [orbital] sphere of the moon came into existence for man alone... and it is impossible for any grass or any fruit or any type of living creature, from the elephants to the worms, that it not have a use for man... and when they found that the purpose of all of these matters was for the existence of man, they needed likewise to investigate why man exists and what was the intention of his creation... and they found that his purpose is one activity alone, and that because of it he was created... and that activity is to depict for himself the intellectual secrets and to know the truths... And the most distinguished of the intellectual conceptions to depict





הלכות מלכים ומלכותיהם ומוֹלך המשיח בספר הי"ד החזקה לרמב"ם

to himself is the unity of the Holy One, blessed be He, and all the implications of that matter from the G-dly ideas, as the other forms of wisdom are only to train him in them, until he reaches the knowledge of Divinity... And, if so, it has become clarified from all that we have said that the intention in the creation of all that there is in the present and transitory world is only for the man who is complete in wisdom and in deed."

In line with this rule, the Rambam explains in *Moreh Nevochim* the significance of the mitzvot in the Torah in terms of how they all benefit man and creation, by distancing man from bad deeds and bad character traits and bringing him to his true perfection through good deeds and proper traits of true recognition of the existence of G-d and His Oneness.

However, being that the soul of man is connected to a body, the body limits its comprehension and it cannot achieve true comprehension of G-d's existence. Therefore, it is only after the soul separates from the body after death that man can achieve a more true comprehension of the existence of Hashem. That is the perfection and true delight which man can aspire to, before which all other pleasures are mere folly, and that is the "World to Come" that the Sages spoke of. As the Rambam writes in his *Laws of Repentance* (ch 8):

"The good that is hidden for the righteous is the life of the World to Come. This will be life which is not accompanied by death, and good which is not accompanied by evil... In the World to Come, there is no body or physical form, only the souls of the righteous alone, without a body, like the ministering angels... This is what the early Sages said, in the World to Come, there is neither eating, drinking, nor carnal relations. Rather, the righteous will sit with their crowns on their heads and delight in the radiance of the Divine Presence. From that statement, it is clear that there is no body, for there is no eating or drinking... What is meant by the expression, 'delight in the radiance of the Divine Presence'? That they will comprehend the truth of G-dliness which they cannot grasp while in a dark and humble body... How very much David yearned for and desired the life of the World to Come as it says [Psalms 27:13]: 'Had I not believed that I would see the goodness of G-d in the land of the living!' The early Sages already informed us that man does not have the potential to appreciate the good of the World to Come in a full sense nor can anyone know its greatness, beauty, and power except G-d, alone... it has no comparison or likeness, nor was it

described by the prophets, lest with such a description, they diminish it.”

As the Rambam explains there, this is the meaning of the reward for mitzvos promised in the Torah, “So that it be good for you and you shall have length of days,” which the Sages explain as referring “to the world that is entirely good” and “to the world that is entirely lengthy.” According to the Rambam, this means the world of souls where there is only eternal delight without interruption.

Therefore, all of the promises in the Torah of material rewards in this world, “If you shall go in My statutes... and I will give the rains in their [proper] times,” the Rambam explains as not the ultimate purpose but only a means to an end. Namely, to enable the fulfillment of mitzvos in tranquility and to engage in knowing G-d, through which a person grows ever closer to his ultimate perfection which he will only attain in the World to Come. In his own words there (ch 9):

“Since it is known that the reward for the mitzvos and the good which we will merit if we observe the path of G-d as prescribed by the Torah is the life of the World to Come... what is the meaning of what is written throughout the entire Torah that if you observe [the Torah’s laws], you will acquire such and such and if you do not observe [the Torah’s laws], such and such will happen to you, all of which are matters of this world. For example, plenty and famine, war and peace, sovereignty or lowliness, the settlement of the land or exile, success in one’s deeds or loss and all the other points mentioned in the covenant. The resolution of the matter is as follows... we are promised by the Torah that if we fulfill it with joy and good spirit and meditate on its wisdom at all times, [G-d] will remove

.....

**The Philosophical  
Approach of the  
Rambam: The ultimate  
perfection of creation  
is that human beings  
should recognize  
and grasp with their  
intellects the greatness  
of the Creator.**

.....

all the obstacles which prevent us from fulfilling it, for example, sickness, war, famine, and the like. And He will grant us all the good which will reinforce our performance of the Torah, such as plenty, peace, an abundance of silver and gold in order that we not be involved throughout all our days in matters required by the body, but rather, will sit unburdened so as to study wisdom and perform mitzvos in order that we will merit the life of the World to Come.”

Based on this, the Rambam continues in the next halacha regarding the Coming of Moshiach and the Days of Moshiach that they too are part of this same idea, a pathway to merit life in the World to Come, as he puts it:

“For these reasons, all of Israel, their Prophets and their Sages, have yearned for the Days of Melech HaMoshiach so they can rest from the [wicked] kingdoms who do not allow them to occupy themselves with Torah and mitzvos properly, and they will find rest and increase their wisdom in



order to merit the World to Come. This is since in that era, knowledge, wisdom, and truth will become abundant, as it states, “The earth will be filled with the knowledge of G-d” and also ‘One man will no longer teach his brother, nor a man his colleague,’ as well as ‘I will take away the heart of stone from your flesh.’ This is because the king who will arise from the descendants of Dovid will be a greater master of wisdom than Shlomo and a great prophet, close to the level of Moshe, our teacher. Therefore, he will teach the entire nation and guide them in the path of G-d, and all the gentile nations will come to hear him as it says, ‘And it shall come to pass in the last days that the mountain of G-d’s house shall be established at the peak of the mountains.’ [Nevertheless,] the ultimate of all reward and the final good which will have no end or decrease is the life of the World to Come, but the Days of Moshiach are of this world, with the world following its natural pattern except that sovereignty will return to Israel. As the early Sages already declared, “There is no difference between the present age and the Days of Moshiach except [the emancipation from] our subjugation to the [gentile] kingdoms.”



In summation, we have learned a number of things:

1) What the Days of Moshiach are all about: A period in which “knowledge, wisdom, and truth will become abundant” in general, and especially so for the Jewish People who suffered in exile up to that point who, in the times of Moshiach, will “find rest and increase their wisdom.” Although there will be material abundance, we should not view that as an end unto

itself but rather a means and goal for something loftier, the aforementioned increase in wisdom.

2) In accordance with that, the Rambam describes the persona of Melech HaMoshiach: Moshiach represents the perfection of human wisdom, as mentioned that the king “who will arise from the descendants of Dovid will be a greater master of wisdom than Shlomo and a great prophet, close to the level of Moshe, our teacher.” (As the Rambam explains elsewhere [Moreh Nevochim] that prophecy is also an aspect of wisdom and intellect; a flow of supernal wisdom that rests upon the person who is worthy due to his own acquired wisdom.) Moshiach will pour forth from his great wisdom to all of humanity, as “he will teach the entire nation and guide them in the path of G-d, and all the gentile nations will come to hear him.”

3) All of this – the knowledge of G-d that will be in the Days of Moshiach – is not the ultimate end, but only a means and a way-station on the road to the ultimate perfection and purpose in the World to Come. This is because, as mentioned, true knowledge of Hashem can only be attained in the world of souls, and that is why according to the Rambam even during Yemos HaMoshiach and even after the Resurrection of the Dead, souls will continue to disengage from bodies and come to their eternal rest and perfection in the world of souls.

The Rambam explains the significance of the anticipation and the yearning for Yemos HaMoshiach in accordance with all of the above, that the desire of the Prophets and Sages is for the World to Come. As such, their desire for the Days of Moshiach is only as a means to attain, through them, the World to Come.



## PURPOSE OF CREATION – REVELATION OF HIS KINGSHIP

In Shaar HaYichud V'haEmuna (ch 7), the Alter Rebbe writes: It is known to all that the purpose of the creation of the world is the revelation of His kingship, or in the language used in other Chassidic discourses, the starting point of Creation is in that it rose up in His will, "I will rule as King."

As explained in numerous places, the revelation of His kingship is not through the intellectual comprehension of His greatness on the part of the created beings, but through the 'nullification' (*bittul*) and submission of 'acceptance of the yoke' (*kabbolas ol*) before G-d, in that one negates his will and intellect before Hashem and His commandments like servants who submit to their king and serve him in a manner of 'acceptance of the yoke.'

This *kabbolas ol* is expressed in the carrying out of His decrees in the form of the 613 mitzvos for Jews and 7 mitzvos for Bnei Noach, referred to in numerous places by the Sages as 'decree of the king' or 'command of the king.' These terms categorize the absolute obligation on our part to fulfill all of His mitzvos to the fullest as is the obligation of a servant to his master and king. As the Sages put it, 'acceptance of the yoke of mitzvos' comes after 'acceptance of the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven,' and "A person should not say I don't want flesh of the pig, rather I do want, but what should I do that my Father in Heaven has decreed upon me." Or as the Rambam writes, that even when a person understands the reasons for the mitzvos, he still should not do them only out of 'intellectual conviction'



שער הגמול - ספרו של הרמב"ן

but rather "because of the mitzva that G-d commanded in the Torah and informed us through Moshe" as a result of accepting the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven.

This end-goal of revelation of His kingship in the world began to be actualized primarily at the time of the Exodus from Egypt and the Giving of the Torah, as it is then that G-d made a covenant with Am Yisrael to be their king and they His servants. We see this in the verse, "When you take the nation out of Egypt, you all shall serve G-d upon this mountain (Sinai, upon which the Torah was given)," as well as "For unto Me are the Bnei Yisrael servants. They are My servants whom I took out of the land of Egypt." On their end, the Jewish

People accepted His kingship willingly as they proclaimed “Hashem shall be King forever and ever,” and G-d on His end revealed His kingship over the Jewish People when He proclaimed, “Anochi Havaya Elokecha.” On the basis of this covenant Hashem commanded us the 613 mitzvos of the Torah, which are the 613 commands of the king to his subjects and servants.

The event of the Giving of the Torah revealed Hashem’s kingship only over the Jewish People, however, the end-goal remains for them to establish His kingship over the entire world. That is why subsequent to that event Moshe Rabbeinu commanded to compel all of the inhabitants of the world to observe the Seven Noahide Laws, through which is expressed G-d kingship over all of the nations and actualizes the fulfillment of the prophecy of “And Hashem will be King over the entire earth.”

A further stage and added completion of this process was when Dovid was anointed as king over the Jews, because regarding the ‘throne’ of the kingdom of Dovid it says (Divrei HaYomim) that it is “the the throne of Hashem’s kingship over Yisrael.” This is because the king who sits on the throne must be in a state of absolute nullification to G-d, such that his kingship over the nation is nothing more than a manifestation of G-d’s kingship over them, and through him is revealed G-d’s kingship over the Jewish People and the entire world. That is why the deeper and primary role of the king is to lead the country and the nation in the way of Torah and to compel them and the entire world to fulfill all of His mitzvos. As the Rambam writes [regarding a Jewish king], “In all matters, his deeds should be for the sake of heaven. His purpose and intent

.....

**The significance of  
Yemos HaMoshiach and  
Melech HaMoshiach is  
in that his kingdom will  
encompass the entire  
world and he will work  
so that every Jew**

.....

should be to elevate the true faith and fill the world with justice.” That is because, as mentioned, the Jewish king represents Hashem’s kingship in the world, and His kingship is expressed in actual fashion with the fulfillment of the 613 mitzvos of the Jews and seven mitzvos of the Noahides.

Based on all of the above, the significance of Yemos HaMoshiach and Melech HaMoshiach is in that his kingdom will encompass the entire world and he will work so that every Jew and the entire world will serve G-d, and through this G-d’s kingship will be revealed in the world to the fullest extent.



All of the above is reflected in the words of the Rambam in his Laws of Kings at the conclusion of his monumental work, which on the surface appear to be identical to some extent to what he wrote earlier in his Laws of Repentance cited previously. However, with additional analysis it turns out the description of Yemos HaMoshiach in the Laws of Melech HaMoshiach is entirely different. That is because in the Laws of Repentance the Days of Moshiach were described as a state of perfection in the knowledge of



G-d through apprehension of the intellect as we saw earlier, whereas in the Laws of Melech HaMoshiach the Rambam does not even mention knowledge of G-d at all (except as a separate matter in the final two halachos of chapter 12). He only speaks there of the return of the kingdom of Dovid to its original state, the fulfillment of all the mitzvos and rectifying all of the nations to serve G-d. In his words:

“Melech HaMoshiach will arise in the future and renew the kingdom of Dovid to its original state and its initial rulership... In his days, the observance of all the statutes will return to their previous state. We will offer sacrifices, observe the Sabbatical and Jubilee years according to the entirety of the mitzva as described by the Torah. And anyone who does not believe in him or does not await his coming, denies not only the statements of the other prophets, but the Torah and Moshe Rabbeinu. If a king will arise from the House of Dovid who diligently contemplates the Torah and observes its mitzvos as prescribed by the Written Law and the Oral Law... and he will compel all of Israel to walk in it (the way of the Torah) and rectify the breaches in its observance, and fight the wars of G-d... if he succeeded and was victorious over all the nations, built the Mikdash in its place, and gathered the dispersed of Israel, he is the definite Moshiach and he will then repair the entire world to serve G-d together.”

The above quote teaches us a number of things:

1. What the Days of Moshiach are all about: A period in which there will be the revelation of Hashem's kingship over all of the inhabitants of the world through the return of the Kingdom of Dovid and the fulfillment of all the mitzvos to their

fullest, with all of the Jews observing their 613 mitzvos and all the nations serving G-d with their seven mitzvos.

2. What Melech HaMoshiach is all about: In these laws, the Rambam describes the persona of Moshiach differently than he did in the Laws of Repentance. Here, the Rambam does not mention at all the great wisdom and power of prophecy that Moshiach will have. Rather, he emphasizes other aspects of his personality and describes him as a mighty king who compels all of the Jews to go in the way of the Torah and he does battle against those who would oppose that. The reason being that the power and mission of Moshiach, to bring about perfection in the fulfillment of mitzvos in actual practice in a way of 'acceptance of the yoke,' derives primarily from his being a powerful king who is capable of compelling the entire world to submit to G-d's will and command and not from his being a wise man and prophet.

3. All of this leads us to a key understanding, namely that we should not look upon Yemos HaMoshiach only as a way-station on the way to the World to Come but also as a matter and end unto itself, because the ultimate revelation of Hashem's kingship in the world is specifically revealed in the Days of Moshiach and not in the world of souls. Over there, there is no fulfillment of mitzvos, no serving like a servant, only intellectual apprehension of His greatness. As such, the Rambam focuses in the Laws of Moshiach on explaining the significance of the time in and of itself and only mentions the World to Come as a tangential point.

These themes will be explained in more detail, with Hashem's help, in the subsequent chapters of this work.



**Photo:** A view of 788 Eastern Parkway from Kingston Avenue after the blaze. **In the background:** A page of Likkutei Sichos that miraculously survived the inferno

דברי ימי  
החסידים



# Why Did Break Out A

A historical overview  
by original photo



When a Volume of  
Likkutei Sichos  
Was Published in  
**Record Speed of  
Three Weeks** at  
the Rebbe's  
Request...



# And A Fire Above 770?

new supplemented  
s and documents

**O**n Thursday, 21 Teves 5743, Rabbi Zalman Shimon Dworkin, the rav of Crown Heights, received \$12,000 from the Rebbe along with the following letter:

**BH.** You surely heard of the fire **ע"ל** that took place this morning. The waters etc. have reached and damaged the shul, and only by miracle did it not affect the Sifrei Torah etc.

Even though this shouldn't be spoken about and obviously shouldn't be publicized (so not to instill fear etc.), still, for the good of the shul (as I have written long ago, but nothing concrete has been done about it **ל"ל** -- here-with is attached a sum of money in its value received in exchange for it from someone who isn't a resident of this neighborhood, who obviously has no influence neither in the committee of the mikvah, nor in that of neighborhood, or with the rabbonim of the neighborhood.

The sum is \$10,000 (according to what I wrote then), plus \$1000 for the shul and \$1000 he donated for the mikvah.

The buyer will not make anything about this public (to protect the honor of Lubavitch and my honor) and won't interfere in the administration of the shul at all.

However, there's no permission to make the building smaller or to expand it, and neither to apply nay significant changes to it – and anything of the like – against his will.

May Hashem fence in all the breaches of His nation in both communal and personal matters, and may the famous saying of the holy Sages be fulfilled

Handwritten Hebrew text on aged paper, likely the first page of the document. The text is written in a cursive style and includes a date at the top right: "ד.ה. 21 תמוז 5743". The text discusses a fire and the damage to the shul, mentioning the sum of money received and the instructions for rebuilding.

Handwritten Hebrew text on aged paper, likely the second page of the document. The text continues the discussion of the fire and the damage to the shul, mentioning the sum of money received and the instructions for rebuilding.

[that after a fire one becomes wealthy]. And may you rebuild in the very same place as per the instructions (that come with a gift of power) that appear in the holy letters of the Alter Rebbe and the Tzemach Tzedek.



**May thre only visible and revealed  
good be here and in all places where  
Jewish people שליט"א reside.**

What was this letter all about? Which fire was the Rebbe talking about? And why was the Rebbe selling 770 and sending the money to the Crown Heights rav?



It all began on a wintry Friday in Kislev of 5743 (1982), Erev Shabbos Parshas Toldos. The latest volume of *Likkutei Sichos* – Volume 19 on *Sefer Devarim* – had just been published, and the members of the Vaad L'hafotzas Sichos had submitted a copy for the Rebbe's approval. A few hours later they received the Rebbe's answer:

On top of the page, the Rebbe had written his usual acknowledgment and thank you, but at the bottom of the margin was an unexpected surprise (see facsimile #1). There the Rebbe had written: "It is imperative that the section on Bereishis be published in time for the corresponding weeks of 5743, and the sooner the better. Surely you will have good news to report about this."

The members of the Vaad were stunned. They looked at the Rebbe's response and wondered how they would ever be able to fulfill the Rebbe's directive. Only six weeks remained until the end of Bereishis, and from past experience they knew that under usual circumstances, it would be impossible to finish a book in such a short time. Even today, in the age of the computer, publishing a book of hundreds of pages in a few weeks is an extraordinary undertaking. But in those days it wasn't just difficult, it was beyond the realm of possibility. Plus, it would not be the only project the Vaad would be working on. It

was still in charge of the weekly *Likkut*, which took dozens of hours to prepare.

In addition to the technical difficulties, the Vaad faced another problem. In accordance with one of the Rebbe's previous directives to include as many *sichos* as possible, the last few volumes of *Likkutei Sichos* had contained five *sichos* on every parsha. These were taken from the weekly *Likkut* that had been published during the last five years, between 5735 and 5740. If the next volume of *Sefer Bereishis* would be published at this point, it would contain only two *sichos* on each *parsha*.

The members of the Vaad decided to write to the Rebbe for further instructions, and asked if they might postpone the new volume until the Rebbe had edited the *sichos* through Parshas Vayechi. That would allow them to include three *sichos* for every *parsha*. They also wrote that if they printed the book with only two, the resulting volume would have only half as many pages as the previous ones, approximately 300 instead of 600. The Vaad listed which particular *sichos* were ready, which had been typed and needed editing, and which ones they had not yet begun to prepare. They also listed the topics to be included in the addendum.

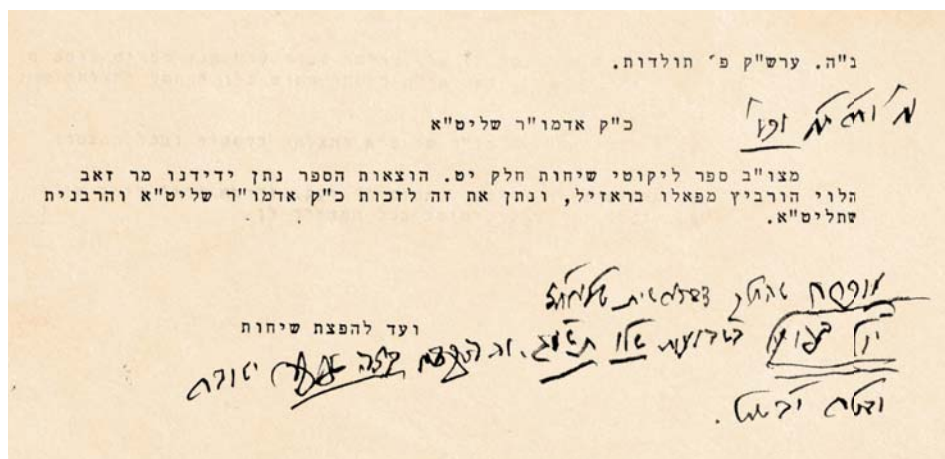
According to the plan, the addendum to Volume 20 would be a major part of the book, containing many of the Rebbe's letters relating to the various *sichos*. When the Rebbe edited the introduction to Volume 15, he had appealed to everyone who had such letters to give them to the Vaad for publication, citing "the merit of the many."

The Rebbe's answer wasn't long in coming (see facsimile #2). As far as

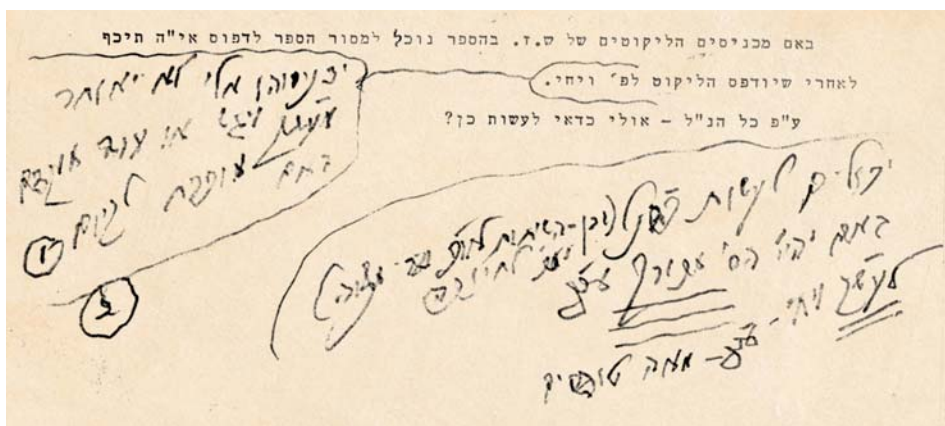
postponing the project was concerned, the Rebbe wrote that they should "Submit it to me no later than Erev Shabbos Kodesh Vayigash or even earlier if necessary." Concerning the list of topics submitted for the addendum, the Rebbe wrote: "You may use these, and also include the *sichos* for *chasan* and *kalla* and *bar mitzva* [which the Rebbe said at the group *yechidus* after Yud-Tes Kislev], and letters about Chanuka. At least 100 copies [of the sefarim] should be bound and printed before Shabbos Parshas Vayechi."



The Vaad L'hafotzas Sichos embarked on the new project at a frenzied pace, working day and night to fulfill the Rebbe's wishes. During those few weeks, the members of the Vaad barely saw their families. From Motzoei Shabbos to Friday afternoon they remained in their editorial offices, emerging only to daven, go to the mikva, or to catch a few hours of much needed sleep. Food was provided by their *nashim tzidkaniyos*, who brought it to their husbands at 788 Eastern Parkway.



FACSIMILE #1



FACSIMILE #2



FRONT VIEW OF 788 EASTERN PARKWAY THE DAY AFTER THE FIRE

But the members of the Vaad were only human beings, and at a certain point they despaired of ever completing the task in time. In response to another letter they submitted, the Rebbe indicated that they should *not* wait for the *sichos* on Parshas Vayechi or even Vayigash (see facsimile #3). However, it was still of the utmost importance that the book be published before Bereishis was completed.

[Incidentally, at this point the Rebbe gave his approval for the Vaad to include in the addendum the *sichos* and *maamarim* that had been said from the Rebbe's room during his convalescence from his heart attack in 5738. These *sichos*, said on Motzoei Shabbos, had been broadcast to the Beis Medrash downstairs in 770, and later edited by the Rebbe. The Vaad had previously requested to print them as a separate volume, but the Rebbe had negated the idea. The Vaad saw the Rebbe's permission to include them in Volume 20 as an indication that he considered them an integral part of

his usual *sichos* and *maamarim*, no different from those that were said at Shabbos farbrengens.]

The work progressed in a miraculous manner. When the Vaad submitted the galleys on Parshas Vayigash, the Rebbe responded (see facsimile #4): "Fast! And if you hurry up with Parshas Vayechi, everything can be included in the volume."

The members of the Vaad worked faster, pushing themselves beyond human endurance. A short time later, even Vayechi was ready for the Rebbe's approval. Returned only a few hours after it was submitted, the galleys were immediately sent off to the printing presses, with instructions that all other work be interrupted. Every piece of machinery was to be used only for publishing the new volume – 100 copies before Shabbos Vayigash.

The manager of the printing press, who was not a Chabad Chassid, considered it a great merit to print the Rebbe's works,



and stayed up the entire night to supervise. Interestingly, when his wife brought him some sandwiches in the middle of the night, he refused to eat them, saying that he didn't think it was right to eat something that wasn't completely kosher while he was working on the Rebbe's books! His wife went back to Manhattan, where she found a kosher restaurant and bought him supper. But her husband wouldn't eat it until he saw the words "*Glatt kosher*" on the wrapping...



By the next morning, the unbelievable had happened. The 20th volume of *Likkutei Sichos* was in print – before Shabbos Parshas Vayigash!

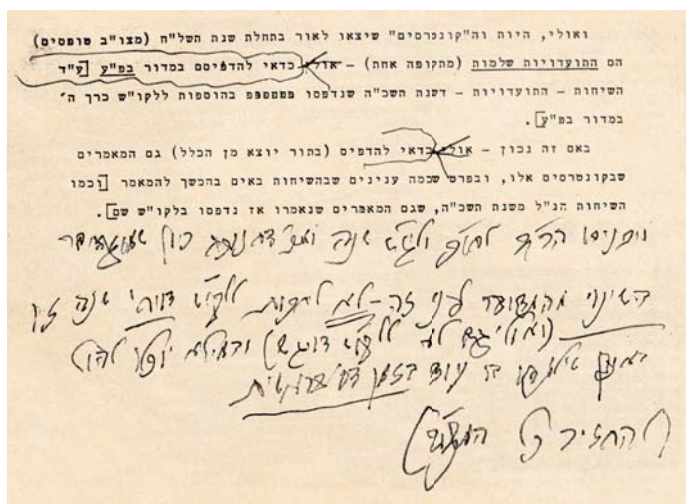
The public was astounded by the speed at which the Rebbe's works were being published. Even the pages of Volume 20 were of the finest quality, and the binding was particularly impressive. But the most important thing was that the book contained the *sichos* on Parshas Vayechi – the first time a volume of *Likkutei Sichos* contained a weekly *Likkut* that had not yet been printed as an individual *Likkut*!

Why had it been so important to the Rebbe for the project to be finished before the end of Bereishis? It was the only question on everyone's mind throughout the weeks of frantic activity.

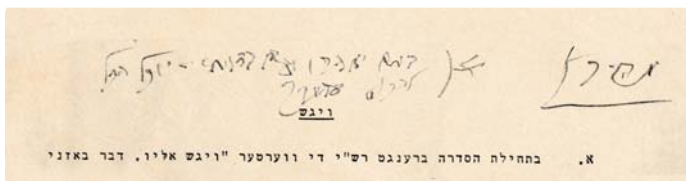
In the past, the Rebbe had sometimes indicated that a book be printed before a certain date, but never with the same

sense of urgency. Usually these were books about the Chabad Rebbeim, whose publication the Rebbe wanted to coincide with their yahrtzeit or another significant day.

In fact, the Rebbe's insistence in this case was unprecedented for two reasons: 1) the Rebbe had never before rushed the publication of any of his works, and 2) the date of completion was not known to be particularly significant. But the Rebbe had repeatedly stated that he wanted



FACSIMILE #3



FACSIMILE #4



DOWNSTAIRS ZAL OF 770 AS THE FIREMEN COMBAT THE BLAZE UPSTAIRS. THE BENCHES ARE COVERED WITH PLASTIC SHEETING TO PREVENT WATER DAMAGE

these *sichos* to be learned at the same time the *parsha* was being read in *shul*. The members of the Vaad realized that there must be a spiritual reason behind the deadline, but it was simply beyond their capacity to understand it.



On Wednesday night of the week of Parshas Shemos, a fire broke out in the printing room of the Vaad, on the third floor of 788 Eastern Parkway. A passerby noticed the flames sometime after midnight, and dozens of fire trucks responded to the alarm. Huge quantities of water were sprayed into the building, but the fire wasn't brought under control until every single printing press of the *Vaad L'hafotzas Sichos* had been reduced to ash.

Even before the smoke dissipated, the members of the Vaad ran to see what they could salvage, and breathed a collective sigh of relief when they saw that the fire had stopped directly in front of

their offices. The hundreds of volumes of the new *Likkutei Sichos* had been spared, together with their priceless archives.

But the biggest surprise was waiting in the middle of the printing room. On one press that had actually started to melt from the heat were thousands of copies of the weekly *Likkut* – virtually untouched by the flames! Only the margins of the pages had been slightly charred (see photo). The Rebbe's holy *sichos* had withstood the test of fire.

The next morning, the members of the Vaad, Rabbis Shalom Jacobson, Shneur Zalman Chanin, Nachman Schapiro, and Leibel Altein, informed the Rebbe about the incident and asked for a *bracha* to recover from the damage. The Rebbe responded (see facsimile #5): "May it be G-d's will that the famous saying of our holy Sages be fulfilled [that after a fire one becomes wealthy]. May you have revealed good to report, and particular success in disseminating the wellsprings outward. I will mention it at the *tziyun* affirmatively."

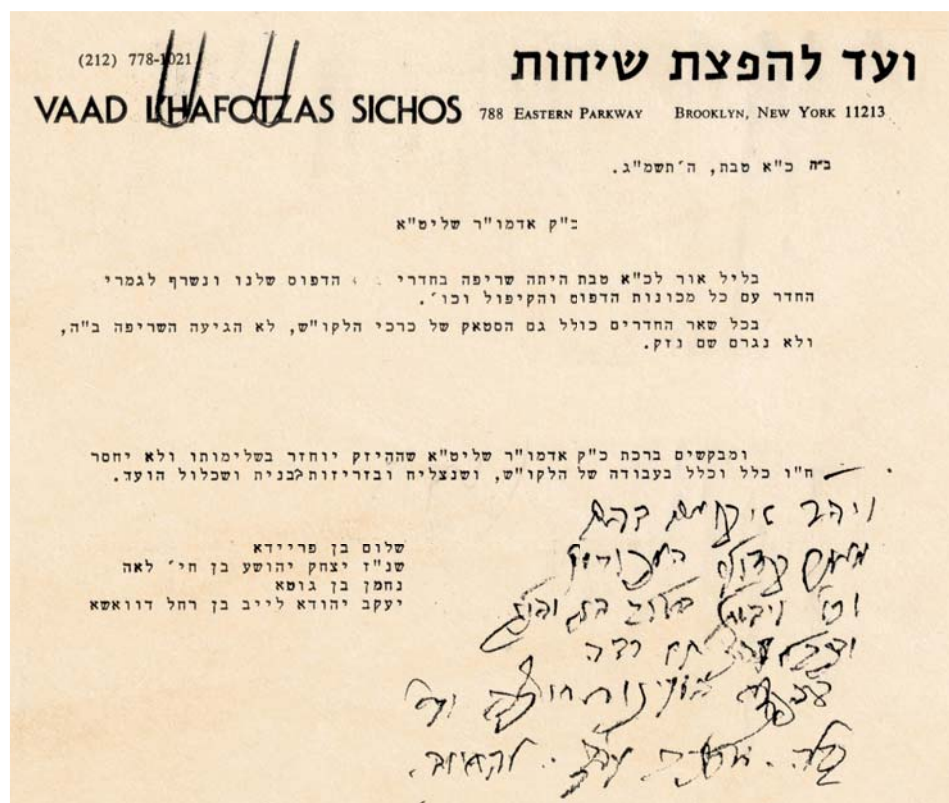
directors on the board decided to raze the old building even before the new one was completed. Due to this hasty and premature step, a fully renovated *mikva* would not be available for another two years, the time it took to complete the new *mikva*. In the meantime, the women who used the *mikva* had to navigate an open construction site, and several were badly injured in accidents.

But at the farbrengen of Shabbos Parshas Shemos, the Rebbe explained what was really going on...

On Erev Shabbos Kodesh 12 MarCheshvan 5743, the Rebbe wrote a sharply worded letter to the people in charge of the project:

A few years before, in 5740, a group of community activists had begun building a new *mikva* for the women of Crown Heights. Unfortunately, in their eagerness to complete the project, one of the

“...The event that took place was frightful, and it is even more appalling that no one is paying attention to this at all! The only women’s *mikva* in the neigh-



FACSIMILE #5





RABBIS SHALOM JACOBSON, ZALMAN CHANIN AND MOSHE SHAGALOW ESTIMATE THE DAMAGE AFTER THE BLAZE

borhood of Lubavitch, visited by Chabad women from around the world, was destroyed two years ago with public money and in [inappropriate] haste.

“As they are apparently ‘unaware’ of what happened, I would like to inform them: 1) There is still no *mikva* here; 2) according to the *Shulchan Aruch* regarding a synagogue, even when other synagogues exist, it requires serious investigation as to how it can be destroyed in the first place; 3) In a case where it is permissible to destroy one (which was not at all the case here), ‘the new one must be built very quickly, working night and day,’ according to the *Shulchan Aruch*.

“With my own eyes I have seen how days go by without any work being done by day or by night. May G-d have mercy on us all, together with the rest of Klal Yisrael. May this be concluded in a good manner.”

On Erev Shabbos Kodesh Parshas Vayechi the Rebbe wrote an even sharper letter:

“The ruling that it is permissible and laudable to sell a synagogue for the purpose of building a *mikva* is well known. I was promised that the *mikva* would be completed by mid-summer, then informed that it would take until Rosh Hashana, then Succos, then another two or three weeks.

“On 14 Teves I visited the building. It will not be completed within two or three weeks.

“If you are really concerned about the wellbeing of the Beis Medrash, let it be sold, and the money given to someone who is not a Lubavitcher. Give him \$10,000 as compensation for his work – just make sure that the *mikva* is completed within three weeks. And no one from Lubavitch should offer him advice.”



In the middle of the farbrengen of Shabbos Kodesh Parshas Shemos the

cont. on p. 25

דרכי  
החסידים



What  
Rebbeim S  
Bochurim



A detailed overview  
by **Sholom Dovber**  
**Crombie**

# t The Said About Smoking





## NOT TO SMOKE ON ROSH HASHANA

**I**would like to make the point that those who smoke all year and smoke on Yom Tov too, refrain from doing so on Rosh Hashana. This is proper, for the bnei Torah are careful in this, and they should also convince their acquaintances. – this is what the Rebbe Rayatz wrote on 13 Elul 5697/1937, in a letter that was sent to the talmidei ha'yeshivos.

It is repeated in the name of Rabbi Menachem Zev Greenglass of Montreal, that the Rebbe Rayatz wrote this letter in response to the request of Rabbi Yaakov Chizkiya Greenwald, Rav and Admor of Pupa, author of *Va'yaged Yaakov*.

In any case, a year later (22 Elul 1938) the Rebbe Rayatz repeated his instruction that refraining from smoking on Rosh Hashana is the proper behavior of bnei Torah. **“I suggest that the manner of behavior on the two days of Rosh Hashana be to limit unnecessary speaking, eating, drinking and sleep, and not to smoke, even privately.”**

Although the Rebbe Rayatz's request was directed at bnei Torah and the talmidei ha'yeshivos, it was accepted among Chabad Chassidim in general.

## UNTIL AGE 20 – FORBIDDEN; 20 AND OLDER – THE REBBE REQUESTS NOT

Five to six years later, the Rebbe Rayatz decided to instruct the young students of the yeshiva not to smoke at all, ever. He sent this instruction to Rabbi Morde-

chai Mentlick, the leading rosh yeshiva in yeshivas Tomchei Tmimim, on 12 Teves 5703. He wrote, **“I am presenting my friend with my instruction to make a list of all the talmidim who smoke, and to utterly and absolutely forbid smoking for talmidim under the age of 20, no matter whether it's cigarettes, cigars or pipes. This prohibition applies to all talmidim wherever they are, throughout any 24 hour period ... this order should be enforced strictly with superior supervision by my friend, and the talmid who transgresses this order should be harshly punished.”**

Further in the letter, the Rebbe addressed the talmidim older than 20 and made a request of them: **“As for my friends, the talmidim who are twenty and older, you should request in my name, for their good – spiritually and materially – that they should try to stop smoking by diminishing day by day until they cease entirely. Whoever fulfills my request - it will be good for him spiritually and materially. Please inform me which of the talmidim who are twenty and above, fulfilled my request.”**

After the hanhala of the yeshiva reported to the Rebbe that the announcement had been made to the talmidim, the Rebbe Rayatz wrote to R' Mentlick that he was happy to hear that they were carrying out his order: **“... In response to your letter about the fulfillment of my order and request regarding smoking, I was very pleased. May Hashem grant them success in their learning and their fear of Heaven, and may they be G-d fearing, Chassidim, and scholars.”**



## YOUNG PEOPLE SMOKING

The Rebbe Rayatz's emphasis on prohibiting smoking to those under 20 is being echoed today in the world at large. As you know, there is a war going on against smoking. Every year millions of dollars are invested, around the world, in the campaign against smoking. All those who are opposed to smoking are in agreement as to what age group to focus on – teenagers, who easily fall into the habit and then have a hard time quitting for the rest of their lives.

In an article about smoking in *Mishpacha* magazine, there was research from Mrs. Naava Inbar, the director of communications for an organization to fight cancer, that said that 90% of Israeli smokers began smoking before they were 18. Consequently, the Ministry of Health decided to focus their energy on the young population of smokers, and to strictly enforce the law against selling cigarettes to those under age 18.

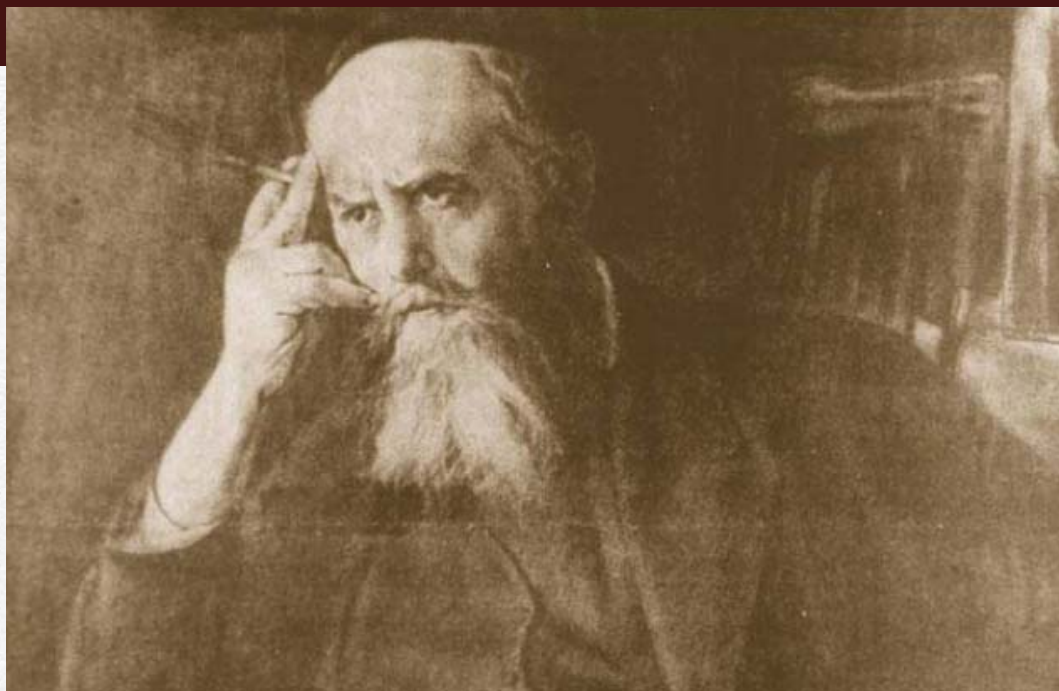
Presumably, in Tomchei Tmimim after the announcement about the Rebbe Rayatz's *gezeira*, it was also necessary to work on imposing the new prohibition. About a week after the announcement was made, the Rebbe wrote to the hanhala: **"Please let me know how the situation is regarding smoking by talmidim under age 20, whether they have stopped completely, and as far as those 20 and older, whether they have diminished and are trying to stop completely."**

Due to the difficulty in quitting the habit, the Rebbe was afraid that talmidim were continuing to smoke privately. In another letter the Rebbe inquired again, **"Please inform me ... about the smoking situation, whether they stopped entirely and whether you are sure that they aren't secretly smoking."**

## NO MORE SMOKING FOR THE FARBRENGEN

Over the years, the Rebbe Rayatz's letter became one of the well-known *gezeiros* for talmidim in Lubavitch yeshivos





## “WHY DOES THE REBBE SMOKE?”

In Chassidic history we find a number of references to the Rebbeim and smoking. One of them is the story in *Shmuos V'Sippurim* that took place one of the times the Rebbe Rashab visited Moscow and was hosted by one of the wealthy men of that city. The rich man's son was sick and the doctors forbade him to smoke, but he did not obey them. His father yelled at him to stop smoking and fought him over this, but to no avail.

When the Rebbe Rashab was in their house, the rich man asked him to influence his son to stop smoking. The Rebbe said to his son, “Why do you smoke when you are sick?” The son said, “The Rebbe is not well either, why does the Rebbe smoke?” The Rebbe said, “I smoke because my father smoked.”

*Why do you smoke when you are sick?” The son said, “The Rebbe is not well either, why does the Rebbe smoke?” The Rebbe said, “I smoke because my father smoked.”*

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The Rebbe MH”M told a story about the Rebbe Rayatz and the Rebbe Rashab, that after a telephone was set up between their rooms, it often happened that the Rebbe

Rashab would call the Rebbe Rayatz and say: “You can come in, I want to smoke.” The Rebbe would go in, light a match and the cigarette, and the Rebbe Rashab would smoke and talk to him

regarding the topic he was involved in.

Likewise it is told that some time before Pesach some yeshiva bachurim would travel to check the wheat for the baking of shmura matza, and they would also check the tobacco for Pesach for the Rebbe.

In general, the Rebbe Rayatz smoked very frequently, and this is mentioned



many times in his sichos and memoirs. However, in 1940, due to his poor health, the Rebbe Rayatz stopped smoking. In a letter of 13 Iyar, 1940, the Rebbe Rayatz told Professor Fishel Schneersohn that he completely ceased smoking. “Regarding my state of health there haven’t been any happy developments yet,” wrote the Rebbe. “As to the diet prescribed by Gerson, I only keep it about halfway or a third of the way, as there are things that I am very careful about like smoking, which I stopped completely ... may Hashem send me a refuah.”

In an interesting story told in *Migdal Oz*, the Chassidim R’ Shmuel Michel Treinen and R’ Simcha Gorodetzky visited the Rogatchover Gaon. During the visit, which took place on Shavuos, R’ Shmuel Michel took out a cigarette and it was obvious that he wanted to smoke. The Rogatchover called for his wife to bring fire, and when there was no response he wanted to get up himself to bring fire for his guest. However, R’ Shmuel Michel stopped him and said he had no intentions of smoking and had only wanted to know the gaon’s opinion about smoking on Yom Tov.

The Rogatchover said he had never smoked and so he couldn’t offer an opinion on the matter, since it was possible that for one habituated to smoking it could be considered *l’tzorech ochel nefesh*. When R’ Shmuel Michel said that the Rebbe Rashab smoked on Yom Tov the gaon said, “You compare yourself to the Rebbe?! He is a lofty tzaddik and their smoking is another inyan altogether!”

(before the gezeira regarding mashke, which was promulgated by the Rebbe), and young bachurim refrained from smoking until they were 20. The prohibition applied to all Chabad yeshivos worldwide, and bachurim who were found smoking were severely penalized by the hanhala.

The Rebbe did not outright forbid smoking after the age of 20, which is perhaps why bachurim smoked when they were older than 20. This was apparent in 770, where the talmidim were older than 20 and many of them smoked. Those who learned in 770 back then remember the zal in a haze of smoke.

Before the Rebbe farbrenged, everybody in the Beis Medrash stopped smoking so the Rebbe could come down into a room with fresh air. Rabbi Eliyahu Simpson would bang on the table a half an hour before a farbrengen and announce that everyone should stop smoking.

Aside from the health problems engendered by smoking, the cigarettes made the Beis Medrash filthy. It was only after the Rebbe stopped walking several times in order to pick up a cigarette butt, that the smokers made sure not to dirty the floor.

## NO MORE SMOKING IN 770

In 1976, in yechidus with a Chassid, the Rebbe brought up the topic of smoking and said, “As far as smoking cigarettes, there is the letter of the Rebbe, my father-in-law.”

Following this statement in yechidus, a meeting was called of talmidim in 770, in which the hanhala urged them to stop smoking. A description of that meeting was written by Y. M. Sossover, who was a talmid there at the time:

“Adar 5736: A meeting took place on Monday afternoon, in the Beis Medrash of the Rebbe, Admur shlita ( in the small zal).

At 5:45, Rabbi Dovid Raskin began the meeting and said that everybody was requested to stop smoking, since the Rebbe had spoken to someone in yechidus about this a month ago ...

“After the meeting, the Rebbe Rayatz’s letter was publicized, and a new set of rules was put forth by the hanhala. All those who wanted to smoke had to leave the zal. The talmidim who learn in Chovevei Torah also have to leave their study hall.”

Over the years, especially in the past two decades, awareness about the dangers of smoking and the many illnesses that result was raised in the frum community. Even the older bachurim, to whom the gezeira did not apply, decided that for their spiritual and material good they were better off not smoking, and the number of those who smoke went down.

In 5755, a law was passed in New York forbidding smoking in public places. The law was welcomed by non-smokers and was successfully enforced. Today, people are aware that it is forbidden to smoke in 770 since it is a public place, and the air there is clean of cigarette smoke.

## NOT TO QUIT COLD TURKEY

Although the Rebbe said that smoking is dangerous for one’s health and people should stop smoking, he was opposed to a ban on smoking. On 3 Teves 5750, someone passed by the Rebbe for “dollars” and complained that he saw bachurim smoking outside 770. He asked, “Why don’t you say not to smoke? Is smoking good or bad?”

The Rebbe said, “It depends on a person’s habit. If someone is used to smok-

ing and he stops, it can be harmful to his health.”

The man said, “Okay, so tell them, please, not to smoke. If you tell them, they will listen to you.”

The Rebbe said, “I am not a doctor.”

## THE PSYCHOLOGY OF QUITTING

In order to quit successfully you need the awareness that smoking is harmful, that half of all smokers who continue to smoke will end up dying from a smoking-related illness, and that it’s vital to stop. Without a strong desire to do so, it is very hard to drop the habit, but if the resolution to do so is made, quitting can be achieved by virtually anyone.

Smoking harms nearly every major organ. The risk of developing smoking-related diseases, such as lung and other cancers, heart disease, stroke, and respiratory illnesses, increases with total lifetime exposure to cigarette smoke.

The benefits in quitting are enormous, with a tremendous improvement in overall health: the risk of developing heart disease as a result of smoking may be reduced by as much as half in the year or two after quitting. After 15 years, the former smoker’s risk of heart disease approaches that of a person who has never smoked. Five to 15 years after quitting, the risk of stroke returns to the level of those who have never smoked. Quitting reduces the risk of lung cancer, as well as many other kinds of cancer. Life expectancy rises. There is improvement in the senses of taste and smell. It clears the lungs, making for easier breathing, and reduces coughing and pressure in the sinuses.



There is also the great satisfaction in being liberated from a bad habit, not to mention the financial savings (taxes alone on a pack in New York are a whopping \$4.35, not including a roughly 9% sales tax. Add it all up and a pack of cigarettes in New York is likely to cost around \$12.00!)

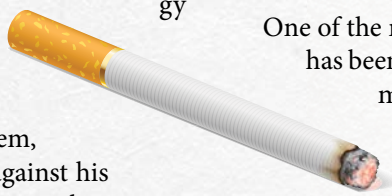
It has been proven that it is easier to quit smoking with a support system.

This idea, that there is a psychological component to quitting, is something the Rebbe gave as an example for something else. After his heart attack in 1977, the following was written in a diary at the time:

“The Rebbe asked that all the mail be brought to him. One of the doctors said that perhaps he should rest for about two weeks before resuming his correspondence. The Rebbe said that if he waited until then, the work would be harder, because so much would have accumulated. The Rebbe said that just like we find in psychology in regard to cigarettes, someone who is used to them cannot divert his mind from them, and if forced to do so against his will it affects his health, so too here, since the Rebbe was accustomed to constantly receive mail and respond to it, suddenly stopping would not be good for his health.”

## CIGARETTES NOWADAYS – HEALTH HAZARD

Cigarette smoke contains about 4,000 chemical agents, including over 60 carcinogens. Many of these substances are poisonous to the human body. Nicotine is a drug that is naturally present in the tobacco plant and is primarily responsible



.....

**The Rebbe Rayatz’s letter was publicized, and a new set of rules was put forth by the hanhala. All those who wanted to smoke had to leave the zal. The talmidim who learn in Chovevei Torah also have to leave their study hall.**

.....

for a person’s addiction. During smoking, nicotine is absorbed quickly into the bloodstream and travels to the brain in a matter of seconds. Cigarette smoke has an immediate effect, with constriction of the blood vessels and a drop in skin temperature.

One of the most toxic substances that has been researched a lot is carbon monoxide. The carbon monoxide found in tobacco smoke is the same gas that you find in your car’s exhaust system or a faulty gas heater in your home. It interferes with your body’s ability to use the oxygen that you inhale, affecting your stamina and athletic ability. An increase in levels of carbon monoxide in your blood means less oxygen to your brain.

## NOT HAPPY TO PLACE A BAN

Despite the clear order to talmidim under 20, the Rebbe was not in favor of a ban





*sh'ein rov ha'tzibur ye-cholim laamod bah,* a "decree that most of the congregation cannot abide by," in which case an *issur* would force many into a position of being *meizidim*, sinning deliberately, rather than *shogagim*, sinning unintentionally.

"Certainly there would be no case for issuing an *issur* in a matter on which authorities differ.

"As you know, there are those, albeit in the minority, who claim that the health hazard of cigarette smoking has not been proven conclusively. This is perhaps one of the reasons why the manufacture and sale of cigarettes has not been outlawed by the health authorities."

against smoking. In a letter from 5739, the Rebbe responded to the question as to why rabbinic authorities had not banned smoking: **"This is to acknowledge receipt of your letter ... in which you write about the problem of smoking and ask why no *issur* (prohibition) has been issued against it, etc.**

"I note from your letter that you are aware of the halachic problems in issuing an *issur*. Rabbinic authorities have traditionally been reluctant to proclaim *issurim*, even in non-controversial situations, when it involved a *Gezeira*

Aside from referring to the health problems in smoking and the various ways to counteract this problem, the Rebbe also referred to smoking itself. Being a genuine shepherd in Israel and understanding the young people who start to smoke, the Rebbe spoke about the source of the problem, that which leads young people to start smoking:

"In recent years there has been a further consideration, namely, that the prohibition of cigarette smoking, and placing it on a par with smoking mari-

juana, would increase the incidence of drug abuse and drug addition, since it is believed that cigarette smoking, especially among young people, provides a certain 'escape,' and to some degree is a substitute for the drug abuse so prevalent among their peers."

By now, research has proven that in most cases, smoking is not an addiction that causes real changes in the chemical makeup of the body. From this aspect, there is no comparison between smoking and using drugs. It's just a habit which is sometimes so ingrained that it borders on addiction. Psychologists define smoking as an acquired addiction which can be overcome.

Other research shows that far more than the chemical influence tobacco exerts on the body, a person is attracted to smoking itself. Lighting up, handling the cigarette, holding it in one's mouth, blowing smoke, tapping out the ash etc. provides psychological pleasure akin to an older child's pacifier.

An Israeli researcher says, "Most smokers started smoking in adolescence, in high school or when they began army duty. Smoking is a 'challenge' of sorts to young people, who use it to demonstrate their maturity and independence. There is strong social pressure exerted on kids to try the forbidden smoking experience."

## **"IT IS A FUNDAMENTAL DIN IN SHULCHAN ARUCH"**

At the end of the letter cited above, the Rebbe writes:

**"Needless to say, these and other considerations do not justify the use of something that has already**

been prohibited by the imperative of *V'nishmartem meod l'nafshoseichem*, "Be careful to scrupulously guard your health." But I have mentioned the above by way of answering your letter as to some of the reasons why no *issur* has been proclaimed against cigarette smoking.

**"In addition to [the proposed *issur*] being counterproductive, there is also the possibility of a harmless cigarette being introduced in the future..."**

In connection with the "cigarette which is not harmful that will be introduced soon" we have another letter from that year (5739) in which the Rebbe writes:

**"Even according to those medical authorities who hold the opinion that cigarette smoking is harmful to the health, this opinion is based on the quality of cigarettes as they are now manufactured, containing harmful substances.**

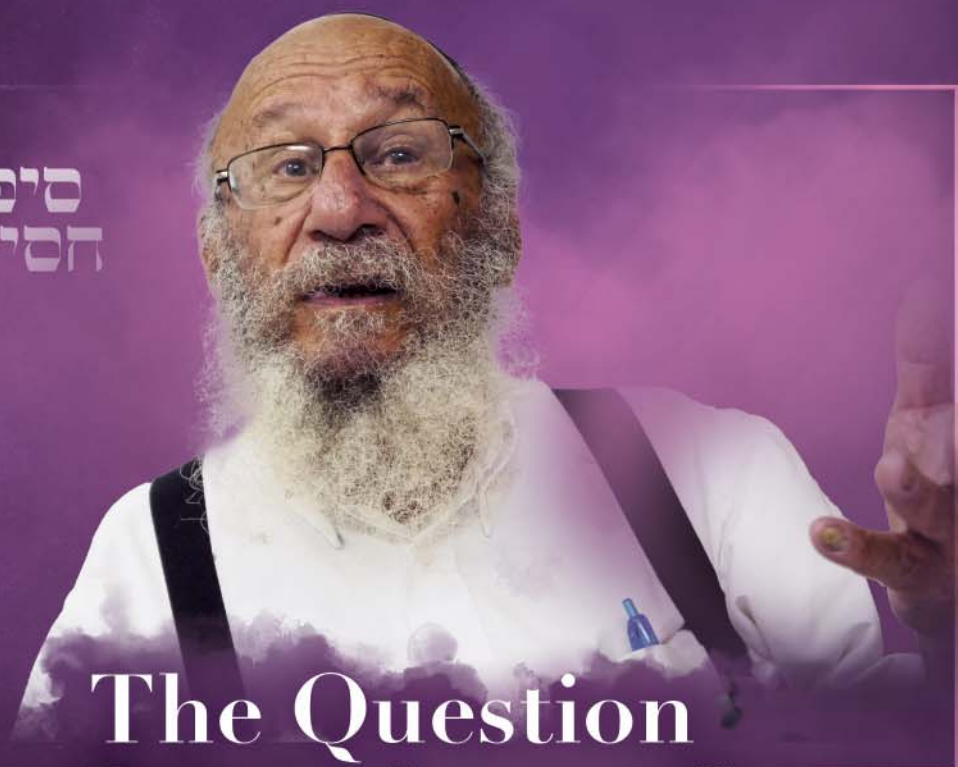
**"A great deal of research is being conducted to find a way to eliminate those harmful substances in cigarettes and produce a harmless cigarette, in which case there would be no room at all for issuing a prohibition on cigarette smoking. Furthermore, any prohibition according to Torah is eternal and cannot be changed, just as the Torah itself is eternal and cannot be changed."**

The Rebbe also wrote sharply regarding smoking today, that according to most researchers, smoking is bad for one's health:

**"As for the general mitzva of 'be very heedful of your souls,' there is no need for rabbanim to take any special action since it's a fundamental din in Shulchan Aruch." ■**



סיפורי  
חסידים



# The Question The Rogatchover Gaon Couldn't Answer...

Short Stories Heard From **Reb Zushe**  
**Posner** a"h and recorded by his talmidim



## SHECHTING WITH KAVANA

Rabbi Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev studied the laws of shechita thoroughly, but when it came to actually shechting a chicken, he held the chicken by its wings, closed his eyes, and meditated deeply. When he opened his eyes, after finishing all his kavanos, he discovered that the chicken had escaped and was nowhere to be found!

## ONE DAY OF TRUTH

R' Yosef Kolbo, the renowned Chassid of the Alter Rebbe, was a great *baki* (expert) in Shas and was a very serious man. Once, on Simchas Torah, he jumped up on a table and yelled, "Yosef, Yosef, when will you have one day of Truth?"

## BETTER TO LOSE THE WORLD TO COME

R' Boruch of Mezhibuzh once saw a Jew steal a silver spoon when nobody else noticed. R' Boruch began talking about the prohibition of stealing, thus hinting to that Jew... Somebody who thought himself clever quoted the statement about the seriousness of shaming a fellow Jew in public.

Replied R' Boruch: Continue that saying of the Sages. It says that one who publicly shames his fellow has no share in the World to Come. I prefer to lose my share in the World to Come so long as a Jew doesn't sin.

## NEAR THE TZIYUN

After the passing of the Alter Rebbe, his grandson, R' Menachem Nachum, son of the Mittler Rebbe, lived most of his life in Haditch, where the Alter Rebbe is buried. Many explained that he did so because his conscience bothered him. That is, during

the war, when the Alter Rebbe fled before Napoleon and his army in 5573 (1813), R' Menachem Nachum sat on the wagon that led the convoy of wagons. Each time they came to a crossroads, the Alter Rebbe would alight, lean on his stick, and point in the direction he wanted to go. The Alter Rebbe fell asleep and when they came to a crossroads, R' Menachem decided on his own how to proceed. It turned out later that he had been mistaken (and this led to the Alter Rebbe's illness and subsequent death), but it was too late to go back.

However, R' Menachem himself gave a different reason for being contrite. He said that when he was going to be married, the Alter Rebbe had asked him to wear a patch on his suit and he promised him in exchange for doing so, "*imi b'mechitzasi*" (you'll be with me in the next world). R' Menachem refused, and that is why he stayed near the Alter Rebbe's *tziyun*, etc.

## AN APPOINTMENT FROM ON HIGH

They say about R' Hillel of Paritch that when he was personally attacked, he accepted it with love. But when his rabbinic position was attacked, he did not forgive the attackers, since this was an appointment from On High.

## R' MOSHE, SON OF THE ALTER REBBE

We know very little about R' Moshe, son of the Alter Rebbe. When he grew up he knew many languages and he debated with ministers and priests about religion and faith, and always won the debates. Nevertheless, his father wasn't pleased with this.

R' Moshe was once invited to a long and difficult debate against 40 priests, each one a great scholar. He won the de-

bate within a few days. Since this debate was a government-sponsored event, it was possible that the priests could have him sent to Siberia, and they did so. On the way, a miracle occurred. The guards fell asleep and R' Moshe escaped to a community where nobody knew who he was.

Every day he collected money in shul and was supported by the people of the town. One day, the Tzaddik of Chernobyl came to town, and asked to speak with R' Moshe. That's when people realized that R' Moshe was a tzaddik and not just a wayfarer.

R' Moshe lived a long life and was still alive in the time of the Rebbe Maharash. The Rebbe Maharash even sent him a letter, saying, “The people who seek to kill you have died, and you can return,” but he refused.

### “OHR EIN SOF IS WORTH MORE THAN ALL MY SILVER AND GOLD!”

R' Nosson Nota, a Chassid of the Alter Rebbe, was extremely poor. His brother-in-law was wealthy but was greatly opposed to Chassidus.

One year, at the 19 Kislev farbrengen, R' Nosson drank a lot of mashke, and after the farbrengen, on his way home, he passed the home of brother-in-law, a misnaged. He knocked on the window for a long time until his brother-in-law got out of bed, came to the window, and opened it only a crack, as it was bitter cold outside.

He asked R' Nosson what he wanted, and R' Nosson said, repeat after me: Ohr Ein Sof is worth more than all my silver and gold!

His brother-in-law, the misnaged, stood there dumbstruck, and R' Nosson turned around and went home.

## A PROBLEMATIC CONTRACT

R' Nechemia of Dubrovna once wrote up a contract for two partners. One day the partners had an argument and they went to the Alter Rebbe for adjudication. The Alter Rebbe examined the contract and saw that it made reference to this argument, and he resolved the disagreement based on what it said in the contract.

Some time later, the partners went to the Alter Rebbe about another argument. Once again, the Alter Rebbe was able to resolve the problem based on what was written in the contract. Each time problems arose, he solved them in the same way.

When R' Nechemia went to the Alter Rebbe, the Rebbe asked him: How could you be so suspicious of Jews that you included all these conditions in the contract?

## THE WELLSPRINGS OF WISDOM WERE OPENED

After the passing of the Mittlerer Rebbe, there were a number of candidates for the *nesius*. One of the outstanding candidates was R' Isaac of Homil, to whom the Alter Rebbe had said, “Eizil, Eizil, eat kugel but don't be a Rebbe.”

At that time, the Chassidim considered him a Rebbe, so they prepared for him a special cart, etc. R' Isaac wanted to go up onto the cart, but when he put his foot on the step, he remembered what the Alter Rebbe had told him, and he put his foot back down on the ground.

Afterwards he related that when he had put his foot on the step of the cart, the wellsprings of wisdom had opened before him like the entrance to the Ulam.

## T'FILLA WITHOUT CONTROL

The Tzemach Tzedek once told R' Pesach of Malestovka to go with the Maharash to a certain place. The next day, the Maharash finished davening early so that they would get to Rodenya, where the train station was, on time. R' Pesach was still in the middle of davening and finished at noon.

The Maharash asked R' Pesach why he had spent such a long time on his prayers when they needed to travel, and R' Pesach answered: If you had told me not to daven at all, I would listen to you, because one who is occupied in doing a mitzva is exempt from other mitzvos. However, since you didn't say so, I couldn't control myself.

### “AS LONG AS I AM ALIVE”

R' Pesach was known for his strength and when the Cossacks came to his town and caught him on the street, he fought with them until his strength was depleted. Then he ran away and hid in a barrel atop a roof. The Cossacks pursuers went up to that roof, and when they didn't find him, one of them angrily stuck his sword into the barrel in which R' Pesach was hiding.

The sword struck R' Pesach in the head and he fainted from the blow. After he regained consciousness and recovered, he went to the Tzemach Tzedek and told



RAV MEIR SHLOMO YANOVSKY -  
THE REBBE'S GRANDFATHER

him what had happened, and said his head still hurt. The Tzemach Tzedek said: As long as I am alive, you have nothing to worry about.

On the day of the Tzemach Tzedek's passing, R' Pesach was not in Lubavitch, but when he felt a pain in his head, he grasped his head with both hands and cried out: "The Rebbe is no longer here!"

From then on, his mind was confused. Sometimes, when he finished davening at length, he said, "Oy, we didn't daven," and he davened again. He could do this a number of times.

### NOT TO FORGET MAARIV

R' Gershon Ber of Pahar was a great Chassid and a tremendously deep thinker. There were days that he sat from sunset until dawn deep in thought, and when day



broke, he would arouse himself from this thoughts and remember that he hadn't davened Maariv.

When he went to the Tzemach Tzedek, the Rebbe blessed him to be alert, even if he was lost in thought.

## A "FAMILY PROBLEM"

Chassidim would call R' Gershon Ber the Great R' Gershon Ber, but he himself avoided all trappings of honor. When he heard himself being praised for his depth, he dismissed it and said there was nothing to praise since it was genetic. The proof? Even his sister, when she cleaned the house, would sometimes think deeply about something and forget to clean.

## TO EAT OR NOT TO EAT

R' Gershon Ber would hesitate and think many times before eating anything.

When he would finally decide to eat, he would say to himself: "You fraud, *iskafia!*"

## HE NEVER ATE HONEY CAKE

R' Eizik of Vitebsk did not eat honey cake because of what happened at a meeting of rabbanim. At this meeting, they served many types of cake, and he took a piece and said the mezonos bracha. Other rabbanim present asked him why he didn't take the most desirable item first (the honey cake), as this is a law in Shulchan Aruch. He answered that he did not eat honey cake. In order to remain faithful to this statement, he never ate honey cake.

## IF NOT FOR THE ALTER REBBE

People know the famous story about how the Alter Rebbe saved R' Avrohom the Malach from expiry of the soul by giving him a bagel with butter. R' Avrohom's grandson, R' Yisroel of Ruzhin, once said to the Tzemach Tzedek that he was grateful to the Tzemach Tzedek's grandfather, the Alter Rebbe for saving his grandfather's life. If not for what the Alter Rebbe did, the Ruzhiner Tzaddik wouldn't be here...

## HE ALREADY GAVE IT TO THE ALTER REBBE

R' Michel Apatzker wrote many letters to the Mittlerer Rebbe and the Tzemach Tzedek but he

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THE KEVER OF RAV HILLEL HALEVI MALISOV OF PARITCH



never went to them. He said that he had already given his nefesh, ruach, and neshama to the Alter Rebbe.

## NOT TO PERMIT THE AGUNA TO REMARRY

R' Yitzchok of Volozhin once sent a letter to the Tzemach Tzedek and asked him to agree with him on a ruling to permit a certain *aguna* to remarry. The Tzemach Tzedek agreed but when he wanted to write his reply, his pen fell from his hand a number of times. The Tzemach Tzedek finally wrote that he could not agree with the ruling.

## WHY WAS MONEY CREATED?

A man once asked R' Meir Shlomo Yanovsky (the grandfather of the Rebbe MH"M) why the Rebbe Maharash lived a lavish lifestyle rather than give the money to the poor. R' Meir Shlomo replied: Fool! Why do you think money was created if not for the Rebbe?

## WHAT DID R' GRONEM WANT?

R' Shmuel Gronem was a night watchman before being appointed mashpia in Tomchei Tmimim, and he walked the streets at night. As he walked, he would take pages of *Likkutei Torah* out of his pocket and look at them. As he learned, he wished for two things: that he could learn out of the volume and that he could have



RAV AVROHOM ELIYAHU AXELROD

proper candlelight (and not merely the light of the moon). When he was appointed mashpia, his requests were granted.

## SENDING HIMSELF

R' Eizik Druk, mashpia in Otvotsk, would not write his pidyon nefesh on scrap paper and then copy it, but he would send his original draft to the Rebbe. When it was pointed out to him that this was disrespectful, he said, "The Rebbe is in Riga and I want a yechidus with him and cannot have one. When I send a pidyon nefesh, I send him what I am and not something 'nice.'"

## SEUDA MAFSEKES

R' Yankel Druk of Lubavitch went over to a bachur who usually davened at length but didn't learn that well, and asked him:



RAV DOVBER GARFINKEL (BEREL KOZLINER)

If you daven so well, how is it that when you come to learn it doesn't go well?

The bachur said that the meal between davening and learning prevented the goodness in the davening from continuing into the learning.

When R' Yankel told this to the Rebbe Rashab, the Rebbe laughed.

## THE GENIUS DOESN'T KNOW EITHER

R' Berel Kozliner was planning to travel to Rogotchov and he boasted to his friends that he would ask a question that the Rogatchover Gaon could not answer. The Chassidim didn't believe him.

When he got to Rogotchov, he asked the Gaon: If a Jew's day begins at night, why does the Shulchan Aruch start with

the laws of getting up in the morning? The Gaon had no answer for him.

Afterwards, R' Berel told his friends that the Rebbe Rayatz had once asked this question and nobody could answer him, and the Rebbe didn't answer it either. Thus he knew the Rogatchover wouldn't answer the question.

## HEAVENLY ASSISTANCE

Once, R' Berel was in Otvotsk, which was a resort town, and some bachurim arrived there who only studied Nigleh. R' Berel, who was a baki in Shas, went over to them and asked them about some Rashis, which they couldn't answer.

Said R' Berel: To say that you don't learn is not right. But you don't learn Chassidus. If you learned Chassidus, you would have *siyata d'Shmaya* (Heavenly assistance) and I would ask you Rashis that you know!

## THE PRAYER OF THE MAHARIL

There's a *reshima* of the Rebbe Rayatz that was not printed, which describes the time after the passing of the Tzemach Tzedek and about his sons. It says about the Maharil, that he would daven in a wondrous way and would move around because he was immersed in his davening.

The Maharil was a partner with a businessman who consulted with him about



his business. The businessman once asked him a question during the davening and the Maharil agreed. Afterwards, he had no recollection of giving his consent since he was so immersed in his davening.

## REVELATION OF ATZMUS

The Rebbe says that when the Rebbe Rayatz left jail in 5687 (1927), there was a revelation of Atzmus. He explained: That the Rebbe Rayatz was freed is not at all understandable. If we examine the events of that time, we see that there are so many Jews whose fates remain unknown. So many Jews did not merit a Jewish burial.

Rabbi Diskin told me that the Soviet police once caught a gentile in the middle of the night who returned home in the morning bleeding all over. This gentile was accused of setting the German Embassy on fire, an event that had occurred many years before. This gentile had no idea where this building was and wasn't sure what it was called, but he signed that he had set it on fire.

This is just one example to give you an idea of how great the miracle of the Rebbe Rayatz's release from jail was.

## I WON'T LISTEN TO THE YETZER HARA

R' Avrohom Elya Axelrod's hat fell off in the middle of a farbrengen and it looked as though he wore an *oilamishe* yarmulka. When he was asked about it, he said: The *yetzer tov* doesn't care what kind of yarmulka you wear, and as for the *yetzer hara* – I won't listen!

## WHO'S IN CHARGE?

The story is told of a man who went to an Admor for a bracha that he could marry off his son generously. The Admor

sent a letter along with him to a wealthy man, asking him to give him the money he needed.

When the poor man showed the letter to the rich man, the man refused to give him the entire sum. The poor man went back to the Admor and asked him what to do. The Admor told him to return to the rich man. The poor man went back to the rich man, but the rich man maintained his position, saying that the Admor was not in charge of his money.

When the Admor was told what the rich man had said, he said: We'll show him who's boss.

A few days went by and the rich man fell on hard times. He eventually had to go around begging. When he knocked on the Admor's door, he asked forgiveness and for a tikkun. The Admor blessed him, but not with what he had had previously.

## THE NESHAMA EXPLAINS TO THE BODY

One of our Rebbeim said a maamer, but although the chassidim reviewed it, they didn't understand it. They went to the Rebbe in order to hear him say the maamer again. The Rebbe called for a number of people to come and listen, including R' Yosef, who was a simple man. This was viewed with great astonishment.

Afterwards, they asked the Rebbe why he had called for R' Yosef when he couldn't understand a maamer, certainly not when it was this deep!

The Rebbe said: This Jew totally bonded with the maamer and this made his body listen, which resulted in the neshama understanding, and the neshama explains it to the body.■

# לזכות

הת' מנחם מענדל, חיה מושקא,  
חנה, שיינא ושניאור זלמן

קרומבי



# לזכות

תלמידי התמימים בכל רחבי תבל  
לחיזוק ההתקשרות  
לכ"ק אדמו"ר מלך המשיח