

Teshura (a gift)

A collection of stories on the life of

The Man Who Stood Up for Leadership



From the Chanukas Habayis Farbrengen of Shaul and Chaya Nemptov

10 Shevat 5779 / 15 January 2019

Forward

This Teshura is a gift. Contained in these pages is a wonderful collection of stories and anecdotes relating to our Elter Zayde HaRav Avraham Sender Nemtsov OB”M, Z”L. May the mention of his name illuminate the paths of our lives with truth and certainty as well as joy and gladness.

Much thanks is extended to all those who have given permission to share and re-publish these wonderful stories and anecdotes. At the end is the list of sources from which the following material is gleaned. For any questions, please feel free to email shaulnemtsov@gmail.com or call/message 347-370-6615.

The Man Who Stood Up for Leadership



Rabbi Avraham Sender Nemptzav

Reb Avraham had five children, Chaya Rochel, Yehoshua Mordechai, Necha (Nissan Mindel's wife), Chaim Isser, and Yackov. All have passed on, except Chaim Isser, who is 95 and lives in England. Yackov's son, Sholom Gershon, is a Lubavitcher and lives in Lakewood, NJ. Yehoshua Mordechai's grandson, Yechezkel, is a Lubavitcher shochet, living in Monsey, NY, and his granddaughter, Malka, is married to Betzion Cohen of Kfar Chabad. Rabbi Sholom Ber Shapiro, Rabbi Nissan Mindel's son-in-law, is married to Reb Sender's granddaughter. Rabbi Yisrael Chaim Friedman is another grandson, living in Boro Park, Brooklyn.

Reb Sender was born 1870 in Kamin, Russia. His parents, Yackov and Chasye Esther, were from Chasidic homes. Chasye Esther's father was Reb Berel (Dov). To illustrate what type of family Reb Sender came from, Reb Yisrael Chaim Friedman, a grandson of Reb Sender told me the following:

Reb Berel was extremely poor and he ate at a wealthy person's home. He knew the man from shul and was invited regularly to eat with him. One day, during chazaras hashatz, the repetition of the Amidah, the wealthy person spoke out. Reb Berel went over to him and slapped him. The wealthy person not only accepted it, but actually asked Reb Berel for forgiveness for committing such a transgression!

Reb Sender married Shaina Sara Mindel, Nissan Mindel's aunt from the city of Rezekna in Latvia. Shaina Sara's father, Dovid Leib, was from Shatner Chasidim. Her mother was Genesyeh.

Reb Sender's mother, Chasye Esther, displayed real Chasidische feelings and communicated them to Reb Sender.

When he was 11, a wealthy person from Barisav came to their home for Rosh HaShana. The man was so impressed with little Sender's sharpness that he asked his mother if he could take Sender back with him to Barisav. He offered to give him the best accommodations and put him into the best cheder. Chasye Esther noticed that the man didn't wear a gartel while davening, and that he went to sleep that after davening on Rosh HaShana. Because of these two things, she disqualified him as the proper person to educate her son and she told him "Thank you for your offer, but the answer is no!"

Another time while Reb Sender was still at home before he went to Minsk to study, he was awake all night learning on HoShana Raba. The custom in their home and community was that they said the entire book of Tehillim in the morning before Shacharis, instead of at night. However, since Reb Sender was up all night learning, he arose late for Tehillim. His mother scolded him when she awakened him. “Az du zogst nit tehillim hashana raba in der free is dien lernen ah gantze nacht vert ah shpii” - if you don't get up early to recite Psalms on HoShana Raba morning, then your learning of the previous night is worthless!

Reb Sender's father, Yackov, appeared to be a simple man, but davened regular services with tears flowing from his eyes. His sincerity and yiras shamayim made him a much sought after congregation leader.

Minsk and Army

As a young boy Reb Sender studied in Kamin. In 1883, at the age of 13, he went to study in Minsk at a misnagdisher yeshiva and continued his studies for the next seven years. In 1890 he was drafted into the Russian army and was there until 1895. He said he once saw the infamous Czar Nikolai when the latter came to inspect the soldiers.

Although his mother would stand by the seforim shelves in her home and lament that he was not learning from them, Reb Sender continued to display his yiras shamayim and an unrelenting commitment to Torah and Mitzvot while he was in the army.

When he noticed another Jewish soldier saying korbonos before putting on tefillin, Reb Sender told him to stop and put on tefillin and say shema and shemoneh esreh. Reb Sender suggested this procedure because the army did not give one much time to daven a full davening - one had to quickly do as much as possible in a very short period of time. Although the soldier meant well by saying korbonos, a call to army duties would have made him miss the opportunity to put tefillin on.

Another time while in the army, Reb Sender was on guard all night. In middle of the pitch dark night he thought he saw someone walking back and forth. He didn't want to kill this person, just let him get away. Later during questioning by his superiors, it was discovered that what he had seen was not a human being, but an animal! To the superiors, Reb Sender's sense of compassion towards another being, an unknown entity, was incomprehensible.

One time an army officer debated with him the newly proposed Darwinian theory of evolution, which posited that mankind evolved from monkeys. He asked Reb Sender if he agreed with this premise. Reb Sender told him that among non-Jews, a child sees his parents as less than himself because he believes the new generation, with its new discoveries, is smarter. With yidden however, a child looks at his parents as smarter. Therefore, you may be correct that your parents were monkeys and you are human. With us, that cannot be - if anything, our parents were human (and we are the monkeys)!

To survive in the army one needed to be physically very strong. Once Reb Sender had a night shift and was supposed to be replaced by another soldier at midnight. The replacement overslept and Reb Sender ended up doing the entire night guard.

It was 20 degrees below zero! To keep himself from freezing, he walked back and forth all night! In the morning, the other soldier came and apologized to him profusely. He begged Reb Sender not to inform on him, knowing that his life could then be over. Reb Sender accepted his apology and did not say a word to their commander.

In 1897 Reb Sender married Shaina Sara Mindel in Rezikne. At his engagement celebration the rav asked everyone to say l'chaim for the Zionist Congress resolution that had just been passed in Basil, Switzerland. Reb Sender refused to say l'chaim. The rav told him that the Jews in Israel were doing their best by working the fields, etc. So too, those outside Israel must do their part in "working themselves" by supporting the proclamation. Reb Sender still refused. The rav showed him that there were 77 signatures of rabbanim. Reb Sender responded, "Efes ki az ham haze," referring to the negative report the spies gave after visiting Israel. Reb Sender told the rav that the Hebrew word "az," with a numerical value of 77 referred to the 77 signatures as being negative!

Reb Sender displayed an open antagonism towards Herzl's call for Zionism. Throughout his life, he strongly opposed Zionism and did not mince words in saying so.

Reb Sender did not see the Rebbe Maharash, even though he lived during the same time period as Reb Sender. However, he did see the Magen Avos, Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Kopust, a grandson of the Tzemach Tzedek. In 1890, Reb Sender passed Kopust several days before Rosh HaShana and stayed there to daven on Rosh Hashana.

Lubavitch

Shortly after his marriage in 1897 at the age of 27, he obtained a grocery store in Kamin. The non-Jews in Kamin liked him, and bought their products from him. They saw he was honest, so they trusted him. Once, a poretz, a landowner, asked his servant to buy him some milk at Reb Sender's store. It was Friday after midday and Reb Sender, as a rule, closed his store before midday in preparation of Shabos. The servant came and made the poretz's request. Reb Sender said, "I'm sorry, I'm closed," knowing full well that this would upset the poretz. The servant said, "You'll regret it." Reb Sender, confident in Hashem, didn't sell him the milk.

The servant started to buy food products from someone else. The poretz noticed one day that the butter did not taste as fresh as it had in the past. The servant explained what had happened, and why he was shopping elsewhere. The servant expected the poretz to take drastic measures against Reb Sender. Instead, the poretz said to the servant, "I really appreciate his honesty and forthrightness; it's from such a person that I want you to continue buying my groceries."

Reb Sender left the grocery store temporarily to go to Lubavitch with his wife, as a 27-year-old married man! He had an uncle, Reb Shaul, who was influenced by Reb Mordechai Kaminer, a noted chasid of the Tzemach Tzedek. Uncle Shaul was very close to Reb Mordechai and he inspired his nephew towards Lubavitcher chasidus. Even a local Kamin poretz recognized the greatness of this chasid. The poretz said that the knowledge of Reb Mordechai was akin to the wisdom of King Solomon.

Reb Sender repeated a chasidisher teaching of Reb Mordechai that he heard from his Uncle Shaul. In the korbonos section of davening, we recite that the bechor,

first-born animal, is eaten by the kohanim, while the maser, the animal that was the tenth, the tithed one, is eaten by kol adam, any person. Pacing back and forth, with his talis on his shoulders in preparation for tefilla, Reb Sender would say out loud, “The bechor, Chochma, wisdom, the first of the ten sefiros, is for talmidei chachamim who are compared to the kohanim. Maser, the tenth sefirah, malchus-kabalas ol, obedience, and subservience, is for all people!”

It was Uncle Shaul who took him to Lubavitch to meet with the Rebbe Rashab. He asked the Rebbe to allow Reb Sender, a married man of 27, to learn in the newly founded yeshiva. The Rebbe refused, saying that the yeshiva was for younger students. Reb Shaul responded that Reb Sender could have gone to learn in a kollel in Kovne and would have received 10 rubles. He displayed mesiras nefesh by not taking the 10 rubles that he so much needed for himself and his wife, opting instead to come to learn in Tomchei Temimim. The Rebbe listened to the counter argument and did not say a word. He consented, and accepted Reb Sender who studied in the yeshiva for 3-4 years.

Interestingly, when he arrived in America in 1950, the only chasid among the older Chasidim he remembered from Lubavitch was Reb Shmuel Levitin. Reb Sender recalled him as an 18-year-old bochur reciting korbonos before shacharis and davening with much kavana.

In Lubavitch he heard shiurim in chasidus from Rashbatz. He remembers being in a group of students studying a maamar with Rashbatz. It was 9 p.m.; after what seemed like an hour the shiur finished. It was wonderful. He looked at the clock and realized it was 3 a.m.! The 6 hours had just passed without notice. That’s how great a teacher the Rashbatz was.

Because he was already a learned adult of 27, Reb Sender was asked to give an ein-Yackov shiur in the local Lubavitcher shteibel in Lubavitch. An older chasid among the people listening to the shiur told Reb Sender that Reb Chonye Marasow had given the preceding shiur. He told Reb Sender that although his shiur was good, it was still not like Chonye's. Why? "Because when Chonye gave the shiur, he did not feel that he gave a good shiur — that was the level of bitul he had. Although your shiur is excellent, you know you're giving a good shiur! Reb Sender accepted the constructive criticism from an older chasid from the Tzemach Tzedek's times."

Reb Sender used to say that the Rebbe Rashab's character was soft as butter, yet firm as iron!

Reb Sender recalls that once at a farbrengen, the Rebbe Rashab said, as though speaking to himself, "You say you need this, you say you need that -- but who needs you?" All of the students were shattered and stunned — it left an indelible impression upon them.

In 1899 his first daughter, Chaya Rochel was born. She became Reb Yisrael Chaim Friedman's mother. In 1902 his son Yehoshua Mordechai was born. His second daughter Necha, Rabbi Nissan Mindel's wife, was born in 1904. His second son, Chaim Isser, was born in 1908 and his youngest son, Yackov, was born in 1913.

Manchester

In 1905 -1906 Reb Sender went to Manchester, England. Before he left, his parents

said farewell and asked of him one thing - that he remain a frum yid. He was the first Lubavitcher chasid in Manchester. Later another Lubavitcher chasid arrived, Rabbi Rivkin (not the Rabbi Moshe Dovber Rivkin who wrote ashkavta d'Rebbe and was Torah Vodaas rosh yeshiva). He wore an earring on one ear to protect himself against the ayin hara. He was the last of 10 siblings. A Chasidishe Rebbe in Europe gave him the earring and instructed him to wear it to fend off the evil eye! This same chasid never removed his hat from his head, with just a yarmulke on his head. He took the idea of wearing two makifim, coverings, literally!

In Manchester, Reb Sender took a job as a shochet and practiced schita for 40 years until his retirement in 1945. HaRav Kook, the former chief rabbi of Eretz Yisrael, was in Manchester before going to Eretz Yisrael during World War I. He only ate from Reb Sender's schita. Rabbi Kook wanted to hear Reb Sender's opinion about Eretz Yisrael. Rabbi Kook's feelings were known; he was the first religious Zionist. Reb Sender didn't mince words and told him he disagreed with him. Reb Sender's honesty and forthrightness were well received by Rabbi Kook, although the latter vehemently disagreed with the Reb's viewpoint.

In 1937 he traveled to Paris to see the Freirdiker Rebbe, who was visiting Paris; it was the last time Reb Sender saw the Rebbe. The Freirdiker Rebbe told him, "Du hust gezucht der emes; du hust gefunen der emes un du lebst mit der emes" - you searched for truth; you found truth and you live with truth.

In 1945 Reb Sender spent his time learning and specifically teaching Lubavitcher chasidus to his youngest son, Yackov. During next 5 years, until he moved to America, Reb Sender formed Yackov into a Lubavitcher chasid. Although he himself was a Lubavitcher from the original temimim of Tomchei Temimim, his

children went to non-Lubavitcher yeshivas because there was nothing else available. Thus, Yackov was not educated in the Lubavitch school system. Therefore, now that he had free time, Reb Sender shared the beauty of Lubavitch with Yackov, which ultimately had the desired effect. Additionally, during these 5 years, he gave a Gemorah shiur to baalei battim.

New York

In 1950 he arrived in New York and settled in Long Beach, where his daughter, Necha Mindel, lived. During the next 12 years, until his passing, he studied on his own and had a Chasidishe rav in the community as his chavrusa.

In 1951, during the famous Yud Shevat farbrengen, the first yahrtzeit of the Freirdiker Rebbe, he got up on a table and said to the Rebbe, “The saying of sichos is good, but we Chasidim want to hear maamarim.” The Rebbe accepted it and shortly thereafter said his first maamar, Basi Legani, accepting officially the mantle of leadership as Lubavitcher Rebbe. At that time, Reb Sender was 80; the Rebbe was 48!

Reb Sender passed away the 1st day Shavous, 5722 (1962), and was interred in the Lubavitcher cemetery in Queens, New York. Reb Sender was the author of Edus L’Asaf, a work of remarks on Talmud and chumash. The two Hebrew letters of the word asaf, the alef and saf, are an abbreviation of Avraham Sender!

His wife lived nearly 109 years. She was born on the 7th of Elul, 5638 (1878) and passed on in Sivan, 5747 (1987). She is buried near the Rebbe’s mother, Rebbetzin Chana. Rabbi Yisrael Chail relates that the Rebbe himself instructed that she be

buried alongside his mother. She lived the last years of her life in Crown Heights with her great-grandchildren, the Rabbi Sholom Ber Shapiro family, Rabbi Nissan Mindel's son-in-law, ^[L]^[T]^[T]^[T]^[S]^[E]^[P]^[S]^[E]^[P] Reb Avrohom Sender Nemtsov, a luminous personality, was accepted by the Rebbe Rashab as a student in Yeshiva Tomchei Tmimim in Lubavitch and later became one of the elite students that the Rebbetzin Shterna Soro would turn to with shaalos in halacha. His last Yechidus with the Previous Rebbe was in Paris. He traveled from Manchester, England for the Yechidus and arrived late. The Rebbe had already left his room and spent the long Yechidus with Reb Sender outside the room, and at the conclusion said, "Reb Sender, you searched for the truth, you have found the truth, and you lived the truth."

This letter was addressed to Rabbi Avraham Sender Nemtsov, a schochet active in community affairs in Manchester, England.

B"H, Tuesday, 12 Sivan, 5703

Greetings and blessings,

Please forgive my delay in answering your letter until now due to various reasons. I am now approaching you with regard to a matter of immediate concern, namely, the conclusion of the study of Mishnayos by heart [which] is scheduled for Sunday, the 17th of Sivan. At that time, a division will also be made for the coming year, [with the intent that it be completed by] Isru Chag Shavuos, 5704. It is our hope that you, together with our friend, Rabbi Menachem Tzvi Rivkin, and the chassidim [of the community] will arrange the division of the study of the six orders of the Mishnah by heart for the future, and with greater intensity than last

year.

Over time, we have sent to your community the publications we have published to the address of Rabbi Menachem Tzvi Rivkin. With a multitude of requests, please assist him in these efforts, and please stir anyone else who is appropriate to become involved in publicizing and selling [of the texts] by organizing a committee of young and energetic people dedicated to this goal, or by any other alternative means which are more appropriate for the conditions of your place. May it be G-d's will that very soon we merit the fulfillment of the promise that through "spreading the wellsprings out," Mashiach will come.

We have written a similar letter to Rabbi Menachem Tzvi Rivkin[1] which certainly arrived at its designated time. May each of you arouse the other, and may G-d's project which is in your hands be successful.

To conclude with words of Torah, in response to the concepts which you mentioned: with regard to melikah[2] and with appreciation for your words of wisdom on the subject.

Based on our Sages' comment[3] to the phrase[4] "Like a hammer breaking a rock," [that the words of the Torah provide several alternative interpretations, we find that] there are manifold perspectives to the Torah. According to explanations in the teachings of Chassidus, the parallel in our Divine service to the concept of melikah can be explained as follows:

[When performing] melikah, [one approaches the fowl] from the neck. One begins separating the head from the body and in particular, from the heart, from the neck, and then one proceeds to the windpipe and the esophagus.[5]

In our Divine service, the difference between the face and the neck can be explained as follows: the face refers to the Divine service stemming from intellect and reason, that [a person's] heart and emotions be directed by guidance from the mind in his head.

The neck, [in contrast, reflects a different thrust]. [In this vein,] the quality of "stiff-neckedness" can be expressed in a positive context, a commitment to kabbalas ol, forcing one's conduct to be desirable [even when this] runs contrary to [the tendencies of] one's heart.

With regard to our Divine service, an animal and a fowl can be compared to benonim[6] and reshayim.[7] (Fish are the parallels to the tzaddikim.[8] Within a person himself, the three levels, tzaddikim, benonim, and rashaim, refer to the G-dly soul, the intellectual soul, and the animal soul which I described in my previous letter.[9]) Tanya (chs. 12, 13, and others) explains the true definition of a benoni and a rasha [as follows]: A benoni has never committed a transgression and the evil in his left ventricle cannot bring its desires from the potential to the actual, because "the mind rules over the heart." Nevertheless, the evil still retains its initial strength and might. Indeed, it has been strengthened more over time.

For this reason, the Divine service of the neck is necessary, i.e., [we need to employ] the power to compel to our emotions without entering into intellectual rationalizations with evil - for [it possesses] many complete [rationalizations] that it is prepared [to offer at any time]. In particular, this applies when an individual feels a deadening of his emotional sensitivity from time to time - and even frequently; the light of his soul and his mind do not shine that intensely. The only remedy for this is crushing oneself, to raise a clamor against the yetzer hara (as explained in Tanya, ch. 29).

Needless to say, [similar action is also necessary] with regard to the animal, the rashaim. In this instance, evil has a hold also on the letters of a person's thought, speech, and action, the aspect of inanimate matter in the soul. [To combat this, the person] needs kabbalas ol, the quality of inanimate matter in our Divine service. If the quality of kabbalas ol ceases before the animal is slaughtered, the animal is treif, unfit to be eaten (see Chullin 19b).

When does this apply? Outside [the Beis HaMikdash]. When, however, a fowl is being offered as a sacrifice in the Beis HaMikdash, [a different type of Divine service is required]. For there, the souls lose their self-concern, like candles which shine before a torch. They have no other will or desire at all. This is the inner intent of the service of prostration.

Therefore, there has to be an arousal from below that reflects the arousal from above. A person must perfect the inner dimensions of his own Divine service according to his level. (This does not apply with regard to an animal [even in the Beis HaMikdash]. On the contrary, [for an animal, the back is important. As our Sages say:] "According to its ability to carry, load it.") Therefore for a bird, the neck is snipped off. Only the face[10] remains, and one concludes with the windpipe and the esophagus.[11]

This service is performed by the priest, with his own physical person. Moreover, the intent is not that the priests are agents of G-d, and we follow the postulate: "The agent is equivalent to the principal." Instead, through the inner dimension of Divine service, oneness is established with face-to-face [communication].

Based on the above, we can also appreciate why ritual slaughter is acceptable even when performed by someone other than a priest, while melikah is not. Even after the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash, a resemblance to these concepts applies with regard to prayer and study in a synagogue and house of study, which are called "sanctuaries in microcosm."[12]

Explanation and [a prior] basis for the above concepts can be found in Tanya, ch. 12, which states [that a benoni feels overpowering love for G-d] "only at select times, for example, the time of the recitation of the Shema and the Shemoneh Esreh which is a time of [the revelation of] great intellectual faculties," and in ch. 13, which states that "His desire is [focused] on the Torah of G-d... just like during the recitation of the Shema and the Shemoneh Esreh." And in the conclusion of

that chapter, it is explained that the love of G-d experienced by benonim during prayer resembles the love [experienced] by the righteous, as explained in the first maamar entitled Mizmor Shir Chanukas in Likkutei Torah, the maamarim concerning Amalek, sec. 2, and other sources.

With the blessing "Immediately to teshuvah, immediately to Redemption,"

Rabbi Menachem Schneerson

Chairman of the Executive Committee

Notes:

1. [The Rebbe's Igros Kodesh, Letter No. 78.]
2. [Melikah refers to a priest snipping off the head of a fowl to be offered as a sacrifice with his nail in place of ritual slaughter. See Vayikra 1:15.]
3. [Shabbos 88b; Rashi, Bereishis 33:20.]
4. [Yirmeyahu 23:29.]
5. [The two "signs" which must be slit for ritual slaughter to be acceptable.]
6. [Lit., men of intermediate spiritual status.]
7. [Lit., wicked people.]
8. [Lit., the righteous.]
9. See Letter No. 27.
10. [In Hebrew, the word panim means both "face" and "inner dimension."]
11. [The intent appears to be that since for an animal, an analogy for those persons who require the service of kabbalas ol, the neck is necessary, even in the Beis HaMikdash, it is slaughtered from the front. With regard to a bird, an analogy for those individuals who can experience a higher level of love and fear of G-d, by contrast, in the Beis HaMikdash, where those levels are experienced, the emphasis is not on kabbalas ol, and therefore the neck is broken.]

12. [Cf. Yechezkel 11:16; Megillah 29a.]

This letter was addressed to Rabbi Avraham Sender Nemtsov, a ritual slaughterer in Manchester.

B”H, 20 Kislev, 5708

Greetings and blessings,

Enclosed is a publication concerning Yud-Tes Kislev that just yesterday was brought from the printer. Similarly, we sent it to your colleagues, the ritual slaughterers, R. Yitzchak and R. Shmuel.¹ Certainly you will share the text with many others in an appropriate manner. [In this way,] the merit of those many [others] will be dependent on you.

[The following concept can be explained with regard to] these days between Yud-Tes Kislev and Chanukah: The Greeks made all the oil in the Sanctuary impure. The explanation of this is that the peripheral wisdom² became overwhelmingly powerful, as is well known with regard to the sect of Hellenists that existed among the Jewish people at that time.

In our Divine service within our souls, this refers to the intellect of the animal soul, i.e., ordinary mortal intellect, that becomes so overwhelmingly powerful that it defiles the powers of Chabad within the soul. A person cannot comprehend or feel a Gdly matter or idea, although when deliberating about a material matter, he conceives, comprehends, and grasps it thoroughly. Ultimately, however, a single cruse of oil with the seal of the High Priest is found. With [this oil], the Menorah — and “the lamp of Gd, the soul of man”³ — is kindled.

On the surface, it is difficult to understand, after such a great descent in which all the oil in one's soul was defiled, with what and who can elevate him from this deep descent. [In reply,] our Sages tell us that the hand of the High Priest is involved. The High Priest's distinguishing quality is, that as stated in Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Klei HaMikdash 5:7: "His glory and his honor is to sit in the [Beis Ha]Mikdash the entire day. His home shall be in Jerusalem — "complete fear"⁴ — and he shall not depart from there." In every person, and particularly, in the High Priest, this represents the essential point of Jewish [identity] within him, the yechidah of the soul for which no parallel exists within the forces of evil. Therefore it is always entirely intact. It is, however, possible that it will be on the level of sleep before coming to a challenge with regard to faith, as stated in Tanya, ch. 19.

The awakening from sleep before coming to a challenge [experienced by every individual] comes through connection with the High Priest, i.e., the leader of the thousands of the Jewish people, who "sits in the [Beis Ha]Mikdash the entire day and never departs from [Jerusalem,]" [i.e.,] complete fear. He grants all of those who connect with him the cruse of oil from which he can illuminate the lamp of his soul, even though, at the outset, "all the oils were defiled."

These days must be set aside not only for giving thanks — this refers to the power of faith and acknowledgment alone — but also for giving praise (Shabbos 21b),⁵ i.e., comprehending and understanding Gdliness: "Know the Gd of your fathers."⁶ This concept [is manifest through] the teachings of Chassidus Chabad for which Yud-Tes Kislev serves as Rosh HaShanah. [These teachings] draw down the light of the inner dimensions of our Torah. It is, [however,] necessary that they shine within the inner dimensions of our souls.

With wishes for everlasting good in all matters,

Rabbi Menachem Schneerson^{[L] [SEP]} Chairman of the Executive Committee

FOOTNOTES

1. [See the preceding letter and the one that follows.]
 2. [I.e., secular knowledge.]
 3. [Mishlei 20:26.]
 4. [The Hebrew name Yerushalayim can be divided as yireh shaleim, “complete fear.” See Likkutei Torah, Parshas Pekudei, p. 4a.]
 5. [That passage, and similarly, the VeAl HaNissim prayer, states that our Sages established the days of Chanukah to give thanks and praise.]
 6. [I Divrei HaYamim 28:9.]
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Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, the sixth rebbe of Chabad-Lubavitch, passed away on the 10th of Shevat, January 28th, 1950. The devastation experienced by his chassidim was starkly depicted in a drawing by the chassidic artist Hendel Lieberman: A desolate wilderness is scattered with bare, twisted trees. Chassidim sit on the ground, faces contorted in anguish and hands held aloft in grief. In the lofty firmament of the sky the sharp eyed visage of the departed Rebbe looms.

Initially the loss was too raw to come to terms with. But there were a few who did have the presence of mind to think of the movement’s future.¹ First among them was Rabbi Yitzchak Dubov, a senior chassid who had first encountered Rabbi Menachem Mendel in Riga. Just three days after the Previous Rebbe’s passing, Dubov approached R. Menachem Mendel, urging him to accept the mantle of leadership.

R. Menachem Mendel responded by invoking a mystical principle articulated by Chabad’s founder, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, “the life of a tzaddik is not a

life of flesh, but rather spiritual life – faith, fear and love [of Gd]...”² Accordingly, R. Menachem Mendel exclaimed, despite physically passing on, “the Rebbe yet lives.” This was a theme he would keep returning to over the coming months. But Dubov persisted. The spiritual lives of the previous five rebbes, he pointed out, had not ended. The spiritual lives of the previous five rebbes had not ended with their passing, yet successors still emerged. with their passing, yet successors still emerged.³

It soon became clear that the great majority of chassidim were looking to Rabbi Menachem Mendel for leadership.⁴ But throughout the next year he steadfastly refused to acknowledge his candidacy. Two factors contributed to his unwillingness. 1) His personal reserve and practiced evasion of attention. 2) His sensitivity towards his older brother-in-law, Rabbi Shmaryahu Gurary, who, precisely due to R. Menachem Mendel’s general reticence, initially considered himself the more likely candidate.⁵

But the leading chassidim knew that Chabad’s future depended on visionary leadership. This was not a figurehead position that could be filled by default. Ultimately, R. Menachem Mendel’s uncontrived piety and authoritative erudition, combined with his breadth of mind and disciplined efficiency, would decide the course of history. His personal reluctance was only cause for greater esteem.⁶

As the first anniversary of R. Yosef Yitzchak’s passing approached, the campaign to crown R. Menachem Mendel as rebbe reached a crescendo. Leaders of the Chabad community in the Holy Land had already held two public gatherings declaring their allegiance to him.⁷ In New York their counterparts announced that they would formally accept his leadership on the 10th of Shevat, January 17th, 1951. R. Menachem Mendel initially intended to publish a denial, but was persuaded that he could not deny the facts: Whether he liked it or not, the chassidim considered him their leader.⁸

On the 10th of Shevat chassidim gathered from across North America to present R. Menachem Mendel with a communal “writ of adherence” (ktav hitkasharut), expressing their desire to bind themselves to him as chassidim to their rebbe.⁹

R. Menachem Mendel spent most of the day praying at the graveside of his father-in-law. There he read the “writ of adherence” and wept with emotion.¹⁰ When he returned, several hundred people had packed the synagogue, following him with their eyes as he took the seat prepared for him. He spoke first of the continuing influence of R. Yosef Yitzchak and, citing American custom, made an inaugural “statement” proclaiming that love of Gd, love of the Torah and love of the Jewish people “are essentially one.”¹¹

After about an hour, Rabbi Avrohom Sender Nemtsov, an elderly chassid living in London, stood up, and said in a voice that everyone could hear, “Talks are good, “Make no mistake! No one is relieving you of your missions... no one is relieving you of any work.”but the assemblage requests a chassidic discourse...”¹²

There was silence. An original chassidic discourse could only be imparted by the Rebbe. Then R. Menachem Mendel began to speak: “In the chassidic discourse published for the day of the [previous Rebbe’s] passing, the Rebbe begins with the verse, ‘I have come to my garden...’” Here the Rebbe paused for several seconds, then began again in the traditional sing-song in which such a discourse is delivered.¹³

In this first discourse the Rebbe spoke in a deeply personal way, at once invoking mystical themes, fighting back sobs, and articulating a very practical vision of the mission facing Chabad’s seventh generation. “Upon us rests the mission to draw from the loftiest heaven below... When you come to a place where they don’t know of Gdliness, they don’t know of Judaism... you put yourself totally aside... and make sure that those who until now knew of nothing should go into the streets and shout... that Gd and the world are one.”

When he had finished he turned directly to the subject of leadership. “The leaders of Chabad always demanded that chassidim must achieve things themselves... You think you have laid the burden on me... that you can have a peaceful life... Make no mistake! No one is relieving you of your missions... no one is relieving you of any work.” From the outset the Rebbe made it clear that he expected his chassidim to be leaders too.¹⁴

FOOTNOTES

1. See Shemuot veSippurim vol. 3, pages 135-146. Yoman Mi-michtavim, page 1.
2. Tanya, Igeret HaKodesh, ‘Explanation’ to Epistle 27.
3. See Dubov’s account as published in Kfar Chabad Magazine, Issue #176. See also Yemei Bereishit, page 84.
4. See sources cited in Rapoport, The Afterlife of Scholarship, pages 159-169. Two important sources providing detailed insight into the events of this period are Yemei Bereishit (Kehot Publication Society, Brooklyn 1993) and a series of letters written at the time by Rabbi Yoel Kahn to his father, collected and published as Yoman Mimichtavim (Buenos Aires, 1998).
5. Ibid., pages 153-154, and 170-173.
6. See the letter of Rabbi Shmuel Zalmanov, Yemei Bereishit, page 173. Kahan, Yoman Mimichtavim, pages 2-6.
7. See Levin, Introduction to Igrot Kodesh Vol. 3, page 22. Yemei Bereishit, page 202 and 338.
8. See Yemei Bereishit pages 348, and 350-351.
9. Yemei Bereishit, page 376-377.
10. Ibid., and Yoman Mimichtavim, page 11.
11. Torat Menachem Hitva’aduyot 5711 Vol. 2 (Kehot Publication Society: New York, 1992) page 210-211. A recording of this talk is available here .

12. Yemei Bereishit, page 381.
 13. A recording of this inaugural discourse is available here .
 14. A recording of these remarks is available here.
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YOU SOUGHT TRUTH, YOU FOUND TRUTH, AND YOU LIVE TRUTH!

June 7, 2016 Beis Moshiach in #1024, Profile

The Chassid, R' Avrohom Sender Nemptzov got up and announced, "The crowd wants the Rebbe to say a maamer Chassidus. The sichos are good but the crowd wants Chassidus." There was silence and then the Rebbe began to say the first maamer Chassidus, his coronation maamer. * Profile of the Chassid, Rabbi Avrohom Sender Nemptzov who, as soon as he heard about the passing of the Rebbe Rayatz, sent a consolation telegram to 770 which he concluded with the words, "and may Hashem console us with Menachem." * Presented to commemorate his passing on the second day of Shavuos

By Refael Dinari:

FROM CURSE TO BLESSING

Rabbi Avrohom Sender Nemptzov was born in the town of Kamin near the city of Vitebsk in White Russia, around the year 5631/1870, possibly 1865. He grew up in a Chassidishe family where he absorbed fear of heaven and the ways of Chassidus. He suffered greatly in his childhood. When he was a baby, his tongue once touched a candle flame. He was severely burned and was mute afterward. He did not utter a sound and the townsfolk called him Avrohom the Mute. When he was seven he

was once playing at the house of one of the neighbors, a gentile woman, and she cursed him with terrible curses.

His mother found out and she was very frightened by the curses. She asked one of the children of the Tzemach Tzedek to bless the child. When he saw that the boy did not speak, he asked whether he could hear and was told he could. “If he hears, then he will speak too,” said the Rebbe. Avrohom Sender left the house with his mother and from the curse emerged a blessing and the boy began to speak like anyone else.

Because of his muteness, his teachers did not pin great hopes on him, but to their great surprise he became a sharp and diligent student. The local community decided to send him to any yeshiva he wanted and they would pay all his expenses: for the trip, s’farim, clothes, and food.

Before he decided which yeshiva he wanted to go to, he was forcibly inducted into the Czar’s army for six years. He was twenty years old.

IN THE CZAR’S ARMY

The first obstacle he faced was kosher food. Avrohom Sender was moser nefesh for the kashrus of the food he ate. He did not touch cooked food and any other food regarding which he had any suspicions. His food consisted primarily of salted fish, bread, and water. After a period of serving in the army, one of the soldiers tattled on him, saying he did not eat in order to weaken his body and be exempt from difficult tasks. Avrohom Sender was called to his commander and was censured. He explained that he only ate kosher food. The commander did not accept this. “We have ways of convincing you to eat whatever the army serves,” he said angrily.

An idea popped into Avrohom Sender’s mind. “Give me a month in which I eat what I please and then test my strength against the other soldiers in this brigade. If

my strength is on par with my peers, I will be able to continue as I choose, and if not, you will decide what I eat.” Needless to say, he did not, G-d forbid, intend on eating treif, even if he did not pass the test. He simply hoped this would be his way out.

The commander agreed and the experiment got underway. Avrohom Sender, who was thin but strong and energetic, ate large quantities of what he was allowed to eat and he prayed and hoped for a miracle.

A month later, all the soldiers were called to the commander. He ordered them to run fast. They all ran fast, but Avrohom Sender outran them all. The commander couldn't believe his eyes and gave him a harder test. He gave him a heavy and cumbersome rifle which was hard to hold with even two hands. “Lift this with one hand,” he ordered.

Avrohom Sender lifted the rifle with difficulty but he managed. The commander enjoyed the test and allowed him to eat whatever he saw fit.

His elevated character was seen even in his conduct with his fellow soldiers.

During the frigid winter, when it went down to thirty below zero, the soldiers were on guard for only a few hours and then replaced so they would not freeze. One night, as he stood at his guard post, it was midnight and the person who was supposed to replace him remained sound asleep. It was one o'clock and there was still no replacement. The cold had penetrated his bones and he was afraid he would freeze and so he began to run back and forth around the guard post until six in the morning when a different soldier came to replace him. In these rare situations, the soldiers would tattle and the sentence for the missing guard would be execution, but Avrohom Sender did not report the wayward soldier even though it entailed great suffering for him.

When six years were over, and he was twenty-six, he returned home as strong in his ways as when he left. He asked the people of the community to keep their

promise of six years before of paying for him to go to yeshiva. The community agreed and he chose a yeshiva that had just opened, Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in Lubavitch.

WHY BE A MISNAGED?

Upon arriving in Lubavitch he heard that not everyone was accepted into the yeshiva and that there were tough acceptance conditions. His age was another problem, as all the other students were much younger than him. But he insisted on learning in the yeshiva, wanting to be in the presence of the Rebbe Rashab. He got the Chassid, R' Shaul, his mother's brother, involved. R' Shaul went to the Rebbe's room while Avrohom Sender stood tensely outside.

R' Shaul told the Rebbe that Avrohom Sender strongly desired to learn in Lubavitch. "He is a talmid who excelled in his town which is why they paid to send him here," he said, but to his dismay, the Rebbe said no because of his serving in the army for years among gentiles, and his being older and set in his way of thinking.

"We want young bachurim to whom we can speak about avodas Hashem," concluded the Rebbe.

R' Shaul left the room greatly disappointed and sadly told Avrohom Sender that he had to find another yeshiva.

"Tell the Rebbe that I have two reasons for which I deserve to be accepted into the yeshiva. First, I could have gone to any yeshiva in Russia and Poland, including established yeshivos with good reputations, but I still want to learn in this new yeshiva which was just founded and nobody knows anything about. Second, why should I learn in Litvishe yeshivos and become a lamdan and a misnaged if I could be a Chassid?"

R' Shaul nervously went back to the Rebbe Rashab and presented his nephew's

reasons. The Rebbe felt that the bachur truly wanted to learn in Tomchei T'mimim and said he should be accepted.

That was how Avrohom Sender became one of the first T'mimim in Lubavitch. He learned there for two years. While he learned in yeshiva, he simultaneously gave a shiur in Gemara to balabatim in the beis midrash in Lubavitch, a job previously filled by the Chassid, R' Elchonon (Chonye) Morosov, may Hashem avenge his blood.

After spending two years in the presence of the Rebbe Rashab and Rebbe Rayatz, he married Shayna Sarah Mendel. He worked as a shochet. For a month or two a year he was home in White Russia and then he spent the remaining months travelling to various towns and settlements to shecht.

This way of life continued until 5664/1904 when, in the middle of the Russo-Japanese War, the Rebbe Rashab told him to emigrate to England.

R' Avrohom Sender moved to England and settled in Manchester. He was one of the first Chabad Chassidim to arrive in England and together with other Chassidim he started the Chabad community in his city. The Chassidim in England were few and isolated. The Rebbe Rayatz wrote about this in 5691/1931 to R' Yitzchok Dubov at the end of a response to a letter in which he had written that in their k'hilla there were people who know nothing of Chassidus. "That they console themselves that once a week they get together, our friend, R' Rivkin and our friend, R' S. and R' Avrohom Sender the shochet and they learn, I cannot be consoled with their consolation ... May Hashem help them to come to an inner awareness what is their mission in living in exile in that country which without a doubt each of them understands."

For a livelihood he continued working in sh'chita. Once a month, when the salaries were paid, he would go to get his salary but when he arrived home, he was empty-handed. When his wife expressed her surprise he explained that on the way he met

paupers and he gave a little to each one and the money ran out. When this repeated itself a number of times, his wife arranged to have the salary come directly to her. During the period that he lived in London, he sent esrogim on a number of occasions to Jews living behind the Iron Curtain.

MAN OF TRUTH

R' Avrohom Sender was by nature a truthful person. He was particular about everything, even those things that people treat with casualness. When he davened in shul, he did not allow anyone to talk during the davening. Even if a distinguished member of the community was talking during the davening, he would fearlessly censure him.

He was also very particular about the laws of sh'chita. When some fellow shoctim tried to formulate new work rules, he was concerned about certain leniencies that would result and although he was one person against the majority, he fought so that the new rules would not be accepted.

So too with Chassidic customs. His descendants relate that all his life he wore clothing that closed right over left which you can see in pictures of him.

He was a strong man. One Erev Yom Kippur, when he returned home after many hours shechting Kaparos, he was exhausted and hungry and thirsty. He saw a bottle and thought it was whiskey. He took a drink and suddenly felt a strong burning in his throat. It turned out to be kerosene! He was in terrible pain and throughout the day he could not eat or drink, not during the final meal either. Despite the events of that day, he was able to fast until after Yom Kippur, which was nearly two days without food and drink.

R' Avrohom Sender was considered a talmid chacham. After a day at sh'chita he would give shiurim. He had a wealth of knowledge in Gemara, Halacha, and Chassidus.

Over the years, he wrote a book of chiddushim titled Eidus L'Asaf which was published in his later years. It deals with "explanations on difficult passages in the Gemara, Midrash, Rashi, and explanations to bolster religion," as it says in the introduction. When he sent the work to the Rebbe MH"M, the Rebbe reviewed it and made comments. In addition, R' Avrohom Sender merited to have dozens of responses from the Rebbe on Torah topics.

In Shevat 5697, when the Rebbe Rayatz was in Paris, R' Avrohom Sender went to Paris and had yechidus. The Rebbe said to him, "You sought the truth, you found the truth, and you live the truth."

DEMANDING THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE NESIUS

As soon as heard about the passing of the Rebbe Rayatz, R' Avrohom Sender sent a telegram of consolation to 770 which he concluded with the words, "May Hashem console us with Menachem." In this way, he expressed the anticipation and hopes of the Chassidim that the Rebbe succeed the Rebbe Rayatz and accept the mantle of leadership of Chabad.

Upon the conclusion of Shiva, the elder Chassidim in England, led by R' Yitzchok Dubov and R' Avrohom Sender Nemtsov, had Anash in England sign a k'sav hiskashrus at the top of which it said: "To the Rebbe shlita, Melech HaMoshiach." Already back then, it was a "given" to Chassidim that the Rebbe was not just a Rebbe but also Moshiach.

They sent the k'sav hiskashrus to the United States on Sunday, 2 Adar, and on 25 Adar, the Rebbe read the pidyon nefesh with the names that were signed at the gravesite of his father-in-law. Then he wrote personal letters to each of the organizers of the pidyon nefesh. R' Nemtsov received a letter that was about the significance of 2 Nissan. In the margin the Rebbe wrote by hand: "I received the letter of 2 Adar. Surely R' Yitzchok Dubov conveyed what I told him about this

when he was here. I mentioned those who signed while I was at the tziyun.”

(Three days after the passing of the Rebbe Rayatz, R' Dubov asked the Rebbe to accept the nesius and the Rebbe reacted sharply, “What do you think, [and he referred to himself by name] is a Rebbe?”)

Yud Shevat marked the end of the year of mourning and it was nearly certain that the Rebbe would accept the nesius even though he had refused to give prior official notice. The Yud Shevat farbrengen was scheduled for Motzaei that day. Many Chassidim went to 770 and crowded into the small shul. In the first sicha, the Rebbe spoke about hiskashrus to the Rebbe Rayatz. In the second sicha there was a more open hint. The Rebbe said, “Here in America people like to hear a statement, a declaration that is novel and preferably sensational. I don't know whether there is a need for things to be done in this way, but ‘when you come to a town, follow its customs.’ The novel thing is that we need to ensure that every Jew has the three loves — the love of Gd, the love of the Torah and love toward a fellow Jew.”

Then they began singing niggunim. The Chassidim were still wondering what would be and did not know where matters stood. The tension was enormous. About an hour after the farbrengen began, R' Avrohom Sender Nemtsov got up from his seat behind the Rebbe's chair and announced, “The crowd wants the Rebbe to say a maamer Chassidus. The sichos are good but the crowd wants Chassidus, may we find grace and the Rebbe will say Chassidus.” There was silence and everyone waited to see the Rebbe's reaction.

At 10:40, the Rebbe opened the kuntres with the maamer “Basi L'Gani 5710” and said, while looking into the booklet, “In the maamer that the Rebbe gave for the day of his passing, the Rebbe begins with Basi L'Gani ...” and then the Rebbe began to say a maamer Chassidus for the first time, with the maamer tune.

Emotions ran high. When the Rebbe finished the first part he said, “We will pause now and say l'chaim.”

R' Nemptzov, although already eighty years old, jumped on to the table in his great joy and announced with great excitement, "Chassidim, repeat after me, we need to recite the SheHechyanu blessing for Hashem helping us that we have a Rebbe!"

R' Nemptzov said SheHechyanu with Hashem's name and the crowd answered with a resounding and joyous amen. The Rebbe turned to him and smiled broadly and asked him to finish and get down from the table.

The farbrengen continued, and the Rebbe said additional parts of the maamer.

When he finished, R' Nemptzov got up again and he blessed the Rebbe on behalf of all of Anash and the T'mimim on the occasion of accepting the nesius. He concluded with a bracha for children, health, and parnasa and the crowd responded with a loud amen.

R' Nemptzov's demand that the Rebbe say Chassidus will remain etched forever in the history of Chabad.

In 5714, R' Nemptzov moved to the United States and after being in New Haven for a while he settled in Long Beach on Long Island, where he lived for seventeen years. Even after he moved to the US, the Rebbe continued to demand of him in his letters that he be involved in spreading Torah and Judaism in his area.

Before he passed away he contracted pneumonia and on the second day of Shavuot the situation took a turn for the worse. He was brought to the hospital. Those around him were very tense about his condition and so he joked with them to alleviate the tension.

He passed away shortly afterward. He was 97. He had received blessings from the Rebbe for a long life for himself and his wife who passed away at the age of 109. They were survived by sons and daughters.

Immediately following the Frierdiker Rebbe's histalkus, Chassidim's eyes turned towards the Rebbe in the hope that he would agree to be M'maalle-Makom. Perhaps the earliest hint to these feelings is found in a letter penned by Reb Avrohom Sender Nemtsov after news of the histalkus reached him in England. He concluded his letter with the words expressing the hope that the Chassidim be comforted with the Rebbe agreeing to accept the nesius.

The Rebbe's View of Zionism

On Adar I 27, 5687 (Mar 1, 1927), the Rebbe Rayatz saw fit to pen a lengthy communication, addressed to "HaTamim HaTalmid HaRav M.Z. sheyichye HaKohen." The style was deliberately open and direct, "as one speaks to his friend or to his brother." In this letter, the Rebbe Rayatz addressed in detail the London opportunity as well as the Zionism allegations:

By now, you have undoubtedly received my letter regarding the rabbinical position in London. I wrote similarly to our friend, the esteemed and eminent Reb Avraham Sender Nemtsov. After contemplating the state of affairs, I found it proper for the sake of our practical work and for the benefit of the spirit of the Temimim that the responsibility of serving as Rav in the Shul of the London chassidim should be placed upon your shoulders.

In truth, our most precious talmid, who is endowed with many exceptional, goodly, and inner qualities - Reb Yitzchok Dubov, who presently lives in Riga - is fit for such a position, considering his ability to transmit chassidus, to conduct public Torah classes, to draw the hearts of Anash and to arouse them, with G-d's help, with the appropriate inspiration.

Despite all this, I have found - for various reasons - that it is most urgently

necessary to give you this responsibility instead. I do so with the positive hope that with G-d's help, you will fulfill your obligations appropriately. Honor will eventually come along as well, through your expanding the tents of Torah that is taught in public among Anash.

I wrote at length to our friend, Reb Avraham Sender. I also sent him a letter via HaRav HaGaon M.S. And when for some reason the address of Reb Avraham was lost, I sent him a letter via HaRav Y. of Riga. For I know the heart and soul of the Temimim: they are devoted to me with all their being. And I know clearly that it is all for the sake of the bright and absolute truth that our holy fathers - the Rebbeim - planted within us.

In your last letter, I saw that the true and essential goal, namely, our duty le- avdah u'le-sham'rah, "To serve and to preserve," which is the essential goal of life and the objective of each and every person, has been aroused within you.

You set three suggestions before me. The option you considered most seriously was to operate as part of a group [of chassidim in America]. I also wanted that to happen, and with G-d's help it would have brought tremendous benefit. I therefore suggested before you were set to travel that this is the option you should pursue. However, for various reasons, and to a greater extent after you had already set your plan to relocate here, much time has elapsed and the arrangement has failed to materialize.

I am extremely pleased that you are now inspired, with G-d's help, to the abovementioned goal of being of service [to the Jewish people]. Now, therefore, that there is an urgent need for such work in the prominent city of London, and there is also a broad arena in which to operate there, I hereby choose you to fulfill this position, and G-d will agree with me that your activities will be fruitful, with abundant success, materially and spiritually.

You have surely studied or saw or know the ma'amor entitled, "Im Ru'ach

HaMosheil 5684.” It is extremely pertinent to practical service. If you do not have it, search for a way to obtain it. It is explained there that he who desires that all of his affairs should be orderly and well-founded, should discuss everything openly, without retaining matters in his heart. [I will therefore speak my heart to you:] When you journeyed from your former location in Tarashtze, certain laymen reported in your name that you had quoted me as saying that at this point in time, the Zionist ideology is kosher, because matters nowadays are not as they were twenty years ago, and the conditions of present-day life have made even these matters permissible.

Understandably, I made known my view [in response]: that “I could not believe under any circumstances that HaRav Gutnick sheyichyeh would say such a thing, because he knows my clear opinion that I am absolutely and totally against Zionism, without any changes to my view whatsoever.” (This entire exchange was not written in letters, but rather, this is what was spoken to me and such was my verbal response.) I will be brief this time, despite the need for a lengthy treatment of this subject. In my eyes, this ideology in its entirety is a dark stain.

Understandably, this [rumor] can be corrected, and it is now even easier for you to stand by the truth [having received my clarification in writing].

... I am writing to you so that you will hurry to arrange your travel, with the greatest possible speed. Do not wait to be flooded with requests and appeals. I am also writing today to Rabbi Shneur Zalman Havlin regarding this matter. I repeat: Do not look at anything else. Just work to obtain entry documents and let no expense stand in your way. I am also writing ... yet again to Manchester regarding this matter. I received letters from our esteemed talmid, the very honorable Reb Zelig Slonim - but it seems that they have not yet received the letter I sent them concerning you. I will respond to him today, and I will hurry to do so.

All of the letters that I write to the Temimim in matters such as these, I write in the

[candid] manner in which a person speaks to his friends, with the intention that the messages speak to them in the style of one who discusses personal matters with his friend or with his brother. They contain no imaginary adjectives at all, but rather descriptions that are appropriate in the manner that they are applied.

On that same day, the Rebbe Rayatz wrote to HaRav Yitzchok Dubov, informing him that it was specifically HaRav Gutnick who must travel to London - and not he. This change of plan, the Rebbe advised, was to Rabbi Dubov's own benefit and to the benefit of the entire project. The Rebbe added that "even though the matter is not understood at the present time," he was asking Rabbi Dubov to have "the appropriate kabbalos ol [complete acceptance of the Rebbe's decision]" for the sake of facilitating Reb Mordechai Zev's mission.

The Rebbe sent a similarly unmistakable directive to Reb Azriel Zelig Slonim stating that Reb Mordechai Zev must be chosen for the position:

Regarding the rabbinical office in the Shul of the chassidim, my mind is set on our exceptional talmid, HaRav Mordechai Zev HaKohen Gutnick. He is presently in Tel Aviv, and I have written to him about this matter . I trust that with G-d's kindness I will receive much pleasure from this arrangement in all its details. I therefore approach you with this letter, asking you to invest the demanded effort and with most urgent speed in order to facilitate HaRav M.Z's coming.

As soon as the news of the Rebbe's passing was known, Rabbi Avrohom Sender Nemtsov, a senior Chassid, sent a consolation telegram to 770, which he signed, "And may Hashem console us with Menachem." With these words, he expressed the hopes of the Chassidim and T'mimim that the Ramash take over the Rebbe Rayatz's position.

When the Shiva was over, senior Chassidim in England, led by Rabbi Yitzchok Dubov, and including Rabbi Avrohom Sender Nemtav, began to sign up Anash in England on a writ of hiskashrus. This writ of hiskashrus was addressed, “To the

Admur shlita Melech HaMoshiach.” Yes, even then, Chassidim assumed that the Rebbe wasn’t only a Rebbe, but Moshiach too.

This writ of hiskashrus from England was sent to America on Sunday, 2 Adar, and on 25 Adar, the Rebbe read the pa”n with the signatories at the gravesite of the Rebbe Rayatz. Then the Rebbe wrote individual letters to each of the organizers of the pa”n.

Rabbi Nemtav received a letter that spoke about Beis Nissan, and in the margin, the Rebbe added in his own writing: The letter of 2 Adar was received. Rabbi Yitzchok Dubov certainly conveyed what I told him about this when he was here. And I mentioned the signatories when I was at the gravesite.

What did the Rebbe say to Rabbi

Dubov?

It was three days after the histalkus; Rabbi Dubov was in Beis Chayeinu, and he approached the Rebbe and begged him to accept the Nesius. The answer was, “Der Rebbe lebt” (the Rebbe lives). Rabbi Dubov didn’t give up and said that was the case with all the Rebbeim, yet there was always a successor. The Rebbe answered, “What do you think [here the Rebbe referred to himself by name] will be Rebbe?” Throughout the year after the histalkus, the Rebbe refused to accept the Nesius officially, but he acted as Rebbe in a number of ways with yechidus, general letters, etc.

Towards the following Yud Shvat, the end of the year of mourning, it was almost certain that the Rebbe would accept the Nesius, although the Rebbe refused to give

his official approval in advance. The farbrengen for Yud Shvat took place on Motzaei Yud Shvat. Many Chassidim crowded into the small zal of 770.

In the first sicha, the Rebbe spoke about hiskashrus to the Rebbe Rayatz. In his second sicha, there was a more open hint, when the Rebbe said, “The custom in the U.S. is that the first thing you do when you start something new is you make a ‘statement.’ I don’t know if it has to be that way, but since ‘upon coming to a city, do as its customs.’ The ‘statement’ is that you must go out and influence every Jew to have three loves: love of Hashem, love of Torah, and love of Jews.”

Then they began singing niggunim. The Chassidim were still in doubt, and didn’t know where matters stood. The tension was enormous. About an hour after the beginning of the farbrengen, Rabbi Avrohom Sender Nemtav got up from his seat behind the Rebbe, and announced, “The congregation asks the Rebbe to say a maamer Chassidus. The sichos are good, but the congregation wants Chassidus, we should find favor...that the Rebbe should say Chassidus.” Silence. Everybody waited to see the Rebbe’s reaction.

At 10:40 p.m. the Rebbe opened the kuntres with the maamer, “Basi EGani” 5710, and said, while looking into the kuntres, “In the maamer that the Rebbe gave for the day of the histalkus, the Rebbe begins with ‘Basi EGani,’” and the Rebbe began saying a maamer Chassidus for the first time, with the maamer tune.

Emotions ran high. When the Rebbe finished the first part, he said, “We will stop now and say l’chaim.”

Even though Rav Nemtav was already in his eighties, he jumped up onto the table in great joy, and excitedly announced, “Chassidim, say after me. We must recite the SheHechyanu blessing, for Hashem has helped us: we have a Rebbe!” Rabbi Nemtav said the bracha with Hashem’s name and the crowd thundered “amen” after him with great joy. The Rebbe turned to him, smiled broadly, and asked him to conclude and come off the table.

The farbrengen resumed and the Rebbe continued the maamer. After he finished, Rabbi Nemptzav got up again and blessed the Rebbe on behalf of all of Anash and the T'mimim, on the occasion of his accepting the Nesius, and he ended with a bracha for children, life, and livelihood, and the entire congregation thundered a heartfelt amen.

Rabbi Nemptzav's demand that the Rebbe say Chassidus will remain etched in the pages of Chabad history forever.

In honor of Yud Shvat, we present a portrait of a Chassid, who, in his youth, insisted on entering Tomchei T'mimim, even after the Rebbe Rashab refused to accept him, and who, in his senior years, insisted that the Rebbe take the crown of Nesius even after the Rebbe refused to do so.

FROM CURSE TO BLESSING

Rabbi Avrohom Sender was born in the town of Kamin near Vitebsk in Byelorussia, around the year 5631 (1871). He was raised in a Chassidic family, where he absorbed a chinuch to fear of Heaven and the ways of Chassidus. His father, Yaakov Nemptzav, had a small store where he sold dairy products. He was particular about not working on Fridays after midday. One Friday afternoon, as he was closing the store, the servant of a nobleman who lived in the town came to buy a large quantity of cheeses for the nobleman and his family. Rav Yaakov didn't hesitate for a moment but said he was closed. The servant insisted on being served and said, "The nobleman asked me to buy cheese, and if you don't sell it to me, it will cost you dearly."

Rav Yaakov explained that he had to hurry and close the store because of Shabbos. He locked the door and went on his way.

The servant, who had bought cheese from Nemtzav's store for years, decided that from then on, he would buy all dairy products at a different store. He did not report this change to his master.

Two weeks went by and the nobleman called for the servant and told him to tell Nemtzav that his cheeses were spoiled. The servant, embarrassed, had to explain that he had stopped buying cheese from Nemtzav since Nemtzav had insisted on closing his store on Friday because of the approaching Shabbos.

The nobleman said, "Listen, we ought to buy from someone who sticks to his principles. Go back to buying from him, and on Fridays, go to his store earlier in the day."

THE DESCENDENTS RETURNED TO CHABAD

Rav Avrohom Sender's daughter, Necha, married Rav Nissan Mindel a"h, a distinguished Chassid and the Rebbe's secretary. Rav Mindel had been close to the family even before his marriage, for he was Mrs. Nemtzav's nephew (her brother's son).

Rav Avrohom Sender's great-granddaughter, Mrs. Malka Freida Cohen of Kfar Chabad, whose notes were used to write this article, tells Beis Moshiach about the family:

"Although Rav Nemtzav's children were not ardent Lubavitchers, they still have Chabad customs, as do their children. My two brothers and I returned to become Lubavitcher Chassidim.

"When I was born, the Rebbe wrote a letter of blessing to my grandfather, the son of Rav Nemtzav, but I only found out about it when I was 19. My great-grandmother, Shaina Sara Nemtzav, lived till the age of 109. She was a role model for me.

"After I was inspired to return to Chabad, I asked my parents to send me to Bais

Rivka. My grandfather, R' Yehoshua Mordechai a"h, wanted to dissuade me from doing so. That day, he saw me washing my hands three times on each hand, and he wondered where I had learned to do that. I told him I had seen my mother do it that way.

"I switched to a Chabad school and married Rabbi Ben-Tzion Cohen, a Chabad Chassid, and we settled in Kfar Chabad.

"After our first son was born, my great-grandmother asked me to name him after her husband, Rav Avrohom Sender. Apparently, until then, nobody in the family was able to use both names, and she didn't want to split the name.

"Name your son after him, and he will daven for your Avrohom Sender,' she said.

"Over 20 years went by and I got a call from a Lubavitcher friend, who mentioned that every day he learns a few letters of the Rebbe, and just that day he had learned a letter that the Rebbe had sent to R' Avrohom Sender Nemptzav.

"I told him, 'If so, maybe it's Divine providence that you do something for my Avrohom Sender. He needs a shidduch.'

"The conversation ended and I thought he understood it as a joke. Two hours later, he called back and suggested a Lubavitcher girl for my Avrohom Sender. A few months later, they stood under the chuppa, with the strong feeling that the great-grandfather, Rav Avrohom Sender, had davened for his first offspring to be named after him."

An excerpt translated into English from HaRav Avraham Sender Nemptzov's Sefer Edus L'asuf:

In the Talmud, page 25 of Tractate Taanis, it records:

Rabbi Eliezer prayed for rain and uttered 24 petitions but was not answered. Rabbi Akiva prayed and said, “Our Father, our King,” and rain descended, and the Rabbis rejoiced. A voice went forth from heaven and said, “Not because this one is greater than this one [was he answered], but rather because this one overlooks his feelings and this one does not overlook his feelings.”

It is difficult to understand: If Rabbi Akiva is someone who overlooks his feelings and Rabbi Eliezer is not, then certainly Rabbi Akiva is greater...?

There are, however, great people who answer that indeed Rabbi Eliezer would also overlook his feelings, but for him there was no effort in doing so; from his youth he had this natural tendency. Rabbi Akiva, by contrast, would overlook his feelings through tremendous effort.

It is wondrous why they would want to answer thus, for, on the contrary this further indicates that Rabbi Akiva is greater than Rabbi Eliezer, because although it was not in his nature to overlook his feelings, yet with the power of his great Torah learning, he became someone who overlooks his feelings.

With the assistance of G-d, I have said a new explanation on this: The overlooking of feelings that our Sages of blessed memory said was not regarding the personal feelings of Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Eliezer. Rather, their intention was concerning the feelings of G-d and the manner in which they prayed. For, Rabbi Eliezer prayed 24 petitions, and indeed the number 24 is a great number. But there is a numerical comparison that 24 has with kad (כד) which is a measurement (see Bereishis 24:14 for kad meaning a jug or pitcher and thus denotes a specific

measurement similar to a liter denoting 33.8 fluid ounces). He was therefore not answered because according to G-d's attribute of judgement the world was not befitting of rain. Rabbi Akiva, however, prayed and said, 'Our Father, our King...' and behold the concept of father according to Kabbala is wisdom. Also Rashi says in Parshas Miketz (41:43), "Yoseph was a father in wisdom." And wisdom is higher than the realm of feelings, for feelings begin with kindness, etc., and kingship does not either relate to the concept of feelings (see the beginning of the Maamer by Rayatz entitled Ki Imcha Mekor Chaim Parshas Korach 5701). Therefore, when Rabbi Akiva mentioned in his prayer, 'Our father, our King,' he superseded the feelings of G-d and as a result, rain descended.

All this above explanation sits well since in this Tractate [Taanis] it mentions many times that one was answered with his prayer while another was not, and it does not mention what the style of their prayer was nor whether one was greater than the other. Yet in the prayers of Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Eliezer, it mentions the style of their prayers and the greatness of their ability to overlook their feelings, as the version of Rabbi Akiva's prayer, who said 'Our Father, our King,' led to G-d overlooking His feelings. So, for any calamity which should not come, it is good to pray with this prayer of 'Our Father, our King...' This is enough elaboration to understand [the power of this prayer].

במס' תענית דף כ"ה איתא ר' אליעזר התפלל עבור גשמים ואמר כ"ד רננות ולא נענה ור' עקיבא התפלל ואמר אבינו מלכנו וירדו גשמים, ורננו רבנן. יצתה בת קול ואמרה לא מפני שזה גדול מזה אלא מפני שזה מעביר על מדותיו וזה אינו מעביר על מדותיו. וקשה להבין: אם ר' עקיבא מעביר על המדות ור' אליעזר אינו מעביר א"כ ר' עקיבא גדול מר' אליעזר, ויש גדולים שמתרצים כי באמת ר' אליעזר הי' ג"כ מעביר על המדות אך לא היתה לו יגיעה על זה, כי מתולדותיו הי' טבעו לזה, ור' עקיבא נעשה

מעביר על המדות ע"י יגיעה עצומה. ולפלא שרוצים לתרץ בזה כי אדרבה בזה ניכר יותר שר' עקיבא גדול יותר מר' אליעזר, שהגם שלא הי' בטבעו להעביר על המדות, אבל בכח תורתו הגדולה נעשה מעביר על המדות.

ובע"ה אמרתי על זה פירוש חדש, כי העברת המדות שאמרו חכמינו ז"ל לא היתה כוונתם על המדות של רבי עקיבא ורבי אליעזר, אך כוונתם על העברת המדות של הקב"ה בסגנון של תפלתם. כי ר' אליעזר התפלל כ"ד רננות ומספר כ"ד הוא ענין מדה וגבול. מלבד שעפ"י צחות מספר כ"ד הוא ענין כד שהוא מדה, ע"כ לא נענה, כי עפ"י מדת הדין לא הי' העולם ראוי להשיג גשמים. אבל ר' עקיבא התפלל ואמר אבינו מלכנו. וענין אב עפ"י קבלה הוא הכמה, וגם ברש"י פ' מקץ איתא אב בחכמה, וחכמה היא למעלה מענין מדות, כי מדות מתחילות מחסד וכו' ומלכות ג"כ אינה שייכת לענין מדות. וע"כ כאשר הזכיר רבי עקיבא בתפילתו "אבינו מלכנו" העביר המדות של הקב"ה ע"כ ירדו גשמים. ובהנ"ל ניחא שבכל המס' נזכר כמה פעמים שאחד נענה בתפילתו והשני לא נענה ולא נזכר שמה מה הי' נוסח תפלתם, ולא נזכר שם אם הי' זה גדול מחברו, ובתפלת ר' עקיבא ור' אליעזר נזכר נוסח תפלתם ונזכרה גדולת העברת המדות להראות כי נוסח תפלת ר' עקיבא שאמר אבינו מלכנו גרמה להעברת המדות של הקב"ה, ע"כ על כל צרה שלא תבוא טוב להתפלל תפלת אבינו מלכנו, וד"ל.

Source:

<http://hebrewbooks.org/3046> (Pages 25-26)

REMINICENCES

INTRODUCTION TO OUR FIRST ENCOUNTERS

On Sunday, the 19th of Teves, January 2nd, 1994, a Conference of Lubavitcher Shiluchim from the United Kingdom was held in Manchester Lubavitch House. I was asked to address the assembly during the Dinner and I pointed out that yesterday, Shabbos, we read the Sedra Shemos, the beginning of the Exodus, and we learnt that Jacob, our forefather, went down to Egypt with seventy souls.

Well, T.G., I am also the progenitor of seventy souls "Kain Ayin Horah and Kain Yirbu". Roselyn is, of course, the progenitress, the ancestress.

By a coincidence, it is almost exactly thirty five years since our First Encounter with the Rebbe at 770.

If our own family, which represents only a minute portion of Lubavitch, has already multiplied so rapidly, then one can readily understand how much the whole Lubavitcher organisation has increased during this period. And not only in a natural way - but by the addition of vast numbers of new adherents and Baalei Tshuva who have become attracted and attached to Chabad through the activities, endeavours and encouragement of the Rebbe.

We may therefore now readily comprehend why the Rebbe is the leader of so many hundreds of thousands of Chassidim, world wide.

Thirty five years ago our dear friend Rabbi Benzion Shemtov, Z.Tz.L., had just opened the first Chabad House at his home in Stamford Hill, London.

Today, we held a conference of forty Sheluchim from all over the United Kingdom.

Now is a good time to pause, to reflect and to reminisce, in brief, about some of our past Encounters with the Rebbe and remind you of some of the two hundred unique letters which I have received during that period. Besides the Rebbe's messages contained therein every letter included words of Torah and blessings.

'MY FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH THE REBBE'

My very first encounter with the Rebbe took Place in 1952. It was not a direct face-to-face meeting. It was by means of a letter which I had received as President of the Kahal Chassidim Synagogue, Manchester.

We wanted to send the Rabbi of our Shool, my uncle Rabbi Shmuel Rein, to visit the Rebbe as our emissary. He had himself written to the Rebbe for permission to

travel. It was a long sea journey (there were no air services at that time) and he was not in good health.

The letter which we received from the Rebbe was in Yiddish. The following is my translation of this epistle

Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson Lubavitch 770 Eastern Parkway Brooklyn 13,
N.Y.

7th Ellul 5712 - 1952

"To the Members and Honorary Officers of the Kahal Chassidim Synagogue."

"I have just received your letter and am pleased to learn how much you value the work of your Rabbi Shmuel Rein. I am also happy to note that you desire a closer liaison and contact with us here (at 770) - that being the main reason why you want to send Rabbi Rein as your Shaliach - emissary to Brooklyn.

I hope that just the same as with every living thing so will your good feelings also continue to grow and to permeate through your members into their homes and their activities.

This is the principal theme of our Torah and of our religion - that they are not relevant to a part of the day only, and the rest of the time this Yiddshkeit is not even noticeable. But ours is a living Torah, from a living G-d, which encompasses a Jew from the very first second until the last second of the 120 good years of his life - not only a Jew in Shool, at prayer and study, but also at home, in the street and in the office - as we recite twice a day in the Shema, "And you shall speak of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk on the road, when you lie down and when you rise up."

Now, regarding your enquiry whether Rabbi Shmuel Rein should visit me here,

and further to his letter to me regarding his health. I consider that the strain of the journey, especially with the problems of eating and drinking, and other essential matters - although even amidst Simcha and happiness - would be too much for him. I am sure he has shown you the letter which I sent him and in which I have explained these above mentioned matters.

I wish to thank you for the good thoughts in wishing to send your Rabbi, especially from a congregation which prides itself on the name of Kahal Chassidim. We learn that the Alter (Old) Rebbe wrote in the Tanya, Chapter 16, that "Good thoughts have to be united with deeds." That is, there has to be action too. Therefore, I hope that there will also be deeds; that means that the good results which you could have anticipated from the visit will be turned to good actions even though your emissary did not make the journey. I end with good wishes for a Happy New Year to all the members of your Shool and to their families - to everyone - materially and spiritually." This was the first lettet which I had ever received, albeit indirectly, from the Lubavitcher Rebbe. Until that moment the Rebbe was, to me, some vague personality living thousands of miles away in the U.S.A., literally - we were worlds apart. My first recollections of a Rebbe were as a youngster - when he was an even vaguer figure who resided thousands of miles away in the town of Lubavitch in Lithuania. My maternal grandfather, Shneur Zalmon Edelman, was a devout Lubavitcher Chossid. My mother used to tell us that he left his wife and three daughters at home in Rakishik, Lithuania, and spent every Yom Tov with the Rebbe, Sholom Ber, who reigned from 1883 till 1920. At the time of the Russian pogroms, about 1906, my mother, together with many thousands of Jews, fled to this country. She settled in Manchester where she subsequently met my father, Zaive Jaffe, who had come from Riga in Latvia. They were married in 1910. My father was not a Lubavitcher Chossid but my mother persuaded him to join the Kahal Chassidim Synagogue. Until I was nearly thirty five years of age, the only

contact involvement or knowledge I had of Lubavitch was that we davened in a "Lubavitch Shool". We celebrated a Yom Tov called Yud Tes Kislev, which was the anniversary of the date on which the Alter Rebbe, the founder of Lubavitch, was released and freed from a Russian jail - after having been sentenced to death for alleged treason. We also celebrated Simchas Torah in rather a hectic and merry manner, which was most unusual in Manchester at that time. The old Chassidic, who included my uncle, Shmuel Rein, Alexander Nemtsov, Rabbi Rivkin and Rabbi Dubov, had all studied at the Lubavitch Yeshiva. They kept very much to themselves as they were old friends. I had no idea what Lubavitch stood for or what it meant. My uncle did give over a Maamer during Shalla Seudos on Shabbos in winter. It was in Yiddish and none of us - boys - understood very much of it. We did know that Rabbi Rein corresponded with the Rebbe, but we were not personally involved.

Then Rabbi BenZion ShemTov arrived on the scene. Matters changed very swiftly and dramatically. He was the ideal, the perfect soldier of the Rebbe - he served the A-Mighty - and the Rebbe and the Jewish people with friendliness, gladness, joy and self-sacrifice. He explained to us the Lubavitch teachings and doctrines. Furthermore, to enable us to comprehend more easily, he told us the following story about the Alter Rebbe, which explained in simple language, so that even a child could understand, the dogma of Lubavitch. The Alter Rebbe shared his house with his eldest married son - Rabbi Dov Ber (who later succeeded him). Rabbi Dov Ber was known for his unusual power of concentration. When he was engaged in study or prayer he was totally oblivious to everything around him. On one occasion, when Rabbi Dov Ber was thus engrossed, his baby, sleeping in a nearby cot, fell out of his cradle and began to cry. Rabbi Dov Ber did not hear the baby's cries. The infant's grandfather, the Alter Rebbe, who was in his study on the upper floor, also engrossed in his studies, went downstairs, lifted the infant, soothed him

and replaced him in his cradle. To all this the infant's father remained oblivious. Subsequently, the Alter Rebbe admonished his son - "No matter how engrossed one may be in the most lofty occupation, one must never remain insensitive to the cry of a child." The lesson which we have to learn is that we have to hearken to the cry of a child. The "child", may be an infant in age, a minor or teenager, a Jewish boy or girl attending public school, fallen from the "cradle" of the Jewish religion, heritage and way of life. Or it may be an adult in years, yet an "infant" with regard to knowledge and experience of the Jewish religion and heritage, as are so many Jewish students on the campuses of colleges and universities or in other walks of life. The souls of these Jewish "children" cry out in anguish, for they live in a spiritual void. They cry out for a guiding hand that would restore to them the security and warmth and comfort of their faith, and give meaning to their empty lives, whether they are conscious of it, or feel it only sub-consciously. We must hear their cries, no matter how preoccupied we may be with any lofty cause, for to help them back to their Jewish "cradles" takes priority over all else.

ORIGINS In 1926 I celebrated my Bar Mitzvah in the Kahal Chassidim Synagogue, Manchester. Many members had moved away from that area and soon afterwards my father (O.H.), supported by numerous friends, purchased a couple of large houses about two miles away in Waterloo Road and named it the New Kahal Chassidim Synagogue. The members, in appreciation of the work done by my father (O.H.), erected a foundation stone in honour of Zaive Jaffe the founder of this Shool. Many years later, the original Kahal Chassidim Shool also moved to new premises on the same road as was our Synagogue. It would have caused much confusion to have two Kahal Chassidim Shools in one road therefore they changed the name of their Synagogue to the Adas Yisroel. Rabbis Rivkin (Z.Tz.L.) and Dubov (Z.Tz.L.) were centred in the Adass Yisroel and my uncle, Rabbi Shmuel

Rein (Z.Tz.L.) was the Rav of our Shool. Rev. Alexander Nemtsov (Z.Tz.L.) had a foot in both Shools. These four personalities made up the Lubavitch Yeshiva Old Boys Club - a very select and selective group. One morning there was a blizzard raging and Rev. Nemtsov walked into our Shool completely covered with snow - and there was still no Minyan. Rev. Nemtsov declared that, "I have come into the Shool with 'Shnay' (Yiddish for snow and Hebrew for two) and there is still no Minyan." He was very clever at making good puns.

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