



Beis Moshiach

The International Weekly Yearning the Coming of Moshiach

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CHANUKA: LIGHTING UP THE MARKET- PLACE

SICHOS IN ENGLISH



SHABBOS PARSHAS VA'YEISHEV 25TH DAY OF KISLEV, 5750

1. We find a unique phenomenon regarding Chanuka. The story of Chanuka is related at length in a text called Megillas Antiochus. Although this text is not one of the 24 books of the Bible, the *halachic* authorities do refer to it, and, in certain communities, it is customary to read this text in public on Chanuka. This fact, however, seems to be an apparent contradiction. If Megillas Antiochus is not given the status of a book of the Bible, why is it read in public in certain communities?

The question is reinforced by a comparison to Purim. In many respects, Chanuka and Purim have equal status: Both were instituted by the Sages, and work is permitted on both of them, etc. In regard to the text which records the holiday's miracle, however, we find a drastic contrast. Megillas Esther is considered one of the books of the Bible. Indeed, it is given special importance. Our Sages relate that, "All the books of the prophets and the holy writings will be nullified in the Messianic age with the

exception of the book of Esther." It will remain forever like the Five Books of Moshe and the *halachos*. Also, it is a *mitzva* to read the Megilla on Purim. But neither of these factors apply to Megillas Antiochus. There is a further difference between the two: The Megilla of Purim is named after Esther, a righteous woman and the heroine of the story, whereas the Megilla of Chanuka is named after Antiochus, a wicked gentile.

The above difficulty can be explained as follows: Chanuka and Purim represent the refinement of the lowest levels of existence, the transformation of darkness to light. The Chanuka miracle took place at a time of great spiritual darkness, when the Greeks had entered the Sanctuary. Nevertheless, despite their desire to make the Jews "forget Your Torah and violate the decrees of Your will," G-d "delivered the mighty into the hands of the weak... and the impure into the hands of the pure," and wrought the miracle of the Chanuka lights.

Similarly, the Purim miracle occurred in a time when darkness was prevalent. Haman, the enemy of the Jews, and Achashverosh, a

wicked king, were in power over the entire civilized world. Nevertheless, the self-sacrifice of Mordechai, Esther, and the Jewish people as a whole, transformed the entire situation and brought about salvation for the Jews.

There is, however, a difference in the manner in which the Sages determined to have the holidays commemorated. The commemoration of Purim centers around activities carried out in one's home (the Purim feast) or in the synagogue (the reading of the Megilla), i.e., these activities are set within a Jewish environment.

The commemoration of Chanuka, however, centers around *pirsumei nisa*, publicizing the Chanuka miracle. Thus, the Chanuka candles are lit "at the entrance to the house, on the outside," and must burn "until the Tarmudites are no longer present in the market-place." Thus, these candles are intended to illuminate the public thoroughfare and should burn until even the last individuals are no longer present in the streets.

Significantly, all these terms, "Tarmudites," "market-place," and

“public thoroughfare,” are all associated with the forces of evil. Through the light of Chanuka, symbolic of “the candle of *mitzva* and the light of Torah,” these forces are transformed into good.

This quality represents the advantage of Chanuka over Purim. Although Purim also expresses transformation, that transformation involved the fate of the Jewish people and is commemorated by celebrations among the Jewish people themselves. In contrast, Chanuka is commemorated by spreading the light of the candles into the market place, effecting the gentiles as well.

Chanuka is commemorated by spreading the light of the candles into the market place, effecting the gentiles, as well.

In addition to the above concept, to resolve the questions raised from the outset, it is necessary to explain the refinement of the gentiles and the seventy languages they speak. In general, there are two approaches to this service of refinement:

a) The revelation from above to below: When one’s service in the realm of holiness is powerful, the light of holiness is drawn down to even the lowest levels and brings about refinement. Chassidic thought describes this concept with a metaphor of a large torch which draws sparks to it. This effect can be compared to the process of

refinement accomplished through Torah study. The very fact that a person studies about a certain Torah subject causes the refinement of that subject in the world at large.

b) The elevation from below to above: This movement involves lowering oneself and involving oneself (needless to say, according to the Torah’s guidelines) in activities with gentiles and their languages and thus, employing these activities and languages for the sake of Torah and the service of “Knowing G-d in all your ways.”

To focus on the concept of the gentile languages. In the beginning of Creation, everyone spoke *Lashon HaKodesh* (the Holy Tongue), as the Torah states, “The entire earth was of one language.” After the construction of the tower of Babel, G-d “confused the speech of the entire earth,” and from that time onward, people began to speak in different languages.

It is improper to speak about mundane matters in *Lashon HaKodesh*. If so, the question arises: During the many generations that existed before the tower of Babel, when *Lashon HaKodesh* was the only language spoken, how was this “holy tongue” used for mundane matters. Furthermore, this epoch included several generations, e.g., the generation of Enosh and the generation of the flood, when the people were decadent idolaters. How could *Lashon HaKodesh* be used by these individuals?

The concept can be explained as follows: Every element of existence, even the most mundane matters and those which oppose holiness contains a spark of holiness and has its source in *Lashon HaKodesh*. As explained in *Tanya*, G-d created the world through speech and the name of an object in *Lashon HaKodesh* is the mechanism by which the Divine

life-force is drawn down for this object.

Thus, originally, when *Lashon HaKodesh* was spoken, even in regard to mundane matters, it served to reveal the Divine life-force present in each entity. Every individual, regardless of his spiritual level, even one who rebelled against G-d, brought out the Divine life-force present within the world through the mere use of *Lashon HaKodesh*.

Nevertheless, the sin of the tower of Babel brought about a descent in the spiritual level of the

It is customary not to study Torah on Nittul... The Rebbe Rashab, would either play chess (or give advice to others to play chess) on that night.

world. When the people of that era wanted to cut themselves off from their spiritual source, they prevented the possibility of revealing the Divine life-force through speech. (Hence, there is, as mentioned above, precautions against using *Lashon HaKodesh* for mundane purposes.) Thus, G-d’s “confusion of the languages of the world,” began a new order of service. It was no longer possible for speech, in and of itself, to be a positive act. Rather, effort had to be made that when one descended to speak these other languages, one intended to elevate them to

holiness.

The Alter Rebbe explains the difference between the letters of *Lashon HaKodesh* and the letters of other languages as follows: The letters of *Lashon HaKodesh* can be compared to stones, which are creations of G-d, whereas the letters of other languages can be compared to bricks, which are formed by man. By speaking these languages for a constructive purpose, and in particular, using them to teach Torah, one builds “the wall of Torah” with these “bricks.”

Though the above is the general rule, nevertheless, even after the tower of Babel and the spiritual descent it caused, every person – gentiles included – shares a connection to *Lashon HaKodesh*. Therefore, there is the potential to reveal the G-dliness invested in Creation through other languages, as well. When G-d “confused the languages of the world,” He also included some elements of *Lashon HaKodesh* in other tongues. As an example of this concept, the Sages explained that certain words in the Torah, like “Yegar Sahadusa” and “*totafos*,” which are found in other languages are, in essence, words from *Lashon HaKodesh*.

Furthermore, there are other commentaries that explain that these words are originally from other languages. Nevertheless, they have been elevated to the point where they can be used in the Torah. This principle is further expressed in the books of the prophets where foreign languages are used to communicate many concepts including those on an extremely elevated plane, e.g., Daniel’s prophecy of the advent of the Messianic era. This reveals that there is the potential to elevate these other languages to the realm of holiness and accomplish an even higher level in the refinement of the

world than that which can be accomplished through *Lashon HaKodesh*.

Based on the above, we can understand the difference between the refinement of the gentiles and the world at large associated with the Purim miracle and that associated with Chanuka. The Purim miracle resembles the refinement of the world which was accomplished through speaking *Lashon HaKodesh* in regard to mundane matters. Even though Megillas Esther contains certain Persian words and names (including

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the name, Achashverosh) and was transcribed into the Persian chronicles, this shows how the holiness of the Megilla descended to the lowest levels. Nevertheless, because this refinement came “from above,” it did not effect the Persians on their own level. Thus, the name of G-d was not included in the Megilla, lest the Persians substitute the name of one of their deities for it when translating it.

To emphasize this concept, it is called Megillas Esther. This name indicates that Esther, symbolic of

the forces of holiness, is the one who accomplishes this process of refinement.

Chanuka, in contrast, elevates and refines the gentiles as they exist “in the market-place,” i.e., on their own level, before they have been influenced by *Lashon HaKodesh*. Nevertheless, on that level itself, they are transformed into holiness.

For this reason, the Megilla of Chanuka is called Megillas Antiochus. Antiochus, the wicked, is the villain of the narrative. Furthermore, the narrative does not become a part of the Bible, thus, reflecting how it refers to the gentiles on their own level. Nevertheless, through the service of Chanuka, this narrative becomes transformed to the extent that Torah authorities refer to it and, in certain communities, it is customary to read it on Chanuka.

* * *

Greater potential for this service is generated on the present day which is:

a) Shabbos Chanuka – on which the holiness of Shabbos is drawn down into all aspects of Chanuka, including the service of transforming the gentiles.

b) Shabbos VaYeishev – The opening verse of this portion states: “And Yaakov settled in the land of his fathers’ sojourns, the land of K’naan.” This contains an allusion to the two processes of refinement mentioned above. “The land of his fathers’ sojourns,” refers to service within the realm of holiness, and “the land of K’naan,” refers to the service of the refinement of the world at large.

2. Based on the above, we can understand the practices followed by the Rebbeim in connection with *Nittul* (which generally falls on or in proximity to the Chanuka festival).

The Rebbe Rayatz taught that it is customary not to study Torah on that night in order not to increase the Divine life energy present. The Rebbe Rayatz continued that his father, the Rebbe Rashab, would either play chess (or give advice to others to play chess) on that night.

The lesson that can be learned from this is as follows: When a Jew is in a situation which – because its level is very low – he cannot elevate in a direct manner through studying Torah, he should use that situation to produce a benefit in an indirect manner, for example, by playing chess, a game which is connected with the intellect. Firstly, it sharpens one's intellect. Secondly, playing successively can increase the respect with which one is held by gentiles. And thirdly, at times, it can produce a direct financial benefit.

Similarly, each person in his own way must use *Nittul* in a positive way. Rather, than merely do nothing, he should perform acts connected with wisdom, or connected with charity and kindness, or connected with the proper functioning of his home.

In this vein, the story was once told of a *yeshiva* student who wore a jacket which was missing a button. When he was asked why he did not fix it, he replied that *Nittul* was approaching and that he was putting off fixing it until then. The *yeshiva* student couldn't conceive of time that would be spent without any

Since Chanuka is connected with "illuminating the public thoroughfare," it is an appropriate time to devote oneself to reaching out to those Jewish children who do not receive any Jewish education, those who study in "public schools."

positive input. Hence, knowing that he could not study on *Nittul*, he planned to use the time for another constructive act.

3. Chanuka is also connected with *chinuch*, education. This implies that, first and foremost, a person must involve himself with the education of his own children, both his sons and daughters, by teaching them about the holiday and training them to observe its *mitzvos*. (In regard to sons, even those under *bar mitzva* age, this involves lighting the Chanuka candles. It is not customary for daughters below *bas mitzva* to light candles. Nevertheless, it is proper to

train them in other aspects of the observance of the festival. Indeed, our Sages stressed how women are obligated in all aspects of the holidays observance since the miracle also involved a woman.

Similarly, the children should be given *Chanuka gelt*. This custom should be carried out at least twice throughout the holiday and if possible every day. (Needless to say, money itself should not be given on Shabbos.)

Similarly, since Chanuka is connected with "illuminating the public thoroughfare," it is an appropriate time to devote oneself to reaching out to those Jewish children who do not receive any Jewish education, who study in "public schools." We must try to bring them into a program of Jewish education. In particular, efforts should be made to use the midwinter vacation they are given to involve them in a program of Torah study.

These efforts should be expanded in an effort to educate the world at large, spreading Torah and *mitzvos* among Jews and the seven *mitzvos* given to Noach and his descendants among the gentiles, and in this way, reveal how the entire world was created only for the purpose of expressing G-d's glory. This will be realized in the Messianic Redemption when, "the earth will be filled with the knowledge of G-d as the waters cover up the ocean bed."



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WILL IT HAVE ANY SUBSTANCE?

BORUCH MERKUR

It's time I let you in on a little secret, faithful readers. For an entire year now, I have been filling this column with material written five years ago (with a few exceptions, such as "Don't Change That Tune!" of issue 389), leaflets that were home published and distributed locally and via email. Apart for a handful of leftover articles, the series is complete. (Part of my rationale for reprinting the material was to touch it up so that it could be published as a book, G-d willing, to be named *The Story of Shyke Fifer and Other Secrets of the Universe*.)

Some people who know me had the insight to ask how I found the time to be so prolific, churning out so much material every week (usually two decent-sized articles a week). Now they know the answer. So the question that remains is: what will happen to this column?

My hope is to continue the column, albeit in a different format. In all likelihood the editorial will be shorter and chattier, probably not focusing on a particular *sicha*, as was my custom.

So what will it contain then? Will it have any substance? All I can say is: thank G-d for Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Ginsberg. Oh, and how can I forget Rabbi Tuvia Bolton.

This column will tend to reflect on events and ideas, rather than present and develop them. It will be more casual, whimsical; probably less polished.

In the past I had made a call for more interaction on the part of the reader. But there is scanty material I receive to justify a regular "Readers Writing" column. I guess I'm not the only one who is too busy. One of the things I hope to do in this new-format "Editor's Corner" (yes, I think I'll keep the name) is focus on whatever few letters I do receive. Another is to share personal experiences and to draw some message from them, something pertinent to everyone, of course.

The latter two points come together nicely in the following email correspondence which emerged as a criticism for sharing my experience as recorded in "Don't Change That Tune!" mentioned above.

For editor only not for print [yeah right – Ed.].

The same point that you brought could have been brought over in a less negative, deriding way, without belittling shluchim, who go through so much. It is very easy for you to stay in 770 and sing "Yechi" when thinking only of the Lubavitchers around you. Many shluchim would love to but have to constantly explain, etc., and it's a very hard thing. So at least don't be deriding; give positive stuff – it has the best effect.

B'birchas Moshiach Now

Anonymous

Dear Anonymous,

My hope is to continue the column, albeit in a different format. In all likelihood the editorial will be shorter and chattier, probably not focusing on a particular sicha, as was my custom.

My only concern is that we seem to reserve the majority of our explaining for "our own" (Lubavitchers). [See this week's interview with Rabbi Schwei, where Rabbi Schwei tells of a *yungerman* who forewarns the *minyán* of *chareidim* from Boro Park and Williamsburg that if he were to take the *amud for Mincha* he would say "Yechi" after *davening*, and "to his surprise, no one objected, and they even gave a reason: You have nothing to worry about – we're not Lubavitchers..."] **The point of my story is that the world is not so un-accepting; it is we who have to overcome our trepidation. After all, the whole Jewish world accepts the singing of "Dovid Melech Yisroel Chai v'Kayam."** Why is "Yechi" any more difficult to give over?

By the way, I may print your words anonymously.

Well I appreciate your response and time to answer.

What you said is a hundred percent valid but it's a lot easier said than done, and that is what shluchim have to deal with.

Moshiach Now

Anonymous

Though I am sympathetic to the hard work and dedication – even utter self-sacrifice – of *shluchim*, I simply don't agree with the premise – that it is "easier said than done." Granted that the entire business of *shlichus* is difficult, I just don't see how this message, the message of

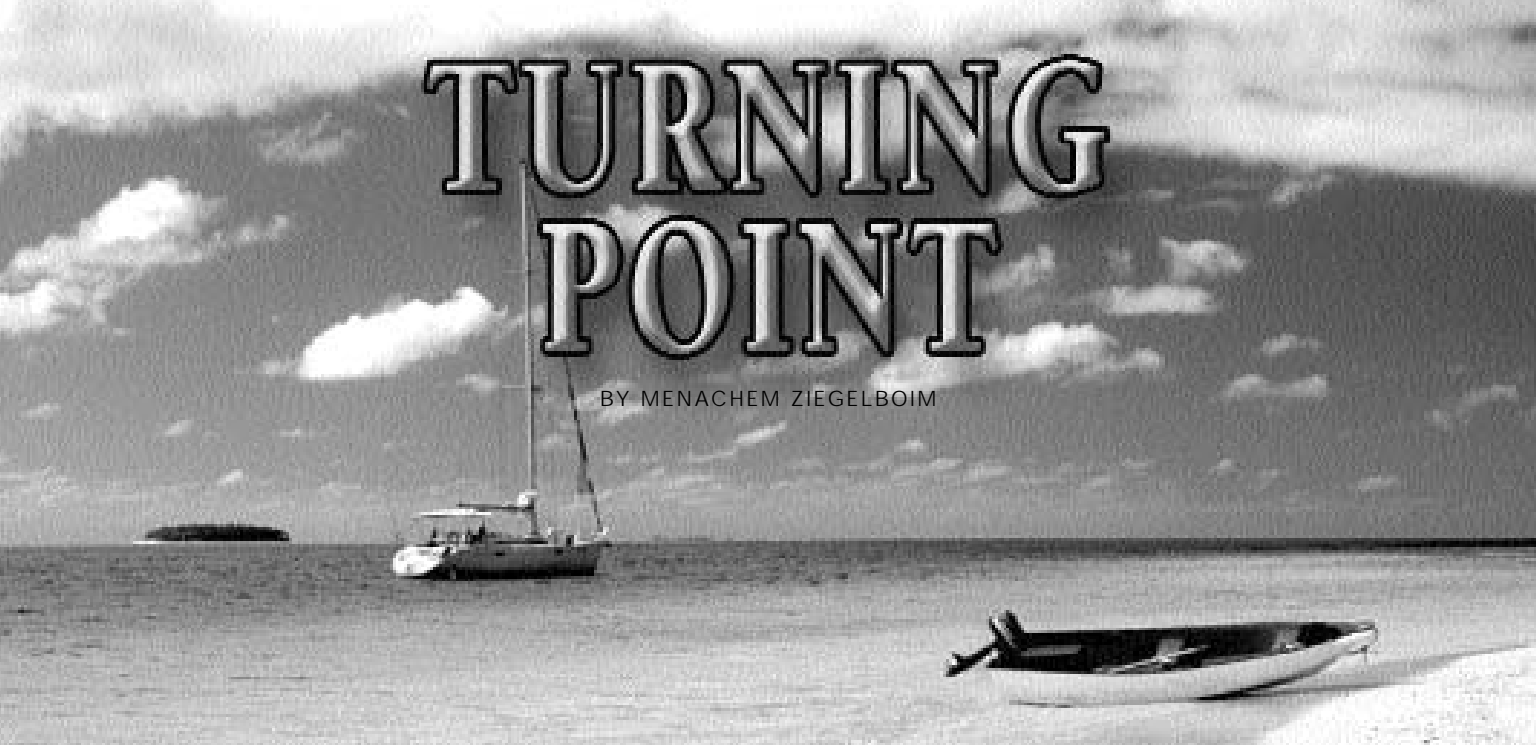
EIGHT SPARKS THAT WERE IGNITED

*Eight touching stories by writers for Beis Moshiach,
about neshamos that were ignited.
Presented for Chanuka. * Part 1 of 2*



TURNING POINT

BY MENACHEM ZIEGELBOIM



You can see him every day sitting in the Chabad *yeshiva* in Katamon, his head leaning on his hand, his eyes fixed upon the volume before him. He has a short beard, and he looks like any other Tamim. It's hard to believe that this *bachur's* background is very far from one of Torah and *mitzvos*. It's even harder to believe how he made his way to the world of *Yiddishkeit* and *chassidus*.

* * *

Guy Efraim is the name of a boy who completed his three-year army service, and who, upon his release, took off with some friends "to clear their heads" in the Far East. He loaded up his backpack and went to see the sights, to broaden his horizons.

At some point he arrived in Thailand, where he traveled about the cities and towns, trying to avoid the noise of the city. Guy loved peace and quiet, so he rarely traveled together with other Israelis. Alone, with his backpack and stick, he walked around the little villages and became acquainted with whole new worlds. He did this for three years.

One fine day he arrived at a vacation island. He remained there for

He felt as though lightening had struck him. A dreidel had landed near his feet, on this forsaken beach in Thailand. It seemed beyond bizarre. What was it doing here in a place where there wasn't even one Jewish doctor?

three months, sleeping in a ramshackle bungalow among the rocks of the beach, eating whatever came to hand. Each day he sat on the

beach for hours. He gazed at the blue sea and listened to the slapping waves which washed over him.

His thoughts flew hither and yonder, taking him to nearly every possible place. He thought about meditation, charting pathways to spiritual worlds, and struggling with the storminess in his soul as though trying to overpower it. The only thing he didn't think about was his people, his Judaism, his birthplace. He went there in order to flee and forget anything having to do with the country where terror reigned, where religious Jews sucked out government money, and the top ten percent of the country ruled the country – and in general, to get away from the chaos.

It's not surprising then, that he was emotionally cut off from anything that would remind him of home, including friends and family. Since he had left three and a half years before, he had called his parents only a few times. The last time he had spoken to them was five months before.

Guy arranged his legs and prepared himself for another round of meditation. He focused his senses and stared off into space, breathing deeply. The sun had nearly set when a

strange object rolled in with the waves and landed on the sand near his feet. He reached out his hand for the object and examined it.

It was a *sevivon* (a *dreidel*) – a Jewish one. Not just a top, but a *dreidel* with four Hebrew letters on it!

He felt as though lightening had struck him. A *dreidel* had landed near his feet, on this forsaken beach in Thailand. It seemed beyond bizarre. What was it doing here in a place where there wasn't even one Jewish doctor?

Guy stared at the *dreidel* for a long time, turning it this way and that. He remembered the last *dreidel* he had seen when he was in kindergarten. He remembered a *menora*, too.

He continued to sit and think, even though darkness had descended and a cold night breeze rippled his thin shirt. He got up and went over to his bungalow.

His thoughts brought him back to his home in Eretz Yisroel, to his father and mother. Suddenly he felt a need to call them and talk with them. It had been so long since he had last done so.

His mother was thrilled by his call. "Guy! Happy Chanuka! It's good you're calling now because Abba is just lighting the *menora*."

Guy couldn't speak, not even when his father took the phone from his mother and asked how he was. He was simply stunned.

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"It's Chanuka today?" he finally blurted out. His father didn't understand why he was silent.

While he spoke, Guy removed the *dreidel* from his pocket. For him, this was more than enough. It went way beyond coincidence. He felt that something was guiding him, that same something he had been trying to ignore and find substitutes to replace.

After the phone conversation, he went outside again. He took a giant banana leaf and a coconut and fashioned a small *menora*. He got

small candles from the Thai "mother" who hosted him in the bungalow.

When he finished his odd construction, he lit the candles. It was a Jewish light, which illuminated the place and the wayward young man. A tourist watched him wide-eyed. He didn't know what Guy had made, why he had lit the candles and why he was so lost in thought. He asked Guy for an explanation, and Guy explained that it symbolized victory.

"Whose victory?" wondered the tourist.

"The Jews' victory over the Romans," said Guy in ignorance.

"Oh," muttered the tourist, shrugging his shoulders in surprise, "I'm also from Rome."

* * *

The next day, at the same time in the same place, facing Chaf HaSevivon (Dreidel Beach) as he called it, Guy decided he had to return home and study his own religion. Maybe there was something to it. First, he visited the Chabad house for Israelis in Thailand, which is run by Rabbi Nechemia Wilhelm, where he first became acquainted with Judaism and Lubavitchers.

A few months later, Guy was sitting in the Chabad *yeshiva* in Katamon, taking his first steps in the world of Torah, trying to make up for all he had missed over the years.

A year later he married, and today he is a *chassidische* young man.



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“AND YOU WILL HARVEST YOUR GRAIN”

BY YISROEL FRIEDMAN



Rabbi Kalman Druk, director of Chabad schools in Beer Sheva, would spend a lot of time on *mitvtzaim*. He started doing this while still at school at Moshav Brosh in the Negev. He devoted a significant part of this time to *Mivtza Mezuzah*. He checked *mezuzos*, and if necessary, exchanged them, thus ensuring that many homes had beautiful, kosher *mezuzos*.

One night he received a phone call from a woman who asked him to visit her home in Moshav Tadmor in order to check her *mezuzos*. Rabbi Druk checked his schedule and suggested a certain day that was convenient for him, but the woman said it was urgent.

Rabbi Druk, who had already been witness to other urgent situations, agreed to see her that very night. The woman and her husband sat facing the *rav*, broken and worn out. The husband was bandaged from head to toe with

signs of stitches visible in many places.

Rabbi Druk said he wanted to

Fortunately, like a helping hand from Above, the machine stopped working seconds later. But in those seconds I received deep lacerations all over my body.”

check the *mezuzos* first, before hearing their story. They agreed and Rabbi Druk went to work. When he

removed the *mezuzah* from the front door, he immediately noticed a flaw in the word, “*d’ganecha*” in the phrase, “*v’osaftha d’ganecha*” (and you will harvest your grain).

Rabbi Druk showed the man the problem and the man sighed deeply. He began to relate what had happened to him, and it seemed that it related directly to what had just been discovered.

* * *

“A few weeks ago I went out to the field, as I usually do, to harvest potatoes. As always, I connected the harvester, which has giant iron teeth, to the pin behind the tractor. This is how the machine works: When I drive the tractor, the machine behind it does the work, and the huge teeth turn the earth over, uncovering the potatoes.

“I began driving but the machine stopped working within a few minutes. I got off the tractor in order to check it out and realized

that little rocks had gotten caught in the teeth of the machine. I removed the stones but before I could get my hand out, the iron teeth starting rotating and I was caught on the wheel! Fortunately, like a helping hand from Above, the machine stopped working seconds later. But in those seconds I received deep lacerations all over my body.”

The man’s eyes filled with tears. “I was seriously injured and I began to hemorrhage. I was in the middle of the field, far from any others, and so there was nobody to hear me. I was unable to drive the tractor to the road. From the distance, I could see a worker in the field, but he did not hear my cries. I had no other choice but to walk towards my house, hoping I would make it there, but apparently I fainted a few minutes later.

“When I regained consciousness, I was in bed in Saroka hospital. I didn’t understand how I had gotten there. I looked around me and saw my brother-in-law sitting nearby, looking at me compassionately.

“He told me later that he had wanted to discuss something with me, and since he knew I worked in the field, he had gone out there. He was shocked to discover me lying there unconscious in a pool of blood.

“It was a great miracle, because if he hadn’t come, I would have lain there for hours until I died from the loss of blood. At the hospital they operated on me for hours. At first they thought they had to amputate my hands, *ch”v*, but they were able to take veins from my leg in order to save my hands.

“I came back from the hospital today and felt that I had to check the *mezuzos*. Now I understand how this could have happened. The words, “and you will harvest your grain,” were *pasul*.”

* * *

The Rachamim family was greatly shaken up by the mezuza revelation. They saw it as a G-dly light, which came into their home in order to save them from a terrible tragedy. The entire family became more seriously committed to *Yiddishkeit*. They began participating in the *davening* at the *moshav*, coming regularly to the *shul*. The father began putting on *t’fillin* every day. Naturally, all the *mezuzos* were changed. A few more *neshamos* were ignited in the Rachamim family at Moshav Tadmor in the Negev.

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ALL FOR A LOVE OF TANACH

BY SHNEUR ZALMAN BERGER



The Chabad community of Rechovot is a dynamic one, one which is constantly growing thanks to the *baalei t'shuva* who continue to join it. This is in no small part due to the Chabad house directed by Rabbi Mordechai Kastel and program director, Rabbi Michael Raynitz.

Reuven Ilan is someone who fit in nicely to the Chabad community of Rechovot. His path to Judaism and *chassidus* was via his interest in Tanach. Reuven is a man in his forties. He works in an internationally known cosmetic company and his views were always anti-religious. He had one "weakness" though, and that was that he found Tanach very interesting. He loved opening his Tanach at home and flipping through the pages, reading chapters of history replete with joy and sadness, blood and tears. He did not consider the Tanach as the holy Torah given at Sinai, but viewed it as

a fascinating history book.

At a certain stage, Reuven realized that if he really wanted to learn Tanach properly, with all its nuances, he had to learn with a religious Jew. He got up the nerve, and when he encountered a religious Jew he asked whether they could study Tanach together. The Jew he happened to meet was R' Shimshon Shoan, a

***When he increased
his Torah study,
parnasa came too.
That day was Yud-
Tes Kislev, his own
personal chag
ha'geula.***

Lubavitcher Chassid who lives in Rechovot. Shimshon referred him to Rabbi Raynitz.

R' Raynitz welcomed him and when Reuven asked him where he could find a suitable class, R' Raynitz simply said, "Right here with me."

The two sat together and began studying Tanach, chapter after chapter, with commentaries and explanations. R' Raynitz added the soul element to their studies, and as time went on, hearts and minds drew closer. When R' Raynitz saw that the time was ripe, he suggested that they expand their partnership to include a class in *chassidus*. Reuven agreed.

Shortly thereafter, Reuven accepted invitations for Shabbos meals at the Raynitz home. Despite it all, he did nothing as far as living a life of Torah and *mitzvos*.

"I kept wondering whether I should invest so much into him when

he wasn't at all interested in keeping *mitzvos*," says R' Raynitz. "I finally concluded that any Jew who comes to Chabad has to be drawn close, each one according to his ability and level. I decided to host him every Shabbos, in the hopes that this would shift something within him."

Indeed, as time went on, cracks began appearing in Reuven's wall of opposition. At first it was new *mezuzos* that he had put up in his home. Then he bought *t'fillin*, and put them on each day.

It wasn't easy for him to put *t'fillin* on daily. He was afraid of what people would say, how people would react to the change in him. For this reason, he tried to put the *t'fillin* on and *daven* at home before leaving for work. But sometimes he woke up late and didn't have time to put the *t'fillin* on. When this occurred, Reuven took the *t'fillin* with him to work and secretly put them on there. Whenever he *davened* at work, he found himself a different hiding place.

On that Thursday when he got up late, he took his *t'fillin* with him to work. During a break he wondered where he could put the *t'fillin* on, and suddenly thought of an idea – the boss' office! The boss had traveled abroad, and so his office was the perfect place. As a senior employee in the company, he had the key to the office.

He slipped into the office, locked the door, put on a *tallis* and *t'fillin*, and began to *daven*. As he stood there in *tallis* and *t'fillin*, someone tried to open the door. At first he hoped the person would leave, but the person kept on trying to get in. He had no choice but to open the door. There stood the son of the boss, holding *t'fillin*!

The two of them stared at each other in bewilderment. It turned out that the two anti-religious men *davened* Shacharis and put on *t'fillin* every day!

Reuven had kosher *mezuzos* and he put *t'fillin* on every day. That was it. For five years, Reuven kept up his connection with Chabad, with Judaism being placed on the backburner. It seemed that if he hadn't been unexpectedly fired from his job, he would never have joined the Lubavitch *kollel* "Ohr Zarua" in Rechovot. He was heartbroken by his being laid off, and he wrote to the Rebbe about it. The answer he

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opened to in the *Igros Kodesh* was to participate in *shiurei Torah*. Reuven did so, quickly acclimating to life in the *kollel*, where he sat and learned *nigleh* and *chassidus*. Naturally this led to a stronger commitment to observing *mitzvos*.

Throughout these months, Reuven repeatedly asked the Rebbe for a *bracha* for abundant and easy *parnasa*, but all the answers he

opened to were about increasing Torah study. He realized he had a mission to accomplish and he added additional hours to his study schedule.

The Rebbe's *bracha* was fulfilled. When he increased his Torah study, *parnasa* came too. His previous place of employment invited him back and offered him additional nice perks, all in all, a better situation than the one he had left. That day was Yud-Tes Kislev, his own personal *chag ha'geula*.

He went back to work wearing a *kippa* and a beard. He hung a picture of the Rebbe in his old/new office, and he brought pamphlets about Torah and *mitzvos* to his colleagues. Soon his son, Eldad, became religious, too. At first he had searched in foreign pastures, but when he learned about the concept of the influence the leader of the generation has on every Jew, he realized he could get that directly, through the *nasi ha'dor*, the Rebbe MH"M. He didn't need intermediaries. Father and son sat and learned *maamarim* together.

Two years ago, Reuven decided the time had come for him to visit the Rebbe and to see 770 in person. "I felt light in my soul. It was thrilling to see the Rebbe's *shtender*, his chair, and the lit *menora*. I will never forget the wondrous sight of the platform at the *farbrengen* with hundreds of *chassidim* sitting around it and *farbrenging*. I felt as though I was in another world, and I knew that from now on, I was a Chassid."

When he returned to Eretz Yisroel, he bought a *sirtuk*, put on a *gartel*, and put on his first black hat. His colleagues at work looked askance at him, but since they respected his professionalism and expertise, they ignored his *chassidic* garb.

ALL THANKS TO ONE TANYA CLASS

BY SHNEUR ZALMAN BERGER



Two T'mimim stood in the doorway of the Chabad house on Rechov Atzmaut in Bat-Yam, inviting people to come in. "A special program is taking place now," they kept repeating. Dozens of young people passing by agreed to enter. They simply were curious to see what the special program was about, which was actually a Tanya class.

When Rabbi Zimroni Tzik began his lecture, the audience realized this was not exactly what they expected, but they were embarrassed to get up and go.

When the class was over, a high school boy approached R' Tzik and expressed a great interest in Judaism, asking many questions about *emuna* and topics related to *mitzva* observance. Even though the boy was young, his questions were mature.

When R' Tzik asked his name, he introduced himself, whereupon R' Tzik realized that he came from a well-known Leftist, anti-religious family.

At the end of the conversation, R'

Tzik invited him to regularly attend the classes and programming at the Chabad house. The boy agreed, and he returned a few days later to another Tanya class. At the end of the class, once again he peppered the Rabbi with his questions.

Months passed, and then one fine day, the boy reappeared. He went over to R' Tzik and announced, "I decided to do t'shuva."

This was the last time R' Tzik saw the boy.

Months passed, and then one fine day, the boy reappeared. He went over

to R' Tzik and announced, "I decided to do *t'shuva*. I heard the classes in *chassidus* and understood what you explained to me about *mitzva* observance. I hesitated over the past months and finally concluded that I must accept the yoke of *mitzvos*."

He became a regular participant in all the classes at the Chabad house, and took on more and more *mitzvos*.

After a year of serious study, whether with organized *shiurim* or on his own, I asked the Rebbe whether he should learn in the *yeshiva* in Kfar Chabad. The answer was positive, and the boy transferred to the *yeshiva g'dola* in Kfar Chabad. He then went on to *k'vutza*, and today runs his own Chabad house.

Over the years he has had a positive influence on his parents, brothers and sisters, and they too have become *chassidim* – all thanks to one Tanya class.

HA'RAV HA'GAON R. AHARON YAAKOV SCHWEI,
MEMBER OF THE BEIS DIN OF CROWN HEIGHTS,
IN AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH BEIS MOSHIACH

**“IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE INSTRUCTIONS
I RECEIVED FROM THE REBBE,**

I WILL COMBINE MY WORK IN EDUCATION WITH THE RABBANUS”

INTERVIEWED BY RABBI SHOLOM YAAKOV CHAZAN
TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY



Upon confirmation of the election of HaRav HaGaon R. Aharon Yaakov Schwei, shlita, as a member of the Crown Heights Beis Din, we asked to hear from him about his plans in the rabbanus and his opinions on today's more pressing matters

– from the role of the rabbanim to the proper methods in the education of children and publicizing the announcement of the Redemption.

In this comprehensive interview, we find irrefutable evidence of the great merit that has come to Crown Heights with the election to the beis din of so wise and knowledgeable a rav as HaRav Schwei.

On behalf of our many thousands of readers, please permit me to say *mazel tov* to the rav. The community gave its overwhelming support to the rav – a majority of 90%, which gives testimony to the great esteem and appreciation it has for you.

Thank you very much.

Many people are asking themselves, “Who is HaRav Schwei? Where did he come from? How did he

come to reach the rabbanus?” Perhaps the rav can tell us something about himself?

My father, of blessed memory, Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu Schwei from Dvinsk, learned for two years in Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in Lubavitch, until 5676. When he returned to Dvinsk, he went to learn with the rav of the local *misnaged* community, Rabbi Meir Simcha, author of the *Ohr Sameiach*. One day, the

Rogatchover Gaon, who was serving as the rav of the *chassidic* community, met him and asked, “Why are you going to the *misnagdim*? Aren't you a Lubavitcher? Come to me!” That meeting was the start of a marvelous period in my father's life. My father received *shimush* from the Rogatchover Gaon, and merited to learn much from him. The Rogatchover gave him *smicha*, and from my father's stories, it was apparent that the Rogatchover showed a special expression of affection towards him.

After two years, my father married my mother, Rebbetzin Bonya, nee Diamond, from a prominent and outstanding Lubavitcher family, descendants of the Alter Rebbe. Her maternal grandfather was the well-known *chassid*, R. Aharon Yaakov Weiler from Krislave. Due to her mother's poor health, my mother grew up in her grandfather's home, where she received an inner *chassidic* education that took root in the depths of her soul.

After the wedding, my father, at the instructions of the Rebbe Rayatz, traveled to Finland to work with young people in Jewish education and outreach. For certain reasons, he was unable to serve officially there as a rav,

and he was appointed as a teacher, despite the fact that, in truth, he fulfilled all the rabbinical obligations. Recently, I came across a newspaper clipping from 5695, which talks about my father's activities. The article describes the spiritual revolution that my father was stirring in the community through his success in the establishment of a regular *minyán*, organized Jewish studies for youth, and more. Among my father's students at that time that I recall were the *chazan* R. Moshe Teleshevsky and R. Yitzchak Nemes, may they live and be

well.

In the Rebbe Rayatz's *Igros Kodesh*, several letters are printed with instructions regarding outreach to Jewish youth that explain the great importance of reaching out to our Jewish brethren. Similarly, the Rebbe instructed my father to involve himself in the study of the laws of *sh'chita* and *b'dika*.

In 5696, we moved to Norva, Estonia. An established Jewish community already existed there, and my father served as a *rav* and teacher in *sh'chita* and *b'dika*. Like his father and

grandfathers before him, my father was an extremely kind and generous man. Our home was open to passers-by, *m'shulachim*, or everyday guests.

However, the good life did not last long. In 5700, the Russians conquered Estonia, and shortly thereafter, the Second World War broke out. At that time, a government order was issued that one member from every family must be enlisted to dig trenches around the city. Naturally, most of those who enlisted were men, as this was extremely difficult and very dangerous work. However, my mother, of blessed memory, categorically refused to let my father carry out the order, so she enlisted in his place. She said that if, *ch"v*, something would happen to him, she would be left alone, and she simply would not be able to educate us at the same level that my father would.

As the frontline came closer, we escaped east into the heart of Russia.

When we arrived in Tashkent, along with the other Jewish refugees, it became clear that the city was already filled to capacity, and it would be impossible to stay there. We moved on until we reached the city of Wofkent near Bukhara. Due to the great hardships that he endured, my father took ill and passed away there, and my mother was left a lonely and broken widow without Jewish surroundings. In the harsh conditions that prevailed at that time, my older sister, Hinda, of blessed memory, also passed away, and my mother had to bury her daughter with her own hands... Afterwards, we moved to Bukhara.

Despite all this, my mother spent these very difficult times making certain that we all had a proper Torah education. When she heard that the famed Gaon of Tchebin, HaRav Dov Berish Wiedefeld, founder of Yeshivas Kochav Yaakov in Yerushalayim, was in the city, she came to him, crying and pleading. In the end, she succeeded in



convincing him to teach my older brother, R. Boruch Sholom, of blessed memory. As an expression of her thanks and gratitude (or in place of tuition), she would bring to the *gaon's* home two buckets of water every day from the center of town, and would also clean his house.

Some time later in Bukhara, she met a Lubavitcher *chassid*, R. Eliezer Mishulovin, of blessed memory, who told her that there is a branch of Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim – Lubavitch in Samarkand. This news gave a breath of life to my mother, who did not rest until she sent us to the *yeshiva*. To make certain that the authorities would not capture us, we traveled one at a time. When their agents came to my mother's home and asked her where the children are, she said that we ran away from her...

As the youngest child, I arrived in Samarkand after my older brothers were already well accustomed to the area. In the merit of my young age, my eldest brother gave up his place on the bench where he would sleep. We learned in substandard conditions, but we were happy and knew well to appreciate every moment that we could learn Torah and live among *chassidim*. It was only after two years that my mother succeeded in getting to Samarkand, and thus the family was reunited once again.

We also continued our studies in the *yeshiva* during the war years. Then in 5706, the *yeshiva*, along with many other Lubavitcher *chassidim*, left the Soviet Union, and after much hardship, established its location at the former internment camp in Pucking, Germany, and from there to Brunoy, France. In 5711, in accordance with the Rebbe's instructions, we went to learn in Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim – Lubavitch in Montreal.

In Montreal, we were very involved in outreach activities and together with my brother, R. Isaac, R. Zalman

Marozov, R. Berel Motchkin, and others, we influenced many *bachurim* who were still outside of Lubavitch.

During those years, I learned in *chavrusa* with my brother, R. Isaac, of blessed memory, and with HaRav Nissan Mangel, may he have many long and good years.

Shavuos 5712 marked my first visit to the Rebbe. In those years, we had the special privilege that whenever we came from Montreal, we were able to have *yechidus* with the Rebbe. In the years that followed, the restrictions on private *yechiduyos* made such a privilege less frequent.

I wrote that I wanted to go out on shlichus, and the Rebbe answered me that since I was already in yeshiva – this is my shlichus!

After several years in Montreal, I was appointed a *melamed*, and in preparation for Yud Shvat 5719, I brought all the children of my class to the Rebbe. I went into *yechidus* with all the children, and we were privileged to hear from the Rebbe an entire *sicha* about the role of children. Since I was the only adult in the group, I wrote a "*hanacha*" from that *sicha*, which was printed afterwards in *Sichos Kodosh*. From then on, it became an established custom that every Yud Shvat the *yeshiva* students would come to the Rebbe.

In 5721, I came to Crown Heights, and a few months later, I married my

wife, Rochel, nee Kalouri, may she live and be well. I was offered a position as a classroom teacher and instructor at the Bedford Avenue of the Central Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim – Lubavitch, and after receiving the Rebbe's *bracha*, I began my job, where I work to this very day.

* * *

During the *yechidus* that the *rav* was privileged to have, was there any hint alluding to the position of authority that he has now assumed, the *rabbanus* of Crown Heights?

No. I did not hear anything hinting to my becoming a *rav*.

In the many *yechiduyos* I was privileged to have, the Rebbe spoke with me many times about the importance of influencing people – individuals as well as larger groups. He also took great interest in what I was learning and recommended to me specific *s'farim* that dealt with the subject. For example, when I was learning the laws of *mikvaos*, the Rebbe recommended to me the *seifer Taharas HaMayim*, and said that this is a good *seifer* on *mikvaos*. On another occasion, the Rebbe instructed me to review the *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch*.

The one time that I served in any rabbinical capacity was when I was in camp in Montreal, I was appointed the camp's *rav*. In that position, I had the authority to give *piskei din* on matters of *issur* and *heter*, *eruvim*, etc., over many years.

During the decade of 5730-5739, when the Rebbe began his battle to change the Israeli Law of Return ("Who is a Jew?"), Rabbi Chadakov put out an order that anyone ordained as a *rav* or a *dayan* should register with *Agudas HaRabbanim*, in order to have influence on that body's decisions. Since I met the necessary criteria, I registered with *Agudas HaRabbanim*, and since then, I am considered an official *rav*.



Were there special instructions that the rav received over the years from the Rebbe?

I received instructions in the area of education, most of which were personal instructions pertaining to the conduct of particular students. Others were instructions of a more general nature.

In 5723, the Rebbe ordered that all *yungeleit* that are interested in going out on *shlichus* must submit a letter to that effect to the secretariat. I wrote that I wanted to go out on *shlichus*, and the Rebbe answered me that since I was already in *yeshiva* – this is my *shlichus*! The Rebbe then added a special *bracha* for success in the work of education.

The truth is that when it was suggested that I stand as a candidate for the *rabbanus* here, I was inclined to refuse the offer, since as a fulltime *rav*, I will be forced to leave my position as an educator.

What tipped the scales in favor of the *rabbanus*?

Two things. I recalled that once, I met the *mashpia*, R. Mendel Futerfas, who told me that if I am offered a particular position, I should take it.

His argument: Lubavitcher *chassidim* are like a soccer team. We all have one goal – to bring the world (*kadur ha'aretz*) to the gate (goal) of Torah and *chassidus*. And when does each player on the team know when he has to get the ball and try to make a break for the goal? When the ball comes his way! Then he knows what his job is. “So too with you,” R. Mendel told me. “When the ball comes to you, don’t hesitate to take it.”

But the main reason that I agreed to take upon myself the responsibility of the *rabbanus* is my plan to combine work in education with the *rabbanus*.

How do you combine the *rabbanus* with education?

Very simple: by educating young *rabbanim*.

The Rebbe expressed his desire on numerous occasions that Lubavitcher *yungeleit* should be *rabbanim* and instructors. Unfortunately, the Rebbe’s desire has not been carried out sufficiently. There are not enough quality *chassidic rabbanim*.

As a result, I took upon myself to teach *yungeleit* to become *rabbanim*. Whenever I am in the office, a student comes to me and we sit together while

I take *halachic* questions. I talk with him on almost every question that comes, without identifying the caller, of course, particularly since I myself usually don’t know who is asking, and I don’t ask the person to identify himself. Then, I let the student understand all the details and angles to the question and its answer.

Teaching rabbinical ordination expresses itself on a variety of levels. First, a *rav* must know the *halacha*. Second, he must know how to connect the question that comes before him to its *halachic* source. Third, he requires the ability to render a rabbinical decision.

One of the biggest problems among *chassidic* rabbinical students is a lack of self-assurance to render a *halachic* ruling. They know what the *halacha* is, but they are afraid to issue *piskei din*. Thank G-d that this is our problem... This reminds me of the story of the *chassid* who came to the Rebbe Rashab and said that he had been offered a job as a *shochet*. He knows *sh’chita*, but he is afraid to accept so great a responsibility. The Rebbe said to him, “Who do you want them to appoint as a *shochet*? Someone who is not afraid?...”

During the last two years, since beginning my part-time work for the *Beis Din*, several rabbinical students have come my way. One of them has already been appointed a *rav* and an educator in Russia, and a second is soon to follow. Every day, one of these students comes to my office. I see clearly that when they understand that they will have to make *halachic* decisions, the learning is on a totally different level. In the Rebbe Rashab’s *Hemshech* of 5666, he explains that when a person learns matters that have practical application, the study is something else entirely.

It is my earnest hope that within a brief period of time Chabad will have a greater number of *chassidic rabbanim*.

One must remember that with *chassidic rabbanim*, the *chassidus* comes before the *rabbanus*. As the Rebbe himself always says, "A *chassidishe rav*" – with the word *chassidishe* coming first – means that you don't take a *rav* and make him into a *chassid*, rather you take a *chassid* and make him into a *rav*...

* * *

In recent years, in light of the Rebbe's instructions that in particular matters – not necessarily *halachic* – one must turn to the *rabbanim*, the role of the *rabbanim* has turned into something far more complex. How is this expressed in the *rav's* daily life?

Many people come with *shalom bayis* problems, and in most cases, they are accompanied by problems with *parnasa*. In a family blessed with a large number of children where the husband is unsuccessful in his efforts to make a living, the wife claims that she needs help with the children, whereas the husband counters that he needs to bring in *parnasa*. Both of them are right, but in the meantime, there is a lack of domestic harmony. I have meetings with couples in my home, sit with them for hours, clarify all the nagging problems, and then try to come up with solutions.

In this area, I have plans to establish a committee of trained rabbinical students to deal with difficulties in *shalom bayis*, and another committee to deal with *parnasa* problems. There are *yungeleit* in very difficult financial situations, and if someone can help them to organize themselves properly, they will be able to extricate themselves from the problem.

As mentioned earlier, quite often these two problems are tied, one to the other, and when the *parnasa* problem is solved, the *shalom bayis* problem is automatically solved, as well. This is so even though that sometimes the exact opposite is the case, i.e., through *shalom bayis* comes the *bracha* for

parnasa.

Many people come with questions totally unrelated to *halacha* – questions on *hashkafa*, *shidduchim*, etc. They have questions on matters they simply can't decide for themselves, so they come and ask the *rav*. Sometimes, they ask the Rebbe via *Igros Kodesh*, but because they don't understand the answer, they come to the *rav* to ask him to explain the content of the answer.

There was a time that *rabbanim*

One of the biggest problems among chassidic rabbinical students is a lack of self-assurance to render a halachic ruling. They know what the halacha is, but they are afraid to issue piskei din. Thank G-d that this is our problem...

could evade such questions on the grounds that they are not *halachic* in nature, and thus not within the *rav's* area of responsibility. Today, however, as you mentioned, the Rebbe gave the *rabbanim* this authority, as well. We must also give answers to these types of questions.

And where does the *rav* find answers to questions with no source in *halacha*?

To tell you the truth: I rely upon

G-d. I pray that I will find the truth, the Rebbe's will, and rely upon G-d that He will place in my mouth the right words.

* * *

To be elected as *rav* of a community with such wide support – 90% – is most unusual... What is the secret to the *rav's* success?

A *rav* must have the Oibershter's blessing for patience – something that is seriously needed nowadays... When someone comes to a *rav* with a question, and he has no time to hear all the aspects of the questioner's circumstances, the questioner leaves brokenhearted and with a bad taste in his mouth. A *rav* must sit and listen to all the doubts and uncertainties that people have. People at times don't wait for an answer. They come only in order that they will be heard. Sometimes they just need some encouragement. Even when the matter is *halachic* in nature, after the *rav* listens patiently to what he has to say, the answer is accepted by the questioner in an entirely different manner.

Everyone that comes to me with a question leaves happily when he receives the answer. People are usually inclined to be stringent with themselves and run to the *rav* with every little question. As a result, it turns out that in the majority of cases that come before me, I rule to be lenient. Naturally, such rulings bring much joy and relief to the person asking. But even in a case when the ruling calls for stringency and thus, the results are less of a reason for happiness, nevertheless, the person is happy to some extent.

The Rebbe said once that when a Jew comes to a *rav* with a question of *issur* and *heter*, he accepts the *rav's* decision happily, even when it causes him considerable financial loss. However, when he has a *din Torah* and loses, he leaves with a feeling of anger against the *rav* – not because he lost,

but because the other person benefited... The rav also sits in on *dinei Torah*, where there are two sides...

It's true that *dinei Torah* are a bit harder. First of all, we always try to bring about a compromise between the two sides, and when we are successful, each side leaves satisfied. But even when there is no choice, and there will be a loser – it is still possible with a little effort to soften the blow to the losing side. I always try after the *din Torah* to speak with the loser and show him the sources of the *p'sak din* and explain them to him, until he understands himself why the decision went the other way. Thank G-d, most of the time, this proves successful.

Not long ago, I presided over a *din Torah*, and of course, there was a winner and a loser. Two weeks later, the loser had another *din Torah*, yet he didn't hesitate to turn to me again and ask me to rule in this second *din Torah*, even though he had been ruled against in the previous one.

* * *

After Gimmel Tammuz, differing opinions have developed regarding the education of children, whether to teach based on a longing for the past or to focus on the present and to live with the Rebbe's announcement of the Redemption. As an experienced educator, what is the rav's opinion?

Everyone agrees that we must educate children to live with the Rebbe. The question is only how to do so. Today, to our great sadness, several years after Gimmel Tammuz, we can let experience speak for itself. Educational experience proves that the best way to teach a child to live with the Rebbe is when you place an emphasis upon the obligation to live with Moshiach and

the Redemption. Children don't connect with something that was in the past. They are inclined to have a much stronger connection with things are happening now. Therefore, when children are taught that the Rebbe is *chai v'kayam* and is with us now – they live with this with much greater strength. We see clearly that those who live with Moshiach and teach children accordingly have much more success.



It is obvious that even those who have adopted different methods in education do so with the purpose of establishing *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe, and they certainly have G-d's help towards that effort. The Rebbe once said in reference to the Rebbe Rayatz that he is a "guter" (good), and therefore, anyone that wants to connect to him, he will accommodate it. The only difference is that someone

who relates to the Rebbe as one who is found in the heavens above will be helped as much as possible – but from afar, from Heaven. Whereas a person who relates to the Rebbe as *chai v'kayam*, who is with him here in this world – he will help him all he can as one who is nearby. In truth, those who believe that the Rebbe is *chai v'kayam*, live with it, and teach it – merit far greater reciprocation.

In my opinion, anything that illustrates the fact that the Rebbe is *chai v'kayam* adds to a person's faith and is a most positive thing. I know that there are those who oppose such an approach. I absolutely understand them, for someone who merited to see the Rebbe, as a king in all his glory, has great difficulty living with such a situation. But for thousands of *chassidim* who were not so privileged, particularly younger people, this is something which adds faith, *hiskashrus*, and vitality in all matters that pertain to the Rebbe.

To tell you the truth, when I see young people who never had the privilege of seeing the Rebbe clinging to this manner of conduct in order to enliven and kindle the flame of faith and *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe, it is evident to me that we are talking about a correct and appropriate *chassidic* feeling, which is very exciting.

Sometimes the argument arises: must we encourage students to travel to the Rebbe after Gimmel Tammuz?

For my part, there is no question: *chassidim* must come to 770! Even though we can't see the Rebbe, these are the Rebbe's *Daled amos*, and from here we draw all our strength and vitality. We can learn this from the Rebbe himself. At more than forty

years of *farbrengens*, the Rebbe emphasized almost every time about the importance of 770 as the *Daled amos* of the leader of the generation – not to mention, of course, the marvelous expressions from the *kuntres* “*Beis Rabbeinu Sh’B’Bavel*.”

Even those who say that what happened on Gimmel Tammuz must be interpreted in its simplest sense – in spite of *sichos* from the Rebbe that indicate otherwise – they too admit that the holiness there has not moved from its place, and the Rebbe continues to influence via 770.

The only reason why people can possibly oppose traveling to 770 is the question of “*Mi B’Rosh?*” The Gemara relates the story of Yeraboam ben Navat, a Torah giant so great that all the Torah scholars of his generation were considered as onionskins in comparison. Nevertheless, when the question of “*Mi B’Rosh?*” came to the forefront, this caused him to prevent the Jewish people from going up to the *Beis HaMikdash*... Also, in our case, this is the real question. Getting to the heart of the matter, I am certain that everyone believes that what the Rebbe said about 770 applies even today, because it is “*Beis Chayeinu*,” where the revelation of the Third *Beis HaMikdash* will begin from.

The bottom line is that their motives are undoubtedly good, but their actions are not in line with the Rebbe’s *sichos*, and that is a tremendous pity.

What is the correct and proper manner to spread the announcement of the Redemption?

As with any such question, it is enough to consider the conduct of the Rebbe in order to know the right approach. The Rebbe used every available opportunity to speak about the Redemption. We see clearly that with every passing year, the rate of *sichos* on the Redemption grew with much intensity. In the decade of

5740-5749, the Rebbe dealt with the subject far more than in the previous decade. From 5750, the Rebbe’s *sichos* were overflowing with discussions of the Redemption. All this is in accordance with the known *halachic* principle of “increasing in matters of holiness.”

In light of the Rebbe’s conduct, there is no question that now, in 5763, we must publicize the announcement of the Redemption much more than we did in the previous decade, and much more than we did last year, particularly since we are now much closer to the Redemption!

There are those who claim that when people publicize the announcement of the Redemption, they quickly slide into the issue of Moshiach’s identity, which is difficult to explain after Gimmel Tammuz.

The Rebbe also touched upon this concern, saying that the world is ready. Therefore, when we go out to the world, tell the truth, and mean it – the message is accepted.

If there are those who don’t accept the Rebbe’s message, only we are to blame. Since we don’t believe it

enough ourselves, the words don’t come from the heart, and thus, it is difficult for them to enter someone else’s heart.

One of the community’s *yungeleit* told me that he works with *chareidim* in Boro Park and Williamsburg. They *daven Mincha* with a *minyán*, and every day someone else takes the *amud*. He would always try to avoid being the *chazan*, because on the one hand, he wants to say “*Yechi*” after *davening*, but on the other hand, he was worried about their reaction. Therefore, every day he would find a different excuse. One day, he could avoid it no longer, and having no alternative, he told them that he has one condition – that he will say “*Yechi*” after *davening*. To his surprise, no one objected, and they even gave a reason: You have nothing to worry about, we’re not Lubavitchers...

That’s the whole story. “And we were in our eyes as grasshoppers,” and as a result, “and so we were in their eyes.” As soon as we stop being embarrassed by the Rebbe’s words and clear instructions to publicize the announcement of the Redemption, our words will automatically be accepted without objection.



The opposition to the Moshiach Campaign lessens from day to day, just as with all of the other *mitvzaim*. The Rebbe is conquering the world, and when the Rebbe announces a particular campaign, this itself affects the world so that it will be accepted.

At times, it created a virtual revolution. One of the elder *chassidim* here in America told me that sixty years ago, when he would enter a *shul* wearing a beard, the *gabbaim* would throw him out. The claim was that it caused a *chillul Hashem* when people thought that Jews went around with beards... This was the way of things in those days. The biggest *roshei yeshiva* in America during that time did not have beards. So when the Rebbe Rayatz arrived in America, he started an "innovation" – that even in America, a Jew can have a beard. The Rebbe Rayatz sent *shluchim* to the *roshei yeshiva* and convinced them to start growing beards. At first, it was difficult, but the Rebbe brought about a complete change in the world's perception, and today, this is no longer within the category of a "trial."

This also happened when the Rebbe announced the T'fillin Campaign, which was opposed in all the *chareidi* communities. They even denounced it as improper and *pasul*, and used every means available to blast Lubavitch over the T'fillin Campaign. Yet, even on this front, the Rebbe and the *chassidim* had the upper hand. Today, those same communities have joined Chabad activities, put *t'fillin* on people, and participate in "outreach."

The same thing needs to be regarding the Moshiach Campaign. It is clear to us without the slightest doubt that we must fulfill the Rebbe's instructions on this matter without hesitation – to publicize everything the Rebbe said about the Redemption and Melech HaMoshiach, and there is no question that the world will accept the message. With time, even they will admit that there must be a Moshiach in

our generation and they will begin to believe that the Rebbe is Melech HaMoshiach.

To those who excuse their inactivity by quoting the Rebbe's words "*b'ofen*

Children don't connect with something that was in the past. They are inclined to have a much stronger connection with things are happening now. Therefore, when children are taught that the Rebbe is *chai v'kayam* and is with us now – they live with this with much greater strength. We see clearly that those who live with Moshiach and teach children accordingly have much more success.

ha'miskabel" (in an acceptable manner), it must be pointed out that the Rebbe said to *publicize b'ofen ha'miskabel*, not to be silent *b'ofen ha'miskabel*. This is certainly not the way to fulfill the

Rebbe's instructions!

I will conclude this topic with a personal story. In my youth, I loved to paint, and when I was in camp, I made Jewish paintings for the campers' cabin groups. After camp, R. Berel Motchkin took the paintings to the Rebbe. One of the paintings depicted a *shofar* with the Thirteen Principles of Faith, where the principle of "I believe in the coming of the Moshiach" combined with a drawing of the Rebbe. R. Berel told me afterwards that the Rebbe enjoyed the paintings very much. Another painting showed the saying of our Sages that "in the Future to Come, the eye will see nothing besides You, Elokim," with the text surrounding the outer edge. The Rebbe stood and walked around the table while reading the words.

A few words in conclusion.

I want to thank all the residents of Crown Heights who expressed their confidence in me by electing me to serve as a member of the *Beis Din*. I hope that I will succeed to carry out the duties of this high position faithfully, together with my friends and colleagues on the *Beis Din*, HaRav HaGaon R. **Avrohom Osdoba *shlita*** and HaRav HaGaon R. **Yosef Avrohom HaLevi Heller *shlita***. I hope to give only *nachas* to the Rebbe MH"™.

I wish to take this opportunity to give encouragement and strength to you and all those involved in the holy work of publishing the *Beis Moshiach Magazine*. It brings each week the light of faith, the fire of *hiskashrus*, and true *chassidic* warmth to thousands of *chassidic* homes throughout the world. I personally enjoy very much reading its wonderful articles.

I have not the slightest doubt that when the Rebbe MH"™ will be revealed, you will stand in the first row to greet him, and the Rebbe will thank you for the wonderful work you are doing and for strengthening the faith in his words. *Yasher ko'ach!*

WHAT IS FITTING OF A CHASSID

TRANSLATED BY RABBI SHIMON NEUBORT



From the Sichos of the Rebbe Rayatz in America Seifer HaSichos – Kayitz 5700 Daytime Meal of Shabbos Parshas Shlach – Part 3

14. [The Rebbe Rayatz continues speaking about the travels of his father, the Rebbe Rashab, in his youth]: The second journey took place during the month of Menachem Av 5634 [to Vitebsk, along with the Rebbe Maharash, who was visiting his physician Prof. Bertenson for a medical consultation]. My saintly father, the Rebbe, related at length the whole story of this journey, which lasted five days: from Sunday, 12 Menachem Av until their return to Lubavitch in the evening of Thursday the 16th of the month. I will relate here only one detail of this subject.

On Wednesday of *Parshas Eikev*, which fell on [the festival of] *Chamisha Asar B'Av*, a large crowd assembled in the courtyard where my saintly grandfather the Rebbe [Maharash] was lodging. The courtyard was very large, with shady trees growing there. After a short while they brought a platform from one of the *shuls*. As the time progressed, more and more people assembled in the courtyard; despite the

courtyard's large size, people began to feel squashed. The elder *chassidim* and dignitaries of the town ascended to

For a chassid it is fitting that he should be joyful, and moreover, that he should appear cheerful to others...

Grandfather's apartment and, in the name of the entire congregation, they requested him to honor them by coming out to the courtyard and reciting a *chassidic maamer*, as he usually did. Grandfather replied that in view of his poor health it was difficult for him to recite *chassidus*, but he would go out

to them for a short time and say a few words. And so, the word went out that within a few minutes Grandfather would arrive.

When Grandfather arrived, he sat on the platform in the place that had been prepared in his honor, and he said: "In the *Agada* of the Sages and in the *Midrash* we often find the expression, 'As is customary in the world...,' or the expressions, 'To what can this be compared?' or, 'It is like a king who...'; 'it is like a prince who...'; 'it is like a person who was...,' and the like. My great-grandfather (the Alter Rebbe; see *Torah Or*, passage beginning "*Chachlili Einayim*," along with the *biur*; also, the letter by my father-in-law the Rebbe (Rayatz) printed at the end of *Kuntres HaAvoda*) translates *ahavas olam* [everlasting love; lit., love of the world] as love which is derived from worldly matters; this means a love of G-d that involves the same feelings as one has regarding love of worldly things. This implies that in serving G-d we should use expressions as they are understood in common language.

"In common Yiddish language we often say 'This is fitting' or 'that is not fitting'; 'for this sort of person it is fitting to do this, and for another sort of person it is fitting not to do this.' The

expressions 'this is fitting' and 'this is not fitting' apply not only with regard to doing, but also with regard to speech, with regard to *middos*, and with regard to understanding.

"For a person of this caliber, it is fitting that he should speak this way, and for a person of different caliber it is not fitting that he should speak this way. For example, [it is not fitting that such a person should speak] with anger, for 'the words of the wise are heard with gentleness.' For a person of this caliber it is not fitting for him not to understand this subject; for a person of such caliber, it is fitting that he *should* understand a profound subject.

"For Jews in general, and *chassidim* in particular, the concept of 'it is fitting' and 'it is not fitting' regarding spiritual matters should be assimilated equally with 'it is fitting' and 'it is not fitting' regarding material matters.

For a *chassid*, it is fitting that he should study a saying of *chassidus* every day; for a *chassid*, it is fitting that he should busy himself with another's benefit; for a *chassid*, it is fitting that he should be joyful, and moreover, that he should appear cheerful to others; for a *chassid*, it is fitting that he should thoroughly see his own shortcomings and the other person's good attributes; for a *chassid*, it is fitting that he should hold even the lowest and simplest Jew to be better than himself; for a *chassid*, it is fitting that he should learn from every person's good *middos* and conduct; for a *chassid*, it is fitting that he should act with love and brotherhood, peace and friendship.

"For a *chassid*, it is not fitting if he does not study *chassidus*; for a *chassid*, it is not fitting if he does not busy himself with another's benefit; for a *chassid*, it is not fitting that he should be dejected; for a *chassid*, it is not fitting if he does not see his own shortcomings; for a *chassid*, it is not fitting that he should hold himself greater than the greatest; for a *chassid*, it is not fitting if he does not learn something good from another person; for a *chassid*, it is not fitting that he should incite dissension, even for the

While he spoke these words, his holy voice could be heard by each and every one who stood there. Most of them broke out in loud weeping.

sake of the ways of *chassidus*.

"Jews in general, and *chassidim* in particular, must use the worldly concept of 'it is fitting' and 'it is not fitting' in their *avoda* of serving G-d (blessed be He)."

When Grandfather finished reciting these holy words he rose from his place, blessed the assembly, and went to his lodgings.

15. The *chassid*, Reb Dov Ber

Hirshman of Vitebsk, and the *chassid*, Reb Shmuel Brin of Vitebsk [a learned rabbi and *chassidic* businessman; see *Links in the Chassidic Legacy* by this translator, Sichos in English, 1977; pp. 137-153], told me that they had been present on that occasion – 15 Menachem Av 5634 – when my saintly grandfather spoke his holy words regarding "it is fitting" and "it is not fitting." While he spoke these words, his holy voice could be heard by each and every one who stood there. Most of them broke out in loud weeping.

Reb Shmuel Brin expressed it to me thusly: "A genuine Yom Kippur spirit prevailed. The *Mishna's* description [end of *Taanis*] was fulfilled, 'Israel had no festivals similar to 15 Av and Yom Kippur.'"

Reb Dov Hirshman expressed it to me as follows: "Those fifteen or twenty minutes during which the Rebbe spoke, cleansed us and laundered us. I wish it could be like that on Erev Yom Kippur after 'Al Cheit.' On that occasion we felt what a Rebbe really is."

16. Reb Dov Hirshman was a wealthy person who owned developed real estate. His material needs were all taken care of. He gave charity generously to the extent that the citizens of Vitebsk understood this concept. He had a stout heart – very, very far from a dejected spirit. And if *he* was so affected that he wished himself that the Erev Yom Kippur *Mincha* could cleanse him the way those holy words did, then we can imagine the great impression that those holy words made.

(To be continued.)

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NO TO THE GREEKS, NO TO CONCESSIONS

BY RABBI TUVIA BOLTON, MASHPIA IN YESHIVA
OHR TMIMIM OF KFAR CHABAD



Chanuka, the Festival of Lights, is probably the most observed Jewish holiday in the non-religious world. For many, many Jews in the U.S.A. the only blessing they know is the one on the Chanuka candles, (with the accompanying melody, of course: “*Asher Kidshanu b’mitzvosav*, etc.”)

Yet Chanuka is, paradoxically, one of the most radically “orthodox” holidays in the book. It commemorates a bloody war waged by the Jews against the Greeks for the most obscure of religious motives, and is a living testimony to Jewish “extremism.”

Let us consider for a moment what really happened on that first Chanuka.

Approximately 2,500 years ago the Greeks, under Alexander the Great, conquered the world and ruled it for several hundred years.

Now, the success of Greek rule lay not only in their superior armed forces, but in their “superior” culture, as well. Their ideas of freethinking and free living held them in the throne long after Alexander the Great died. They were as “civilized” a bunch of rulers as they come.

One of the prime examples of this is the manner in which they dealt with the Jews and their Holy Temple. They did not destroy this center of Jewish identity, as did the barbarian Babylonians or Romans before and after them, rather they cleverly defiled it according to the Jewish laws of purity. The Greeks, you see, did not want to raze the Holy Temple, but rather that the service therein be a bit more Hellenized and less intense.

Similarly, they had no designs to exterminate the Jewish people (as the evil Haman tried to do some two hundred years earlier), rather they wanted to reeducate them with their “superior” Greek intellect and lifestyle.

In other words, the Greeks wanted to do pretty much what most free thinking “normal” Jews want today: Liberty, Fraternity, and Equality. What was so bad about that?!

Suddenly, as if from nowhere, appeared Yehuda Maccabee Chashmonai and his little band of zealots armed to the teeth, and began rebelling against the reasonable, civilized, and mighty Greek

conquerors! And the whole thing caught on! Even the most assimilated Jews (and there were a lot of them back then), got into the spirit of the Jewish cause, or at least threw away their tickets to the arenas and theaters.

The Greeks soon understood that the times were a changing and that they better start packing. They were loosing battle after embarrassing battle, and even worse, the Jews were going berserk! No one wanted to listen to a good rational Greek idea anymore! Exit the Greeks.

Next act: Setting: The empty Holy Temple.

Enter a garrison of victorious Jews swords drawn. As they realize there is no enemy, they return them to their sheaths.

Shimon (the commander): Nu, we made it, men; we’re back in the Mikdash again. Wow, the place is in pretty good order, in fact looks like they didn’t destroy anything.

Dovid: Exactly the opposite, they destroyed everything, it’s all defiled! Here, look over here, in this storeroom, have a look at all these vials of oil. Looks perfect, doesn’t it,

all they did was move or open every bottle, didn't even spill a drop. Those dirty..

Reuven: Watch your language, my friend, remember where you are.

But just a minute... Hey, I remember a law that says that if we have no other choice we can use defiled oil to light the *menora*. It is something like the Pesach Offering, if a few people are defiled they have to wait a month and make it up on Pesach Sheini, but if everyone is defiled, they can all make it in the right time. Same thing here, we can...

Dovid: Forget it, buddy, if we wanted to start thinking like that we wouldn't have been crazy enough to take on the entire Greek army in the first place, would we? We are using pure oil and that's final. I'm not...

Reuven: O.K. O.K. But meanwhile all that we have is unclean. It seems that we really don't have much of a choice, do we. Maybe we should...

One of the group: (on his knees in the corner of the room, he's been rummaging: through the bottles). Hey, Hey! Look here! It's a miracle! A miracle! Thank G-d! Thank you Hashem! Thank you! Thank you! (Everyone gathers around him. He is still on his knees looking up and weeping.) Thank you G-d! Thank you!

Shimon: What's going on here, why is he crying, what did you find here? Good G-d! It's a bottle that they must have missed, it's still sealed with the seal of the Kohen Gadol. It really is a miracle! Thank G-d! First, all those months of miraculous victories, and now this... Who is mighty like you, G-d!

But, to the disappointment of everyone, there was only one such bottle, enough for only one day, and they needed eight days' worth. (That is how long it took to purify the

workers and to either bring or make new oil.)

Now the reader must remember that oil was not lacking, there was plenty of impure oil, but these "fanatics" insisted on using only pure oil. Also, remember that there is no physical difference whatsoever between pure and impure oil, the whole thing is only a detail that is not

There was plenty of oil for the lamp. There was no real danger to anyone's life. The Jews were allowed to worship in the Temple and do all their commandments. All the Greeks wanted were a few concessions, a few reforms, co-existence; certainly nothing to risk one's life or to make a war over.

even written explicitly in the Torah.

The rest is history, the pure oil miraculously burned for eight days, and the Jews had their Beis HaMikdash and their independence for two hundred more years.

So there we have it. There was plenty of oil for the lamp. There was no real danger to anyone's life. The

Jews were allowed to worship in the Temple and do all their commandments. All the Greeks wanted were a few concessions, a few reforms, co-existence; certainly nothing to risk one's life or to make a war over.

There are those who want to say that the Jews fought for independence, and the miraculous victories were won more for political than religious freedom. But if this were the case, then why does the holiday center on lighting little candles and emphasizing the lesser, "religious" miracle. (Remember also that the *menora* was located in a room in the Temple that was accessible to only a few priests, almost no one actually saw the miracle of the oil!)

Chanuka is one of the "exile holidays" begun by the Rabbis after the destruction of the first Temple.

It celebrates the victory of Jewish Light over Greek Darkness.

One major difference between the Jewish and the Greek outlook on life is the origin of all being. Aristotle, the epitome of Greek thought, believed that there was no beginning to Creation; the world just always existed in some form or other. Just as space seems to be infinite, and we can't imagine a beginning or end to the sky, so too according to Greek philosophy is this true of time.

Jewish thought, however, says the opposite: time, space, and all existence (other than the true existence, the existence of G-d) has a beginning, and even more, it is constantly being created anew by G-d.

Of course, no one can empirically prove either side of the argument, but the implications of each belief are overwhelming.

If there is a Creator then it could be that He cares. It could be that

there is a purpose to Creation. Maybe what He writes in the Torah is ultimate and binding and man can't do whatever he wants.

If there is no Creator, however, man is free and alone. There are no moral laws, only natural ones: Pursue pleasure avoid pain.

The Greeks' philosophy was a product of Greek personality. They loved everything natural, especially the human body and mind. They had their religions, to be sure, to evoke the spiritual powers affecting the world: Luck, Power, Love, Health, etc. But these gods were also a part of nature, and were worshiped only for the physical benefits they promised to bring to their worshipers.

Judaism, however, regards all the above as ignorance, darkness, and selfish small-mindedness. They taught that the denial of the existence of the One and Only Creator and King of the universe is the greatest imprisonment of all – to be a prisoner of one's own mind, emotions, and urges.

The Talmud relates that the Greek ruler, Ptolemy, put 70 Jewish scholars into 70 separate isolated rooms and commanded each of them to translate the entire Five Books of Moses into Greek. All 70 independently realized that a literal translation would spell trouble for the Jews, and each miraculously made the same ten alterations. The first of these changes was in the first sentence of the Torah: instead of translating, "In the beginning, created G-d the heavens and the earth" (which could be misunderstood to imply that "The Beginning" created G-d, the heavens, and the earth, *ch"v*), they substituted "G-d created the beginning, etc." so as not to strengthen the Greek position that G-d and all the spiritual powers are but a product of nature.

The Greek way of thinking is darkness compared to Judaism, but

it's fun. Without G-d to govern us, *ch"v*, anything goes. Thus, the Greeks won much admiration and support from the fun-loving Jews (i.e., 98%). But as much fun as it is, it still remains darkness, and Jews don't like spiritual darkness.

That's the Jewish identity. Even the Reform or Reconstructionist don't want to lose the name Jew, or to lose their connection with G-d.

The story is told about a certain Jew by the name of Menasheh who lived in the Israeli town of Chevron during the terrible massacre of 1927.

Thus, the Greeks won much admiration and support from the fun-loving Jews (i.e., 98%). But as much fun as it is, it still remains darkness, and Jews don't like spiritual darkness.

One fateful Shabbos all the Arabs living in Chevron and it's surroundings turned on their Jewish neighbors, after living with them in harmony for years, and murdered as many of them as possible.

One of the Jews there, Menasheh, was the black sheep of the Jewish community. He would ride his motorcycle through the town on the Shabbos, cigarette between his teeth, and his only friends were the local Arabs. As for the Jewish community, all he had to say was, "I'm as good a Jew as they are. Who needs them."

On the terrible day of the massacre, armed Arabs came streaming in from all the surrounding area. After they killed all the Jews in the streets, the synagogues and the shops, they began going from house to house looking for new sacrifices, and eventually they arrived at the house where Menasheh was sitting with his friends. "Who is he?" They asked, pointing to Menasheh. "Oh, he's one of us," they replied, and the murderers returned to the street and turned to the next house. Suddenly, unexplainably, Menasheh ran out after them and began screaming, "No, I'm a Jew! I'm a Jew!" They killed him.

Each Jew has, buried deep in his soul, a small bottle of pure, undefiled (and undefilable) oil. This oil is the essence of the Jewish soul and its purpose is to make a miraculous light. That is what we were "chosen" for: to illuminate the entire Creation with the awareness of the oneness of G-d.

Every Jew senses this purpose in some way. Every Jew feels somewhere down deep that he is different, that he is chosen. It may be that he misinterprets this feeling or totally ignores it. It may take the non-Jews around him to open his eyes and rabbis to interpret it for him, but we are promised by G-d that it will happen to every Jew; every Jew will find this pure oil and light his *menora* to bring blessing and light to the darkness that surrounds us. And that is the job of Moshiach.

This explains, then, what happened on that first Chanuka and what happens every Chanuka when millions of Jews all over the world light their menorahs. Suddenly they feel proud and optimistic. In the flames on the candles they can see the power of the Jewish soul and the redemption of the Jewish people.

For more articles from Rabbi Bolton visit: www.ohrtimim.org/torah

GREAT WOMEN IN THE ALTER REBBE'S FAMILY TREE

BY MALKA SCHWARTZ



*A report containing biographical material about great women in the Alter Rebbe's ancestral family tree. * Part 2 of 2*

THE ALTER REBBE'S AUNT, REBBETZIN DEVORAH LEAH

When Rochel's daughter Devorah Leah was seven or eight years old she was already known for her good heart and concern for others. She would help her poor neighbors with the work in their homes and with the raising of their children. When she was ten years old she was capable of running her families home as if she were the mainstay of the home. Everyone praised the "gold hands" of Devorah Leah.

Devorah Leah's father worked as a *melamed* and was very poor. His work did not provide enough for his house. When a beggar would come to their house, there was not even a small coin to give him. There was not even enough bread for the members of the household to allow for giving to the poor person. Devorah Leah would rush to give

from the bread that was meant for her. She would explain that anyway she was not hungry. As a result of this she would often go hungry. However, it was not visible to others; she was always happy with her lot.⁷

In the case of Rochel's own daughter, Devorah Leah, she did not attempt to teach her Torah until Devorah Leah would show it was very important it was to her – that she needed to learn Torah for her personal happiness.

However, Devorah Leah was not aware of her mother's intentions. She thought her mother did not approve of her learning Torah, and could not understand how her mother, who was so wise and learned, could agree with her father that it was unnecessary for her to receive a Jewish education. She was particularly upset as her mother was such a scholar. Every time Devorah

Leah saw her mother take the Gemara and learn, she felt herself consumed with envy. She hated the thought of being ignorant. If only she could learn like her mother!

Devorah Leah was extremely grateful that Divine providence arranged that her family live nextdoor to Rabbi Noah, who taught children Torah. Whenever she had a spare moment, Devorah Leah would sit on the balcony of her home, sewing or mending a garment and listening to Rabbi Noah. Since he was teaching children, it was easy for Devorah Leah to understand. She remembered everything that he taught. Quickly, Devorah Leah learned all the prayers, including some translations. With time, she was able to read the prayers by herself in a *siddur*, as well as read and understand *Chumash*. However, what she learned from Rabbi Noah was not enough for her. It only increased her desire for more learning. The more she learned the more she thirsted for more learning. But who would open the gates of Torah to her?⁸ In her frustration, she

⁷ *Ateres Malchus* p. 187

⁸ *Ateres Malchus* p.188

became very resentful of her father's indifference toward her Torah education.

One day, Devorah Leah's mother was deeply engrossed in learning Gemara. Devorah Leah was in the same room busy with her sewing. Watching and listening to her mother learning brought back that familiar feeling of envy again. Her envy turned to disappointment and tears began to trickle down her cheeks. In her pain she left the room where her mother was, and was sobbing profusely as she lay face down on her bed.

Rochel left her Gemara and went to Devorah Leah's bedside. "Why are you crying little daughter," she asked her gently.

Devorah Leah wanted to tell her mother, "I am crying because your father let you study Torah, and here I am growing up without understanding those black dots and dashes in the Gemara. And all because my own father does not believe that girls should study Torah!" Devorah Leah, who excelled in the *mitzva* of honoring her parents, held back these words because she did not want to take the chance that the true words of her heart might be disrespectful to her mother.

Rochel wanted to lighten the burden of her only daughter, whom she loved so much. With affection and great care for her daughter, Rochel gradually and gently soothed Devorah Leah until she felt comfortable sharing with her mother what was weighing so heavily on her heart. Devorah Leah finally told her mother that she was bothered because of her parents' attitude towards her learning Torah. Rochel understood her daughter's feelings and tried to assure her that she need not cry anymore. At the first opportunity, they would

discuss the matter thoroughly. The opportunity presented itself the very next day.

Rochel began to explain to Devorah Leah that there were two schools of thought concerning the education of women. Her husband, Devorah Leah's father, belonged to the group which did not believe in the necessity of teaching girls Torah. However, Rochel was of a different school of thought because her father followed the Rabbi Eliyahu Baal Shem of Wurms. He later became attached to the mystics and *kabbalists* as well as a disciple of Rabbi Yoel, the Baal Shem of

Devorah Leah also did not tell her father that she had begun to learn Torah with her mother. It was a secret that only mother and daughter knew.

Zamostch, who believed that girls should be taught Torah. Devorah Leah now understood.

For Rochel it was now clear to her that her daughter truly and deeply yearned to learn Torah. When they were alone in the house, Rochel took time away from her own Torah learning in order to teach her daughter on a regular basis. During this time she also told her about memories of her childhood, the conduct in her father's home and the education she received from her parents. She also told her about how it came about that she married

Devorah Leah's father. Devorah Leah cherished the stories she heard from her mother so much that she recorded all of them in writing.

Rochel wisely considered the possibility that even though her husband had come to approve of her own Torah scholarship, he might not approve of his daughter also being taught Torah. She, therefore, decided to wait for the right moment to tell her husband that she had begun teaching Devorah Leah Torah. This was very difficult for Rochel since it was against her nature to keep anything from her husband for long. Devorah Leah also did not tell her father that she had begun to learn Torah with her mother. It was a secret that only mother and daughter knew. When Devorah Leah was already quite advanced in her studies, Rochel chose an opportune time and then disclosed the secret to her husband. To her great and pleasant surprise, he did not say a word in objection to Devorah Leah's Torah study.

Devorah Leah made remarkable progress in her learning and became quite a scholar. She was never satisfied with the knowledge she had, however, because the more she learned the more questions she had.

It was sometime before her seventeenth birthday that Devorah Leah's mother, Rochel, suddenly passed away. She was deeply hurt by the loss of her mother; she would forever miss her loving care. And with the passing of her mother, she also lost her only teacher of Torah.

After her mother's death, Devorah Leah saw that her father was crushed and was having difficulty making a living. Like the Maharal's wife who had preceded her by four generations, in a time of crisis, Devorah Leah also decided to support her family. She began to

work as a seamstress. She worked very hard and managed to earn enough for the family's necessities. All in addition to managing all of the housework, the cooking and looking after her ailing father.

Despite Devorah Leah's heroic efforts for her family, the health of her father continued to dwindle, until he too soon passed away. Both he and his wife were buried in the cemetery in Vitebsk. Devorah Leah was an orphan, bereft of both her parents.

What she learned from Rabbi Noah was not enough for her. It only increased her desire for more learning. The more she learned the more she thirsted for more learning. But who would open the gates of Torah to her?

She would have liked to have continued living with and taking care of her younger brother, Boruch, but he moved away. She had always wanted a closer relationship with him, but Boruch had been very cold towards her. He never understood her or listened to what she had to say. Devorah Leah was very hurt by this. Her mother also did not approve of his attitude towards his sister and she wanted to talk to

Boruch about his attitude. She felt that if he knew about his family ancestry his attitude towards his sister would change. However, he seemed impenetrable. It did not appear to her that he would be receptive. She continued to look for the right opportunity. However, that time did not arrive before Rochel passed away.

After her passing, Devorah Leah attempted to forge a closer relationship with her brother. She gave him the manuscript which she had handwritten and said, "Read carefully what I have written here in Yiddish. It is everything I have heard from our mother, of blessed memory. She was very learned and was familiar with our family tree. I wrote down all that she told me so that others should know this, too. Read carefully what is written here and you will learn much." Had Boruch heeded his sister's request he would have discovered facts that later took him years to find out. He likely would have related differently to his sister and through her to the whole family. He might not have felt the need to leave Vitebsk. Instead, Boruch answered, "This is written in Yiddish, handing her back the manuscript, it's good reading material for women; not for men. A man doesn't read Yiddish story books, he studies Talmud and other Torah works!"⁹ Devorah Leah was pained to see that Boruch did not seem to want a connection to her. However, in a roundabout way, Devorah Leah would yet have a profound influence on his life, albeit after a few years and in an indirect manner.

Devorah Leah's grandfather on her father's side, Rabbi Moshe wanted her to come with live him in Minsk. However, she did not want

to leave her parents' graves, which were in Vitebsk. She went there many times to pour her heart out to her parents. She would tell her parents everything, as if they were alive. Her parent's graves became an integral part of her life and she chose to live with her Aunt Freida (her father's sister) and Uncle Kaddish so she would be close to them. While living with them she insisted that she continue to support herself by her sewing.

She, therefore, decided to wait for the right moment to tell her husband that she had begun teaching Devorah Leah Torah. This was very difficult for Rochel since it was against her nature to keep anything from her husband for long.

While she lived with her aunt and uncle, Devorah Leah's interest in learning Torah did not wane. She hoped that one day she would find someone who would teach her more and answer her questions.

One day, her uncle and aunt told her that they had a fine young man for her to meet. Devorah Leah immediately went to her parent's

⁹ *Memoirs III p. 209-210*

graves to let them know about the match. She asked them to give their blessing only if it was the right match. After this Devorah Leah agreed to meet the young man, who's name was Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok.

Devorah Leah told him about her ancestry. She told him straight out that she wanted to follow her mother's side of ancestry and live according to the teachings of *kabbala* and *chassidism*.

Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok listened to her intently, then he told Devorah Leah about his own lineage. Devorah Leah was very happy to hear him say that he had learned under the guidance of a follower of the Baal Shem Tov, and that he too wished to follow the ways of Kabbala and Chassidism.

She was beginning to see the Divine providence in their having met. Then Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok

proceeded to tell her that he had gone to meet the Baal Shem Tov, and the Baal Shem Tov told him that he would find his wife in Vitebsk, that she was from a fine family and she was an orphan. Exactly Devorah Leah's description! Devorah Leah now had no doubt that this was the right match for her.

They went to the graves of Devorah Leah's parents and informed them of their engagement. They also told Devorah Leah's parents about the conditions they had set for their lives together:

*After they married, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok would give her a lesson two or three times a week.

*He would not object to her continuing her sewing and thereby helping to support their family.

*They would share equally in all that they did relating to Torah and *mitzvos*.

*They would keep the fact that she was studying Torah a secret.

*They were to live as followers of Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov.

*That this fact would remain a secret until it could be revealed.

*If they would be blessed with children, they too would be raised as *chassidim*.

*If they had a daughter, she too would be taught Torah.

*They would put aside ten percent of all of their earnings for charity.

After they married, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok was appointed as *rosh yeshiva* of the Vitebsk *yeshiva*. 10

Malka Schwartz is the author of publications about our Chabad Rebbetzins.

Her books can be found in your local bookstore, or at Merkaz Stam (718-773-1120) or Judaica World (718-604-1020).

10 Memoirs II p. 228

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THE CARNAGE IN CHEVRON WAS FORESEEN

BY SHAI GEFEN

The military objected strenuously to leaving Chevron. The handwriting was on the wall. Our leaders knew this would happen, and are culpable!

BLOOD DRIPS FROM THEIR HANDS

In issue #388, p. 65 (of the Hebrew section) on the left side, I wrote the following: "We shouldn't open our mouths to the Satan, *chalila*, but last Friday the army left Chevron, and who knows, *r"l*, when the next attack, *chalila*, will take place. The army warned the politicians that leaving Chevron is synonymous with future terrorism."

I wrote that three weeks ago, after the army left most of the city, thanks to Binyamin Ben Eliezer's political maneuverings before the primaries. The ink was barely dry when we learned of the massacre of Israeli soldiers and civilians as they returned from *davening* Friday night at the M'aras HaMachpeila. In a narrow alleyway, three terrorists ambushed and killed twelve men including Col. Dror Weinberg- Chevron Brigade Commander. 14 were wounded, some seriously.

No. I'm not a prophet. I knew what would happen thanks to bitter experience and the long, drawn-out experiment the Israeli government has been running these past many years. Each time they decide, with various excuses, to make life easier for the Arabs, the military warns that this will cost us in human life, and each time the army is right.

Sometimes it takes a few hours like in the attack at the gas station in Ariel three weeks ago, and sometimes it takes a few days. Either way, the tragedy always takes place.

It was so clear. The military expressed strong opposition to this withdrawal, "Judea first," whose sole purpose was political. The writing was on the wall. Former Defense Minister Ben Eliezer and P.M. Sharon knew that withdrawing from Chevron would mean death to Jews, but they preferred capitulating to the Americans and aiding Ben Eliezer in the primaries.



The blood of these *kedoshim* who were massacred Friday night is the sign of Cain on the foreheads of Sharon and Ben Eliezer. It's not just these two who are guilty. Who sat in this selfsame government that ordered the evacuation of Chevron three weeks ago?

Representatives of Shas, Mafdal, Yisroel B'Aliya, Yahadus ha'Torah, and Likud all sat by. Not one of them got up and protested. Effy Eitam Fein didn't write a letter of resignation for the terrible crime of leaving us unprotected. Nor did they protest the *chillul Shabbos* at Gilad Farm (yet still they are not embarrassed to come to us and ask for our votes, explaining how much they influence things from "within").

Let us remember, that it was none other than Binyamin Netanyahu who gave over Chevron to murderers. That was a narrow government of the Right. Chevron was abandoned to despicable creatures with the approval of those on the Right, *datiyim* and *chareidim*, while *rabbanim* and *Admurim* looked away, preferring money for their *yeshivos* and *chatzeiros* over protecting Jewish lives (including their own). Back then, too, nobody resigned and nobody raised a hue and cry (except for Minister Binyamin Zev Begin who resigned from Netanyahu's government).

The one who orchestrated the evacuation at that time was Avigdor Lieberman, then director of the P.M.'s office. He disdained the cries of those who live in Chevron who asked for his aid. The Ministers of Mafdal continued to recline in their upholstered seats, as did the religious (*dati* and *chareidi*) ministers, who are gearing up now to explain to us how far to the right they are.

The blood of those murdered drips from the hands of all those who were partners to the decision to leave Chevron, even though they knew what would happen, as the army warned them.

Apparently we too, the Jewish people, have put ourselves into an alley of death. The problem is that we are not searching for the way out.

WHY WAS THERE A MASSACRE IN CHEVRON?

Precisely twenty-seven years ago, at a Yud-Tes Kislev *farbrengen* in 5736, the Rebbe explained why six *yeshiva bachurim* were murdered in Chevron. The reasons the Rebbe enumerated did not change. They speak for themselves:

... the most recent events, what happened, *r"l*, with the *kedoshim*, *yeshiva* boys, may Hashem avenge their blood – this began with "*b'mishichoi*." For those who ought to say what *daas Torah* is, did not say *daas Torah*, or as the Gemara puts it, "*kavshu p'neihem b'karka*" (hid their faces in the ground, i.e., didn't speak up), and afterwards this extended into the public domain or in the private domains of other Jews...

The connection of this (the murder of *yeshiva bachurim*) with the most recent events is, that when they made what they called "the interim arrangement," which meant that they would leave the secure borders and give the sources of oil and fortified places to our opponents, I made a tumult about it: calling upon *rabbanim*: make a tumult! It's the opposite of the *din*!

The event which took place with the *yeshiva bachurim* is because Jews handed over, *r"l*, that which protects them *b'derech ha'teva* (according to natural means). For Hashem wants there to be "something" *b'derech ha'teva*, as the Midrash says, "a little finger" – they showed the *goyim* that they would remain denuded regarding protection *b'derech ha'teva*, and gave them the oil and the "cities of refuge" and the secure cities, and told them that they relied on their word, which they immediately regretted!"

This frightening *sicha* of the Rebbe

No. I'm not a prophet. I knew what would happen thanks to bitter experience and the long, drawn-out experiment the Israeli government has been running these past many years.

from twenty-seven years ago, sounds like it was said on Yud-Tes Kislev 5763, but we know that the Rebbe is the *navi ha'dor* and Moshiach, and his words are eternal, and what he said applies precisely to our times. Those *rabbanim* who were in favor of giving away land, and who were in favor of the Chevron Accords, while perverting the *din* and the truth, ought to get up and admit they erred in a *d'var halacha*! Why haven't we seen *one rav* admit his mistake in supporting the Oslo Accords and the Chevron Accords?

The Chevron Accords were signed exactly six years ago, and all the representatives of "Torah true Judaism" were accomplices to this crime. Can the elders of the generation say, "Our hands did not spill this blood?"

We *chassidei Chabad* who loyally follow the Rebbe's prophecies, which have been shown to be right on the mark, will continue to warn and shout the truth, as told to us by the Rebbe. We will get up! We will cry out! We will protest! Now, when darkness and confusion reign throughout the world, and Israel is frightened and says: what should we do? as the Midrash in the *Yalkut Shimoni* describes, we will not be shy about quoting the *nasi*, Moshiach, and *navi* of the generation who quoted the Midrash, "my children, do not be afraid, whatever I did, I did only for your sakes ... Humble ones, the time for your redemption has arrived."

IT WOULD BE BETTER IF A GENTILE GOVERNMENT RULED

It seems that Sharon is the first prime minister to say, almost explicitly, that everything he's done these past two years are a result of orders from America. Apparently Sharon is the first one to say the truth. "I will not do anything to do away with the understanding between us and the Americans," he explained when his government fell apart.

The frequent withdrawals from cities throughout Yesha are orders decreed from above, including the withdrawal from Chevron and the plan called "roadmaps" which will lead to the establishment of a Palestinian state, and the uprooting of thousands of Jews from their homes, while endangering the lives of us all. We enter death traps once again; narrow alleyways in which we are killed day in and day out, for being Jews.

In the meantime, according to the news, Sharon managed to postpone the

“roadmaps” until after the elections. They understand. It’s yet another understanding between Sharon and Bush, not to exacerbate the situation in Yehuda-Shomron until after the attack on Iraq. America is going to wipe out terrorist dictatorships in the world, but is willing to allow Saddam Hussein’s Siamese twin to continue butchering Jews.

It wasn’t only a very few who failed to understand, at least in human understanding, what the Rebbe meant when he told then Minister Moshe Katzav on Yud Shevat 5752: **“It’s impossible for a Jew who believes in Hashem and His Torah to, ch”v, collaborate with things like these and to sign on such a thing. Otherwise, it would be preferable that the government be abolished and there not be a Jewish government. For they speak of these plans solely because of worldwide pressure (as they themselves say), and if this is the case, then it would be better if, r”l, a government of gentiles rules Eretz Yisroel and they decide what to do with Eretz Yisroel to begin with! At least then, Jews wouldn’t sign to these things.”**

If Sharon and his government decided that we are actually dependent on the kindnesses of the *goyim* in all matters, and they have handed over decision-making regarding security matters to *goyim*, why then do we need a government comprised of Jews here in Eretz Yisroel?

On second thought, if we lived under the security umbrella of the Americans, we would be far better off. There’s no question that what was said back then is far more understandable to those who didn’t know what the Rebbe meant at the time.

WHAT SHARON IS CAPABLE OF

Ben Kaspit is a senior journalist who is very highly regarded. The information he provides is considered

highly reliable. He has connections in the highest places, including the prime minister’s office. Politicians are always at his door.

This week he wrote the following in *Maariv*:

“[Sharon’s] speech at the Likud convention this week contained a historic sentence, ‘There is no solution to the economic situation, except a political one.’ This is basically what Shimon Peres says. Sharon admitted for the first time that it was a pity that time was a-wasting. The unemployed, those who were fired, the poor and the

“I will not do anything to do away with the understanding between us and the Americans,” he explained when his government fell apart.

hungry, all have no hope except in a political solution.

“Peres has been murmuring for two years now that Sharon can deliver the goods, but “not now, only in his second term.” Sharon is close now, more than ever, to that second term. This past week was the week of his dreams. If he can only make it through the primaries and the elections in peace, if no unforeseen calamity takes place, Sharon can attain that which he has dreamed of being: an independent prime minister, strong, free of pressure from a coalition, fear of voters or cabinet members. Sharon will be able to carry out his big

plans, his plans for peace and political order, and the plan that he has talked and hinted about for two years with nobody listening.

“[...] this will be the time in which the conditions will ripen for a political arrangement. The Americans will oversee the barter deal: “Arafat in exchange for a state. The Palestinians will get a state, with temporary borders, with a deadline to complete the negotiations. They will get a huge aid package and the evacuation of isolated settlements, including Gush Katif. Yes, only Sharon can do this, swear his closest friends. And he’ll do it. ... Believe me, he’ll surprise you all” – swore one of Sharon’s senior confidantes in the name of the prime minister. “You don’t know what he’s capable of...”

We know what he’s capable of doing. He proved this in the past when he tore down Yamit and handed over Chevron (as foreign minister). But in any case, we should pay attention to what this distinguished journalist had to say. Let’s not be taken by surprise.

SHAME OF CHEVRON’S POLICE

A week before the massacre in Chevron, the court in Yerushalayim ruled that Boruch Marzel be expelled from his home in Chevron for half a year. This was per the request of the police and the state attorney’s office, and it was accepted without a trial, illegally.

If that wasn’t enough, Marzel’s children have been arrested these past months on one pretext or another, with the topper being when the Chevron police arrested his daughter after Marzel was sent away from his wife and nine children.

His daughter was on the bus from Chevron to Kiryat Arba on her way to school when suddenly five police cars surrounded them. The police told the bus driver (who no doubt thought a suicide bomber was on his bus) to open

the doors. They boarded the bus and dragged the girl to jail in Chevron, as if she were a criminal, and not just any criminal, but one who committed some international crime.

The police and security forces in Chevron have plenty of time to deal with the Jews of Chevron, to make fraudulent arrests in order to terrorize the people living there. This goes on while complaints presented against Arabs in Chevron are ignored.

You must understand the general situation: the army left most of Chevron and have allowed murderers free reign. In the moments before the army left Chevron, they discovered a missile aimed at the Jewish settlement. Nevertheless, upon orders of the politicians they had to get out.

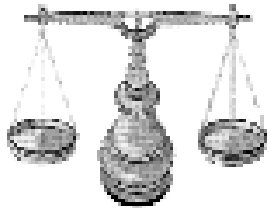
If we lived under the security umbrella of the Americans, we would be far better off!

Boruch Marzel's house (with his wife and nine children) is located in the heart of the Jewish settlement in Chevron, and it's an easy target for terrorist shooting. Despite this, what interests the police and the security forces in Chevron is how to make the lives of Jews miserable, particularly that of Marzel, who for twenty years now

has been *moser nefesh* for Chevron. He lives in intolerable conditions in the Tel Romeida section, in a caravan that has absorbed hundreds of bullets these past two years.

The cruelty exhibited towards Marzel perhaps explains the debasement before the murderers. In Hoshei'a 13:2 it says, "Those who slaughter man, shall kiss the calves," and "all who are compassionate on the cruel, will end up being cruel to the compassionate." When we make concessions to murderers, and allow them to do as they please, there's time for them to attack Jews who are *mosrei nefesh*, and to separate a father from his wife and children for half a year illegally and with no right to appeal.

This is what the righteous government of the State of Israel is like.

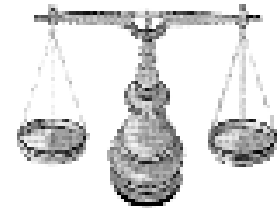


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This Chanukah the Chabad Mitzvah Tanks are going to launch a parade that will traverse Israel from North to South. During a three-day period they will rally together tens of thousands of children, their parents and soldiers (from Tuesday 28th of Kislev until Thursday 30th of Kislev).

Our goal is to uplift their spirits!

The work of the Hashmoneans was to preserve the Jewish religion and thereby uplift the spirits of the Jewish people who were living under the oppression of the Hellenistic Greeks.

In response to the darkness of our times the *tankistim* of Chabad want to give the Israeli Jewish populace a morale boost to continue going on the way to redemption and Moshiach.

(The Rebbe tells us that we are standing at the threshold of redemption. There is just a little more to do.)

The present parade will cost \$30,000. Would you like to join us in this effort to bring the light and joy of Chanukah to Israel?

Would you like to sponsor any portion of the three-day parade?

Please call to 718 756 1898 or send your donation to Mobile Mitzvah Centers – Israel, 820 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, NY 11213.

Traveling from city to city to get Israel ready “to Greet Moshiach”



The Maccabeans of today – the Chabad Mitzvah Tanks in Eretz Yisroel



Scenes similar to this one will take place in Israel on Chanukah 5763

EXCITING NEWS FOR CHABAD CHASSIDIM WORLDWIDE: CHABAD-WORLD NEWS ONLINE IN ENGLISH

A new website was launched in recent weeks – Chabad World, located at www.chabad.info. The purpose of this website is to give swift updates and information on news and events in Chabad communities and families throughout the world.

The website, which began operation just a short while ago, has already reaped tremendous praise from Internet surfers in Eretz Yisroel and the world at-large, particularly among Lubavitcher *chassidim* who live far away from Chabad population centers. These people are thirsty to know about what's going on in Chabad worldwide. All news items are presented in a organized and attractive fashion.

The website provides news services, a daily

calendar for almost every country in the world, names and telephone numbers of *Anash* worldwide, and the daily *Chitas*, *Rambam*, and *HaYom Yom*.

In recent days, the website's administrators completed work on its English department. Last week, Internet users could already read a wide variety of Chabad World news items in English.

Shluchim, *askanim*, and *chassidim* throughout the world are cordially invited to update their fellow Lubavitchers regarding current events in their local community, city, and country, for the benefit of the worldwide Chabad community at-large. Such updates may be sent via e-mail to editor@chabad.info.

May this new dimension in spreading the wellsprings outward bring us all one step closer to the approaching revelation of the Rebbe MH"M.



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