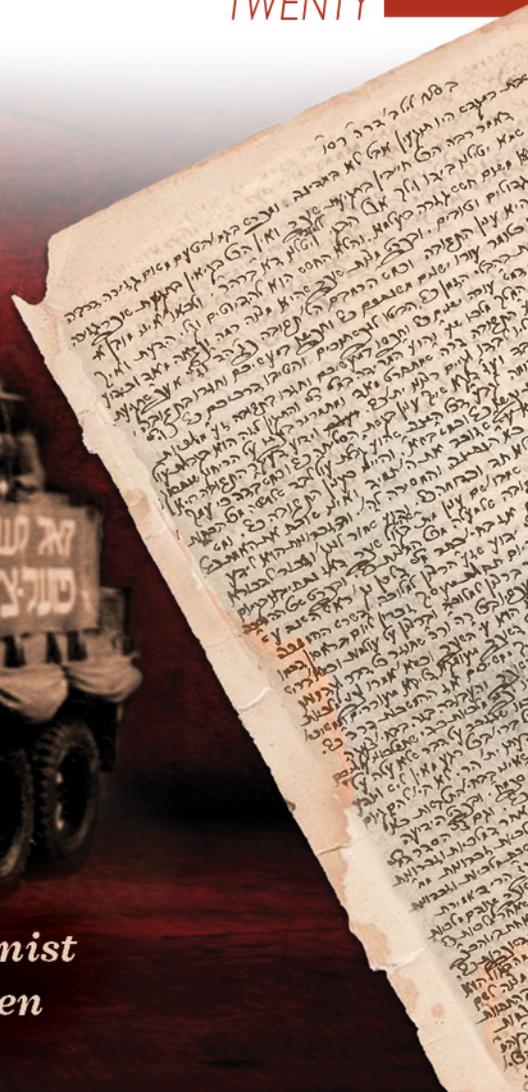
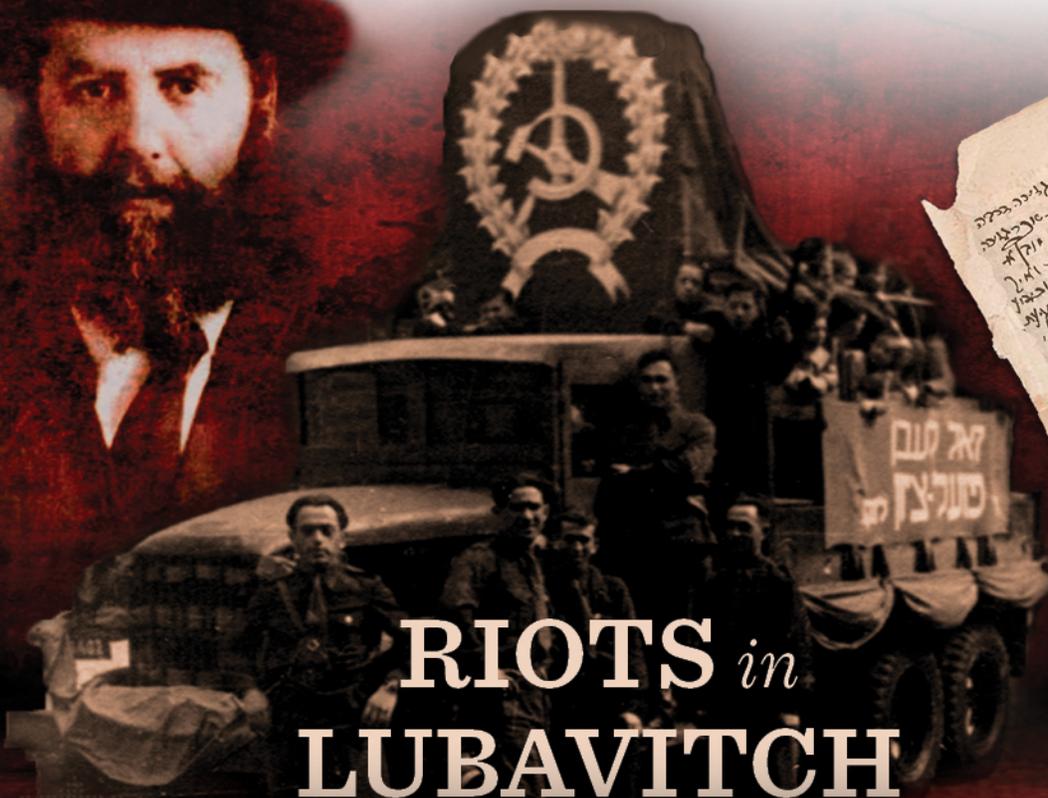


Perspectives

ב"ה

TWENTY



RIOTS *in* LUBAVITCH

A burgeoning yeshiva, a radical Zionist group, and a bochur caught between



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Perspectives TWENTY

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Cover Photo:

*The Frieddiker Rebbe in his younger years
and the manuscript of Hemshech Samech Vav
against the backdrop of a Poalei Tzion
Zionist rally*

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FOREWORD

Chassidus Is Not Humanism



*Chassidus,
the bystander
imagines, is
a universal,
humanistic
ideal, void of
practical import.*

The Rebbe once related this joke at a *farbrengen*:

A young rabbi was hired in a synagogue, and on the first Shabbos of his new tenure, he dedicated his sermon to the importance of Shabbos observance. After his speech, the *shul* president approached him, “Please don’t speak about Shabbos observance in our *shul*. Some of our members don’t observe Shabbos, and they’ll be offended thinking that you had them in mind.”

The next week, he spoke about *kashrus*, and again he was told off. On the third week he discussed *taharas hamishpacha*, yet he was told to avoid this sensitive topic as well.

“What *should* I speak about?” asked the confused rabbi. “You *did* ask me to give a sermon each Shabbos after all.”

“Simple!” said the president incredulously, “Just talk about *Yiddishkeit!*”¹

CHASSIDIM THROUGH THE AGES stood out for their staunch commitment to Torah and *mitzvos*. They displayed exactitude in *halacha* in the face of oppression, heartfelt *ahavas Yisroel* and genuine brotherhood, refined character, careful *davening*, restraint in materialism, constant Torah study despite imminent danger, and fortifying their *emuna* from the pollution of *goyishkeit* and *haskala*. We admire their traits and tell their tales with pride.

Yet, it can happen that when someone actually attempts to bring these down into the practical realm for our times – by suggesting to eliminate exposure to secular media or to treat *davening* as a serious endeavor – a bystander will challenge it, all in “the name of Chassidus.” As paralleled in the Rebbe’s joke, the speaker is admonished for raising such “unchassidic” topics, and instead is demanded to talk

1. *Shabbos parshas Vayigash* 5736 (1976); *Sichos Kodesh* 5736, Vol. 1, p. 360.



about “*chassidishkeit*.” Chassidus, the bystander imagines, is an airy, humanistic ideal, void of practical import.

The counterfeiting of Chassidus has always been a problem. Shortly after his arrival in the United States, the Friediker Rebbe bemoaned phony *farbrengens* where speakers would poke fun at the *farbrengens*’ participants or other Jews. He said, “I call our gathering a ‘*Chassidus chassidisher farbrengen*’ since there are sadly so-called ‘*chassidische farbrengens*’ which are far from the true sense of the name, if not the absolute opposite.”²

It is related that when the great *beis midrash* was built in the town of Gur, it was adorned with the words, “*Beis HaMidrash L’Torah, Tefila VaChassidus*.” When the Sfas Emes saw it, he noted, “Chassidus is interpreted by some to mean drinking, engaging in *machlokes* and speaking *lashon hara*. Better just leave it as ‘*Beis HaMidrash L’Torah Veli’Tefila*.’”

We must educate our children about what the core values of Chassidus are, and what a *chassidische* lifestyle in modern times entails. We cannot assume that our sacred perception of Chassidus is obvious to our offspring. As the Rebbe said on multiple occasions: “Nowadays, everything must be spelled out.”

We must find ways to convey to our children how Chassidus is a driven pursuit of G-dliness in both knowledge and practice. They should be told explicitly that *chassidische* cultural trappings are secondary at best and cannot replace the essence of what Chassidus is about. If they aren’t taught, they are likely get caught up with the trivialities that naturally capture a youth’s attention.

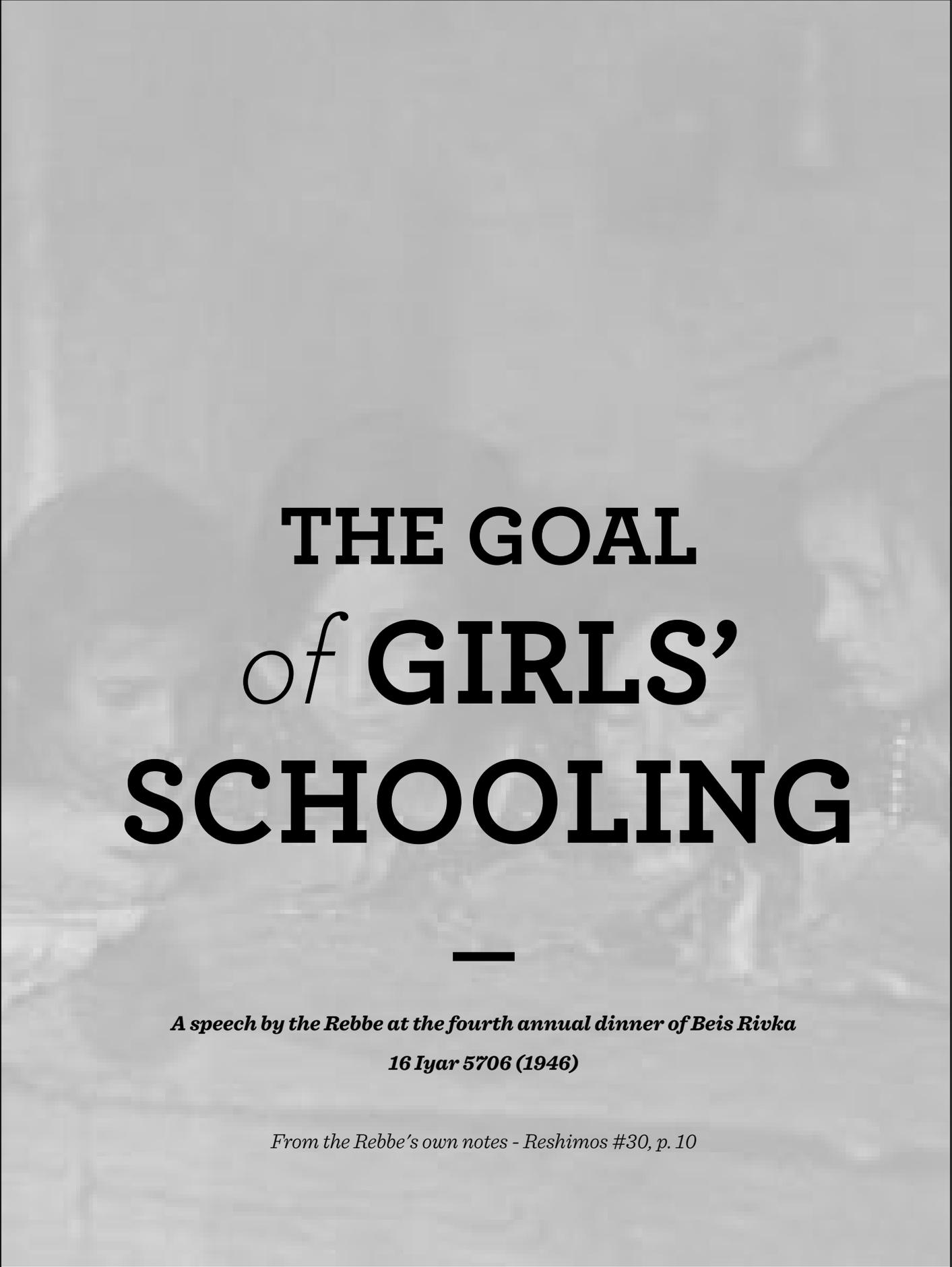
Let’s speak out. We owe it to our children.

Rabbi Shimon Hellinger

General Editor

2. *Sefer HaSichos* 5700, p. 34.

*We cannot
assume that our
sacred perception
of Chassidus is
obvious to our
offspring.*



THE GOAL
of **GIRLS'**
SCHOOLING

A speech by the Rebbe at the fourth annual dinner of Beis Rivka

16 Iyar 5706 (1946)

From the Rebbe's own notes - Reshimos #30, p. 10

Today, it has become standard practice to provide girls with a Torah education. But not always was this the case. For thousands of years, women stood strong in their faith and appreciation of Yiddishkeit, without academic instruction.

What is the function of Jewish education for girls today? Is it the same as the Torah study of boys? Has the role of Jewish women and girls changed?

WHY STUDY TORAH

When my saintly father-in-law the [Frierdiker] Rebbe visited the United States sixteen years ago (in 5690 [1930]), he took great interest in the condition of Jewish education here. Subsequently, upon his return six years ago (9 Adar 5700 [1940]), he observed the developments that ensued in the interim, and after a period of preparation, he founded the network of schools for girls called “*Bais Rivka*” or “*Bais Sarah*.” However, as with any new project, many objected to his activities, bombarding him with all sorts of arguments and challenges. Their primary and most potent argument was rooted in the teaching of our Sages¹ that women are exempt from the study of Torah, and moreover, “One who teaches his daughter Torah teaches her foolishness.”² One could perhaps say that the purpose of their instruction is so that they earn reward as “one who practices even though they are not obligated,” as the law is regarding a woman who studies.

1 *Kiddushin* 29b.

2 *Sotah* 21b.

Another reason for study is that it leads to action, and in fact, this is what makes Torah study “great.” A woman has the requisite to know the laws that pertain to her – all prohibitive *mitzvos* and those positive *mitzvos* which are not time bound.

Still, such study is only the *preparation* for a *mitzva*. We find, however, that when a woman helps her husband and sons study Torah, she receives an *equal* share of reward.

Now, in earlier times, the men did not need to be encouraged to study; it was only that they were hindered by the burden of *parnassa* (and the woman could help them study by alleviating that burden). Today on the other hand, it is often necessary to encourage the men to study, and thus it is necessary for the woman to be knowledgeable in other areas of Torah as well (so she can engage and inspire the males in her home).

PROUD JEWISH CHILDREN

However, if we consider the present circumstances, the above discussion is irrelevant. Because, the education of Jewish girls today is not for the sake of



Certainly if they participate in some charitable endeavor – Jewish or otherwise – they maintain that they have absolved themselves of their duty, both towards Hashem and society.

knowledge alone, but rather to assure that they live as Jewish children.

In most circumstances, children are raised in an environment submerged in the pursuit of “making a living,” or conversely, when there is ample livelihood, in an environment of ambition to simply “have a good time.” As a result, they fail to sense the superior distinction of being Jewish. From their perspective, Yiddishkeit is synonymous with restrictions, prohibitions, or even personal affliction (since they are unacquainted with the sanctity of these practices).

Certainly if they participate in some charitable endeavor – Jewish or otherwise – they maintain that

they have absolved themselves of their duty, both towards Hashem and society.

FUTURE JEWISH MOTHERS

This is the function of the “*Bais Rivka*” and “*Bais Sarah*” schools, founded by my saintly father-in-law the [Friediker] Rebbe: To impress upon the hearts of the students that they are *b’nos Yisroel*, Jewish daughters, to explain this sanctity to them, the virtue and purity that it yields, and the responsibility that each one of them bears.



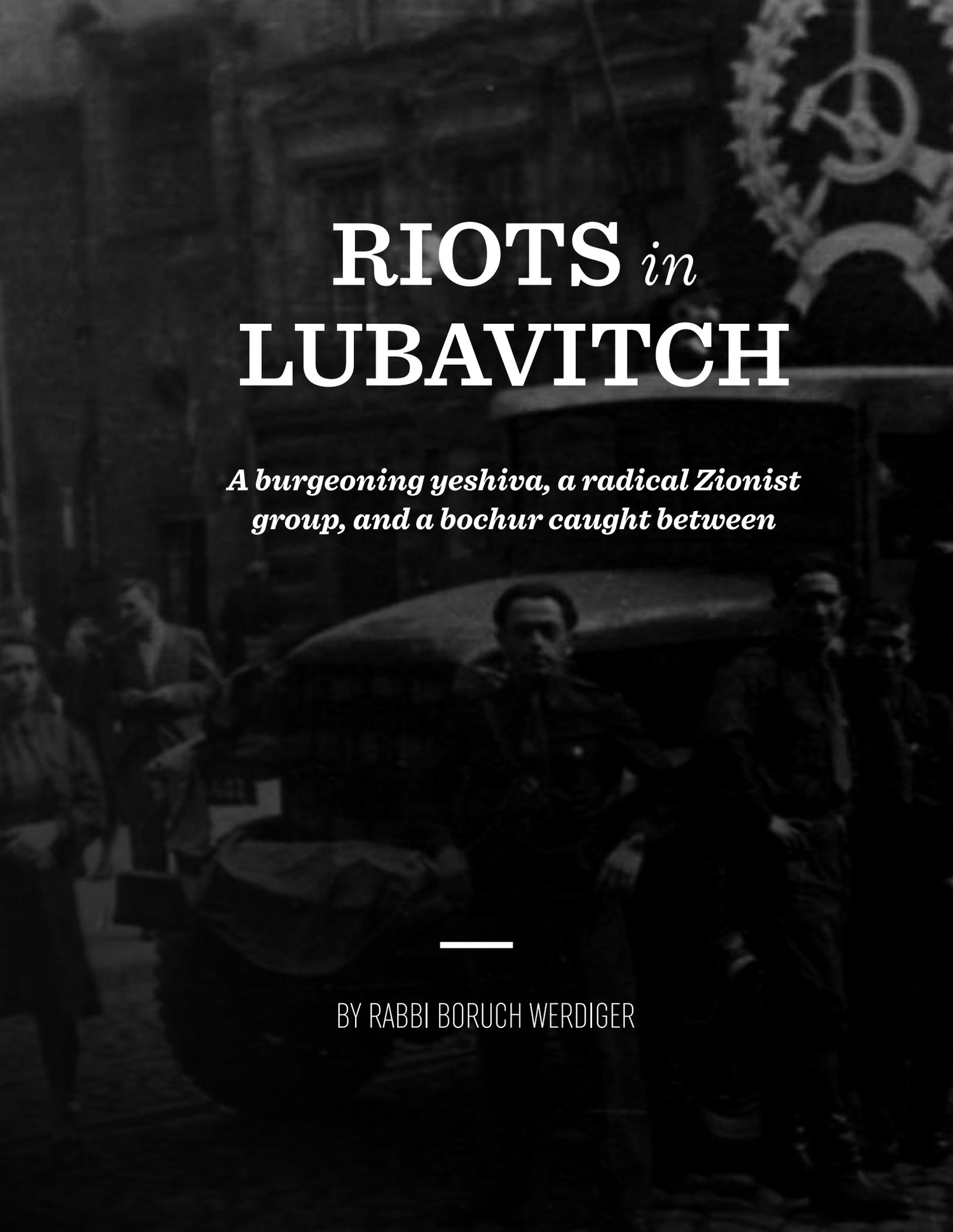
That being said, the response to the second question posed is also obvious. They asked, “Are you founding a school to create ‘Rebbetzins?’”

Our aim is that every student should recognize her duty as a *bas yisroel*, being a member of the Jewish nation, and one who will form a Jewish home in

the future, as a Jewish mother. Even for the sake of saving just one soul from straying from the path of Torah and *mitzvos*, we must invest effort and grant all we can. Particularly for girls, who will continue on to build Jewish homes on the foundations of Torah and *mitzvos*.

IN SUMMARY:

- Girls’ education is not for the purpose of knowing Torah, as it is for boys. Rather, its primary purpose is to impress upon their hearts the sanctity, pride and responsibility of being a Jewish woman.
- In an environment whose primary focuses are earning a living and having a good time, children will inevitably find *mitzvos* burdensome.
- Only by teaching children the meaning of Yiddishkeit will we raise fulfilled Jewish women who will build solid Jewish homes.



RIOTS *in* LUBAVITCH

A burgeoning yeshiva, a radical Zionist group, and a bochur caught between

BY RABBI BORUCH WERDIGER

A black and white photograph of a crowd at a rally in Russia, with a dark text box overlaid in the center. The background shows people in traditional attire, some holding signs, and a horse-drawn carriage. The text box contains two paragraphs of white text.

For Czarist Russia, the years of 5665-6 (1905-6) were a time of dramatic upheaval. Against this backdrop of political and ideological foment, one revolutionary Jewish movement came up against another, with explosive consequences.

Within its first decade, Tomchei Temimim had grown rapidly in size and renown, quickly establishing itself as a bastion of Chassidism and a reinvigorated Jewish spirit. But there were those, in Lubavitch and further afield, who resented its nascent influence. Soon enough, they would come to challenge the yeshiva at its very doorstep.

INTRODUCTION

Divrei Yemei Hatemimim, "The Chronicles of the Temimim," is an original historical survey of Tomchei Temimim, spanning the years 5657-5666 (1897-1906). The brief work contains accounts of notable events, often filling in details of stories that we know from other sources, as well as detailed reports on the size of the student population and the yeshiva's various expenses.



R. Moshe Rosenblum a"h

Its author, R. Moshe Rosenblum, born 5610 (1850), was a chossid of the Rebbe Maharash. Having received *semicha* from the Rebbe Maharash himself, he was charged with writing a *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* based on the Alter Rebbe's rulings, which he did. Sadly, this work was lost when on one Shabbos it caught fire; R. Moshe had no choice but to watch it burn. In 5669 (1909), he was invited to serve as a liaison and correspondent for the *yeshiva* in Lubavitch. In that function, he communicated with Jewish leaders and donors, and headed the *Agudas HaTemimim* – the society for encouraging continued spiritual growth among the *yeshiva's* alumni.

Today, R. Moshe is most known for his weekly children's newsletter *Ha'ach*, "The Brother," for aspiring *temimim*, published from 5670 (1910) until the outbreak of the First World War in 5674 (1914). Penned in his smooth style, the articles written in simple Lashon Kodesh – some with *nekudos* – portrayed the beauty of Torah and good conduct. The weekly was read by children all over Russia, and had an estimated readership of twenty thousand (including our Rebbe as a young child).

The *Divrei Yemei Hatemimim* was written several years after the actual events it describes, and is believed to have been written in conjunction with the Friediker Rebbe (who was present when said events occurred). The manuscript was first published in 5747 (1987) by R. Yehoshua Mondshine in *Kerem Chabad* Vol. 3, and was recently republished in an updated format.

The following story is translated from an excerpt of that composition. It conveys certain key elements of life in Tomchei Temimim: the yeshiva's precise rules and firm discipline, the Rebbeim's fierce opposition to secular infiltration, and their care and thought for each and every *bochur*.

The Story of
BEREL CHERNIGOVER
and the
Shocking Assault on Tomchei Temimim

WRITTEN BY R. MOSHE ROSENBLUM A"H

As was the yearly custom, a great many guests came for Tishrei. Every one of them was curious about the institution named "Tomchei Temimim", each of them eager to see with his own eyes that which his ears had already heard, for thank G-d the land was already full of praise for the institution.

But from the moment the visitor's eyes first took in the yeshiva, it was as though nothing he saw was enough; first he would enter the study hall for the older *bochurim*, from there to the younger students' classroom, then it was off to the kitchen, and then the dining hall. He would schedule his visit to the latter for precisely when the students gathered to eat, and then linger for a while, reflecting on their orderliness and the aura of reverence that surrounded each and every one of the students.

His spirit seemed to soar within him, and as his heart filled with lofty, holy emotion, he would whisper his heart's feeling to his friend – standing by in the same stunned, silent amazement - and say, *Look! It's a new world before you!*

Yes – his acquaintance would reply – I see a pure world, a world of Jewish people in their truest form. It's a world I will have trouble parting with!

Many of them would then, as though duty bound, resolve to do whatever they could to support the expansion and development of the institution.

On Shmini Atzeres the leader of the *yeshiva*,¹ the Rebbe, began to present the students with an unusually special gift: He delivered a lofty and sublimely uplifting talk, and one that would serve them as a pillar of fire to illuminate their way, the holy path that leads to the House of G-d.

After Tishrei, the black days arrived – the days of the pogroms.² Train travel was halted, the post offices were shut; no-one went or came; nobody heard or knew what was happening. When the post and telegraph services were first reopened, shocking reports began to quickly come through. Here, people had been killed; there, houses and entire towns had been destroyed; the land itself trembled with a fear of G-d. Throngs of people came to seek the Rebbe's counsel on various matters; one man frightened, that fellow fleeing, another falling to pieces in the face of tragedy, yet another asking for assistance, and on and on they went.

All of these events left their depressing and deeply distressing mark on the Rebbe's soul. They reached

FROM THE MOMENT THE VISITOR'S EYES FIRST TOOK IN THE YESHIVA,
IT WAS AS THOUGH NOTHING HE SAW WAS ENOUGH.



The city of Chernigov

THE STUDENT BEREL
DAVZIK HAD ARRIVED IN
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WAS OF MODERATE ABILITY,
THOUGH UNDISCIPLINED.

his heart and began to affect his health so adversely that he was forced to travel to the city of Vitebsk in order to consult with a team of doctors and find some succor for his weakened body. He set out the week of *Parshas Yisro*, and took his son, the director of the yeshiva, along with him.

That same week, the faculty of Tomchei Temimim conferred to discuss the yeshiva's progress in its spiritual mission. Several of the younger students were summoned to their meeting in order to be tested, among them a student named Berel Davzik, from the city of Chernigov. Since this young man would be at the epicenter of so many of the troubles and travails that the *yeshiva* bore in the years 5666 and 5667, it is fitting that we gather the relevant material from the proceedings of that meeting, and present it before the honored reader.

The student Berel Davzik had arrived in the year 5664, when he was about 14 years of age. He was the only son to his parents – middle-class householders – and was of moderate ability, though undisciplined. More to the point, his studies were devoid of any real drive, and he was an immature, frivolous young man.

In the winter of 5765, he was assigned as a study partner a respected student who, through his hard work, had acquired a thorough proficiency with his studies and an upright bearing. He began to have a positive influence on Berel, investing in him, speaking with him encouragingly and persuasively, eventually directing him towards his studies and a proper conduct of character

For the most part, Berel's new colleague impacted his outward conduct; on comporting himself appropriately during prayer times, and *davening* at a regular place; making the appropriate blessings before and after meals, and generally being meticulous with *brochos*; washing *netilas*

yadayim; as well as more superficial matters relating to his speech, and adopting a more measured manner. In addition, he also received meaningful guidance in his learning, in a manner appropriate to his age and abilities.

Within a few months, a wondrous, pure spirit had come over the young student. He comported himself with an uncommon degree of *yiras shomayim*, and his conduct changed in so many other areas: regular prayer with a *minyán*, meticulousness with *brochos*, *mikveh* on Mondays and Thursdays, and tremendous diligence in learning.

By the end of the month of Shevat, 5665, the yeshiva's faculty had noticed the progress in this young student, who seemed to have suddenly transformed into a G-d fearing young man. At one of their meetings, they held a solemn discussion of the mode and manner of this student's educational development. After

making various inquiries and investigations, they came to the conclusion that this dramatic change in behavior was yet another manifestation of his fickle nature. They therefore resolved to pay close attention to his education, to set him on firm ground, so that his fear of G-d would be both sincere and enduring. As a means to this end, they decided upon having the student join one of the yeshiva's satellite programs, its third branch (at the time), which was situated in the nearby town of Horoditch. He was to be sent the next semester, along with instructions for the director of that program – R. Zalman Havlin – which comprised a detailed plan for how to act with and guide the boy so that he might turn into a man, or that very least, a serious young lad.

In the early part of the month of Nissan, a request from the student Berel Davzik was read out at a regular sitting of the institution's faculty. He was

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asking for permission to travel home for Pesach, and wrote several reasons he had for doing so: a) His parents longed to see him, b) he was a single child to his parents, and c) he wished to rest for some two weeks, while there was little learning taking place here. Finally, he concluded his written request by adding that it was something he very much wished to do, and that he simply must make the trip.

The boy's father had also sent in a request (or, to be more precise, a demand) that his son be granted leave to travel home for *yom tov*. After all, he concluded in his letter, he wasn't asking for any form of assistance from the director, and therefore felt that it was only right he have the ability to act as he wished, and in accordance with the wishes of his son, the student.

The board considered this request – just as they would other requests of this nature – with due diligence.

The rules of the yeshiva stated: Before a young student's views had sufficiently matured, and until he had acquired proper proficiency in his learning, he was not to be granted permission to travel home, or elsewhere. In general, this would only happen after

a year, or a year and a half, had passed. (To this rule were appended two clauses: a) If the student insisted on traveling within that timeframe, he would lose his status as a student, and was not to be counted amongst the students of the yeshiva, and b) For isolated cases, the faculty reserved the ability to act in accordance with their knowledge of the case and their own discretion.)

Most questions and requests of this kind were resolved affirmatively; however, in the case of the student Berel Davzik, a tremendous debate within the board ensued. Eventually, they reached the decision, with unanimous consent, to enter the following resolution into the meeting minutes:

According to regulation, the student Dovber Davzik's request ought to have been denied, irrespective of the various views on the matter that have been expressed by persons outside of the institution. However, according to the decision reached at a faculty meeting at the end of last Shevat, owing to a few specific reasons – the Rabbi of Chernigov's urgent entreaties, and the stubborn intransigence of the boy's parents

THE RULES OF THE YESHIVA
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KNOWN AS THE ELTERE TALMIDIM, THESE STUDENTS, THROUGH THEIR GREAT
CONSCIENTIOUSNESS AND DILIGENCE IN LEARNING, HAD ACQUIRED THE TRUST OF THE
SCHOOL OFFICIALS AND DIRECTOR TO MULL OVER THIS QUESTION.

– it is necessary to treat the student with a gentler touch, to show him a more congenial attitude, in the hopes that it will bring about the advancement of his character. Therefore his request is to be resolved in the affirmative. Clause a) of the relevant regulation will also be put into effect, with the caveat that the student is not to be informed of this.

The student was thus given permission to travel to his home, and he promised to quickly return, immediately after *yom tov* and in time for the recommencement of studies.

When time for the next semester of learning arrived, however, Berel had not arrived. Only after a full week had passed did a letter from the student arrive, explaining that, due to domestic reasons, he would not be able to come until after Shavuot. With approval from the administration, his place was given to someone else.

Eventually, after an entire summer at home, he returned in the winter, and put in a request to return to his place in the yeshiva. The director of the yeshiva [the Friediker Rebbe] was unsure of how to process the matter, and decided to consult with the other school officials. When for various reasons the meeting they had called to discuss the Davzik question was pushed off, resolution of the question was, for the time being, handed over to a committee of senior students. Known as the *eltere talmidim*, these students, through their great conscientiousness and diligence in learning, had acquired the trust of the school officials and director to mull over this question, as well as a separate, graver question, on the matter of the student L., from the city of K-p.³

This new committee approached its task by making careful inquiries, asking questions, and conducting examinations. Once the time they had been assigned passed, they presented their findings to the yeshiva's administration, before the director and other officials. The committee was divided into two groups over their decisions, and each of them sent a

representative to deliver its opinion to the officials. The first opinion was this:

"These students, both of whom have been found to be lacking in integrity, must be rejected from the yeshiva: The aim and ambition of this institution is to nurture men of mighty spirit who, upon completion of their study regimen, will go on to outstanding accomplishment, to become men who work for the benefit of every person, and especially for that of their own society. Those, however, for whom this was too distant a target, and who will never reach this ideal – why should this society invest in them for naught?"

The second representative transmitted the opinion of the second group thus:

"The first group is certainly correct in stating that the yeshiva needs pious men of spirit, and not those who are scarcely mature enough to take care of themselves, never mind others. Nevertheless, our group does not agree that the students L. and D. should be expelled, and for these reasons: The student L. is both upstanding and diligent in his learning. And, while the yeshiva suffers considerably from his fickle nature, nevertheless he is an adult – not a child – and no one can guarantee what the consequences of expelling a man like him might be; one ought to take this into account before acting. The student D., on the other hand, is still a boy, and there is hope that his educative ills might still be healed. With the proper dedication, and genuine concern for his guidance, it is still possible to elevate his character, and turn him into a man."

The director [the Friediker Rebbe] felt that the group arguing against the expulsion was right, and instructed that the student L. should have his stipend and place in the yeshiva retained. The student Berel was not to be sent away either, but the director deemed it important that the yeshiva's rules be applied to his case in their entirety. Namely, as the relevant regulation stated, any student who left for a specified amount of time and did not return by the agreed-upon date would, in the absence of any compelling reason,

SOON ENOUGH, THEY BEGAN EXPRESSING THIS NEWFOUND DISDAIN OVERTLY, STICKING THEIR HEADS INTO EVERY ASPECT OF TRADITIONAL COMMUNAL LIFE, AND IMPOSING THEMSELVES ON TO ONCE HALLOWED INSTITUTIONS.

be considered as a new and unregistered student until he had completed three months of perfect attendance and excellent grades. The director ordered that there was to be special supervision over the student Berel's conduct, and in particular his fickle nature and constant volatility.

After a few days had passed, the director travelled with his father, the Rebbe, to Moscow, where they remained for some two weeks.

At that time in Lubavitch – as in the other small towns of the region – uneducated, often boorish youth had become increasingly contemptuous of tradition and authority. Soon enough, they began expressing this newfound disdain overtly, sticking their heads into every aspect of traditional communal life, and imposing themselves on to once hallowed institutions.

One especially astonishing intrusion of this sort was a visit to the yeshiva's study hall by a teacher from the town's Enlightenment-affiliated school, along with an unknown companion. The head *mashgiach* of the yeshiva, upon seeing this uninvited guest – the teacher – strolling from table to table and interrupting the students' learning, approached him and asked him not to divert the students from their scholarly work.

"But I'm not asking anything of you," replied the teacher, "and I'm not doing anything. Are you really trying to prevent me from simply speaking with the students? Don't worry, I won't be turning them into heretics that quickly!"

"I'm not afraid of that," the *mashgiach* responded politely. "The students aren't so flippant and impressionable as to be afraid of a little chat. Still, you are after all disturbing their regular routine. So I'd like to ask you, for the second time, to not try

starting up any conversations with them, and to not distract them from their learning."

The teacher and his colleague left the table they had stopped at, only to approach another, where a small group was studying the *Yoreh Deah* section of *Shulchan Aruch*, among them the student K-n. Deeply engrossed in their learning, the study group did not notice the visitors, until the teacher asked, "What is it that you are studying with such interest?"

"Something that interests every religious Jew," said the students.

"And is that all you will remain? What will be of you? You ought to start reading some scientific texts – here, I'll give you something to read."

"Sure, give us the books, we'll take them."

"And what will you do with them?"

"What will we do with them? We'll burn them, so there will be one or two fewer of them."

"But why is it," said the teacher, "that I don't suggest burning the books that you are interested in?"

At that point, the student K-n spoke up. "Enough of this talk: we're not interested, we won't listen to you, and we won't be giving up on this Torah right here. As for your benighted, deviant selves, can you not see the shame and the disgrace covering your faces? You've abandoned your people, the Jewish nation, corrupted all that is true, left the honor of the Torah for the indignity of a few pitiful, lowly books, and now you're trying to lure us after you? Shame on you! Leave, and don't speak with us anymore!"

The words of this student, spoken with a thunderous voice and heartfelt passion, shocked the visitors, and they turned to go without idling a moment longer. While at the time, for all appearances, the teacher and his colleague caused no harm with their visit,



The Poalei Tzion gang in Vitebsk

they nevertheless left an impression that would go on to bear decidedly unpleasant consequences (as will soon be related).

Not long after, it emerged that the student Davzik had been in contact with a few of the town's local youth, whose standard of conduct was less than ideal, and even less so when it came to Yiddishkeit. At that time especially, the infernal activities and ideas they were engaged in were proving particularly destructive. The revelation left the faculty with a bad feeling, and they felt it necessary to provide the director [the Frierdiker Rebbe] with a specific account of recent events, regarding the visit to the yeshiva by the aforementioned guests and the conduct of the student Davzik.

Upon receiving the faculty's letter in Moscow, the director became quite upset. He was unsure of what his response should be – he didn't wish to present to matter to the Rebbe, despite his formal status as head of the yeshiva, since he knew how profoundly it would affect him – and in a state of deep consternation, the director decided to leave the matter unresolved until he had returned home.

On Wednesday morning, the week of *parshas Ki Tisa*, the director arrived home safely, and the very first report that was presented to him was a thoroughly detailed account of the Davzik matter, the relevant details of which we will now present before the honorable reader:

"Davzik, for the past two weeks, ever since the teacher's visit to the yeshiva, has maintained a friendship with some local youths. Since, pursuant to our previous discussion of his case, we are all too familiar with his character, we find it necessary to apply the law which states that any student not acting in line with yeshiva regulations is to be removed from the register of students, and notified accordingly.

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HE BOASTED TO THE HOST THAT THESE YOUTHS WANTED TO CONVINCE HIM TO STRAY FROM THE STRAIGHT AND NARROW PATH, BUT THAT THEY WOULDN'T PREVAIL OVER HIM UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES, AND HE WOULD CONTINUE TO LEARN IN THE YESHIVA..

Additionally, his colleagues and teachers are also to be notified that they are not to maintain a relationship or acquaintance with him, whether in general or personal matters.

"However, we are well aware of Davzik's temperament, namely his wax-like impressionability; that this decision could have a powerful effect on him and that perhaps, out of his volatility, he might come to injure himself physically or cause some other damage. This is especially so considering the reverence he has for his parents, who both wish that he conduct himself appropriately. Therefore the board finds that, in this case, it is important to also apply the section of the regulations which states: Even in the case of a youth who has had the title '*talmid*' removed, the yeshiva's management is nevertheless obliged to care for and protect him until the arrival of his father, or the guardian who brought him to the institution."

The director continued to investigate the matter, and made some inquiries of the householder in whose home Davzik had been boarding, hoping to learn

about his comings and goings, his activities, and mode of living. This is what Davzik's host, H.T., related:

For some two weeks now, said the householder, at around evening time, Davzik had been going to visit some of the neighboring homes and some of the different youths who live there. He boasted to the host that these youths wanted to convince him to stray from the straight and narrow path, but that they wouldn't prevail over him under any circumstances, and he would continue to learn in the yeshiva. On the contrary, he said, he was able to expose them, clearly and in the flesh, for what they really were; not men of wisdom and intelligence, but of simple self-indulgence. In fact, it was precisely the students of the yeshiva – despite their apparent lack of industry – whose every action was guided by intelligence and genuine feeling.

After a few more days had passed, he started visiting them more frequently, and spending ever more time there. He would bring books over, heavy ones and light ones, big and small, and spent the entire night

reading them. Despite not sleeping, he would still go to *daven* in the morning, but rushed his prayers.

Then, one day, he came back home to his room angry and upset, and told the householder the following: *I was called to the mashgiach, who berated me for not coming in time for davening. You know, it's true what they say about the yeshiva – they count our every step over there, and watch every student with a hundred eyes. In another month I'm leaving this place!* But then he said, *If they expel me, I'm going to kill myself, or I'll throw myself into the lake!*

And then, last Sunday, recalled the householder, he said, *My new friends are right. You have to get used to doing aveiros just like you get used to mitzvos, and once you've gotten used to them, they aren't so frightening any more. I thought that if I wouldn't put on tefillin, or wouldn't pray, I'd die on the spot, and wouldn't be able to live a moment longer. But today, I haven't put on tefillin or davened, and here I am, alive and well. My friends at Poalei Tzion [a Zionist movement] say that they'll help me take revenge on them, on the yeshiva and the people in charge of me there.*

"Revenge?" the householder had asked with alarm. "To take revenge on them? What did they do to you that makes you say you want to take revenge on them? What evil, or what sin have they perpetrated against you?"

"When I was home last summer," Davzik had recounted, "a friend cajoled me into becoming a member of Poalei Tzion. I would read their literature and began working for the cause; whatever job I was assigned, nothing was too much for me. Eventually my father gave me a stern scolding. 'What will become of you?' he demanded. His repeated words of rebuke had their impact. They opened my ears, pierced my heart, and convinced me to travel to Lubavitch and go back to how things were – to come here.

"And then when I do come," he continued, "they refused to accept me, making all sorts of inquiries and investigations – why? After all, I wasn't asking for any assistance, just a place to learn! Eventually they accepted me, and put me under the charge of two teachers who never took their eyes off me. They

encouraged me to be diligent with my studies and meticulous in my conduct, proscribing all forms of relaxation or leisure. But at the same time, my imagination began to overcome me. I would see those local debauchees lying about and became envious of them: Why were they free as birds while I was trussed up in captivity? Why could they idle away their days on whatever caught their fancy while I was hard at work, laboring away at my studies? What's more, while they were allowed to strut about with conspicuous self-pride, the same could hardly be said of us; taught only selflessness and absolute altruism, what can we ever hope to amount to?"

"Still, despite all of this, I never considered anything other than remaining a *tomim*, a student of Tomchei Temimim. I only ever wanted to show them that we're also people, that we were no less intelligent or discerning than they. Then I became close with them, they befriended me, fed me their books, and now I share their convictions – this is what I want."

"Well as far as you're concerned," retorted the householder, "do as you wish. But why do you go a step further, and speak about taking revenge on the yeshiva? Although I'm not overly concerned about your vengeance – I know you don't exactly size up against the leaders of the yeshiva, and aren't really worth taking that seriously – but for your own sake, you need to be a decent human being. Are you really going to repay all of the good they have done for you – including lending you money – by doing them evil?"

"That's what my friends say must be done," was the response. "To take revenge on the institution, to take revenge on its leaders; to destroy it, or at the very least to harm it and its students."

The next day, the young man complained to his host that, for the entire night, he had been unable to sleep. His own demons had kept him lying awake in terror, and tortured by his conscience. *How could he do such a terrible thing to his parents? When they find out, it will simply be too much for them to bear,* he told himself. He had been informed that his father had already been summoned, by telegram, to come and take him home. His mother was a sickly, G-d fearing

"REVENGE?" THE HOUSEHOLDER HAD ASKED WITH ALARM. "TO TAKE REVENGE ON THEM?

WHAT DID THEY DO TO YOU THAT MAKES YOU SAY YOU WANT TO TAKE REVENGE ON THEM?

woman, and his father was also frail; who knew how they would be affected by news of what was – at least in their minds – an utter catastrophe in the making? The only way out, he decided, was to take his own life.

On the third day – after learning of the director and the Rebbe's recent arrival – he changed his tune. "I'm going to go off to my new friends," he now said. "What will the faculty be able to do to me? My friends will help me out, and stand by my side. I will estrange myself from my parents as well. My friends were right when they said that I'm hardly the first to go against his parents, or to not follow in the footsteps of our ancient forefathers, who knew nothing about life and the ways of the world. If I just go ahead and do as I wish, what will they do to me?"

Based on the householder's candid account of this turn of events, the director determined that Davzik was in a particularly delicate emotional state, and decided to leave the notification of expulsion until the boy's father had arrived. They would then inform the lad that he been removed and erased from the students' register, and that he was expected to leave the institution.

On Wednesday afternoon, a letter signed by the students arrived at the desk of the director, requesting that he remove Davzik from the students' register, declaring it a disgrace that Davzik be counted amongst their number and his name mentioned in their history.

For the director, it was vital that he first summon the boy and ascertain things for himself, to know the truth of the matter, before he delivered and sealed any judgment. However, the boy refused to come, insisting that if they had any issue with him, they could come to his residence: As he saw it, there was no need for him to kowtow to anyone from the yeshiva, and not a single one of them was master or ruler over him.

As long as Davzik had been counted amongst the student population, he had benefited from the yeshiva's policy, as stipulated in the school regulations, to also provide financial assistance

to students from wealthier homes, in the form of free loans.⁴ With the impending dismissal of the student Davzik, the school treasurers calculated his remaining balance, and found that he owed 47 rubles and 63 kopeks. Once the balance was determined; since the regulations had to be kept, and since the yeshiva's financial position was not stable enough to allow forgiving such a sum; the bursars decided to apply the regulation's third clause. To wit, two men were sent to impound and bring over Davzik's belongings, sealed and sequestered in a box, with the key left in his possession. The box would be held as lien under the guard of the institution's treasury.⁵

On Thursday, towards evening, five youths from the town's local hooligans, two of them 20 years of age and the other three between 13 and 15, came to the treasury offices. Informing the bursar that Davzik was a member of the organization, *Poalei Tzion*, they declared that the bursar was unable to adjudicate his case without their counsel and knowledge, and that they were generally opposed to the decision, of which they already had heard (even before it had been made public), that Davzik would be struck out of the students' register.

The director was sitting in his office at the time, and upon hearing the loud commotion outside (of course, these sorts of fellows were neither well-mannered nor softly spoken; they would state their case in a loud hubbub of coarse, noisy yells), called in the bookkeeper Reuven Varoveitchik, who was filling that position at the time. He asked him what the commotion was about, and then invited everyone into his office.

"Why is it that you would like?" the director asked them. "What reason have you come here for?"

"We have come to notify you that Davzik is a member of our organization, *Poalei Tzion*."

"And therefore?" the director retorted.

"We have heard," answered the guests, "that you intended to send him away from here, so we have come to inform you that that won't be possible.

"THAT'S WHAT MY FRIENDS SAY MUST BE DONE," WAS THE RESPONSE. "TO TAKE REVENGE ON THE INSTITUTION, TO TAKE REVENGE ON ITS LEADERS; TO DESTROY IT, OR AT THE VERY LEAST TO HARM IT AND ITS STUDENTS."



"FROM NOW ON, WE WILL BE DEALING WITH YOU ON OUR TERMS, AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE WAY WE SEE THINGS." AT THAT POINT, TWO OF THEM REVEALED THAT THEY WERE ARMED WITH PISTOLS.

Additionally, his belongings were confiscated yesterday – why?"

"This institution has directors, a faculty, and regulations; he is under their charge, and not yours. If there is someone who needs to be ejected from here, then it will be done without any asking for your say-so. The rules of this institution will be upheld as a matter of necessity."

"Then let this be notice," said the guests, "that from now on, we will be dealing with you on our terms, and in accordance with the way we see things." At that point, two of them revealed that they were armed with pistols.

"Get out of here! I'm not afraid of you, or your guns. And let me notify you now, so that it's clear, that Davzik is now erased from the students' register. As

for this threat you're leveling against me – you didn't bring me into existence, and you won't take me out of it; G-d runs the world. Now get out!⁶

"Just know that you are going to have a bitter end. We will do whatever we want, and nothing you do will be of any use." With those parting words, the guests left.

On Friday, word came from the boy's father that he would be arriving that Sunday. By then, the heated exchange that had taken place in the administrative offices had become the talk of town. The news had so deeply affected Davzik that he had gone running through the city streets like a madman, crowing about how he was going to take his own life. The director called for the young man's host, and cautioned him to look out for the boy, and to hide from him anything that might cause harm.

DAVZIK TURNED TO THEM AND SAID, "THE POALEI TZION HAVE BEEN LOOKING FOR A PRETENSE TO WREAK REVENGE ON THE YESHIVA FOR AROUND A YEAR, AND NOW THEY HAVE FOUND IT. THEY ARE GOING TO DO WHATEVER THEY WANT NOW."

On Motzoei Shabbos, there was a long meeting on the matter, and it was decided that the Davzik lad would have to be apprehended and remanded to the director's office until his father had arrived: Anyone who had seen him over Shabbos could tell that he was showing signs of instability and derangement. The matter was settled after the meeting, and when Davzik passed by the yeshiva's courtyard entrance, he was seized and brought indoors, without any heed paid to his mad shouts.⁷

The director went out to receive him, and requested that he come into his office by saying the following:

"I understand that, due to various circumstances and reasons, you wish to leave the yeshiva – we aren't stopping you. However, both I and yourself must follow the yeshiva regulation stating that when a young man wishes to leave this institution, then the latter is obligated to return the young man to whomever brought him to the institution in the first place. So, I would like to ask you to please stay here with me, until tomorrow evening, when your father comes.

"I am designating for you this room, which as you know is normally my own, and am taking it upon myself to tend to whatever it is you need. My assistants have also been told to serve you with whatever you might command them. Just now, they have been instructed to bring you a hot drink, or supper – which would you like?

The director then departed the room, and as soon as he had, Davzik ordered a tea and loaf of bread with butter. His request was met immediately, and he sat to eat, joined by the students M. Ch., Sh. Y., and A. V.

Davzik turned to them and said, "The Poalei Tzion have been looking for a pretense to wreak revenge on the yeshiva for around a year, and now they have found it. They are going to do whatever they want now."

At approximately 11:30 at night, the director's relative-by-marriage, Shmuel Abba Dolitzki of Kishinev, was sitting with the director in his room,

when all of a sudden, a loud, noisy clamor of voices could be heard: *The Poalei Tzion declare that Davzik is a member of their organization, and demand he be released from imprisonment. If not – five hundred fellow members from Vitebsk⁸ will be on their way. Even a regiment of soldiers won't be able to withstand them – they will shoot, set fire, and destroy this entire courtyard.*

The director, along with Dolitzki, came out of the room they were in, and saw five youths, all of them with tall fur hats on their heads and rifles in their arms. They shouted their script, and repeated it four or five times, their faces glowering with violence and murder.⁹

When they saw the director, they turned to him and shouted, "Move back or we'll shoot! If we do, it will be too late for any regrets."

The director replied in an even tone, "You're wasting your breath trying to frighten me – I don't get frightened.

"Davzik isn't a prisoner here," he continued, "he's simply changed his address. He just ate, and had a hot drink, and I'm sure you'll trust me when I say it was on cleaner dishes than he's been using at his old place – so what's with all of this noise, and all these shouts? Either way, I'm telling you all to leave. Please don't make any more of a fuss than there needs to be, and just go."

At that point, the tallest member of the group, and its apparent leader, addressed the director directly. "Take a moment to think," he said. His eyes and face radiated such bloodlust and death to scare even the hardiest of souls. "Be very careful about what it is you are doing here. In another minute – just a little longer, and I'll turn you into smithereens..."

"My good sir, you're make a mockery of yourself." said the director. He doffed his hat, and then said, "This has been a lovely laugh, but just a bit too much for me. Now, please put aside your toys for another time, and leave."



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Upon seeing the director's sheer audacity, and his unflappable courage, the group left his office. As they emerged into the courtyard they encountered throngs of students who had just come out of the yeshiva's study hall bearing an assortment of sticks and stones.¹⁰ They tried threatening and warning them as well, and even fired off a few shots in the direction of the yeshiva buildings, but the students were neither fazed nor frightened, and they held their own. In the meantime, however, comrades of the Poalei Tzion group had begun to join them.

As all this was going on, the scribe Seligson and the bursar Varoveitchik were seated at a table in a side room of the office, beneath a hanging candelabrum. The Rabbi of Romanov, R. Moshe Z. H. Klatzkin, was there as well, standing beside the short room divider. Suddenly, a bullet whizzed through the window, past the candelabrum, then directly over the Rabbi's head – not two inches,¹¹ maybe less than that – before slamming into the wall directly behind him, embedding itself at a depth of perhaps five inches.¹²

If it is sometimes said that a miracle goes unnoticed even by the one who experiences it, this time G-d's providence was revealed in plain sight: At the very moment the bullet passed by, the Rabbi had bent down just so, wanting to pick something up, and was saved from death. May G-d's name be blessed!

Once the students saw how serious the situation had become, they summoned their courage and rallied together, so that in a short time, they succeeded in driving out the mob of youths, which by then had dramatically grown to number some two hundred young men and women.

The hooligans continued to break windows, throw stones from the street, and roared that they would burn the buildings down, but at least they had been banished from the courtyard.¹³

Incredible as it may seem, but the rest of the townspeople somehow continued to sleep, without a single person, including neighbors of the courtyard, waking from all of the noise and hullabaloo. Meanwhile, on all the streets surrounding the courtyard the riotous thugs had posted sentries to make sure that nobody would raise alarm with the town's inspector or his policemen. Still, one night watchman managed to sneak out, from courtyard to alleyway, and informed the police chief of what was happening.

This police inspector, as is often the case in small towns, had already known of these developments – the back-and-forth, the threats, and so on – since the previous week. Now, he promptly proceeded to search a few houses he deemed suspicious before he came to the yeshiva courtyard.¹⁴

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On his arrival, he promptly began to prepare a detailed report of the matter. To this end, he summoned the Davzik boy for questioning, who in turn offered an open account of the entire story.

"Why did you originally come here?" the inspector asked.

"I came to learn here, at the Schneerson schools. But, for various reasons, I became acquainted with some of the local youths" – Davzik called them by name – "and they gave me a number of books to read. They would also call me to their meetings, and on account of my young age, I was unable to hold my ground.

"And who are they?"

Davzik began to call each and every one of them by name, along with their aliases and nicknames. The inspector wrote everything up in his report, which was by then some three pages long.

By the time all this writing work was complete, it was already getting on 4 o'clock in the morning, and the inspector said that, by law, he would have to take Davzik into custody. After all, he was to blame for this entire affair.

The director was against the idea, and said that he wouldn't agree to having the boy taken from his home; instead, Davzik could remain in his custody – but not as a prisoner.

The inspector demanded a signed declaration from the director that, whenever Davzik would be summoned for a court hearing, he would be responsible for his appearance...



THE DAVZIK VENDETTA

The Story Continues

The above account of the Davzik affair, as recorded in Divrei Yemei HaTemimim, breaks off somewhat abruptly, without going on to relate its aftermath and eventual resolution. What follows is a continuation of this story, as reconstructed primarily from a series of letters of the Rebbe Rashab and his brother Reb Zalman Aharon – the Razoh – written in the immediate wake of the events related above, as well as from the later memoirs of Chassidim.

The very next day after the dramatic melee in the yeshiva courtyard, on Sunday evening, Berel Chernigover's father arrived in Lubavitch. Berel's passport had been taken by one of his Poalei Tzion comrades, but father and son Davzik nevertheless proceeded to travel home. With the pretext and primary instigator of the confrontation between Tomchei Temimim and Poalei Tzion gone from the scene, tensions appeared to have calmed down, at least for the most part. "Although the matter has not been entirely resolved," writes the Rebbe Rashab a week or two after Davzik had left, "there is nevertheless nothing to be afraid of, G-d forbid. It is my firm hope that they won't touch our *bochurim* again, and will not mix in with our affairs."

Certainly, the scenes of chaos visited upon the quiet town of Lubavitch had been more than anyone had ever expected, and more than most had ever wanted.

A couple of the rabble-rousers had been arrested – including one who had been witnessed firing a revolver – and although it was unclear whether they would face any real prosecution, it seemed that the others had since calmed down and now regretted their involvement in the matter. "However," the Rebbe Rashab remarks ominously in the above-quoted letter, "there are those of them who, even now, continue to talk, to intimidate, and so on." In fact, the matter was far from settled. It had triggered a new set of tumultuous events that would bring even more shocking brutality to strike at the very heart of Lubavitch – the Rebbe's own family.

It was over month later, a couple of weeks after Pesach, that the dispute between Poalei Tzion and Lubavitch, along with its potential resolution, resurfaced. In the time that had passed, it quickly became clear that Poalei Tzion's grievances had only continued to stew. Since the Rebbe's brother Reb Schneur Zalman Aharon, popularly known as the Razoh, lived in the larger city of Vitebsk – which was also the regional headquarters of the Lubavitch's local Poalei Tzion chapter – he was charged with creating a backchannel between the two groups.

Until then, the Vitebsk heads of Poalei Tzion had kept their identities secret, which unsurprisingly complicated communications. The Razoh, for his

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IN FACT, JUST A FEW DAYS EARLIER, THE SOCIALIST YIDDISH-LANGUAGE NEWSPAPER DIE VARHEIT, PUBLISHED IN FARAWAY NEW YORK (!), CARRIED AN ACCOUNT OF THE STORY.

part, attempted to reach out to the group leaders through a fellow named “Brook,”¹⁵ who though not a member of the organization, was on familiar terms with its leaders. After they met with Brook, and overcame their initial hesitance about the Razoh’s status as an unofficial representative of the Rebbe, several Poalei Tzion members agreed to meet.

During that time, the Razoh discovered how the Davzik affair had been portrayed to the public by its instigators: Unsurprisingly, the skirmish in the courtyard and the developments that had lead up to it proved quite the news story, and was heavily reported in the newspapers. In fact, just a few days earlier, the socialist Yiddish-language newspaper *Die Varheit*, published in faraway New York (!), carried an account of the story. Though corroborating many of the affair’s salient details, the account is heavily editorialized, and takes an obvious slant towards the paper’s ideological comrades in Poalei Tzion.

The article refers to Lubavitch as that “famous nest of Chassidus, darkness, and fanaticism,” which, though “tucked away in a far-off corner,” is capable of “spreading darkness throughout the entire Russia.” Its author takes aim at the Rebbe Rashab, depicting him in irreverent terms as an undeserving heir of the “great Schneersohns,” being “inferior in Chassidus, in Torah, and in good deeds,” and “who nevertheless knows all the tricks a Chassidisher Rebbe needs to know.” In particular, he is bothered by Lubavitch’s “autonomy” and its apparent imperviousness to any outside influences, and accuses the Rebbe of relying on “greater fanaticism... and greater darkness” to shore up his own authority. Key in all this is the Rebbe’s yeshiva, an institution with the “sole mission of implanting darkness in the hearts of the youth so firmly that light will never again be able to penetrate,” and which is “already responsible for spreading much

darkness amongst Yidden.” An anonymous source is then cited decrying the yeshiva’s draconian practices (“The yeshivah bochurim aren’t allowed to read anything, whether in Yiddish, or other languages. The newspaper *Di Fraind* is already considered terrible ‘sedition’, never mind the *Vekker* and *Folks-Tzeitung*”) before going on to relate to story of a “16 year old yeshiva bochur” – none other than our Berel Chernigover – who was “found with a few books and a copy of the *Folks-Tzeitung*.”

“The books and paper were immediately burned on an *auto-da-fe*, and the bochur was ordered to go to Reb Yosef, the Rebbe’s son... When the bochur... responded that he knows the way home himself, Reb Yosef send an army of yeshiva bochurim to promptly bring him the ‘revolutionary’... [Failing to do so,] in his place they brought his coat and things. Eighteen ruble had just been sent from his father...which they also kept.”

No mention is made of any debt owed the yeshiva, or of any further parental involvement. At this point, we are told, a few “workers” take up the cause of the “unfortunate bochur,” and when he is “arrested” on the Rebbe’s orders,

“[A] battle broke out between the Poalei Tzion and the Rebbe’s ‘policemen,’ who had been guarding the ‘prisoner.’ The Rebbe’s policemen, the yeshiva bochurim, were armed with wooden sticks and iron bars, and the Poalei Tzion with empty hands... although one of them fired a revolver... Nobody was hurt, but that innocent shot brought about negative results...”



Back in Russia, the origins of this divergent narrative now came to light. From the aforementioned preliminary talks the Razoh discovered that, as he writes to his brother, the loutish junior members of



Poalei Tzion back in Lubavitch “have related many lies to the heads” of the organization. The group claimed that five of their members were still being held by the authorities in relation to the incident, but the Razoh disavowed any responsibility; at least two of them were being held for unrelated prior crimes.

A few days later, the Razoh sat down to talk with a Poalei Tzion representative. After a few introductions, the representative laid out four demands¹⁶, thus clarifying the group’s position:

Firstly, that the yeshiva expel five of its top students, whom Poalei Tzion suspected were being deployed to undermine and oppose its efforts. Secondly, one of the school officials deemed responsible for the yeshiva’s treatment of their former colleague Berel Davzik was to be fired from his position. Thirdly, that the Rebbe remove the strict boycott he had imposed, for all local businesses, against the organization’s associates in Lubavitch. Fourthly, they insisted that the yeshiva pay a “fine” of two thousand rubles, on top of reimbursing another two hundred rubles in losses they claimed to have incurred.

From the moment the Rebbe Rashab learned of Poalei Tzion’s designs, his reaction was unequivocal. Seeing the first two demands as a clear attempt to subvert the autonomy of Tomchei Temimim, he refused outright the prospect of allowing someone not from the yeshiva to have a say on who should be in it. “[T]hey have no right to challenge the general workings of the yeshiva,” he later insisted, “save for the matter

of the [Davzik] lad whom they allege was unfairly mistreated. If anyone is in fact found to have acted improperly, then it is indeed within their rights to insist that those involved be fined an appropriate sum of money. They have no right, however, to adjudicate on whom is to be ejected or expelled.”

But in addition to this dispute, there was a more fundamental road block standing in the way of any reconciliation: The leaders of Poalei Tzion had agreed to set up a tribunal in order to assess the parties’ claims and determine an appropriate settlement, but one with a twist: In a traditional *zabla* adjudication, the two disputants each selects one mediator, but to ensure impartiality, the third member of the court must be agreed upon by both parties. From the very beginning of these negotiations, however, Poalei Tzion imposed the absurd condition that they also choose the third and deciding vote.

Even before any of the stated demands could be addressed, the Razoh made clear that this condition was unacceptable. The representatives of Poalei Tzion, however, dug in their heels, setting up further meetings, imposing a deadline, and even threatening to break off contact. But of course Rebbe Rashab would not agree to such a patently lopsided arrangement. “Obviously,” he writes in a letter dated the 19th of Iyar, “such a thing is impossible. But since they are intent on having their demands fulfilled, G-d forbid – both with regard to expulsion of the [five] *bochurim*, and with regard to the two thousand rubles – they insist



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COMPANION, KATZMAN.

on [mediating] in this way... I told my brother to tell them I do not agree under any circumstances... since then I have heard nothing from Vitebsk.”

A few days earlier, the Razoh had written to his “precious, dear brother” the Rebbe, that he was unperturbed by the fitful nature of the two parties’ communication. “In general, during the negotiation period there’s nothing to be afraid of; we aren’t bothered by how long this is taking...” But, beneath the Zionists’ bluster, and notwithstanding the outrageousness of their proposed tribunal, the very real threat of renewed violence remained. After their humiliating defeat in the yeshiva courtyard some two months ago, the members of Poalei Tzion who had been involved still burned with resentment. And it seemed that the focus of their rage was the man responsible for that humiliation: the young Frierdiker Rebbe, director of the yeshiva.

Despite his cool demeanor in the face of Poalei Tzion’s murderous menace during those two nights in Adar, the Frierdiker Rebbe was hardly oblivious to the violence and destruction such unchecked hatred was capable of causing. For all of their failure and humiliation, Poalei Tzion had left an impression. In his 19th of Iyar letter, the Rebbe Rashab describes the toll these incidents was taking on his family:

“With regards to myself, I am not afraid of them, and I hope to G-d that they will not do us any evil, Heaven forfend. My son, it seems to me, is more afraid and anxious, although he keeps it hidden. But my wife [has been affected] most of all; the fear she has felt all this time can simply not be described in writing. Scarcely able to think of nothing else, she hasn’t been sleeping at night, and does not allow our son to leave her eyes. Quite literally, she cannot rest.

“Last Thursday, we sat down to collect ourselves, and together with our friends Reb Menachem Monish Moneszon and Reb M. B. Bernstein, and together with my mother, we decided that my son and daughter-in-law ought to travel abroad... I thought they should travel abroad anyway, since my son was exhausted by the entire affair, and by matters related to Tomchei Temimim in general. With the help of G-d, he needs to be strong.

“In the merit of our fathers, the holy Rebbeim, may Hashem protect us from all misfortune, and may no man be able to have any evil affect on us, Heaven forfend.”

"YOU'RE WAITING FOR THE REBBE'S SON," HE SAID. "THEN LET ME TELL YOU THIS: IF YOU EVEN THINK ABOUT TOUCHING HIM, WE'LL BLAST YOU ALL AWAY INTO A PUFF OF SMOKE.

It was perhaps out of concern for his son that the Rebbe Rashab seemed intent on ensuring he would have as little to do with the aftermath of the Davzik affair as possible, despite the leading role he had taken in the standoff against Poalei Tzion. The Rebbe insisted that he alone would be directing negotiations with the Zionists, writing that, "The mediation will be with me, and not my son; I am the one responsible for the yeshiva's management, so if they have some claim against it, they must take up their claims with me."

Their fears were not unwarranted. That much became clear on a trip the Frierdiker Rebbe took to the town of Rogatchov during this period, accompanied by Shmuel Katzman. A few days into the trip, the police warned the Rebbe Rashab back in Lubavitch that a large mob of ruffians was gathering near the train station in Orsha – apparently in anticipation of the Frierdiker Rebbe's return trip – and he immediately sent a telegram to his son in Rogatchov.

Already keenly aware of the enemies he had made, the Frierdiker Rebbe had taken to travelling armed, and on the return leg through Orsha, he prepared his revolver and kept it at the ready. As the train rolled into town, the Frierdiker Rebbe spotted a group of the thugs through his window, and pointed them out to his travelling companion, Katzman. Fortunately, a detachment of police had come to the station as well. Once the train came to a stop, the younger man hopped off and walked directly towards the group.

"You're waiting for the Rebbe's son," he said. "Then let me tell you this: If you even think about touching him, we'll blast you all away into a puff of smoke"¹⁷

Apparently the presence of the police – and Shmuel Katzman's threat – made the right impression, and the group quickly scattered in fear.

But, despite this lucky escape, and the family's plan for him to travel abroad to safety, the Frierdiker Rebbe did not manage to get away entirely unscathed. It happened around this time, on one cold Friday morning in Lubavitch, while out on a trip to the *mikveh*. He was just on his way back when a local lout – the wayward son of Bere Yoel "Beirech" the cobbler – suddenly struck him with a baton. As he reeled from

the vicious blow, the young thug then seized him by the neck and began to squeeze, trying to strangle the Rebbe's son.

The Frierdiker Rebbe quickly recovered, and managed to fight back, punching at his assailant's head with both fists. Then, breaking free, a well aimed kicked felled the cobbler's son, and the Frierdiker Rebbe fled straight to his home. As soon as Shabbos had passed, with his father's encouragement, he left Lubavitch headed for abroad, where he would hide away, dressed in disguise, until the storm had blown over. It would be some time before he returned.



In the meantime, there seemed to be some progress in the talks between Poalei Tzion and Lubavitch. In late Iyar, accompanied by the Razoh, a senior representative came to Lubavitch to meet with the Rebbe himself and to personally present the group's position. The Rebbe reiterated that he would not meet their first two demands for expulsion and firing. Beyond his refusal to entertain any outside interference with the workings of the yeshiva, in a retrospective¹⁸ letter written in Av, he offers an additional reason: "I do not want the *bochurim* to be afraid of any man." At this point, however, the group had already given up on having any school officials fired, and darkly muttered that "they would deal with him themselves."

And what of the boycott? The respect and influence that the Rebbe Rashab commanded in Lubavitch was such that his call to break off all ties with Poalei Tzion was having a ruinous effect on the group's local members now shut out from all economic activity. At the same time, however, it was still quite evident that the Zionist group had not given up its hopes of intruding on and interfering with the affairs of the yeshiva. For all anyone knew, the Davzik affair was just the beginning: With a constant stream of slander and trumped up accusations against the yeshiva being fed to them by their reprobate associates in Lubavitch – "whose inventiveness is boundless," as the Rebbe Rashab remarked – the Zionist group

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could just carry on pouncing on every pretext to act against the yeshiva that came their way. Removing the boycott might simply mean taking away their only disincentive. So, the Rebbe proposed a compromise: If Poalei Tzion were to disassociate from those local hooligans, and pledge to disregard their libel, he would remove the boycott. But it appeared this compromise was a bridge too far for the group, or perhaps they weren't quite ready for peace. Either way, the representative declined, and the Rebbe kept the boycott in place.

At one point in their conversation, the Poalei Tzion leader challenged the yeshiva's code of strict insularity. *Why is the yeshiva is so adamant about not engaging with outsiders?* he persisted. *Doesn't it show a certain weakness, and a fear that its students will go astray? After all, our group allows representatives from any other party to address us, and we are not afraid anyone will go astray. What are you afraid of?*

"Freedom," replied the Rebbe Rashab bluntly. "I am afraid of licentious, unscrupulous freedom, and anyone with a proper sense of duty, of *kabolas ol*, ought to be just as skeptical of unrestrained freedom."

"A similar argument," the Rebbe adds in his Av letter describing the encounter, "was put forward by the great leaders of religious Jewry in Germany, who were in favor of combining Torah with general studies. 'The Torah is a consuming fire!' they claimed, and thus needs not be fearful of anything.

"This would only be a valid argument, if their Torah study were truly for the right reasons, *lishma*, and those who study it consummately, truly righteous. Then, it is true, there really is nothing to fear. The Sandhedrin – who were familiar with 70 languages, all the wisdom of the world, and even such matters as witchcraft – are proof of this, and so it is written in the Tanya of the Rambam and Ramban."

But the Rebbe Rashab reserves his skepticism. "But who can say that he is truly perfect, or that his Torah is *lishma*? And, if it is not *lishma*, then one must be exceedingly careful of any untoward influences. We

see with our own eyes that knowledge of secular matters dulls the fire of Torah and the fear of G-d, even amongst religious people. One ought not to rely on miracles and test himself in this way, but instead to safely walk in the ways of Torah and *mitzvos*."

With the first three demands addressed, the matter of money was all that remained. Indeed, as the Rebbe Rashab later remarked, money was apparently their main objective all along. But here too they seemed to come to an impasse. Poalei Tzion would not budge from their insistence that they choose two out of three people on the mediation court. With a note of exasperation following the unfruitful meeting, the Rebbe writes in a 28th of Iyar letter, "I imagined we might be able to come to a compromise, but it was impossible."

As the representative left the meeting, presumably headed back for Vitebsk, he was accosted by a throng of locals. These townspeople, many of them simple folk, knew that another eruption of violence in Lubavitch – a town accustomed to a high volume of visitors from out of town – could have a real impact on their livelihoods. They hurled angry threats at the interloper, and warned that if the Zionist group were to harm anyone else, then they themselves were prepared to fight. The man quickly left, and did not return.

But still the matter remained unresolved, and the Rebbe Rashab's worries remained. In the 28th of Iyar letter, he writes: "If they come again to attack, G-d forbid, and especially if they come into the study hall, as he said they would (on our part, we warned him that they would have a bitter end if they tried), then Hashem know that both sides could sustain heavy losses, Heaven forbid... I hope they will not do such things."

For the time being, the Rebbe Rashab suggested sending out word to members of Poalei Tzion in other cities, "like Riga, and other places," warning them of the potential consequences of any further conflict. By making it clear that their interference in the affairs



of Lubavitch was no local, private matter, and could be met with broad retaliation far further afield, he hoped that “the fear of numbers would have an effect,” and that cooler heads would prevail.

The Rebbe also visited the *Ohel* of his father and grandfather, the Rebbe Maharash and the Tzemach Tzedek, to implore for a peaceful resolution to the standoff with Poalei Tzion. In a petitionary *pidyon* that he read at the *Tzion* at this time, he refers to the “wicked organization called Poalei Tzion,” which had “laid eyes on... Tomchei Temimim... wants to eject some *bochurim*, and also demands money, intimidating and threatening to kill, Heaven help us, if we do not comply...” He pleads for his son, as well as “the *bochurim* learning in the Tomchei Temimim yeshiva” that “Hashem should protect them... that no man be able to do them evil, that Hashem thwart the designs of anyone who plans to do them evil, and may sin cease from the earth...”

With the Rebbe Rashab refusing to concede any further, negotiations had ground to a halt, and several months wore on without any progress. And then, frustrated by the Rebbe’s unswerving intransigence, Poalei Tzion lashed out once more, in what was perhaps the most shocking episode of violence in this entire affair.



It was getting on in the day one quiet summer’s afternoon, just a couple days before Tisha B’Av. The Rebbe Rashab was with his family on *datche*, at a vacation spot not far from the city of Liozna, when a contingent of Poalei Tzion suddenly appeared. Six to eight men burst into the house with revolvers drawn, while a good a few more stood in the courtyard outside.

We already told you and you did not listen, the intruders shouted out. Now we will show you!

The Zionist activists posted guards at all entrances, making sure that no one could come or flee, and went on a rampage throughout the house, smashing windows and breaking everything in sight. Later, the Rebbe

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REBBETZIN SHTERNA SARA
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would it call it a “pogrom.” By the time they were finished the dining room, which was next to the entrance, was completely destroyed. “They broke the table, the closet with the dishes, and everything else that was there. Only the clock remained intact.”

The Frierdiker Rebbe’s daughters – then 2, 5, and 7 years old – began shrieking in fear. Rebbetzin Shterna Sara begged for permission to take the terrified youngsters out of the house, but one of the men standing by the door loomed before her menacingly, holding his revolver, and ordered her back into the house.

When the intruders finally departed, they left some guards standing by the road into town for a few more hours, to ensure that no one would raise alarm. “We still haven’t notified the police,” the Rebbe Rashab writes in a letter a day later, “but we have hired some armed guards. May Hashem protect us from all misfortune.”

Still, the Rebbe remained firm. Poalei Tzion wanted money – now demanding three thousand rubles – but the Rebbe resolutely held his ground on the neutrality of the proposed tribunal. The day after the pogrom, the Rebbe Rashab writes to the Frierdiker Rebbe, who was still hiding overseas, in a calm and altogether unruffled tone: “As for the matter of Poalei Tzion, things are now quiet with them, thank G-d. It’s impossible to know what they are thinking, but in general, there no need to be afraid of them, Heaven forefend...”

And yet, it was around this time – whether because of the shocking attack or because they realized the depth of the Rebbe Rashab’s resolve – that a few rays of reconciliation began to appear over the horizon. After some fits and starts, a few letters between Vitebsk and Lubavitch¹⁹, and a couple of tweaks²⁰, it appeared that a satisfactory tribunal was coming together at last. But, with monetary matters far from resolved, and progress on Poalei Tzion’s past demands still fraught, the situation remained fragile. In late Av, the Rebbe continued advising the Frierdiker Rebbe to remain abroad: “Our hope is that this will bring about settlement [but] if you come now, it will make settlement more difficult, therefore... wait a little longer...”

Finally, after several more updates to the Frierdiker Rebbe, who was obviously eager to return to Lubavitch, the Davzik affair came to a close just a week or two before Rosh Hashana of 5667. In a letter to his chossid and confidante Reb Yeshaya Berlin, dated the 23rd of Ellul, the Rebbe Rashab writes, “[J]ust now I have received a telegram... that it is finished. Now, with the help of G-d, there is nothing to worry about, Heaven forfend. My son and daughter-in-law are arriving to our home in peace, tomorrow. May Hashem protect us from all misfortune, and may we live a life of comfort, in matters



AS I WAS SITTING IN THE CELL, THEY BROUGHT IN A YUNGERMAN SPORTING A BEARD. HE APPROACHED ME AND REMARKED, "YOU APPEAR TO BE A TALMID OF THE LUBAVITCHER YESHIVA."

spiritual and physical, in the merit of our fathers, the Rebbeim."



With the détente between Poalei Tzion and Lubavitch in place, the Friediker Rebbe and family safe back at home, the Rebbe Rashab deep into his groundbreaking 5666 series of *maamorim* ("Samach Vov"), and the bochurim as immersed in their learning as ever, the Davzik story seemed to have come to a tidy conclusion. That is, except for one loose thread – the instigator, and cause of all this trouble – Berel Davzik.

In his memoirs, R. Yisroel Jacobson provides us a postscript of sorts when he describes an encounter he had a full ten years after the events related above.

In the summer of 5676, I had to present myself for a military inspection. I traveled to the Rebbe Rashab's summer home in Sloviansk, and he advised me to present to the draft board in Chernigov, where I would be assisted by the local Rov R. Dovid Tzvi ("Radatz") Chein.

One day, after I'd arrived in Chernigov, there was a sudden call up of all military aged men, and the authorities found my papers faulty. They ordered me to come, once again, for an inspection, and in the meantime placed me in a military prison for draft evasion.

As I was sitting in the cell, they brought in a *yungerman* sporting a beard. He approached me and remarked, "You appear to be a *talmid* of the Lubavitcher Yeshiva."

'Indeed I am, but who are you?' I replied.

He answered that his name was Dovber Davzik, and that in Lubavitch he had been known as Berel Chernigover..

At that time, he was married, and led a religiously observant family life. He would regularly go to shul to *daven*, and though he trimmed his beard, he did not shave. All in all, he was a very fine young Jewish man – *gantz fainer Yiddisher yungerman*. **P**

1. In the original, the term "association" (*agudah*), by which the Rebbe Rashab often referred to the yeshiva in its early years, is used.
2. Over the past year, the Russian Empire had been seeing intensifying anti-Czarist foment that eventually broke out into the Revolution of 1905, a precursor to the 1917 events that would eventually overthrow the regime altogether. A wave of strikes and uprisings culminated in a nation-wide railway workers' strike in the immediate aftermath of Sukkos 1905 (5666). Important concessions from the Czar came shortly thereafter, but there were accompanied by violent government reprisals and a wave of pogroms by its allies, in which Jews were targeted. These pogroms, and those of the ensuing months, most of which occurred in present-day Ukraine and Belarus, took the lives of hundreds, if not thousands, of Jewish people, and caused tremendous material destruction.
3. Understood to be referring to either Konotop or Korop, both in present-day northern Ukraine, the same region as Chernigov.
4. The regulation in question is copied here in full:

Regarding a student of average or wealthy means not in need of financial assistance, the institution's bursar must nevertheless ensure his peace of mind by being lenient whenever necessary, by offering interest free loans, until he receives the requisite funds from his home or any other source.

Clause (a): The loan is to be set within a specified time frame, at any rate no longer than one and half months.

Clause (b): In the event of refusal to repay, the bursar is not allowed to withhold for itself, on account on the debt, any more than one third of the monies received at its address on the student's behalf.

Clause (c): If the debtor refuses to repay, and it is suspected that he will not repay – whether on account of expulsion or another reason – the treasury may use any available means to protect the institution's assets, namely confiscating his

clothing or other effects as a lien until such time as he can redeem them by cash repayment.

Clause (d): Any personal belongings can be confiscated, excluding one's tefillin, tallis, overcoat – during winter or the colder months – galoshes, and other such essentials.

Clause (e): The treasury is to take responsibility for the safe keep and and guarantee of these effect for no longer than one year. After this time, they are to be sold publicly, so that the institution may exact its debt; any extra monies, are to be sent immediately to their owner.

5. In the Rebbe Rashab's account of these events, as recorded in a letter to R. Yeshaya Berlin (*Igros Kodesh*, vol. 4, pp. 137), he mentions that a second telegram was sent to the boy's father after the confiscation, requesting his immediate presence.
 6. The spoken Yiddish is provided: *Ihr hot mich nit bashafen, un nit ihr vet mich opshafen; der Aibishther firt di velt. Arois!*
 7. The Rebbe Rashab writes (*ibid*) that after the initial Thursday night confrontation, members of Poalei Tzion had taken Davzik to one of their homes. "We saw," the Rebbe Rashab writes, "that when [Berel Davzik's] father would arrive [Poalei Tzion] would hide him so that he would remain with them (it later emerged that this was indeed their intention)."
- Likewise, in Reb Yehuda Chitrik's account of events (based on a report from Reb Shmuel Katzman, who was a student in the yeshiva at the time and published in his *Reshimos Dvorim*, vol. 2, p. 131 Davzik was only seized once unaccompanied by any guards. He adds that the Frierdiker Rebbe had called on several yeshiva students, "both physically strong and intelligent" for the task, one of them being Shmuel Katzman himself.
8. The Lubavitch chapter of Poalei Tzion was apparently headquartered in the larger, nearby city of Vitebsk.
 9. In the Rebbe Rashab's account, representatives of Poalei Tzion and their allies came into the yeshiva courtyard itself, and some of them entered the

administrative offices. Presumably, the ensuing conversation with the Friediker Rebbe took place in the offices.

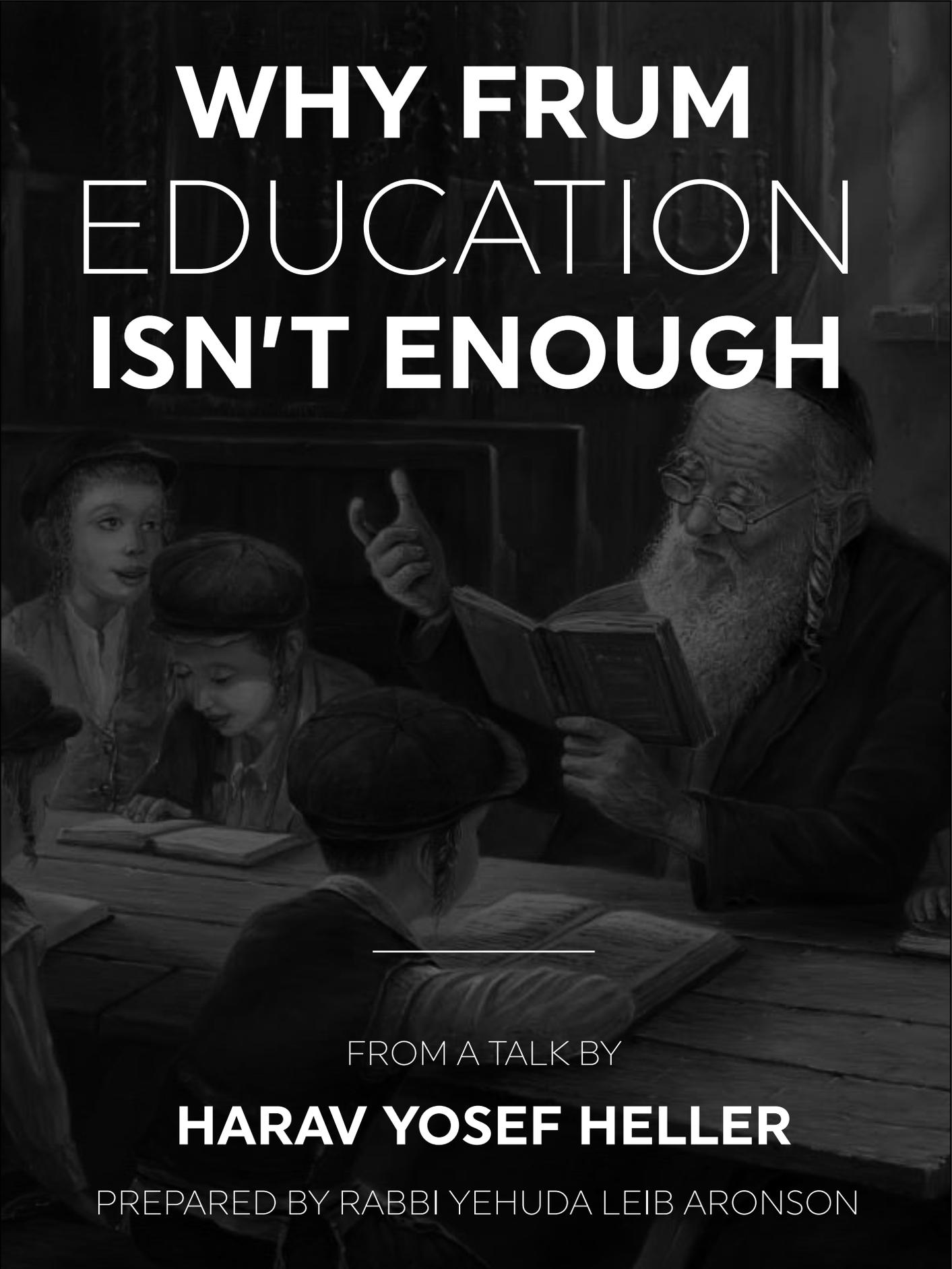
10. The Rebbe Rashab relates that “our *bochurim* ... wanted to attack them, but my son [the Friediker Rebbe] did not let them,” insisting that they only need to be removed from the premises. Reb Yehuda Chitrik describes how the students manage to frighten off the intruders with the iron slats from beneath the beds in their rooms.
11. In the original: Approximately a vorshak, or less. The vorshak is an obsolete Russian unit of measurement, equivalent to one and three-quarters of an inch.
12. In the original: Five fingerbreadths.
13. The Rebbe Rashab adds that the mob also fired in the direction of the study hall, but by then they had been driven far enough back, and past the courtyard gate, that the bullets did not meet their mark.
14. In the Rebbe Rashab’s written account, the police inspector made an arrest on a suspect whom several witnesses had identified as having fired on the yeshiva with a revolver. The gunman was sent off to the nearby city of Orsha and subsequently released, and at the time of writing it was unclear whether he had been freed completely or only until a trial at a later date.

Another Poalei Tzion member, whom the Rebbe Rashab mentions had deliberately taken Berel Davzik’s passport, was arrested that same night, but in connection to a separate incident in which he had assaulted the previous police inspector.

In a separate letter to his brother Reb Zalman Aharon (the Razoh) (printed in *Igros Kodesh*, vol. 4, pp. 141-3) he writes that the Poalei Tzion headquarters in Vitebsk claimed that a total five of their own had been imprisoned as a result of the incident. He goes on to say that one of them, a fellow by the name of Shekarachad, was there for an unrelated crime, while another was apparently there for stealing an animal from a resident (“Mendel”) of Lubavitch.
15. Possibly Tzvi Brook (1869-1922), a doctor and community activist who had been serving as the

government-appointed rabbi of Vitebsk since 1901. That same year, 1906, Dr. Tzvi Brook was also voted in as a deputy in the First Russian Duma, the legislative body created by the Czar as a concession to the 1905 Revolution. After the dissolution of the Duma later that year, Brook was briefly arrested, before returning to Vitebsk. Brook was an ardent and life long Zionist, but as a delegate of the moderate “Constitutional Democratic Party”, and an advocate of democratic ideals within the Zionist movement, his politics would have differed from those of the radical, socialist Poalei Tzion.

16. These demands are listed explicitly in a letter from the Rebbe Rashab written in Av of 5666, printed in *Igros Kodesh* vol. 4, p. 154, as well as being referred to in several other letters.
17. In the original Yiddish: *Vet men fun aich machen eish un roich*.
18. It appears that the meeting referred to in this letter is the same as that of his 28th of Iyar letter, quoted below. The events described in the two letters are thus conflated together here.
19. In a letter to his chossid R. Moshe Madaievski dated the 8th of Av, the Rebbe Rashab raises the prospect of the aforementioned “Brook” serving as the third member of the tribunal, and getting Poalei Tzion to agree, “if he were home... or would perhaps soon arrive in Vitebsk.” The Dr. Tzvi Brook referred to in a previous footnote had indeed been away from Vitebsk at around this time, first serving in the Duma in S. Petersburg, and then in jail, after being arrested along with his party colleagues for protesting government interference with reforms and legislative process. A 29th of Av letter from the Rebbe to his son again refers to Brook, and expresses hope that Poalei Tzion will accept him. In this letter, the Rebbe also mentions that Madaievski had been delegated to formally serve on the tribunal on behalf of Lubavitch.
20. In the end, it appears that Brook did not serve as the neutral member. In a 2nd of Elul letter to his son, the Rebbe Rashab mentions having an unnamed lawyer come to Vitebsk to moderate the tribunal.



WHY FRUM EDUCATION ISN'T ENOUGH

FROM A TALK BY

HARAV YOSEF HELLER

PREPARED BY RABBI YEHUDA LEIB ARONSON

Parents nowadays struggle over their children's use of technology and exposure to secular culture. They find themselves contending with their children's demands for increased use and more stimulating gadgets.

How do we deal with this issue? Is it possible to influence our children to not to be drawn after the world around them and its secular values? Is the only way to keep our children safe from the world's attractions to fight an uphill battle making strong restrictions? Is there another way to dispel the trance of technology from our children's eyes?

READY TO TAKE ON THE WORLD

The Rebbe introduced a tremendous novelty in teaching that a chossid should engage the world to elevate it.

Once upon a time, a chossid's ideal was to have as little connection with outside influences as possible. Lubavitch was a small *shtetl* that was detached from the world. In fact, the Tzemach Tzedek didn't want a train station in Lubavitch. Chassidim all lived in small *shtetlach*, or served as *melamdin* in the home of some businessman, but barely leaving his house. No one read any newspapers – even Jewish ones – since they had no interest in what was happening in the broader society. Having learned in Chassidus how the world has no real existence, they didn't see any point in paying it much attention. Yet, the Rebbe instructed his chassidim to put their preferences on the side and go out and engage the world.

However, this interaction with the world is solely to the extent necessary to elevate it. A *bochur* might go to Manhattan on *mitzoyim*, but in his mind, Manhattan was created for him to do *mitzoyim* there, and as soon as he's done, he leaves. The businessman or *shliach* who must check the newspaper for a piece of

information – the value of the dollar or the name of a politician whom he must visit – will check only what is relevant to him since he doesn't want to maintain a relationship with the world any more than is truly needed.

Raising our children to fulfil this *shlichus* without stumbling is a challenge. The only way one can remain faithful to our *shlichus* without getting pulled in to worldly ideals is by learning and living with Chassidus. When one is reminded how “*Ein Od Milvado*” and everything is insignificant before Hashem, the world isn't as enticing. If instead they perceive the outside world as attractive, but are forbidden from tasting from it, they are at risk of falling to the temptation.

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

In order for our children to have this attitude when they face the world, we need to train them in this type of thinking when they're still young. We can't rely on the school system to give them this feeling, but we must teach it to them ourselves. And, of course,

*Manhattan was
created for him to
do mitzvoyim there,
and as soon as he's
done, he leaves*



studying Chassidus is not enough; they must actually be energized by it.

When a *bar mitzvah bochur* prepares the *maamar*, he must of course understand what he is sharing. However, that is still not enough. After the *bar mitzvah* someone should review it with him again and explain it so that he can apply it to real life. Before the *bar mitzvah* he may have been preoccupied with reciting it properly, but now he has the time and focus to work on incorporating it into his life.

When the Rebbe Rashab opened Tomchei Temimim, a *yeshiva* with an official *seider* for Chassidus, some were concerned that Chassidus would become an intellectual subject, “Volozhiner Chassidus.” The Rebbe Rashab had visited the resting places of the previous Rebbem before he decided to open the *yeshiva*.

We have to do our part to ensure that Chassidus doesn't become “Volozhiner Chassidus.” We cannot train our children to learn Chassidus because of tests, prizes and punishments. Just because a student does well on a Chassidus test doesn't mean that he lives with Chassidus. He may be equivalent to a professor of chassidic philosophy.

INDIFFERENT TO SOCIETY

Living with Chassidus in this way prevents many of the challenges that parents face in *chinuch* in our times. Children who live with the ideals of Chassidus

don't have to be forbidden from browsing the internet; they simply won't be interested in it.

Years ago, many people smoked, and today it is much less common. Do we need to forbid a child to smoke? It isn't necessary. A child understands that smoking is unhealthy and dangerous, and he doesn't want to cause himself harm.

Spiritual dangers can be handled in a similar way. If you speak nicely and with patience, adolescents can understand that certain technologies aren't good for them. You must converse on *his* level of logic. If you must forbid it, it is an indication that the child has a much deeper problem: he perceives those harmful things to be good.

We sometimes make the well-intentioned mistake when speaking with children about *sur meirah*, of telling them sternly “You're not allowed to do such and such.” Our generation is emotionally feeble and doesn't take well to strictness. Warnings and punishments don't work the way they used to. People today – even young children – have the attitude that, “If someone is harsh with me, I'll break away.” We need to speak to our children about *sur meirah* in a way that they will *want* to avoid it.

GESHMAK IN CHASSIDUS

Our children will be interested in living with Chassidus if they enjoy learning it.

In all parts of Torah education, success isn't measured merely by the amount of material covered, or even

understood. The success of a teacher is in how much the student *wants* to learn. A teacher who covers less material, but uses that time to instill more of a *geshmak* for learning in the students, has essentially given them the entire Torah.

If this is true of all learning, it is especially true of Chassidus study. Chassidus is meant to illuminate our lives, and it only illuminates when it is taught in a pleasant manner. And when the student has a *geshmak* in Chassidus, he will come to have a *geshmak* in *nigleh* as well.

It used to be that students were only allowed into the *shiur* Tanya with special permission, and it was considered a privilege to be invited to study Chassidus. Now, some have unfortunately reversed this attitude by punishing a student to study a *perek* of Tanya. Such an act can cause the student to hate Chassidus, *R"L*.

In one Crown Heights *shul*, on Shabbos after *mincha*, an elder chossid shares a *maamar* for some middle-aged listeners, while the younger adults step into a side room where a younger rabbi presents a lecture on some curious topic.

I questioned the speaker, “Since you’re speaking during the auspicious time of *Raiva D’raivin*, why don’t you share with them something from Chassidus?” His response was, “Unfortunately, these young people aren’t interested in Chassidus. It reminds them of their negative experiences in *yeshiva*.”

That’s very tragic. If they don’t have a connection to Chassidus, with what do they live? Lacking the tools

to combat the turbulent waters of secular society, they and their children are in grave spiritual danger.

DAILY GUIDANCE

We must look to Chassidus for guidance for the challenges we face in our everyday lives.

A *yungerman* came to me with this predicament. His in-laws mixed into his life and gave him unsolicited advice. He resented this very much, and asked for my counsel. I quoted to him what is written in *perek* 12 of Tanya that as soon as thoughts of hatred, jealousy or anger enters one’s mind, he should immediately push them away. Thus, it would be advisable that he remove all negative feelings about his in-laws from his mind, and resolve to treat them as nicely as he could.

Doing so would actually make his life easier. He wouldn’t have to worry how to retaliate. He wouldn’t have to spend thousands of dollars on psychologists, psychiatrists, and marriage counselors. By listening to the Tanya’s basic advice, he can have a life free of worry. This *yungerman* told me that it never dawned upon him that the Tanya which he learns every year could be the answer to his troubles.

When we learn *Chitas* each day, we must ask ourselves the question: *How does this paragraph in Tanya improve my life, give me less worries, and make the world and its challenges less daunting?* Obviously just reading the words of *Chitas* is better than not saying them at all, but it won’t give us the inner fortitude that we need. With all the challenges that we face, we must learn and live with Chassidus. If we don’t know



how to extract a practical lesson from the Tanya, we ought to consult with someone who can.

NOT JUST KABALAS OL

When choosing a *maamar* or *sicha* to study, we should choose one that we understand and relate to. Similarly, we must teach our children parts of Chassidus that they can understand.

A *yungerman* told me that he used to have a *geshmak* in Chassidus, and he used to learn *Likkutei Torah* and the easy *avoda'dike maamarim* of the Friediker Rebbe. Then the *yeshiva* compelled him to learn *Samach Vov*. His head started spinning while unsuccessfully trying to decipher the three levels within *Ohr Ein Sof Shelifnei Hatzimtzum*, and he lost all interest in Chassidus. We can't afford to make that mistake and cause our learning to become irrelevant.

I know a young *bochur* in *mesivta* who was told that he must learn the Rebbe's *maamarim* during night *seder*. Although he wasn't intellectually weak, he would get entirely lost in the profound depth of the Rebbe's *maamarim*.

I challenged the *menahel* of his *yeshiva*, "If you really thought that the boy is on the level to learn these *maamarim* I wouldn't be so bothered. However, I know that you agree that basic *avoda'dike maamarim* would be more suitable for him, both intellectually and emotionally, and you are only telling him to learn these *maamarim* for the sake of '*hiskashrus*.' I ask you, is learning without understanding or emotional connection called '*hiskashrus*?!' He's coming to dislike these *maamarim*, all of Chassidus, and everything that Chassidus stands for. You're alienating him!"

"No!" he replied forcefully, "He must learn with *kabolas ol*!"



We must teach our children parts of Chassidus that they can understand.

In every *beis midrash* you can find people learning Chassidus with such “*kabolas ol*.” One person reads the words and doesn’t know what he is saying, another learns because that’s what everyone else is doing, and another may appreciate the intellectual element, but doesn’t connect to it in a meaningful way.

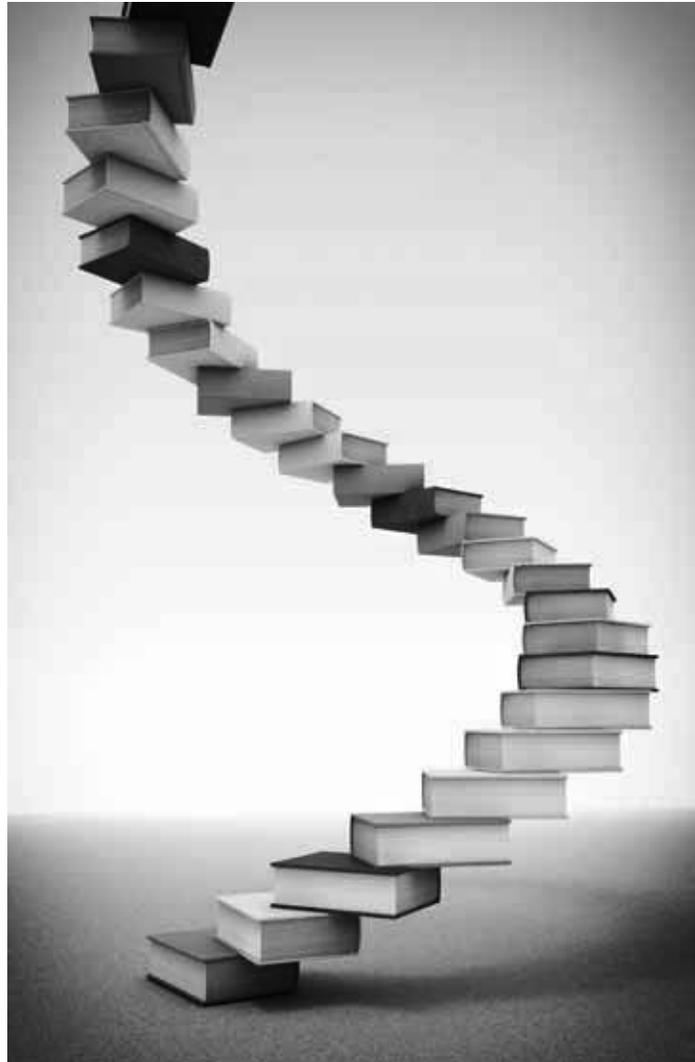
Learning *Chitas* with *kabolas ol* is important, but that’s not enough, since it won’t help us deal with our everyday challenges. Someone who just learns Chassidus with *kabolas ol* becomes lost when he faces a challenge. He feels like he has nothing to hold on to, and he can fall apart *R”L*.

Our children must be educated to study Chassidus not only because there’s a *seider* to do so or because it is part of the official chassidic check list. We don’t eat or sleep because someone is making us. We must learn Chassidus because it’s essential to our very life.

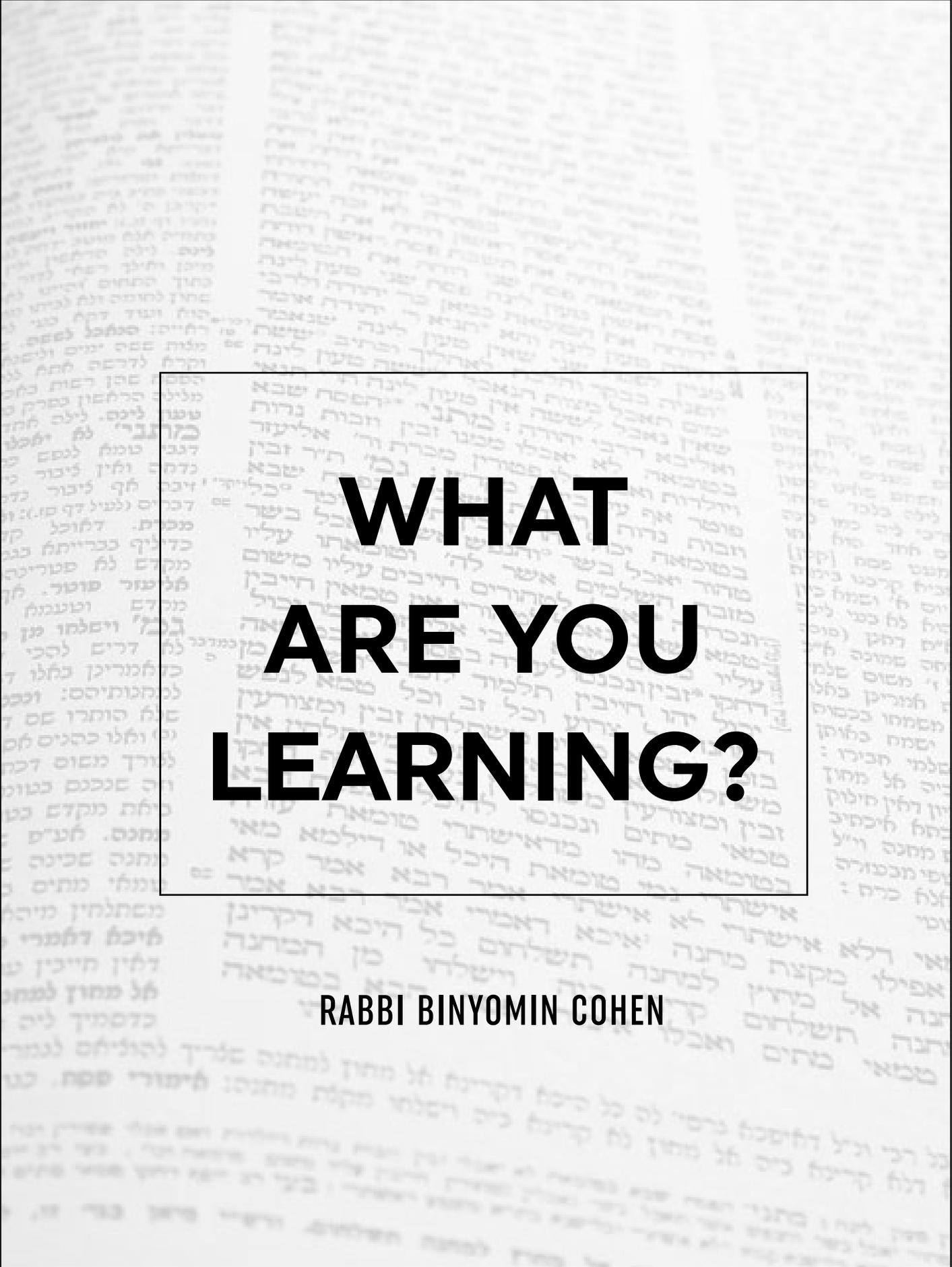
Every father must learn Chassidus with his children, and every teacher with his students. When they will live with Chassidus, we won’t have to deal with their undesirable conduct, since they will be occupied with loftier matters.

In today’s day and age, if we want to ensure that our children keep Shabbos, we must learn Chassidus and lead a *chassidische* life. We can keep all the *minhagim* and hang a picture of the Rebbe on every wall of our home, but if we don’t learn the Rebbe’s Torah and live with it, those actions won’t uplift us or our children. Certainly, it’s better to have a Rebbe picture on the wall than some other picture, but a picture alone, without a deeper connection, won’t give our children the guidance that they need.

The main thing is that we are headed in the right direction. Even if we’re not up to the ideal level, but if we’re working on ourselves and growing, our children will *bez”H* climb even higher. With the light and life of Chassidus, they will overcome the challenges of *golus* and lead the way to the *geulah*. **P**



The main thing is that we are headed in the right direction. Even if we’re not up to the ideal level, but if we’re working on ourselves and growing, our children will bez”H climb even higher.



WHAT ARE YOU LEARNING?

RABBI BINYOMIN COHEN

On the tenth of Sh'vat 5710 (1950), the previous Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Schneersohn, also known as the Rebbe Rayatz, passed away. The next day he was laid to rest in the Montefiore Cemetery, situated in Cambria Heights in the New York borough of Queens. Some months later, a small, roofless building, known as the Ohel, was erected around his grave, in order to accommodate all those who came there to pray.

The stately and impressive main entrance of the cemetery was located on Springfield Boulevard. However, the close proximity of the Ohel to the cemetery's side entrance on Francis Lewis Boulevard ensured that the overwhelming majority of those visiting the Ohel entered the cemetery through its

side entrance. This consisted of a modest pair of wire gates, which provided the only opening in an extremely long wire fence, running along the entire side of the cemetery. Once through these gates, it was a very short walk to the Ohel.

In Sh'vat 5711 (1951) the Rebbe gave specific and explicit instructions to the Chassidim as to how the day of Yud Sh'vat – the *yahrtzeit* of his father-in-law and predecessor – was to be observed. One of the directives was that each Chosid should write a special *pidyon nefesh* (a term used by Chassidim to describe a written note containing an individual's requests for the Rebbe's blessing) to be taken on the day of Yud Sh'vat to be read and placed at the Ohel. Most of the Chassidim would therefore first daven *shachris* on



The car pulled up at the side-entrance of the cemetery on Francis Lewis Boulevard and I climbed out into the biting wind of a bitterly-cold January day.

Yud Sh'vat at 770, Eastern Parkway (especially since the Rebbe himself acted as *shliach tzibur* on this day) and afterwards travel to the Ohel (a journey of about forty minutes) in order to read their *pidyon nefesh*.

In the year 1972 (5732) I had, for some reason which I can no longer recall, been unable to go to the Ohel on the morning of Yud Sh'vat. Somehow or other, the delay stretched into the afternoon, and therefore, by the time we arrived at the Ohel, daylight was already fading.

The car pulled up at the side-entrance of the cemetery on Francis Lewis Boulevard and I climbed out into the biting wind of a bitterly-cold January day. Clearly, at the Ohel of the Rebbe there are more important things to think about than the weather, so I immediately headed for the entrance in order to proceed to the Ohel.

To my surprise the gates were closed. A closer inspection revealed that they were securely

padlocked. I was certain that there was some mistake. On all my previous visits to the Ohel I had invariably found the gates wide open. Why were they now locked? I started pushing and rattling the gates in an attempt to open them.

As I stood trying to gain entry, another car pulled up a short distance away, and Rabbi Pinchos Hirschprung, the Av Beis Din (senior Rabbinic authority) of Montreal, got out. Not a Lubavitch Chosid in any formal sense, Rabbi Hirschprung was nevertheless quite close to the Rebbe and travelled to New York several times a year in order to participate in his *farbrengens*. He would, no doubt, be present at the Rebbe's *farbrengen* later that evening, and was meanwhile using the available time to visit the resting-place of a *tzaddik* on the day of his *yahrtzeit*.

Rabbi Hirschprung stood next to me as I continued in my efforts to open the gates. I was suddenly interrupted by the appearance of a young man on

All of a sudden, Rabbi Hirschprung turned to me and asked in his heavily-accented Yiddish, וואס לערנסט דו, "What are you learning?"



The spectacle of an older Rabbi, standing on a desolate, dark street in freezing weather and a biting wind, totally and enthusiastically involved in the Torah he was repeating and completely oblivious of all else

the other side of the gate i.e. inside the cemetery. Apparently a security guard, he wanted to know why we were shaking the gates. I replied that we needed to go to the Ohel and could not understand why the gates were locked.

“The whole cemetery closes at five o’clock every day of the year,” replied the guard curtly. “Now is already well-past official closing time.”

Glancing at my watch, I saw that it was only a few minutes past five. I pleaded with the guard to open the gate and let us into the Ohel for just a few minutes. He flatly refused to do anything of the sort, and, pointing to something strapped to his belt, added, “Don’t try to climb over the fence. If you do, I will shoot you.”

I was not sure whether Rabbi Hirschprung’s life experiences had included having a gun pointed at him, or whether he even understood what the fellow was saying. I, however, had definitely never been threatened in this way and found the man’s aggressive reaction totally misplaced. I had, after all, never had the slightest intention to scale the fence, but had merely asked him to open the gate.

The guard remained standing on the other side of the gates and continued to glare at us menacingly. Having no interest in prolonging a pointless dispute, we backed away from the gates and resigned ourselves to the unfortunate reality of our situation. There was no way that we were going to get inside, and we had come here for nothing.

I was totally dispirited and dejected. It was Yud Sh’vat and I had missed out on reading my *pidyon* at the Ohel. I had wasted at least two precious hours on a futile journey, and was not sure whether I was angrier with myself or with that uncooperative and belligerent guard. In addition, I was now acutely aware of the unpleasant weather. The temperature was sub-zero,

a bitterly cold wind was blowing, and the snow was descending with a vengeance. There was nowhere to take shelter, and we were completely at the mercy of the elements. The fellow who had dropped me off at the Ohel had expected me to be here for at least half an hour and had meanwhile gone off somewhere else. No doubt he would soon return, but in the meantime it was pretty unpleasant.

Nowadays, the scenario is vastly different. The establishment, over the last twenty odd years, of a whole complex of buildings and facilities near the Ohel, has meant that every visitor is well cared-for. Food and drink are freely available, as are spacious, comfortable areas to learn, daven or relax. None of this existed in the seventies. All that we could see was a long, dark, lonely street. Every detail of our surroundings was totally cheerless and my mood was correspondingly becoming blacker by the minute.

All of a sudden, Rabbi Hirschprung turned to me and asked in his heavily-accented Yiddish, וואס לערנסט דו?, “What are you learning?”

I was rather surprised that the Rabbi could find no more appropriate circumstances than our present one to hold such a discussion. However, not wishing to appear rude or disrespectful, I replied immediately. “Bava Kamma Daf Yud Alef”, I said, referring to the Masechta of Gemara which I was at that time learning every morning in Kollel.

Rabbi Hirschprung’s eyes lit up. “Bava Kamma Daf Yud Alef!” he said excitedly, and started to repeat out loud every single word on that particular page, together with an accompanying explanation of his own consisting of quotes from the classic commentaries.



Why can we not ask another Jew what he is learning, and use his response as a springboard for some sort of discussion of a Torah topic of mutual interest?

If I had been previously slightly surprised, I was now totally amazed. Not by the Rabbi's expertise. It was, after all, common knowledge that Rabbi Hirschprung had committed to memory the whole of the Babylonian Talmud and its commentaries, as well as countless other works. He could thus quote entire passages by heart with the same degree of accuracy as if he were reading from a book. Even in the pre-war Poland where he had been born and raised, and where expert Talmudists could be found in almost every *shtiebel*, Pinchos Hirschprung was known as something unique.

What was really amazing me was the spectacle of an older Rabbi, standing on a desolate, dark street in freezing weather and a biting wind, totally and enthusiastically involved in the Torah he was repeating and completely oblivious of all else. The snow was falling on him, but he didn't seem to be aware of it. His feet must have been like blocks of ice, but he apparently felt no discomfort. Looking at his smiling face and listening to his impassioned voice, you would have thought that he was standing in a large, packed Beis Midrash delivering a *shiur* to attentive listeners who eagerly absorbed his every word.

When confronted with such obvious enthusiasm, it is difficult to remain indifferent. When in the presence of unbounded energy, it is almost impossible to retreat into a shell of dejection and depression.

Vigour, warmth and excitement are contagious, and serve as a light which naturally dispels much darkness. Looking at the Rabbi, much of my gloom lifted.

For sure, we always have something about which we can moan and groan. There is never any shortage of physical challenges and spiritual setbacks upon which we can choose to focus if we are

The question, “What are you learning?” manages to explore the same ground with none of the associated negativity. No-one is suggesting, or in any way implying, that maybe you do not learn any Torah.

determined to remain in a cocoon of pessimism. However, being together, albeit for just a short while, with someone who breathed a passionate and unflagging commitment to Torah and its learning, refreshed, revived and invigorated me.

The frustrations of the past hour faded into the background. My car had at last returned, and I entered it in a fairly upbeat mood. Yud Sh’vat was once again the day of inspiration and encouragement which it was meant to be.

The above incident demonstrates the power of Torah study in even the most unlikely places. What is perhaps of slightly more relevance to us, is the fact that the question “What are you learning?” was on Rabbi Hirschprung’s lips wherever he found himself and with whomever he was talking. He saw it as his life’s-task to engage other Jews in the study of Torah and found the words “What are you learning?” a remarkably useful vehicle through which to achieve this goal.

After all, the Rabbi did not ask people, “Are you learning?”, but rather, “What are you learning?” The difference between these two questions is far more than one word. They express, in fact, two entirely different approaches in our interpersonal communications.

“Are you learning?” implies that there is a distinct possibility that you are not learning Torah at all. The person being asked might well find such an implication both demeaning and offensive. In addition to this, the whole question sounds like an attempt to interrogate the other person in order to subsequently pass judgement on his behaviour. No wonder then that such a question would tend to arouse a fairly negative reaction from the one to whom it is directed.

Conversely, the question, “What are you learning?” manages to explore the same ground with none of the associated negativity. No-one is suggesting, or in any way implying, that maybe you do not learn any Torah.

On the contrary, the form of the question clearly implies that you are in fact learning, and that the motivation behind the query is not a clumsy attempt to belittle you, but rather to enter into a discussion with you as an equal.

Rabbi Hirschprung could of course be supremely confident that, regardless of what the other person would reply, he would be able to fully respond with an encyclopedic analysis of that particular Torah topic in all its details. Very few, if any, of us are capable of feeling a similar degree of confidence. Nevertheless it would be a pity were we to be reluctant to initiate a discussion of Torah topics for fear of exposing our own limitations. We are, after all, happy to initiate conversations about such important matters as the weather, local politics and the economic situation, despite our having little real in-depth knowledge of any of these. We manage to feel comfortable, despite our understanding of these matters rarely rising above the most superficial level, and the question therefore poses itself, “Why should Torah be any different? Why does Torah rarely form even part of our everyday conversations? Why can we not ask another Jew what he is learning, and use his response as a springboard for some sort of discussion of a Torah topic of mutual interest?”

I am not sure what the answer to these questions is, and am by no means certain that I wish to find out. A far more productive exercise would be to change the facts on the ground by making at least a modest effort to include Torah as a topic of conversation.

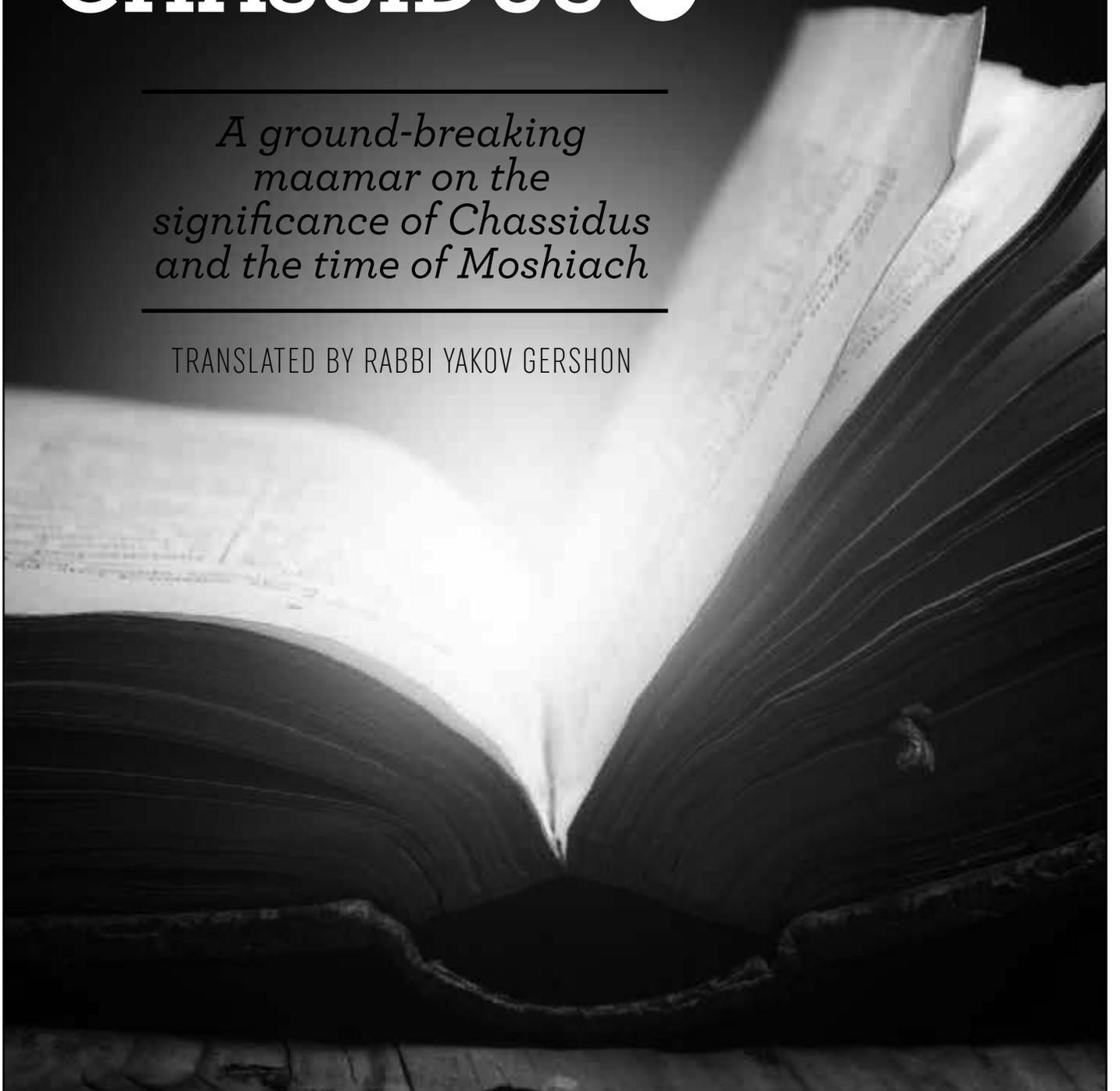
We are told that the Mitteler Rebbe expressed the wish that when two of his Chassidim met each other, they should engage in an enthusiastic discussion of the deepest concepts of Chassidus. If we are, for some reason, incapable or unwilling to go quite so far, let us at least not discard the message completely. Sharing Torah insights on all levels will be of the greatest benefit to the individuals concerned and the community at large. **P**

WHY DO WE NEED CHASSIDUS ●



*A ground-breaking
maamar on the
significance of Chassidus
and the time of Moshiach*

TRANSLATED BY RABBI YAKOV GERSHON



This *maamar* of unknown authorship discusses the central question of why Chassidus was revealed only in the later generations, and the various stages of revelation leading up to Moshiach.

The exact authorship, and if it was said by one of the Chabad Rebbeim, remains unclear.¹ The first section concludes, “These are the words that we heard from the Rebbe *zichrono l’vracha*,” and the next section begins, “We can extrapolate based on this...”. Some have surmised that the first half was

said by the Tzemach Tzedek, and the second half by the Rebbe Rashab. According to one of the transcriptions, it was said on 19 Kislev 5663 in front of a select group. The *maamar* is referred to by our Rebbe as “*Ksav Yad Yashan Lo Noda Lemi*” – an ancient manuscript of Chassidus of unknown authorship.

It was first printed, based on a number of handwritten manuscripts, in *Migdal Oz* (Kfar Chabad, 1980), and was later printed in a slightly different version as a supplement to *Sefer Maamarim 5663*. We have noted some variances in square brackets.

To answer the famous question [that was asked to me]: If the Baal Shem Tov’s teachings are true, and without them it is impossible to be victorious over the *yetzer hara*, why then were these teachings revealed specifically in the 500th year of the sixth millennium² and not earlier?

The explanation is based on that which one thousand years are considered by Hashem as one day, as the

posuk says, “For a thousand years are in Your eyes like a bygone yesterday”³ A day consists of evening and morning, as the *posuk* says, “There was evening and there was morning, one day.”⁴ Consequently, the first half of the millennium is considered “night,” and beginning at the 500th year, the daytime light of “Friday” began to shine⁵ [see the commentary of *Or HaChaim* on Parshas Tzav 6:2]. It is stated, “On the

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1. In the sichah of 18 Elul 5710, the Rebbe expressed doubt whether it was from a Rebbe or a chossid. In the sichos, it is referenced as “כת” “(אינו ברור למי הוא) דא”ח ישן (ליקוטי סיחוס, vol. 2, p. 516); “(לא נודע למי) כת” דא”ח ישן (ליקוטי סיחוס, vol. 15, p. 282). In *Igros Kodesh*, vol. 19, p. 66, “הוא כנראה הנאמר במאמר דא”ח (שלע”ע לא נתברר לי מי הוא שאמרו או כתבו, אף שכנראה יש בו גם ענינים מאדמו”ר הזקן) ד”ה ואת האלף ותשע”ה המשל, שדורותו הם בנגד התעלפות עמוקה ביותר, [ולכן לחשו לבני” השם באזנם, ביאת הבעש”ט ששמו ישראל], וההתעלפות גם צד הטוב בה, כי באם היתה איזה הכרה, לא ה’ אפשרי לסבול הצער וכו’. ד”ל”
 2. See *Likutei Diburim*, vol. 1, 31a, that the Baal Shem Tov revealed himself in 5494. In *Likutei Sichos*, vol. 15, p. 42 – “around the year 5500.”
 3. Tehillim 90:4, and see *Bereishis Rabbah* 8:2.
 4. Bereishis 1:5.
 5. See *Maamarei Admur Hazaken, Parshiyos* vol. 1, p. 420; In *Sefer Hasichos 5750*, vol. 1, p. 254, the Rebbe adds that this can also be considered “midday” according to the view that Hashem’s day of 1000 years only includes the twelve hours of daylight and not the nighttime.

Since the daytime of “Friday” began in the year 5500, there was a mitzvah to begin tasting from the “Shabbos food.”

sixth day they should prepare”⁶ for one must prepare for Shabbos – the seventh millennium, a “day which is entirely Shabbos.”⁷

According to Shulchan Aruch,⁸ it is a mitzvah on *erev* Shabbos to taste each of the Shabbos foods, as it says, “Those who taste from it will merit life.”⁹ The soul of the Baal Shem Tov therefore descended to give us a taste from the tree of life, which is synonymous with the meal of the *livyasan* and *shor habar* which will take place in the times of Moshiach.¹⁰ The meaning of this meal according to Chassidus is that Moshiach will reveal the inner dimensions of Torah¹¹ from the souls of the hidden world which are called “fish of the sea” – corresponding to the *livyasan*, and the Torah from the souls of the revealed world which are called the *shor habar*.¹² Since the daytime of “Friday” began in the year 5500, there was a mitzvah to begin tasting from the “Shabbos food,” and therefore the soul of the Baal Shem Tov was sent to the world to reveal the inner dimensions of Torah. What was revealed by the Baal Shem Tov and his students was only a sampling, since the primary meal will take place in the future.

Yet, only the souls after the year 5500, when the Shabbos preparations must begin, merited this

tasting; souls in earlier times did not have the ability to taste from the tree of life. Although the teachings of Kabbalah were revealed earlier, such as by the Arizal whose soul was revealed in 5333, this was only a minute level of “nursing.”¹³

This is alluded to in the Gemara’s statement, “in the third watch of the night, a baby nurses from his mother and a woman converses with her husband.”¹⁴ Just as the night is divided into three parts, similarly, two thirds of the 500-year “night” concluded four months into the year 5333. At that point, the Shechina began ascending from the dust and the decrees of destruction ceased.¹⁵ Souls of Tikun began descending to the world, and the Kabbalistic teachings of the Arizal were revealed. However, he only revealed very little, and only to his holy students. Therefore it was called “nursing,” as alluded to in the Gemara’s statement “a baby nurses from his mother.” The phrase “a woman converses with her husband” alludes to the ascent of *Malchus* to *Z’eir Anpin*, “her husband,” the holy *Shechina* arising from the dust. However, in the year 5500, the light of day began to shine in the world through the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov.

6. Shemos 16:5, regarding the *man*.

7. Mishna, end of *Tamid*.

8. *Alter Rebbe’s Shulchan Aruch* 250:8, based on *Magen Avraham s”k* 1. See also *Likutei Sichos*, vol. 15, p. 282.

9. In the *Musaf* prayer on Shabbos.

10. See *Bava Basra* 75a; *Vayikra Rabbah* 13:3.

11. See *Zohar*, vol. 1, 135a; *Likutei Torah, Shemini*, 18a.

12. See *Likutei Torah, Shemini*, 18a.

13. A Kabbalistic term for minimal *hashpa’ah*.

14. *Berachos* 3a.

15. See *Shaarei Teshuvah* of Mittler Rebbe, vol. 1, 5a, that the period between the crusades in Rashi’s time (4856) through the expulsion from Portugal (5252), when tens of thousands in each generation gave up their life on *kidush Hashem*, was a rectification for the lofty souls in the era of the first Beis Hamikdash who served idols. In the time of the Arizal (5333), who was a soul from Tikun, and to whom the true Kabbalah was revealed, the decrees of destruction ceased and will not happen again.

Based on this, we can understand a cryptic statement of R. Pinchos of Koritz of righteous memory, student of the Baal Shem Tov, who said: “The Jewish nation in the sleep of exile was in a faint, Heaven forbid, and the Baal Shem Tov came and aroused them.”¹⁶

Now, there are four levels of sleeping: (1) one who dozed off, who can respond but without intelligence;¹⁷ (2) one in a deep sleep, who must be aggressively awakened; (3) one in a faint, who must be revived with potent medication or by whispering his name in his ear; (4) one under anesthesia for the purpose of amputating a limb.

All of these levels applied to the Jewish nation during the sleep of exile:

In the immediate aftermath of the destruction of the second Beis Hamikdash, the Jewish nation was on the first level, “dozing.” Even a completely ignorant individual would become a Tanna or Amora if he devoted himself to Torah, as we see with R. Akiva¹⁸ and other cases. However, some time later, they fell into a deep sleep and required a thorough awakening.

In the time that preceded the Baal Shem Tov’s revelation, the nation was in a faint, and required potent medications to arouse them. The Baal Shem Tov therefore descended to give them these “medications” in the form of his Chassidus teachings which have the ability to arouse a person from a state of faint. He also “whispered their name to them,” which is the name Yisroel, the source of their souls. It is known that there are two levels, namely, Yaakov and Yisroel,¹⁹ and he drew forth into their bodies from the source of their souls which is called *mazla*²⁰

16. In another version: “R. Pinchos of Koritz said that the soul of the Baal Shem Tov descended to this world in order to arouse the Jewish people from their sleep in which they were in a state of faint.” See also *Likutei Sichos*, vol. 2, p. 516; vol. 12, p. 165; vol. 15, p. 282.

17. See *Pesachim* 120b.

18. See *Nedarim* 50a.

19. See *Zohar*, vol. 3, 210b; *Torah Or, Miktz*, 36c; *Likutei Torah, Balak*, 70c. *Yaakov* represents a lower level, comparable to a servant, while *Yisroel* represents a higher level, comparable to a son.

20. See *Shaarei Kedusha*, vol. 3, *shaar* 5; *Likutei Torah, Bamidbar*, 16a, that the level of the soul that remains above and is too lofty to descend into the body is referred to as “*mazal*,” as in the Talmudic phrase (*Megillah* 3a) “even though they didn’t see, their *mazal* saw.”





and Yisroel. For this reason, it was Divinely ordained that he should be called “Baal Shem Tov,”²¹ for he drew forth the crown of the good name (“*shem tov*”), the level of Moshiach,²³ which surpasses all three other crowns.²⁴

In the present time, the Jewish people have descended, Heaven forbid, to the fourth level. The transcendent levels (makif) of *kelipah* descended to this world and have concealed the G-dly light [and numbed the sense of feeling] so that even when Jews study Chassidus, they don’t feel the vitality. The new generation has breached the path and gone astray publicly, such as in desecrating Shabbos and similar areas. They are set apart from us in all areas of conduct and dress. Even in matters of holiness, such as in the shul or cemetery, they segregate themselves by purchasing separate places, for they don’t want to be in the company of the upright whom they utterly despise.

All this is for our benefit, so that the evil become set apart from the good and not ruin others²⁴ [comparable

to amputating the diseased flesh in order that it not ruin the healthy flesh]. If G-dliness would be revealed today as in the time of the Baal Shem Tov and Alter Rebbe, no one would be foolish to sin openly. Instead, the evil would remain hidden in their hearts, causing others to be misled by them. This is what took place with Moshe of Dessau²⁵ and his followers, who brought many to sin because they were viewed as upright and sincere people. However, now that these groups have strayed openly, people will no longer learn from them.

[A second reason why it was necessary to have this concealment, and] another thing that these transcendent levels of *kelipah* accomplished, is to dull the feeling of fathers for the sins of their children. Although the fathers are upright, they excuse their children who, G-d forbid, went astray with the foolish argument that in the present time it is necessary to study secular subjects, and the fathers’ love obscures the children’s sins.

21. For other explanations behind the name “Baal Shem Tov” – see *Toras Shalom*, pp. 45-46; *Likutei Sichos*, vol. 8, p. 27; and other sources cited in *Kesser Shem Tov Hashalem*, p. 447.

22. See *Imrei Binah, shaar Krias Shema*, ch. 47-48.

23. *Avos* 4:13.

24. See *Maamarei Admur Haentzai, Kuntresim*, p. 273, where a similar idea is applied to the *apikorsim* in the time of the Baal Shem Tov, that before Moshiach’s coming there needs to be a separation between the good and evil that were mixed together until then. Also, *chet haegel* which caused the breaking of the luchos was only due to the *erev rav* who were mixed amongst the Jewish nation.

25. The *maskil* Moshe Mendelsohn of Dessau, Germany.

If not for this dullness, the father wouldn't be able to stand the pain and heartache of seeing his son separating himself and being severed from his life source.

If not for this dullness, the father wouldn't be able to stand the pain and heartache of seeing his son separating himself and being severed from his life source. Since it was deemed necessary in Heaven that these souls be separated from the general population and the good portion, the concealment and dullness was thus beneficial so that the upright fathers should not feel the pain as much. In this second reason, it mirrors the analogy exactly.²⁶

Notwithstanding this, "the Jewish people had light in their dwellings"²⁷ in the darkness of Egypt, and now also, this darkness doesn't conceal for those that possess the light of Chassidus.

These are the words that we heard from the Rebbe *zichrono l'vracha*.



We can extrapolate based on this, to explain why the birth pangs of Moshiach began in a strong manner specifically in the year 5651.²⁸

Based on the four levels within sleeping explained above, it is understood that there are likewise four stages in awakening from sleep.

It is apparent from Shulchan Aruch²⁹ that there are four times allotted for awakening.³⁰ (1) one may recite *shema* immediately from dawn if he is setting out on a journey; (2) the optimal time to recite *shema*

is at sunrise; (3) one may recite *shema* up until three hours into the day, which is a quarter of the day; and (4) the final time is according to the *poskim* that the day is measured from sunrise to sunset, thus the three hours conclude 36 minutes later, and this is how the Alter Rebbe rules in his *siddur*.³¹ All these times are based on the word of the *posuk*, "*uv'kumecha*" ("when you arise"), which means when people awaken.³²

It thus emerges that there are four times when people awaken: **1)** dawn; **2)** sunrise; **3)** princes sleep until three hours of the day;³³ **4)** some rise slightly later according to the opinion that the three hours are measured from sunrise.

When the Jewish nation is supposed to arise from the sleep of exile, there are also four times:

The first is dawn, corresponding to the year 5500 when the morning began. The second is sunrise, corresponding to the year 5550, for from dawn to sunrise there is an hour and a fifth, the amount of time it takes to walk four *mil*,³⁴ which this amounts to a tenth of the day, and a tenth of the 500-year "day" is fifty years. Beginning at this time, the "sun," i.e., the Alter Rebbe, shone more strongly, and therefore thousands of souls were awakened from the sleep of exile. This was to a greater extent than in the time of the Baal Shem Tov, "dawn," when only select individuals rise from their sleep; in the time of the Alter Rebbe, "sunrise," even souls of low stature were

26. The fourth level of sleep described above, namely, anesthesia for the purpose of not feeling the pain during the amputation of a limb, G-d forbid. (In the first explanation, the concealment and sleep was to bring about the segregation, but not specifically to numb the pain of the "amputation.")

27. Shemos 10:23.

28. Further on, it is implied that this is a reference to the expulsion of the Jews from Moscow that took place in that year (1891).

29. See *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim*, 58:1-4.

30. As explained below, the reference here is to the proper time for recital of *krias shema* in the morning, which this time is referred to in the *posuk* as "when you arise."

31. See *Alter Rebbe's Siddur, Hilchos Krias Shema*. See also his *Shulchan Aruch*, 443:4.

32. Devarim 6:7 as explained in *Berachos* 10b.

33. See *Berachos* 9b.

34. See *Pesachim* 94a, i.e., 72 minutes.



Every day there are various ascents of the Shechina, beginning from midnight and culminating at the time of davening.

awakened. This is because the light of Chassidus was revealed, which explains the ideas of G-d's Higher Unity and Lower Unity, the theme of *krias shema*.³⁵

This continued for three hours of the day, until the year 5625, a quarter of 500 years. In 5626, the Tzemach Tzedek passed away,³⁶ and the revelation of the Divine intellect, corresponding to the time of *krias shema*, departed. Then began the fourth hour, the time for *tefilah*, which, according to Kabbalah, is the time for *Yesod* to unite with *Malchus*.³⁷ [This hour lasted until eight months into the year 5666.³⁸]

Therefore, at this time (the time for *tefilah*) will be the *geulah*, which is the ultimate ascent of *Malchus*. Every day there are various ascents of the *Shechina*, beginning from midnight and culminating at the time of davening. The internal service involved with *tefilah* is specifically nullifying the external aspects, as is expressed in the bowing of the physical body³⁹ and as is especially vital by *Modim*.⁴⁰

Accordingly, the birth pangs of Moshiach and severe suffering began at this time, for it implants and draws forth the Jews' submission to Hashem. Although the intellectual and emotional levels aren't revealed anymore, the Jews' firm submission and commitment remains nonetheless. Even the lowly souls have *mesiras nefesh* just to maintain that our faith is true; they won't deny it and they won't alter their Jewish names. This is the acceptance of Hashem's kingship, with a functional nullification, and this calls forth the revelation of *Malchus* directly from Hashem's Essence ("*Atzmus*"), bypassing the Divine attributes

of intellect and emotions (see *Shaarei Orah* in *Shaar Chamukah*⁴¹). This service of *tefilah* began at the fourth hour.

We must still understand why this didn't begin immediately at the beginning of the fourth hour, from the year 5626, and instead Hashem delayed the severe "birth pangs" until 5650? It was that Hashem in His great mercy extended the time of *krias shema* for an additional 36 minutes, following the view that it is calculated from sunrise. This additional amount corresponds to 25 years, thus, the end of the time of *krias shema* as measured from sunrise corresponds to the year 5650.

At that time began the expulsion from the cities of Russia, and the scarcity of livelihood and the yoke of the exile became more severe throughout the country. This awakened even the souls of the fourth level, who were stooped in sleep and had descended, Heaven forbid, in the three totally impure *kelipos*. Even these souls awakened and had *mesiras nefesh* to endure the yoke of the expulsion and displacement instead of giving up their religion, G-d forbid. This culminated the complete awakening of the Jewish nation, for all of their ten subcategories – from "the heads of the tribes to the water carriers."⁴²

In this merit, there will be the fulfillment of the *posuk*, "to pass you in the covenant,"⁴³ which refers to *Yesod*. There will be the unity of *Yesod* and *Malchus*, the juxtaposition of *geulah* and *tefilah*, and G-d willing there will be the complete *geulah*, *Amen selah*. **P**

35. *Zohar*, vol. 1, 18b; *Tanya, Shaar Hayichud Vebaemuna*, beginning and ch. 7.

36. The Tzemach Tzedek passed away 13 Nissan 5626.

37. See *Or Hatorah, Tisa*, p. 1877.

38. Regarding the *ketz* related to the year 5666, see *Likutei Sichos*, vol. 7, p. 209; *MiG-dal Oz*, p. 491.

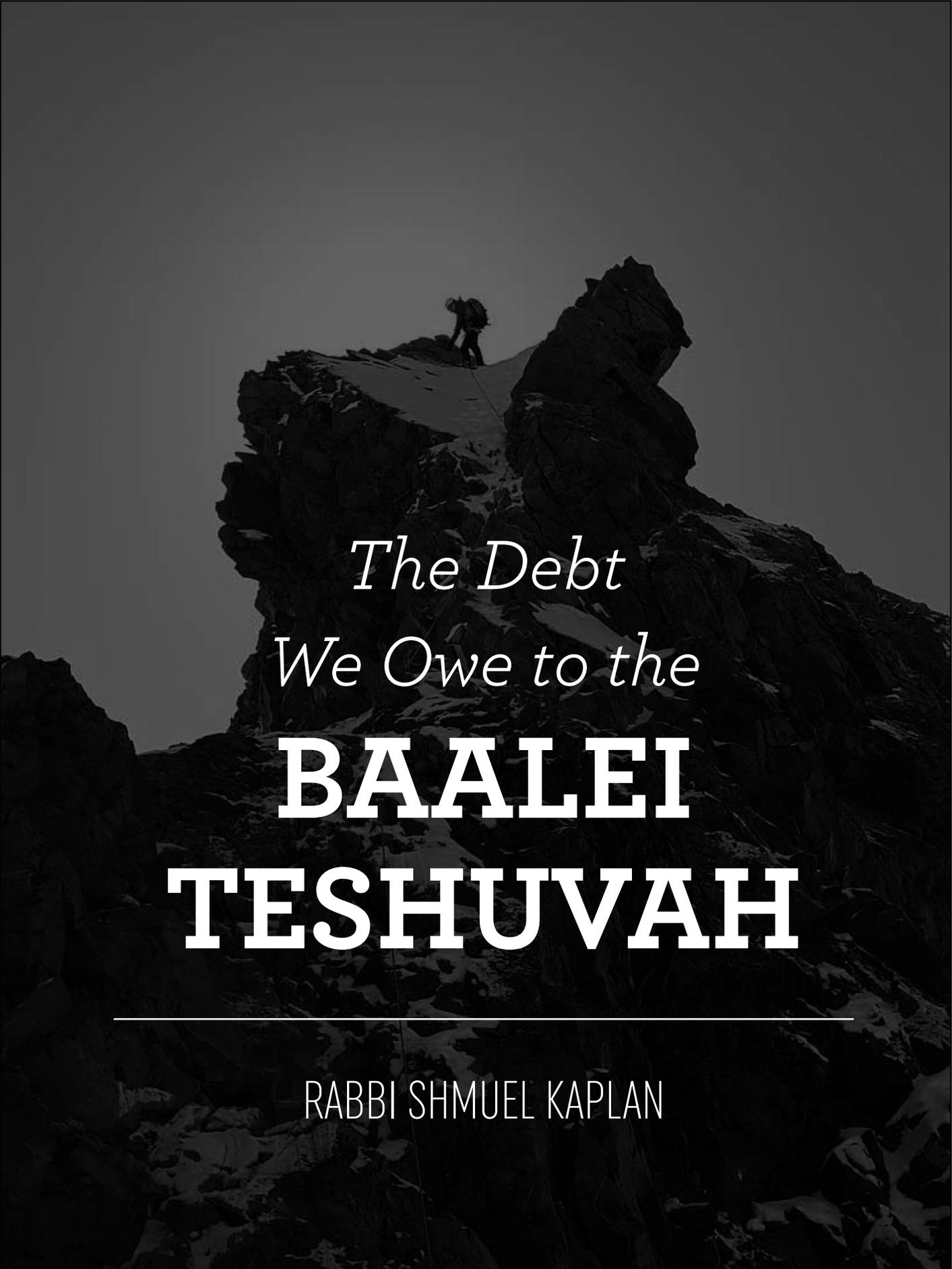
39. See *Or Hatorah, Noach*, vol. 3, 603a.

40. The Talmud (*Bava Kama* 16a) speaks harshly regarding one who doesn't bow by *Modim*. See also *Zohar*, vol. 2, 100a; *Likutei Torah, Balak* 71a.

41. *Dibur Hamaschil Bechof Hei Kislev*, ch. 49 and further (starting at p. 20b).

42. See Devarim 29:9-10 and *Likutei Torah*, beginning of *Nitzavim*.

43. Devarim 29:11.



The Debt
We Owe to the
BAALEI
TESHUVAH

RABBI SHMUEL KAPLAN



During the early part of the twentieth century, the center of the Jewish world shifted from Europe to America and thereby presented an entirely new kind of challenge to *Yidden* and *Yiddishkeit*. In addition to the physical dislocation and economic adjustment associated with immigration to a new world, a multi-faceted spiritual obstacle emerged. This obstacle was comprised of: the principle of freedom of the individual, the complete equality of all citizens, and the culture of materialism.

The Frierdiker Rebbe approached this challenge by declaring at the very first opportunity upon his arrival on these shores, “*America iz nisht andersh*. (America is no different.)” This was not simply a statement but a powerful declaration - not only about America, but also about Chabad Lubavitch. The Frierdiker Rebbe affirmed that Chabad is uniquely equipped with the necessary tools to deal with the reality of America, and he was determined to demonstrate that this was, in fact, so.

Some years later, our Rebbe similarly stated that within Chabad there already existed the antidote to the ills that afflicted the American Jewish community and that it held the keys to enable us not only to survive but indeed to thrive and furthermore to subsume American culture for Torah purposes.

In Chassidus we learn about two general responses to any given matter or situation: a) *Chessed* (kindness) – *kav hayemin* (the right column), a forward movement, b) *Gevurah* (restraint) – *kav hasmol* (the left column), a backward movement. Applying this notion to our context these two approaches would be: a) forward – to seek to embrace and accommodate the prevailing social conditions while still maintaining our distinct identity; b) backward – to reject the existing conditions and seek to isolate ourselves from them in order to survive intact.

For the most part, both the Chassidic and *yeshivah* worlds chose the latter approach and set up communities which lived apart from the general

stream of American culture. The modern Orthodox, Conservative and Reform groups chose the former. While there is a fundamental difference between the modern Orthodox and the Conservative/Reform movements in their commitment to *halacha*, they still shared the principle of seeking accommodation.

Chabad, by its own internal ideology, is an expression of a third form of reaction, i.e. that of *Tiferes* (beautiful blend) – *kav ha'emtzaei* (the middle column). *Kav ha'emtzaei* is neither a forward nor a backwards movement, rather it is a position of static tension resulting from a combination of the two basic opposing movements. The ability of the third reaction to combine both conflicting elements is a result of its source in the transcendent level of *Kesser* ("The Crown"), which because of its removed and higher nature is able to combine two opposites.

(As an analogy: when a person views a particularly stunning scenery, he is not drawn to get closer to it, nor is he repelled to withdraw and distance himself

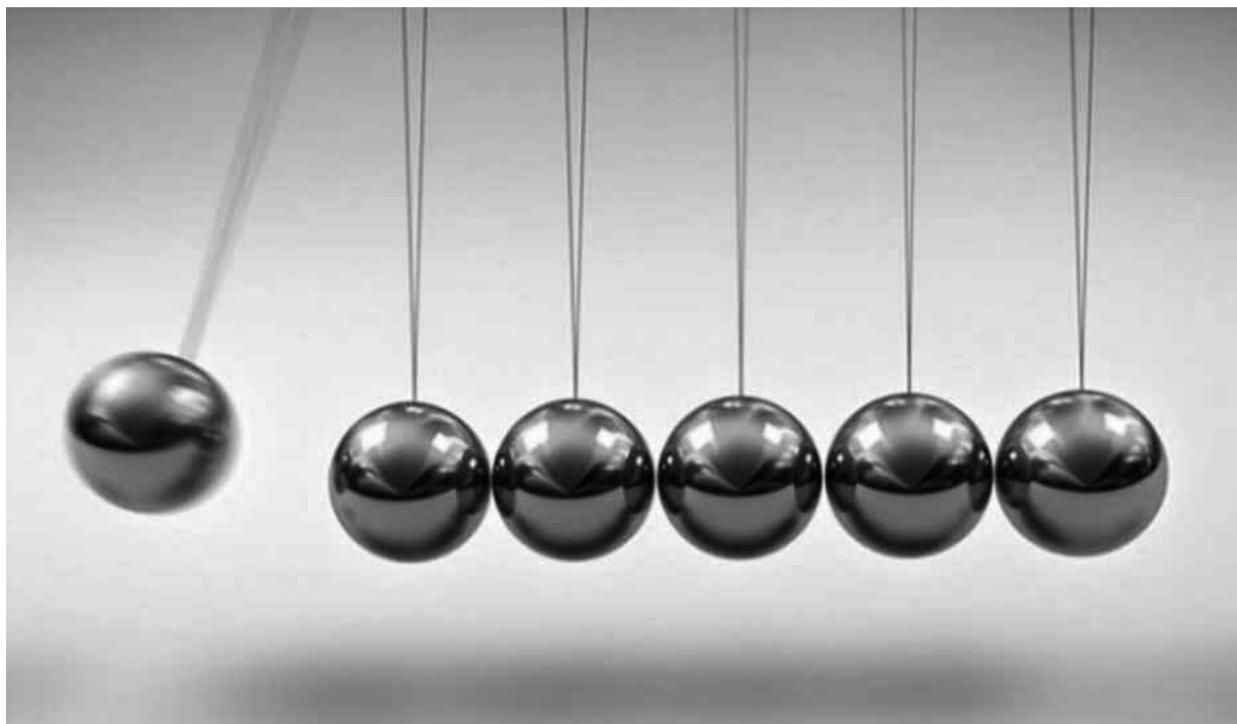
from it, rather he is transfixed in place. This is not because he has no reaction to the scene but rather because of the static tension created by the two opposite movements.)

Regarding the challenges of America, the Chabad approach through Chassidus included both rejection and accommodation at the same time. In practical terms it meant remaining unchanged internally while at the same time having the strength to reach out to those who were indeed immersed in contemporary culture with Torah and its life. Furthermore, the idea was to co-opt the methods and instruments of the culture itself for the benefit of Torah and *Yiddishkeit*.

While even at that time the Rebbe fully understood the underlying basis of his approach and its ability to succeed, others (including many Chabad Chassidim) were skeptical and even resistant to aspects of it.

As a young *bochur* in the sixties, I experienced both the exhilaration of challenging the world around us, but also the skepticism about the validity of the thesis

It is a position of static tension resulting from a combination of the two basic opposing movements.





*At the height of a farbrengen, Dr. Yitzchok Block wears a top hat during a 'Pegisha' in Crown Heights in 1973 * Photo: Jay Rochlin - Tucson*

One of the unique personalities at every “Pegisha” was Professor Yitzchok Block a”h, a Harvard-trained philosopher and at the same time a genuine chossid.

of engagement and our ability to succeed without becoming influenced ourselves.

This is where, in my opinion, the early *baalei teshuvah* made a very important contribution. Their willingness (even eagerness) to forsake the allure of the American culture and the materialism it offered, choosing instead to adopt a Chassidic life of Torah and *mitzvos*, offered us a powerful proof of the validity of the Chabad ideology and its mastery over the prevailing culture. In addition, they gave immeasurable courage to the early *shluchim* who were actively applying this approach in daily life, and they affirmed the ability of Chabad Chassidus to succeed without becoming diluted.

For those of us who remember the early “Pegishas with Chabad” in the early sixties, one of the unique

personalities at every “Pegisha” was Professor Yitzchok Block a”h, a Harvard-trained philosopher and at the same time a genuine chossid. His penetrating lectures and even more so his legendary all-night *Motzaei Shabbos farbrengens* were truly inspiring events and were also an important training ground for many future *shluchim*.

The early *baalei teshuva*, the “Nachshons,” are some of the unsung heroes of the Chabad miracle in America and they deserve appropriate recognition and acknowledgement. **P**

Dr. Yitzchok Block passed away on 14 Tishrei 5778.

Rabbi Shmuel Kaplan is the director of Lubavitch activities in the state of Maryland.

WHO'S EDUCATING YOUR CHILDREN?

AN ADDRESS ON EDUCATION

*Farbrengen of Yud-Tes Kislev 5731 (1970)
Sichos Kodesh 5731, Vol. 1, pp. 258-270*

INTRODUCTION

Youth are notorious for breaking rules and challenging the status quo. They complain about restrictions and argue for independence.

A leader and educator is, of course, tasked to point out their misestimations and to show them the value of a refined way of living. But what happens when an educator is weak, and afraid to stand behind his principles? Lacking conviction and confidence, he is tempted to relax the standards and meet the youth somewhere in the middle.

The Rebbe staunchly opposed compromises on education. The Rebbe believed in the youth, and held that they rejected the rules only because they sensed that they lacked authenticity.

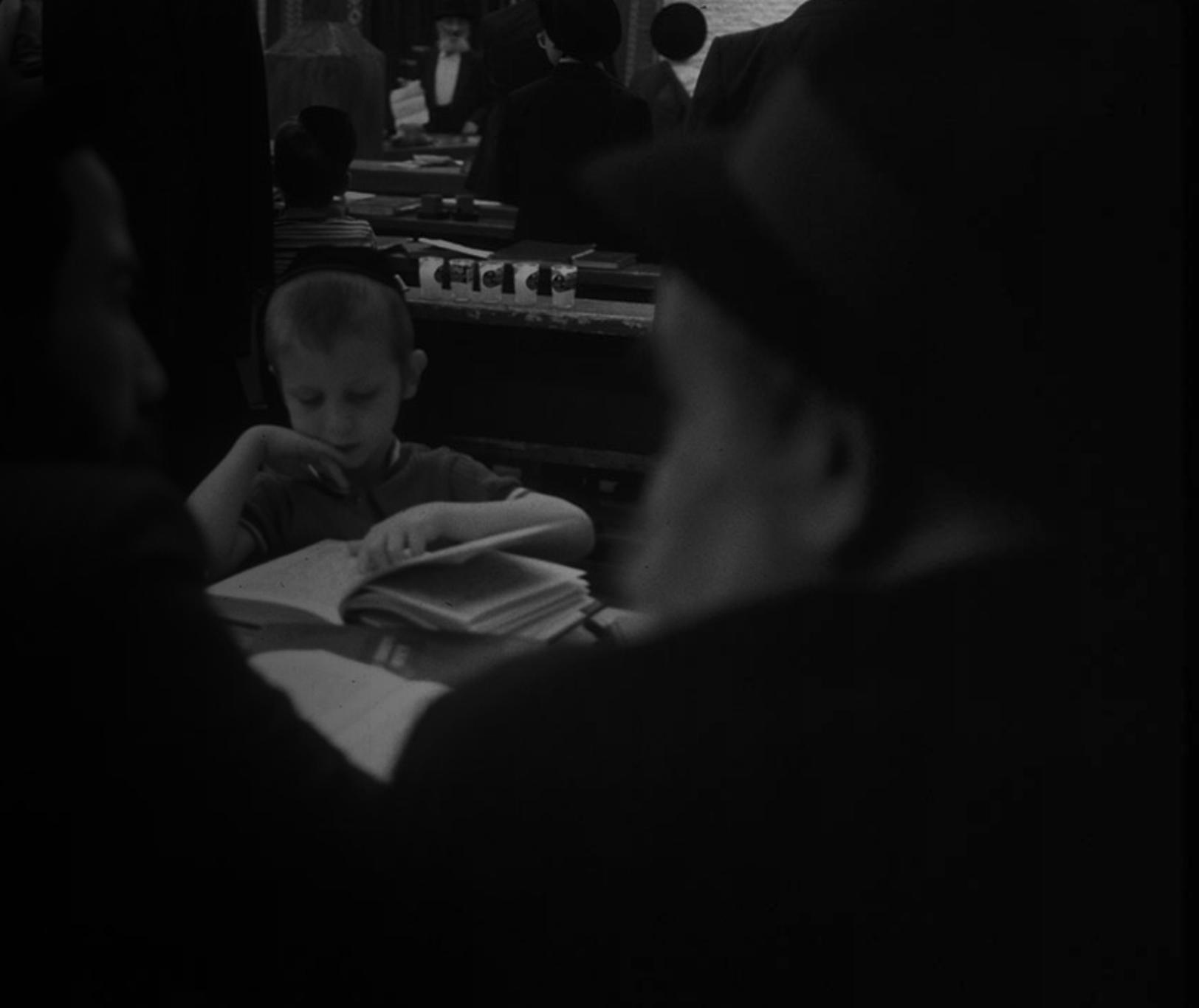
In this talk, the Rebbe implores parents and educators to be strong leaders and teach their children the unmodified truth of Torah, arguing that with this direction they will drink it up and ask for more. They must believe in their children and not be afraid to lead.

ILLUMINATING THE WAY

Light can distinguish between burning coals and sparkling gemstones, or the difference between a door that leads to a hallway and a hole in the ground.

Without the light of Torah, one may wander around without direction. The function of light is, not to create anything new, but to illuminate what is already there. Light can distinguish between burning coals and sparkling gemstones, or the difference between a door that leads to a hallway and a hole in the ground.

“Man is born a wild foal” and is lacking both in knowledge and refined character traits. It is thus imperative for education to address both of these fields. We must teach him information, and also develop his manners (which is what the word chinuch really means) so that they aren't characteristics of “a wild



donkey of a man – his hand against everyone, and everyone's hand against him," but rather characteristics of a human (adam) who is compared (adameh) to G-d.

If we address only one of these fields, proper development will not result. Even if there aren't any outside influences, the child will be lacking whatever he wasn't taught. If there are other influences, the education must be reinforced accordingly: If they are in the realm of bad information, we must increase the child's intellectual education, and if they influence his character, we must pay special attention to make him into a mentch.

These days, children are unfortunately not just influenced by parents and educators, but by the outside – both in a physical

If they are in the realm of bad information, we must increase the child's intellectual education, and if they influence his character, we must pay special attention to make him into a mentch.



Without the light of Torah, one may wander around without direction. The function of light is, not to create anything new, but to illuminate what is already there

sense, and worse, that which is “outside” of goodness and morality. As it happens, the negative influence in our times is not the realm of theory, but in the realm of emotional desires.

STOP EXPERIMENTING!

It follows that the primary education nowadays must target emotion – that a child should become a mentch and not a “wild foal” as he was born. Moreover, since the child gains knowledge and skills over time, he may utilize his shrewdness to behave even worse than an animal. As the posuk says, “They are clever to do evil, [since] they do not know to do good,” which should be understood to mean that they were never properly educated.

Character won’t improve through scholarship, since a person can have extensive knowledge and use that for wronG-doing, making him much worse and more dangerous than he would be without the extra knowledge.

This brings us to the cause of all the confusion: People are looking for “innovative” solutions.

Incidentally all of these solutions have been tried before, and not only did they not bring benefit, they caused harm. Parents and educators refuse to employ the old tried-and-true way which established civilization and the Jewish nation that lived in peace despite differences of opinion.

NO PROBLEMS...

The problems begin with something minute, but then they develop into something much greater.

When a person takes a small step off the road and continues heading in that direction, he will end up in the middle of the forest among ferocious animals. Likewise, a person may slowly veer off the proper path, until he finds himself speaking such foolishness that runs even against self-serving human logic.

Social “leaders” have even come up with a notion that the youth’s upheaval in free-spiritedness should not

be a cause for concern; it isn't a devastation that must be resolved, but it is the "development of a new world of peace and goodness." They aren't even ashamed to say it at a major conference with hundreds of people! What's more, everyone just nods their heads in agreement, and this becomes the formal resolution!

The only comfort is that like all conventions, the resolutions remains on paper, and the "executives" go on as before. The only difference is that another volume is added to the shelf, and "case dismissed," it is taken off of the agenda, so that the executives then move on to more enjoyable matters – eating, drinking, and other pleasures – as they've been doing until then.

WHO IS AN EDUCATOR?

Then they came up with this argument:

The youth rightfully claim that their parents didn't give proper attention to their education, and instead of showing them a good example of how to live as upstanding citizens – both between with Hashem and with mankind – they did just the opposite. Action impresses more than words, and children watch what the educators do, not just what they say.

Now, the obvious solution would be to provide these youth with the education that they're missing. However instead, we have frum Jews coming together,

even beginning their gathering with a dvar Torah, but then, dividing sharply between Yiddishkeit and the "convention," they proceed in the manner of all worldly symposiums: by congratulating the youth for raising an uproar. They excitedly broadcast, "Yasher koach! You are absolutely right! In response to your arguments, we will let you do as you please, since you are the leaders and you don't need education. On the contrary, you should educate us!"

If the youth weren't given a proper education, how can they educate anyone else?! From where did they gain this education?!

There is no answer to this question, since it is the wrong way!

THE TORAH WAY

There is a clear posuk (Mishlei 13:24), "One who spares the rod hates his son, and one who loves him rebukes him." There is no arguing what the posuk means; one cannot interpret it any other way. And it refers to the education of both sons and daughters, as is evident from the pesukim that come before and after.

Yet, here we have Jews who believe in Tanach and know this posuk gathering together and passing a resolution that youth will no longer be rebuked, no

Action impresses more than words, and children watch what the educators do, not just what they say.



Why do you whisper?! You should have banged on the table and proclaimed, "Listen here! This girl was 'taken captive among gentiles' and doesn't realize what she's saying!"

more chinuch, and no more authority of parents and teachers. Respecting parents is one of the Aseres Hadibros, not a hiddur of some modern-day acharon. If a child has a claim, there are rules in Shulchan Aruch how he may present it, but regardless the respect must be maintained.

However, they still want to correct the youth. How do you do that? Today, they argue, repeating Shlomo Hamelech's posuk will cause youth to run away.

They won't run away! All they will respond is that they want to hear it from someone who lives as Shlomo Hamelech wants him to, not just when it comes to holding the rod. But to suggest that the solution is to burn the rod, eliminate authority and cancel chinuch, runs contrary to the Torah of Truth and of Life.

The shock is not that someone could make such a suggestion, but that no one objected. A month has since passed, and I waited to see whether one of their rabbis, teachers or roshei yeshiva would speak up, but no one said anything. It's not that they didn't hear about it: halevai they would be fluent in the four sections of Shulchan Aruch as they are fluent in the convention resolutions...

WHY DON'T YOU SAY SOMETHING?!

Moreover, in front of all those frum Jews, a girl stood up and announced that nowadays it is okay for a boy and a girl to live together before marriage. (The girl is not to be blamed, since she wasn't taught otherwise.) Her statement went by smoothly and was simply recorded in the protocol. But when they mention Vietnam, or some trivial issue, it raises a great commotion that something must be done...



He shouldn't think that as a result of his good behavior he will get what he wants, rather he should be told that it isn't beneficial for him to succumb to his desires.

Modesty is a foundation and pillar in the service of Hashem and a person's day-to-day life. Yet there are people who argue that the entire subject of tznius is debatable because, even though references to it are scattered throughout the Shulchan Aruch, there is no formal set of "Hilchos Tznius." That fact has been irresponsibly misused as an excuse to question whether tznius today is more relevant or less relevant, whether times have changed or whether human nature has changed, and so on and so forth.

There were indeed some "tzaddikim" who, with great "self-sacrifice" after it all ended whispered about it among themselves. Why do you whisper?! You should have banged on the table and proclaimed, "Listen here! This girl was 'taken captive among gentiles' and doesn't realize what she's saying!"

Besides the prohibition, it's a decay of family life, of modesty, and of ownership of one's self. Torah, which knows man's inclinations, doesn't allow for such conduct, which indicates that it will lead to discontent even for an ordinary person.

WHO'S EDUCATING WHOM?

The youth themselves say that the reason they are so destructive is – not as a "new philosophy" as some say but – to ruin those who ruined them!

Some of these children weren't educated at all; their parents paid large sums of money to send them to a "fancy institution" without inquiring what happens there. Even those who were sent to appropriate yeshivos came home to see their parents and siblings living contrary to the way they learned. A boy does his parents a favor and attends yeshivah, but he senses that what will make him into a "mentch" will be having several "zeroes" in his bank account. They are indeed hollow "zeroes," and halevai they shouldn't be worse, "riches kept for the detriment of its owner," since he wasn't taught for what to use his money.

I once had a Lithuanian melamed who had no interest in general studies, but on rare occasions, particularly

on Tisha B'Av, he would discuss these subject with us. Once, one boy related how some claim that man wasn't created in Hashem's "image and form" and by Hashem's breath, but through evolution – from a cell, to a fish, to an animal, then a monkey, and then finally a human emerged – and how they have "evidence" for this notion. My melamed turned to me and said, "Mendel! Why bother arguing against it? If he appreciates that type of yichus, let him trace himself back to a monkey..."

Instead of taking the blame and accepting to correct that chinuch, they appoint the youth as the "educators"! If they want to be students of these untamed youngsters, that's their choice. But they're ruining the next generation by leading them to believe that this is how they will become good Jews and menschen.

In the last generation, they ruined children passively; but now it's worse, since they actually pat the untamed child on the back and tell him, "Yasher koach! Keep it up!" This is something that we've never had before.

BUILD WITH FENCES

The problem is that although the convention resolutions aren't implemented, the leniencies and heterim are quickly seized. They haven't just breached the wall that separates between light and darkness, they've destroyed it completely.

The response must be to replenish with education – not one that broadens the existing breach, but as the Torah states, that when one "discovers a plain" one should "erect a fence."

What does this mean? When Rav arrived in Bavel, he found a dark environment, filled with ignorance. There were no yeshivos or the like. When he encountered a mitzvah that suffered from neglect, he could have responded like some of today's professors and "rabbis" do: "Kinderlach, since you find this mitzvah difficult to observe, I'll give in to you, and

His approach was that one must pinpoint which area is in need of a “fence,” and it must be built pleasantly and peacefully – there is no need for other approaches – but something must be done in that direction



let’s rather discuss the weather, or Vietnam, or whatever...”

As the Gemara teaches, that is not the way to go. When Rav arrived in Bavel and discovered a plain he erected a fence, meaning that he built precautionary “fences” even around matters which would ordinarily be permissible. They would now be prohibited, in order to safeguard their observance. The “fence to a fence” that he built followed the directive of the Mishnah – to “make a fence for the Torah.”

That was how Rav built up Bavel, to the extent that in the case of a difference of opinion, the halacha follows the ruling in Bavel – Talmud Bavli versus Talmud Yerushalmi. This superiority resulted from Rav’s arrival there. His approach was that one must pinpoint which area is in need of a “fence,” and it must be built pleasantly and peacefully – there is no need for other approaches – but something must be done in that direction.

BELIEVE IN THE JEWISH PEOPLE!

When one has faith in Hashem, then one has faith in the Jewish people as well.

When one comes with a true message from the Torah of Truth, and is not afraid—that he will be dismissed from his position, or criticized and threatened not to be elected, or that they will write in the newspapers that he still lives in the Sinai Desert and not in the “cultured land” of USA—he isn’t afraid of any of this, and he tells them: “Listen here! This is what Hashem said back then and today as well. This is guidance for life, and if you will follow it you will have a good life. And we are here to help you.”

When we will give the youth a worthy education, we will make each one of them into a home for Hashem, so that He may rest in them in a visible manner, here and now. **P**

SNAPSHOTS

15 SHORT STORIES

— OF THE REBBE ON —

CHALLENGING THE STATUS QUO

ONE YOU TOO HAVE BEGUN TO WEAR THIS SHMATEH?

Reb Chatzkel Brod, a chassid from pre-war Russia, remembers the first *farbrengen* of the Rebbe he attended:

It was Shavuos 5711 (1951). It was extremely crowded, and I sat on the window sill, with one leg in the room and the other outside. But I did not feel any discomfort, as I was transfixed on the Rebbe.

At that time, the Rebbe's *farbrengens* had a family-like atmosphere, and the Rebbe would often give individual attention to those present.

During the *farbrengen*, I lifted my cup to say *l'chaim* to the Rebbe. The Rebbe looked at me, and then at the tie on my neck. The Rebbe smiled and asked, "You too have begun to wear this *shmateh*? Remove it!"

Needless to say, I took it off immediately, and ever since, I am not very particular with the American dress code...



Reb Chatzkel Brod

TWO ABUNDANCE IN RUCHNIYUS

In the year 5727 (1967), a father of a soon-to-be *bar mitzvah* boy was in *yechidus*. On a note he had written prior to entering, he informed the Rebbe of his upcoming *simcha*. He added as an aside, that since Hashem had blessed him with the means, he planned on celebrating the *bar mitzvah* with great *harchava* (abundance).

The Rebbe replied that the *harchava* could and should be in the *ruchniyus* aspect. The Rebbe's answer made waves, and *Anash* throughout the world began being more particular with their spending on *simchas*.

Following this incident, one *bar mitzvah bochur* and his father informed the Rebbe at their *yechidus*, that in light of the Rebbe's directive, to have *harchava b'ruchniyus*, the *bachur* would be saying two *maamorim*! The Rebbe awarded them with a broad smile of satisfaction.

(Hiskashrus Issue 361)

In light of the Rebbe's directive, the bachur would be saying two maamorim! The Rebbe awarded them with a broad smile of satisfaction.

THREE PICTURES



Throughout the first years of the Rebbe in the U.S.A., the Rebbe would avoid being photographed, as is evident from the pictures taken in those years. The Rebbe would often inconspicuously turn his head, or cover his face with his hand. In the year 5711 (1951), the Rebbe stopped this custom, when the photographer Mr. Tzvi Yehudah Trainer told the Rebbe that his *parnasa* was dependent on it.

Even so, during *chassunos* when the Rebbe was the *mesader kiddushin*, a rule was set limiting the amount of pictures being taken of him. In 5716 (1956) it was one picture, and later it became two. Some *chassanim*, including Reb Sholom Morozov and Reb Zelig Katzman, understanding that the Rebbe did not approve of pictures, had no pictures taken of the Rebbe at their *chassunah*!

When the Rebbe left the *chupah* of Reb Shimon Aharon Rosenfeld, which took place on 3 Nissan 5711 (1951), the Rebbe gave a sharp look at the photographer. It was understood that this was because he had broken the rule of limiting the pictures.

(Mekadesh Yisroel album)

FOUR**"WHERE IS THE PRIDE?!"**

Simchas Torah 5715 (1954) was one to remember. The Rebbe prefaced the *hakafos* with a quote from the Rebbe Rashab that "Simchas Torah *shat nit*" (on Simchas Torah harsh words will not cause harm), and began discussing a sensitive topic in the most direct manner:

"The first three years when a child begins to learn, are the foundation of his future success. Then how is it that during this period a child is taken and stuffed with English and geometry?!"

"*Halevai* adults would also not know of these matters! But certainly not a nine or twelve year-old child... Hashem wishes to dwell in the mind of a *Yiddishe* child – and his head is taken and crammed with secular studies! Where is the *Yiddishe* pride?!"

This *farbrengen* was to be the basis of the establishment of Oholei Torah, *Cheder al Taharas Hakodesh*, by Reb Michoel Teitelbaum. It was soon followed by the establishment of other *chadorim* in Kfar Chabad, Detroit, Holland and Bnei Brak.

Hashem wishes to dwell in the mind of a Yiddishe child – and his head is taken and crammed with secular studies! Where is the Yiddishe pride?!

FIVE**NOT A MODERN HAIRCUT**

During the early years of the *nesius*, the Rebbe invested much energy into *Anash* and their families, encouraging them to withstand the American *nisyonos*, and setting the standard for Chassidim.

When Reb Shimon Goldman celebrated his son's *upshernish* on 23 Shevat 5713 (1953), the Rebbe was honored with the first cut of the boy's hair.

The Rebbe said a short *sicha* on the quality of Torah study beginning at age three. Then, just before getting up to leave, the Rebbe turned to Reb Shimon and said:

"I wish you a *chassidishe* home, not a modern home. This will also express itself in the kind of haircut you give your son: that it be in the proper fashion."

The Rebbe then added with a smile, "I assume you know what I mean..."

(Toras Menachem, vol. 7, p. 339)



Reb Shimon Goldman

I wish you a chassidishe home, not a modern home. This will also express itself in the kind of haircut you give your son.

SIX**"YASHER KOIACH" FROM THE REBBE**

R. Moshe Yitzchok Hecht

It is well known amongst chassidim that the Rebbe did not look kindly upon extravagant spending of any sort. Especially, if this would cause negative peer pressure, forcing others to spend what they could not afford.

At the *chassunah* of Reb Yaakov Kaplan, there were no flowers, in accordance with the Rebbe's wishes. *Harav* Chodakov took part in the *chassunah*, and made note of it. A number of days following the *chassunah*, *Harav* Chodakov called in the *chassan* and thanked him in the Rebbe's name for not spending on flowers.

But the real surprise was yet to come. When the *kalla's* parents, Rabbi and Mrs. Moshe Yitzchok Hecht of New Haven, were in a *yechidus*, they received a warm "*yasher koiach*" from the Rebbe in person!

Naturally, when the word got out, this had a great impact on the excess expenditure of the *simchas* among *Anash*.

SEVEN**SHABBOS CLOTHES**

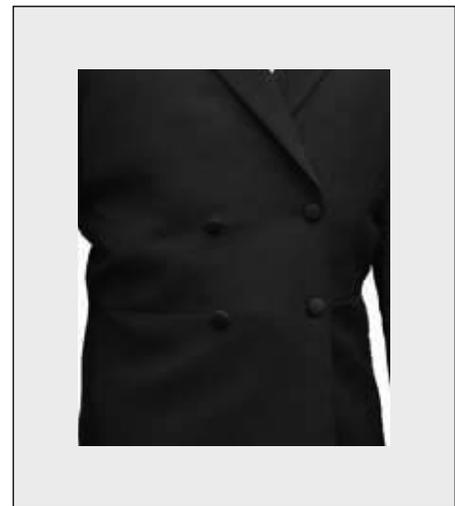
"There are some *yungerleit* who wore *kapotes* at their *chassunahs*, yet now they have stopped wearing them on Shabbos. Why is this so?" the Rebbe asked Reb Leibel Groner in the early 5710s (1950s).

Reb Leibel replied that the *yungerleit* could not afford the *sirtuks*.

"I remember," said the Rebbe, "growing up in Yekatrinoslav, people were very poor; this one had a patch on his right elbow, that one on his left elbow, and yet another on his chest. Yet never did it occur to anyone to substitute his Shabbos clothes with a short jacket! The *yungerleit* should be told that there is no need to be intimidated by the world around them, just as *Yidden* never were."

Reb Leibel commented, "In America, patched clothing would not be considered Shabbos clothes..."

The Rebbe responded sharply, "And half a garment **is** considered *Shabbosdik*?!"



Never did it occur to anyone to substitute his Shabbos clothes with a short jacket!

EIGHT**FROM SIDNEY TO SHOLOM***Mr. Hecht*

Mr. Sidney Hecht was childless for eighteen years. He visited doctors and professors in the field, but to no avail.

During a *farbrengen* of 5716 (1956), between the *sichos*, the Rebbe suddenly called out to him, “Change your name from Sidney to Sholom, so that you may have peace in your body and soul, and you will have a healthy child!” Sidney became Sholom, and was blessed with a daughter within the year.

Harav Tzvi Raisman, a member of the Eidah Hachareidis Bes Din in Yerushalayim, was a former *rosh yeshiva* of Mr. Hecht. This story of the Rebbe was his favorite, and he would always conclude with excitement, “Only the Lubavitcher Rebbe could promise a child in public, after eighteen years of waiting!”

*Only the Lubavitcher Rebbe could promise a child in public,
after eighteen years of waiting!*

NINE**AN AMERICAN CHASSUNAH**

In 5719 (1959), the Rebbe told Reb Nissan Nemenov the following in *yechidus*, asking him to publicize it:

“I am unhappy with the lifestyle of chassidim in America. A *chassunah* used to be a small, warm affair, where everyone would contribute by making some food, so everyone felt that they were part of the *simcha*. Here, however, the *chassunah* must be held in a hall, which also adds financial strain on the host.

“Then there is the pressure on the guests to bring a gift, which puts a strain on a friend who cannot afford one, to either go without a gift or to borrow money. Even if a chossid is willing to swallow his pride, and come without a gift, his wife will not hear of it. And so he’s pulled into debt...

“Finally, there is the table plan. Here, the host must place everyone according to their social status, without offending anyone. This also adds extra strain on the host. One could well imagine what kind of *chassidische farbrengen* could take place in such a setting.

“I obviously cannot tell anyone to act differently; to be the odd one out...”

*Reb Nissan Nemenov*

*I obviously cannot tell
anyone to act differently; to
be the odd one out...*

TEN

MATERIALISTIC COMFORTS

In the summer of 5720 (1960), a chossid wrote to the Rebbe to share the good news that he had purchased and moved into a house in Newark, NJ.

In a 5 Elul letter, after giving his *bracha* on the move, the Rebbe cautioned him to be wary of what the Rebbeim termed “*balebatishe hanochos* (material focuses)” which pull a person down.

“Some most-painful evidence has reached me, that you, your brother-in-law, and others have reached

this plateau: you are content with your *nigleh* and Chassidus studies and *avodas hateflah*. You also find your *hafotzas hamayonos* work satisfactory.

“It is just that since a person naturally must advance, you have made sure to progress in every area of bodily luxuries, including a pleasurable afternoon nap...”

The Rebbe concluded bluntly, “Is the purpose of your *neshama’s* coming down into her body truly for this ‘ascent?’”



ELEVEN

WHERE TO MAKE A BAR MITZVAH?

“My *bar mitzvah* was supposed to be a lavish event,” relates Rabbi Yochanan Gurary. “My father was a well-known *gvir*, and if all of my friends could afford a catered dinner in a hall, I shouldn’t have been outdone.

“As the day of my *bar mitzvah* approached in Kislev 5725 (1964), my father asked the Rebbe which hall to rent. To his surprise the Rebbe answered, ‘A *bar mitzvah* should be celebrated at home or in *shul*.’

“My parents obviously followed the Rebbe’s directive, and my *bar mitzvah* took place at the *yeshiva* on Bedford Avenue. My mother found it difficult to swallow, so she brought a painter to paint the *yeshiva* beforehand.

“Indeed, the difference was immediately felt. The atmosphere was that of a *fabrengen*, with *divrei Torah* and *niggunim*. As a result, my classmates followed suit, and we all fondly remember our *bar mitzvahs* as warm, *chassidische fabrengens*.”

TWELVE

THEIR RABBI IS ALREADY CONSERVATIVE...

Among the Rebbe's many battles for American Jewry, stood the combat for strict *mechitzas*. As the Rebbe retorted during the Yud Beis Tammuz *farbrengen* of 5724 (1964): "A *mechitza* is not put up to divide herds of goats, for which the Gemara says three *tefochim* (handbreadths) would suffice; its purpose is to separate people, so that they don't **see** each other..."

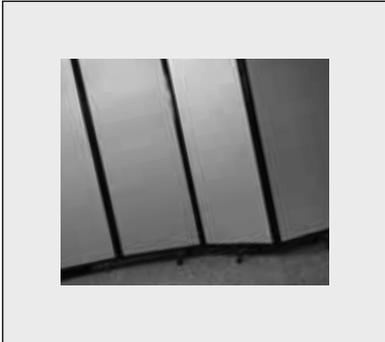
In the summer of 5735 (1975), the president of a prominent *Sefardi shul* in North America began insisting that the planned raise of the *mechitza* should be halted. The rabbi excused himself to the Rebbe that should he insist on the valid *mechitza*, the community may replace him with a Conservative rabbi.

The Rebbe answered in writing: "If you **do** give in to them *chas vesholom*, then they will *already* have a Conservative rabbi..."

The rabbi also suggested that since the *achdus* of the congregants is at stake, perhaps it would be advisable to concede to the president's demands.

To this The Rebbe replied: "If you **will** raise the *mechitza*, there will then be *achdus* between the *shul* and the Rambam, the Beis Yosef, etc..."

(Lahak Weekly Sicha, Mishpotim 5773)



*If you do give in to them
chas vesholom, then
they will already have a
Conservative rabbi...*

THIRTEEN

RAISING STANDARDS OF ANASH



Reb Volf Greenglass

During the early years of the *nesius*, the Rebbe waged many battles for the raising of standards among American *Yidden*. Even amongst fine people, associated with *Anash*, much was left to be desired; the Rebbe addressed it.

The late *mashpia* of Montreal, Reb Volf Greenglass A"H, related: The concept of having a strict *mechitzah* at *chassunos* was at that point still a *nisayon* for many. The Rebbe spoke out publicly at *farbrengens*, privately in *yechidus*, and via extensive correspondence, until matters improved.

There was once a *chassunah* where the Rebbe appointed someone to stand guard at the *mechitzah* to ensure that it was not tampered with. One of the guests attempted to shift the *mechitzah*, but was stopped.

The next day, the Rebbe asked to receive the name and mother's name of that person.

The Rebbe's strong stance made waves among *Anash*. From that incident, everyone became more particular with the decorum at *chassunos*.

Reb Volf Greenglass related:

During the early years, the group of *Anash* who came from Russia would hold weekly *melaveh malkahs*. The Rebbe took a keen interest in them.

One *Motzaei Shabbos*, the *melaveh malkah* was held at the home of a *chossid* who had become somewhat Americanized. On the wall of his dining room he had hung a picture of himself with his wife.

As the *fabrengen* proceeded, Reb Michoel Teitelboim, who had said some *lechayims*, got up and removed the picture.

The next time a *melaveh malkah* was held at the home of someone with similar leanings, the Rebbe suggested that the pictures be removed in advance...

(*Likutei Sipurei Hisvaaduyos*, page 341)



Reb Michoel Teitelboim

“During the 5710s (1950s), there were still many *klipas* to be conquered in America,” related Reb Nachman Sudak A”H. “One was the concept of a *mechitzah*, which was a challenge even among *frum Yidden*.”

“I had a friend who made a condition at his engagement that there be a *mechitzah* at the *chassunah*. However, when he walked into the wedding hall, there was none to be seen. The *bochur* was furious, and he stormed out of the hall.

“The *bochurim*, his friends, who had come to join in his *simcha*, were at a loss. In their quandary, they

telephoned the Rebbe’s secretariat, and explained the situation. The Rebbe instructed that they proceed with the *chassunah*. However, they should set up tables around themselves as *mechitzos*, and be *freilach* with the *chassan*, ‘and make enough noise so that others will want to join you.’

“Indeed, others joined, and brought more *mechitzos*-tables with them. The lonely, distinguished dignitaries sitting on the dais, a respected *rosh yeshiva* amongst them, could only watch the sincere *temimim* with envy.”

(*Main Nachman*, page 8)

The lonely, distinguished dignitaries sitting on the dais, a respected rosh yeshiva amongst them, could only watch the sincere temimim with envy.



In the World of
ANASH

WHAT'S THE QUESTION?

**INNOVATIVE TESTING SYSTEM ENSURES
GEMARA IS LEARNT, WELL**

Levi did the system. Elementary was followed by a mainstream yeshiva high school, and a stint in Russia as a shliach. He has the passport stamps and global friends to prove his journey. But there is something missing, and it's not the smicha certificate hanging on his wall. For all his years behind a desk and with a

chavrusa, Levi still does not know how to decipher a blatt of Gemara. And he isn't alone.

At 34, Levi wants more for his 11-year-old son, who, he hopes, is at the cusp of a lifetime of learning. **Mivtza Torah - Gemara**, a recently launched division of **Igud Hamelamdin**, just might be the answer.

The program began in sixth grade classrooms across seven schools in Crown Heights, Baltimore, Toronto, and Chicago this September. Under the guidance

FOR ALL HIS YEARS BEHIND A DESK AND WITH A CHAVRUSA, LEVI STILL DOES NOT KNOW
HOW TO DECIPHER A BLATT OF GEMARA. AND HE ISN'T ALONE.

"IT'S ABOUT LOOKING INSIDE THE GEMARA TO SEE WHICH WORDS MEAN THIS, AND WHO IS THIS REFERRING TO, AND HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT. THESE SKILLS ARE THE KEY TO KNOWING HOW TO LEARN GEMARA INDEPENDENTLY ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD, AT ANY TIME."

of their rebbeim, boys study the set curriculum of their individual schools. Once every three weeks, the students are tested on the material covered, *inside*. The tests, written specifically for each individual classroom by Gemara Bifnim, are "open book," allowing boys to actually use and hone their Gemara skills.

"It's not a memory game, it's not about remembering the conversation or story line," explains coordinator Rabbi Avrohom Bluming. "It's about looking inside the Gemara to see which words mean this, and who is this referring to, and how do you know that. These skills are the key to knowing how to learn Gemara independently anywhere in the world, at any time."

The current chinuch landscape is filled with extracurricular programming, encouraging students to excel in baal peh, in mitzvoyim, in darkei hachassidus. The achievements gained in these areas are astounding. To match that enthusiasm within the classroom itself, Igud Hamelamdin sought a





positive program that would not only encourage proper Gemara study, but also make it tantalizing.

After each test, boys are rewarded with points that will amass throughout the year. In the spring, the points will be redeemed at a sefarim store in each school. Whoever takes the test receives points based on the number of his correct answers without a minimum passing score. Based on their scores, boys are also entered into raffles that are drawn after each exam. Unlike initiatives that cater to students at extreme levels of their classes, Gemara Bifnim is designed for each talmid, at his own ability.

Rabbi Gamliel Dray has been teaching for seven years. The program, he says, "is amazing." Where other curricula focus on memorization, leaving weaker students behind, Gemara Bifnim literally opens the Gemara before each student. "They use their own Gemaras, they use their own brains," explains the Oholei Torah rebbe. "The boys are learning, liking it, and looking forward to each class. They are really learning how to learn."

WHERE OTHER CURRICULA
FOCUS ON MEMORIZATION,
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BEHIND, GEMARA BIFNIM
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USE THEIR OWN BRAINS."

WHEN HELP IS REALLY ONLY A CLICK AWAY

NEW INITIATIVE CONNECTS PARENTS WITH EXPERIENCED MECHANCHIM FOR FREE, PERSONALIZED PARENTING SUPPORT

Shaina Gold slumped into the wooden bench next to her park buddies. Her kids' snacks barely unwrapped, and she was already spilling out her latest conflict. With her daughter Dina. Of course. The 12-year-old wasn't around, she was in detention again, and Shaina was at a loss. How had her sweet child changed so dramatically since her *bas mitzvah*? Her friends were good listening ears but as she pulled the kids off swings and slides an hour later, Shaina still didn't know what to do.

Facebook doesn't have all the answers. Whatsapp chats can be cyclical rounds of conflicting opinions. Even your mother doesn't always know.

Sometimes, parenting is overwhelming and confusing. It doesn't have to be.

Gidulim, launched recently by **Merkaz Anash**, offers lectures and publications to assist parents in their most vital roles. Its brand new, free phone support system provides effective, anonymous support to all parents. Have a question? An experienced *mechanech* or *mashpia* is at the other end of the line, ready to listen, discuss, and guide.

When Yitzchak came home from school with a bloody nose for the third time in as many days, his father Levi was mystified. Was this the bullying he had heard so many people discussing? Was Yitzchak provoking classmates on the bus? Was this the onset of some illness? Levi settled his young son and typed **Gidulim.org/adviceline** into his keyboard. He filled out the basic information (his child's age, type of query, phone number and preferred time to chat) and waited. When a seasoned educator called him later

that evening, he shared his concerns and listened gratefully as a plan of action was formed.

Merkaz Anash was started 10 years ago to meet the spiritual and educational needs of the global Anash community. "Chinuch is at the core of what we do," explains founder Rabbi Shimon Hellinger, "With the Chinuch advice line, we now offer parents personal support to help them navigate their personal dilemmas."

Questions are relegated to five specific areas, including **Halacha** ("until what age can my kids swim with their cousins of opposite genders?"); **Hashkafa** ("what is the ideal internet policy for my family?"); **Behavioral** ("how can I control my child's tantrums? He's 14."); **School** ("how should I manage my children's nightly homework saga?"); and **Support** ("my wife and I are going through a messy divorce, how can I protect our kids?"). Appointments are made via a simple online sign-up sheet or by calling 718-207-5325 and leaving a message. Parents can choose which *mechanech* they are comfortable speaking with. Importantly, all conversations are anonymous and entirely confidential.

"Every parent cares about the chinuch of his children," believes Rabbi Mordechai Lipskier. The noted *mechanech* is a founding member of this new initiative, a program, he believes, that is long overdue. "And a caring parent has a never-ending need for Torah-true guidance, support and encouragement. With the chinuch advice line parents have this easily available to them."

Not everyone has a trusted mother or *mashpia* to turn to, but thanks to Gidulim, all parents now have a source for their parenting concerns. **Gidulim.org/adviceline**. We all have questions. Now we have somewhere to turn for answers. **P**

FACEBOOK DOESN'T HAVE ALL THE ANSWERS. WHATSAPP CHATS CAN BE CYCLICAL
ROUNDS OF CONFLICTING OPINIONS. EVEN YOUR MOTHER DOESN'T ALWAYS KNOW.

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The Chinuch Advice Line has experienced mechanchim ready to address your parenting questions and concerns.

**"ותשועה
ברוב יועץ"**



The Chinuch Advice Line

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