

THE “WAR” ON THE KIBBUTZIM

BY SHNEUR ZALMAN BERGER

*It was 45 years ago that a new offensive war began in Eretz Yisroel. Chassidim descended upon kibbutzim to share authentic Judaism. * R' Shmuel Blizinsky opened his archives and related his yechidus, reports, and letters from the Rebbe about the grand mitvza which got the ball rolling.*

Rabbi Shmuel Blizinsky relates:

“It was Motzaei Shabbos B'Reishis 5717 (1957), only a quarter hour after Maariv, when the Rebbe's secretary, R' Leibel Groner, came out of the Rebbe's room and with the message that the Rebbe wanted to see me. I was very surprised.

“I entered the Rebbe's room with little preparation. There was a cup on the table with a bit of leftover wine from *Havdala*. The Rebbe poured some of the

wine into a cup and said: “This is for R' Yitzchok Daniel. Tell him that ‘*ein itanu yodeia ad mah*’ (we do not know until what [note: this verse is quoted in *chassidus* in reference to the *Geula*]), and he should take action and be successful. And as for you – I already gave you a bottle of *mashkeh* on Simchas Torah. When you get to Eretz Yisroel, *farbreng* everywhere and send my regards. *Farbreng* with Tzach too, and tell them enough debating; take action and be successful.

“R' Yitzchok Daniel was a writer, and had once been an ardent Leftist who became closer to *chassidus* through my father, R' Meir Blizinsky, a”h.

“I left the brief *yeichidus*, reviewing the Rebbe's words in my mind. That Tishrei the Rebbe had spoken a great deal about it being time to abandon a defensive war, and to move on to an offensive war. After the sudden *yeichidus*, I understood that in the *farbrengens* I was to make when I returned home, the Rebbe meant that I should suggest activities that would begin this offensive war, though I still had no concrete plan.

“Putting down my suitcases upon my return home, I hurried off to do the Rebbe's *shlichus*, and went to R' Yitzchok Daniel's home in Ramat Gan. I gave him the wine and repeated what the Rebbe said: “*Zeh mechayev, zeh mechayev*” (this obligates). We sat, analyzing the situation. He said the Rebbe wanted special action taken on behalf of *hafatzas ha'maayanos*, but he didn't know what. We planned to reconvene at a future date.

“At that meeting, we put forth ideas about how to go about the offensive war the Rebbe had declared, but rejected all



Shmuel Blizinsky (center) in army training exercises

of them.

“Until that time, nobody had even thought of ‘spreading the wellsprings’ on the home turf of the secular public. Nobody thought that way – it was almost out of the question.

“At some point, Yitzchok turned to me and said, ‘You’re an officer in the army. Explain how you prepare for war. We’ll derive from that how to go about this offensive war the Rebbe is asking for.’

“I said that first you have to identify the enemy and then you had to organize forces in order to go out to war.

“Yitzchok’s eyes lit up. ‘If we conquer the hardcore nucleus, the rest crumbles. The *kibbutzim* are the nucleus. It’s the *kibbutzim* that lead the country in ideology that encourages severance from Judaism. We know where the nucleus is – we have to go and capture it – and we need soldiers for this. Let’s divide the work. I’ll give you the front; I’ll get permission from the *kibbutzim* for you to appear there and you bring the soldiers.’”

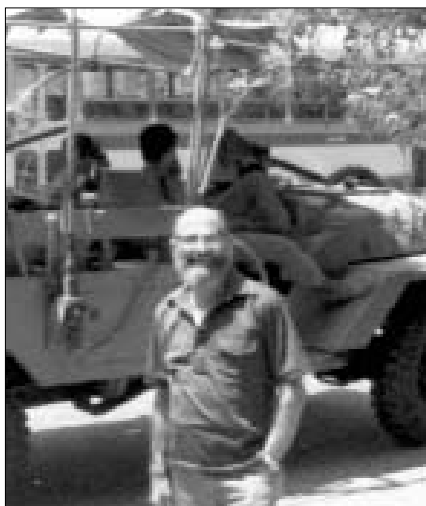
Years passed. Although R’ Shmuel Blizinsky kept copies of the dozens of fascinating reports he wrote to the Rebbe of this unique *mivtza*, they had disappeared with the passage of time. Upon requesting replacement copies from the secretariat, the Rebbe gave instructions to provide him with the originals from the archives.

45 years later, at the present time, R’ Shmuel has offered *Beis Moshiach* the complete collection for publication. A cursory look at material indicates clearly that the initial groundbreaking efforts at outreach were quite difficult. The Left ran the country at the time. *Kibbutzim* actively promulgated anti-religious propaganda. “The *kibbutzim* were the epitome of darkness,” says R’ Shmuel. “Suddenly, we began thinking about how to conquer them. It sounded wilder than fantasy.”

Different ideas were suggested and

rejected until Yitzchok Damiel and Shmuel decided on a starting point: they would bring *chassidim* to *kibbutzim* to spend Shabbos there. The *chassidim* would speak, get to know the members of the *kibbutzim*, and invite them to visit Kfar Chabad, thus breaking the ice. If, as a result, the members of the *kibbutzim* would agree to attend a lecture, that would be a great accomplishment.

Shmuel presented his proposal to Tzach. Although the initial reaction of the heads of Tzach was, essentially, disbelief, Shmuel persisted in presenting his approach, encouraged by the Rebbe to persevere.



Shmuel Blizinsky doing his army service

The details of the proposal are recounted in Shmuel’s first report to the Rebbe on 28 Cheshvan 5717:

“Since the Rebbe said in the *sicha* of *Simchas Beis HaShoeiva* that we must now abandon a defensive war and initiate an offensive war, I will therefore request that each member of Tzach join this war. One Shabbos every three months, everybody must devote himself to the work of Tzach. The administration of Tzach has to ensure that every single *yishuv* in the country without exception, even *kibbutzim* – no matter of which movement or party –

will be visited by Tzach.

“... They will send couples for Shabbos, and they will show [the residents] what is lacking, what needs to be done, encouraging the people at those locations. I claimed that two members of Tzach should even go to completely secular *kibbutzim* and spend Shabbos there in order for the members of the *kibbutz* to be exposed to religious people to have the opportunity to speak to them about Judaism. In my opinion, this is the best approach.

“There should literally be not one *yishuv* in the land which *Anash* does not visit, and which I took upon myself to arrange. I have bought a map of the country, and a book listing every *yishuv* and what affiliation of people live there in order to send people appropriate to each situation.”

The Rebbe responded to this report in a letter dated 3 Kislev 5717:

“I received your letter of 28 Cheshvan and many thanks for conveying my regards to those whom I requested, and to Tzach, too. May it be Hashem’s will that the words have the necessary effect, and I will hear good news from this as well – soon.”

Then the Rebbe charged Shmuel with an additional task:

“It is certainly unnecessary to point out to him that he should inquire, when appropriate, what is actually being done, as per my message which he gave over to the aforementioned, as the inquiry itself will prompt the aforementioned to bring the words into action, and perhaps to increase from time to time.”

Shmuel fulfilled this mission. He spoke to the heads of Tzach and with Yitzchok Damiel to ensure that actions were carried out. Traveling from city to city and from community to community, Shmuel *farbrenge*d with *Anash* in each location, as the Rebbe had originally instructed in the sudden *yechidus*. He went to Yerushalayim, Lud, Kfar Chabad, Petach Tikva, B’nei Brak,

Tel Aviv, and other cities, describing Tishrei with the Rebbe, and especially emphasizing the Rebbe's words concerning the new approach of offensive war. He presented his grandiose plan – to travel to the *kibbutzim* and to inspire the Jews there. In order to mobilize people, he would say, "The Rebbe gave me *mashkeh* in order to *farbreng*. Whoever agrees to spend Shabbos at a *kibbutz* will get *mashkeh*. If you don't agree, you won't get!"

Words that came from the heart entered the heart. Shmuel's enthusiasm was contagious, and many people said they were willing to devote Shabbasos to the *kibbutzim*.

At that time, the Rebbe wrote the heads of Tzach a sharp letter about inactivity:

"It's a pity for each day, and each hour, and each minute that passes. Aside from the irreplaceable loss of time, there is the additional affirmation of previous inactivity."

Continuing, the Rebbe explained his earlier instructions to Shmuel Blizinsky "about the necessity for action and an offensive war – although the terminology is one of war, obviously the means to achieve the goal must be

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The Sinai War broke out in winter 5717. Shmuel and others were drafted, and preparations for the *mivtza* stopped. Great miracles allowing the quick capture of half of Sinai led to great feelings of inspiration among the Jewish people in Eretz Yisroel.

Shmuel felt that no time could be better for instituting his plan of action, as he wrote to the Rebbe on Motzaei Shabbos VaYigash, 5 Teives 5717:

"There's a feeling in the land of excitement about religion after witnessing the miracles Hashem

showed us in the battles in Sinai – everyone realizes the miraculous nature of the conquest. I presented my plan to R' Leib Zalmanov, insisting that the time is ripe to go to *yishuvim* for Shabbos. My work on this now includes combing through a map of the country to map out every single *yishuv* for Anash to visit on Shabbos."

He expressed hope that on Parshas Bo ten couples would go out, but that didn't actually happen for another two months. The goal of the new *mivtza* was *kiruv levavos* (drawing the hearts close), but in his letters to the Rebbe, Shmuel called it "Mivtza Moshiach" – to hasten the *Geula*.

In the above letter, Shmuel explained what each group would do at a *kibbutz*: "Each group will bring three items:

- 1) *mezuzos* to affix where necessary, and of course before doing so, they will explain its importance
- 2) *Sichot LaNaar* – reading material for children
- 3) *Bitaton Chabad* (a Chabad publication of that time) and perhaps *t'fillin*."

(To be continued.)

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