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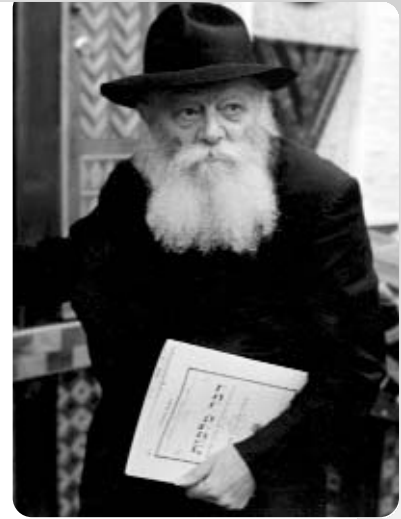
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# HOVERING ABOVE EXISTENCE

SICHOS IN ENGLISH



## SHABBOS PARSHAS K'DOSHIM; SECOND DAY OF ROSH CHODESH IYAR, 5749

1. This Shabbos falls directly before the second of Iyar, the Rebbe Maharash's birthday. On this day, "the spiritual source of his soul shines powerfully." Since he was a Nasi, a leader of the entire Jewish people, this day has an effect on all Jews. It is a day when an emphasis should be placed on studying his teachings and following the directives which he gave us.

One of the most well-known of those directives is contained in the following adage:

Everyone (lit. "the world") says: "If you can't crawl under, try to climb over." I say, "L'chat'chilla Aribber" – "At the outset, one should try to climb over."

This implies that a Jew should not consider the obstacles or even the limitations of worldly existence. Instead, he should realize that, because he is a Jew, he is not bound by these limitations and can and must, view his existence in a manner that his first impulse is to "climb over" those limitations.

In particular, there are two lessons included in this adage:

Climbing over implies rising above all limitations. Thus, it requires that we constantly rise above our previous state. Though previously, one's behavior could have been considered as "climbing over," i.e., beyond limitations, over the course of time, one has become accustomed to this level and to "climb over," one must reach a higher peak.

Though this process involves an unlimited process of growth, it serves as a directive for practical behavior within the context of our limited world. The approach of L'chat'chilla Aribber, though opposite to that of the world at large, should become one's first impulse, followed without any for second thoughts or reconsideration.

This directive exemplifies the service of the Rebbe Maharash and is also connected to his birthday, the second of Iyar. In the context of S'firas HaOmer, the latter date corresponds to the S'fira, Tiferes Sh'b'Tiferes – Beauty of Beauty – i.e., the ultimate of beauty.

In Chassidus, it is explained that Tiferes ascends to the highest levels – the level of Kesser – but also descends to the lowest depths. Therefore, it is referred to as "the middle bar which

extends from one end to the other." This is reflected in the Rebbe Maharash's approach of L'chat'chilla Aribber, rising above all limitations (for Tiferes Sh'b'Tiferes ascends to the highest of levels) and expressing these peaks in behavior within the context of the lowest levels of our physical world.

There is a unique connection between the above and the month of Iyar: The unique aspect of the month of Iyar is that every day of the month is associated with the mitzvah of counting the Omer. In terms of our spiritual service, this mitzvah involves refining our emotional qualities, ascending step by step from below to above. Nissan, the first month, is a month of miracles, a month of Divine revelation. Iyar, in contrast, is a month where the emphasis is on man's service in an ordered pattern of growth.

This service begins on the second of Iyar (for Rosh Chodesh is also above the limits of our world. It is not "a day of work" (and, hence, Tachanun is not recited upon it). The connection of the second of Iyar with Tiferes Sh'b'Tiferes emphasizes how even this ordered service from below to above must be carried out in a manner of L'chat'chilla Aribber. The

influence of Tiferes Sh'b'Tiferes allows the highest of all levels to be connected with the lowest possible rungs.

2. The concept of L'chat'chilla Aribber has its source in the Torah. The Torah begins in a manner of L'chat'chilla Aribber. The first letter of the Torah, a beis, which begins the word B'Reishis, stands for the word "bracha," blessing. This shows how G-d's blessing is present even before there exists anyone to bless.[67]

The second word of the Torah, bara – "created", also emphasizes the concept of L'chat'chilla Aribber. As the Alter Rebbe explains in Igeres HaKodesh (20), creation ex nihilo has its source in G-d's essence. No other level of G-dliness can bring about such a feat. Thus, the Torah teaches us how our world is connected with G-d's very essence.

The Torah continues "And the spirit of G-d was hovering over the water." This also is an expression of L'chat'chilla Aribber. Our Sages explain that this refers to "the spirit of Moshiach." Thus, even before all the particular creations were brought into being, "the spirit of Moshiach," the ultimate state of the world's completion, was "hovering" above existence.

Similarly, the first of the G-d's statements which created individual entities, the statement, "Let there be light," also reflects the concept L'chat'chilla Aribber. In general, light is above the limits of the world. Surely, this applies to the light created on the first day which allowed Adam to see "from one end of the world to the other." [68]

*Even before all the particular creations were brought into being, "the spirit of Moshiach," the ultimate state of the world's completion, was "hovering" above existence.*

Also, the conclusion of Torah, "All the signs and wonders... and all the mighty hand... which Moshe performed before the eyes of all Israel," also reflects the concept L'chat'chilla Aribber. The "signs and wonders," i.e., the highest spiritual levels, were revealed for "all Israel," the totality of the Jewish people.

Similarly, the concept of L'chat'chilla Aribber can be seen in the beginning of the Mishna, the compilation of the oral law. Firstly, the first tractate, Brachos, is associated with blessing. Furthermore, that tractate begins with the question: "When does the time for the recitation of the Shma begin?" immediately teaching a Jew about the oneness of G-d which is the theme of the Shma. Our Sages have also noted that the tractate begins in this fashion because: "The beginning of wisdom is the fear of G-d;" i.e., at his very first stages of knowledge, a person is introduced to the highest levels of awe of G-d.

The conclusion of the Talmud, "May G-d bless His people in peace," also expresses this principle. The Hebrew B'Shalom can be interpreted as Beis Shalom, "two levels of peace," peace in the spiritual realms and peace in the physical realms, Shalom, G-d's name being drawn down and revealed on even the lowest levels of our world.

We also see the concept of L'chat'chilla Aribber in the beginning of the Shulchan Aruch which Rav Yosef Karo opens: "Be strong like a lion..." and the notes of the Rama which begin: "I have placed G-d before me at all times." Similarly, the text concludes with the verse: "A good hearted person is always celebrating." Happiness which "breaks down barriers" is found in a constant manner.

The teachings of Chassidus also follow the same pattern, emphasizing the approach of L'chat'chilla Aribber at the beginning and the conclusion. Thus, the Tanya (the written Torah of Chassidus) begins on the title page with the verse: "It is very close to you" and the text itself begins "Mashbian oso...." The Tzemach Tzedek explains that this means that the soul is made full and satisfied with potential. Similarly, the conclusion of the Tanya praises G-d, "May He be uplifted and blessed." Chassidic thought explains that blessing implies a process of drawing down. As G-d is "uplifted," He is "blessed" and drawn down within the context of our world.

3. The concept of L'chat'chilla Aribber can also be seen in the portions of Torah associated with the present day: The weekly Torah

67. The concept of L'chat'chilla Aribber is further emphasized by the interpretation of the word B'Reishis as Beis Reishis ("two firsts"), i.e., that the world was created for the sake of two entities which are called first, the Torah and Israel.

[Israel is designated as "first" in the verse,

"Israel is holy unto G-d, the first of His produce." The description of Israel as G-d's "first fruits" is also related to today's portion of Rambam which begins Hilchos Bikkurim. This title is applied to the Jews even after the soul has descended and en clothed itself within a physical body. Thus, even when a

Jew is involved in material things, it must be obvious to all that he is one of "G-d's first fruits."]

68. According to Chassidus, this includes the interpretation "from the highest points of G-d's hidden worlds to the lowest points of the revealed worlds."

portion, begins: “Be holy.” Being holy does not mean merely separating oneself from undesirable matters – for such a concept is self-understood for a Jew – but rather to reach the highest levels of holiness to the extent that one’s holiness is associated with the holiness of G-d. Thus, the verse explains – as a reason why a Jew can “Be holy” – “because I (G-d) am holy.”[69]

Furthermore, this potential is granted to all Jews; men, women, and children. Every Jew can reach a level of holiness equivalent to that of G-d. This applies not only in regard to matters of the soul, but also in regard to matters of the body, including even the lowest levels of our physical behavior.[70]

The above can also be associated with the following passage from our Torah portion which discusses the laws of Arla (produce which grows in the first three years of a tree’s existence and is forbidden) and Neta Reva’i (the produce of the fourth year which must be eaten in Jerusalem). The passage states:

When you come to the land and plant a fruit bearing tree... for three years, its produce will be a forbidden growth. It may not be eaten. In the fourth year, the fruit will be holy, an object of praise for G-d. In the fifth year, you may eat the fruit [and thus,] increase your produce.

There are parallels to these three levels in our service of G-d. The fruit of the first three years is equivalent to

the service motivated by the three lower emotional qualities: Netzach, Hod, and Yesod. Because these represent the lower levels of G-dliness, there is a possibility of dominance by worldly influences. Hence, the produce is forbidden.

The produce of the fourth year parallels service inspired by the lower level of Tiferes and is thus, connected to the revelation of the glory of G-d’s greatness in the world for G-d desired to have a dwelling place in the lower worlds. This aspect is further emphasized by the fifth year which represents service inspired by the higher levels of Tiferes (equivalent to the level Tiferes Shb’Tiferes).

Since Tiferes is “the middle bar which extends from one end to the other,” it ascends to G-d’s infinity and reveals those levels on the lower planes in a manner in which, “the glory of G-d will be revealed and all flesh will see that the mouth of G-d has spoken.”

In particular, the differences between the two levels of Tiferes represent the differences between the produce of the fourth and fifth years. The fourth year refers to a level of G-dliness that reflects the limits of the worlds (the number four paralleling the four worlds: Atzilus, Bria, Yetzira, and Asiya). Similarly, our Sages compared the ultimate state of the world to a porch enclosed on all four sides (the shape of a closed Mem).

In contrast, the number five refers to a level of G-dliness which

transcends the limits of the world, a level which is L’chat’chilla Aribber. Thus, the number four is associated with the Daled which is associated with poverty. Since the level of G-dliness is constrained within the limits of the world it is considered as “poverty” when compared to the unbounded revelation that is associated with the fifth year, which “increases your produce.”

The fifth year expresses the two aspects of L’chat’chilla Aribber, a) revealing the levels that transcend the limitations of the world; b) on the lowest planes.

In expression of this latter point, we see that the produce of the fifth year has no holiness associated with it. Rather, it can be eaten anywhere and used for any purpose. This reflects how even the lower dimensions of this world can become a dwelling place for G-d and, also a means of revealing G-d’s blessing, “to increase your produce.”

The above can also be connected with the daily portion of Rambam which completes Hilchos Maaser Sheni and Neta Reva’i and begins Hilchos Bikkurim. In the conclusion of Hilchos Maaser Sheni, the Rambam discusses the declaration made after separating all the tithes in which a Jew[71] states that he has fulfilled all the different agricultural requirements. That declaration concludes with the request: “Look down from Your holy habitation... and bless Your people Israel as You swore

69. On the verse: “Be holy, for I am holy.” Our Sages commented: A Jew must be holy, but can his holiness approach that of G-d? The verse states: “because I am holy;” My holiness transcends your holiness. Though the simple intent of that teaching is to state that G-d’s holiness will always transcend that of the Jews, the Tzemach Tzedek interpreted that teaching as follows: A Jew must be holy. Furthermore, his holiness can approach that of G-d as the verse continues: “because I G-d am holy.”

70. Thus, the command to act in a holy manner is given in the context of the prohibitions against eating forbidden foods and violating the laws of sexual morality, the most basic of our human behaviors.

71. The question has been raised whether this declaration is recited by women or not. Though making the declaration is restricted to those who possess a portion in Eretz Yisroel, there are women, e.g., the daughters of Tz’lofchad, who inherited a portion in Eretz Yisroel.

In regard to the declaration associated with the first fruits, the Rambam states that women are excluded because they cannot say “which You gave me,” i.e., that G-d gave them a specific portion of Eretz Yisroel for the land was not divided among the women. In contrast, the declaration associated with Maaser states: “which You have given us,” using the plural, referring to the Jewish people as a whole. Therefore, a woman who inherits her father’s portion may be obligated.

swore to our fathers [with] a land flowing with milk and honey.”

On this verse, our Sages commented:

How great is the power of those who perform mitzvos! Every other mention of the word Hashkifa (“Look down”) is associated with a curse and this is a blessing. How great is the power of those who give the tithes! They transform a curse into a blessing. Whenever the Torah mentions the word Hashkifa (“look down”), it is associated with difficulty... with the exception of this instance.

This emphasizes the infinite aspects of the blessing associated with this verse, how it can transform difficulty into blessing, revealing the transcendent levels of G-dliness on the lowest planes of existence in a manner of L'chat'chilla Aribber.

The concept of L'chat'chilla Aribber is also associated with the opening verses of Parshas Emor which is read in today's Mincha services. The portion begins: “Say to the priests... and you shall say to them....” Our Sages explain that the repetition in the verse is to teach us to hold the adults responsible for their children. As explained above, L'chat'chilla Aribber involves connecting the highest levels with the lowest levels through the influence of Tiferes Sh'b'Tiferes, “the middle bar that extends from one end to the

other.” Here also we see a unity established between the adults, those who teach, and the children, those who receive. Furthermore, this activity will also increase the light possessed by the adults, until complete unity[72] is established between the two.[73]

In a larger sense, the concept of holding the adults responsible for the children applies, not only within the Jewish people itself, but to the Jews' (the adults) influence over the world at large (the children). The Jews' efforts to refine and educate the world bring the Jews themselves to a higher level.

To take out a practical lesson from the above: Today is an appropriate time to accept resolutions to study the teachings of the Rebbe Maharash and to follow his directive to live in a manner of L'chat'chilla Aribber in all aspects of our behavior, those associated with Torah and mitzvos and those associated with the world at large.

4. Also, now is an appropriate time to invest efforts in printing the teachings of the Rebbe Maharash. In this context, it is worthy to mention the publication of a new text, Seifer HaMaamarim 5626, which include the first maamarim recited publicly by the Rebbe Maharash.

[The very first maamer, Zachor es Yom HaShabbos, explains how the

remembrance of the Shabbos has an effect on a Jew's behavior throughout the week, elevating it to a higher level.]

This text has been printed in regular Hebrew letters, even though previously, the Rebbe Maharash's teachings had been printed in an offset copy of the original manuscript. The reason why they had been printed in this manner is associated with a reluctance shared by many Torah scholars throughout the ages to write down their teachings in a Hebrew script similar to that used in a Torah scroll or to have their teachings printed with regular Hebrew letters which resemble such a script. Rather, the teachings were generally written and printed in Rashi script.

However, at present, it has become customary to print Torah texts with regular Hebrew letters. The reason for this change is self-understood, for in this manner the texts can be spread to a greater readership. This practice will be continued in regard to the Rebbe Maharash's other texts and to other texts of Chassidus. May it be followed in all realms of Torah literature and may the spread of these teachings usher in an age when “Man will no longer teach his fellowman... for they will all know Me,” when we will be redeemed from the exile in mercy.

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*It must be noted that although the Rambam explicitly states that women do not recite the declaration connected with Bikkurim (and Hilchos Maaser Sheni precede Hilchos Bikkurim), he makes no mention of women in regard to the declaration associated with Maaser Sheni. Hence, one might conclude that he requires a woman who inherited land to make such a declaration.*

*One might argue that there is no need to state that women are excluded for since this declaration is associated with a specific time (the afternoon before the final Yom Tov of Pesach), it is considered a mitzvas ase'i sh'ha'z'man grama and, hence, women are not required to observe it. However, one*

*might argue that in this instance, there is no intrinsic connection between the mitzvah and the time it must be observed. Rather, other factors restrict this mitzvah from being fulfilled at any other time (See Turei Even, Megilla 20b). Therefore, this mitzvah would not be considered as associated with time and thus, women would be under obligation to fulfill it.*

72. This is also related to the mitzvah of Ahavas Yisroel which is mentioned in Parshas K'doshim. Since the essential being of each Jew is his G-dly soul, absolute unity can be established between them. Thus, the verse states: “Love your fellowman as yourself. I am G-d.” By stating “I am G-d” (and thus,

*emphasizing the oneness of the Jews with G-d), the verse explains how it is possible for there to be true love and oneness among the Jews.*

73. This concept is related to the public letters sent out for Pesach and the sicha of the seventh day of Pesach which discuss the concept of a leap year in the context of the unity between the sun (a mashpia, a source of influence) and moon (a mekabel, a recipient).

*These concepts are also related to the present day which is Shabbos (connected with the solar cycle) and Rosh Chodesh (associated with the lunar cycle).*

## THE FINAL MISSION TO BRING MOSHIACH

PREPARED BY AVROHOM RAYNITZ  
TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY



*On Isru Chag HaShavuos 5751, dozens of Chabad rabbanim gathered together in 770. At the conclusion of a lengthy meeting, they all signed the p'sak din that established that the Rebbe is Moshiach, and that G-d must complete the process of the Redemption, as it were. As a further step, the rabbanim appointed Rabbi Dovid Nachshon and R. Avi Taub as their emissaries to read the p'sak din at the gravesites of the Rebbeim. Rabbi Dovid Nachshon continues his story of the "early days" of the Moshiach Campaign and his secret mission to Russia.*





In response to the continuing petition activities for *Kabbalas HaMalchus*, rumors began spreading throughout the world that the Rebbe was not pleased with what we were doing. It even reached the point that many of the more prominent *shluchim* in Eretz Yisroel and Europe wrote letters to the Rebbe to express their concern for the future of the Chabad activities under their administration.

During the *farbrengen* of Shabbos Parshas Acharei-K'doshim, the Rebbe raised the issue of these claims and fears:

**To those who are shocked and bewildered over the clamor being**

**made that every Jew must actively do something so that the Redemption will come *mamash* immediately, and to those people who openly express in words their wonderment and concerns—**

Since Moshiach is coming immediately, they ask what will become of all the activities and everything they have done over the years in *Galus*: the businesses they established, the property and assets they accumulated, the friends and connections they made, both Jewish and non-Jewish (particularly public officials), etc.?

The answer to this is that there is nothing to fear, since the

Redemption does not mean the cancellation of “the conduct of the world” and all the good things that were achieved (in accordance with Torah) in the Exile. On the contrary, *Geula* includes within it all the (good) things of the “*Gola*” (exile) such that they are elevated to the level of Redemption, their true and most complete level. As a result, this reveals within them the (Alef) “*Alufo Shel Olam*” (Ruler of the world), the true *kavana* and purpose behind all these activities (during the time of the Exile), as all this reveals G-d’s glory.

Thus, there is nothing to worry about regarding these activities –

even optional matters – that were carried out (in accordance with Torah) in the Exile. On the contrary, we learn from this that every businessman must look for ways to reveal G-d's glory in his business affairs and to take advantage of his business, his possessions, and his connections to increase in Torah and *mitzvos*.

By the way, the Rebbe turned in our direction several times during that *farbrengen*, encouraging us with continual motions of his hands, especially during the singing of “*Sisu v’simchu b’simchas ha’Geula*” (which the Rebbe referred to in a *sicha*).

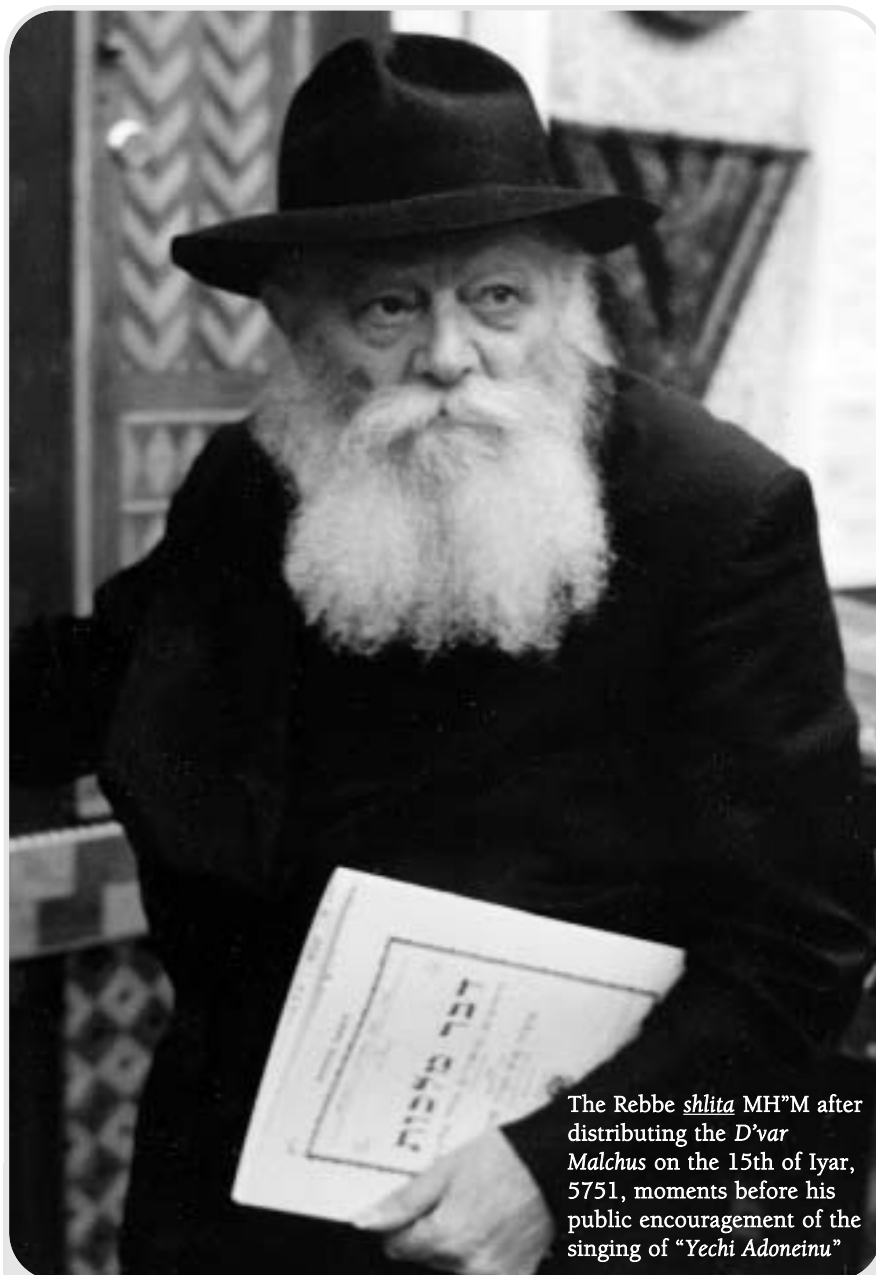
### THE REBBE HOLDS THE “D’VAR MALCHUS” AND ENCOURAGES THE SINGING OF “YECHI”

On Monday, the 15<sup>th</sup> of Iyar, after *Mincha*, the Rebbe suddenly gave a *sicha*. The Rebbe usually did not say *sichos* after *Mincha*, thus everyone was surprised.

During the *sicha*, which dealt with the subject of Pesach Sheni, the Rebbe began to speak about *Krias Yam Suf*. He emphasized that in order for the miracle of *Krias Yam Suf* to happen, it first required the self-sacrifice of a Jewish leader who jumped into the sea – Nachshon ben Aminadav. “Why was he called Nachshon? Because he was the first to jump into the *nachshol* (wave) of the sea.” Thus, through his self-sacrifice of jumping into the sea, he became an example to the entire Jewish people, all of whom went into the sea after him.

I saw this as another message to fortify our position, notwithstanding all the difficulties – both from within and without. The Rebbe was bestowing added strength upon me to be the “Nachshon” to jump into the sea.

The Rebbe spoke most fervently about the need for a Jew to demand



The Rebbe *shlita* MH”M after distributing the *D’var Malchus* on the 15th of Iyar, 5751, moments before his public encouragement of the singing of “*Yechi Adoneinu*”

*The Rebbe began walking in the direction of his holy room, then suddenly, he stopped near the secretary, Rabbi Groner, and told him something. Everyone was very startled. They thought that the Rebbe said something against the singing...*



the Redemption. As a result, immediately after the *sicha*, we began spontaneously to sing “*Yechi Adoneinu*.”

The Rebbe began walking in the direction of his holy room, then suddenly, he stopped near the secretary, Rabbi Groner, and told him something. Everyone was very startled. They thought that the Rebbe said something against the singing. But quickly they were relieved when they heard an announcement on the time for *Maariv*. It turned out that the Rebbe just asked to know when *Maariv* would be. Everyone continued singing, and the Rebbe passed near us, indicating with a full swing of his arm that we should intensify the singing. After the Rebbe left, we began a circle of enthusiastic dancing in response to the unique encouragement we received from the Rebbe. By the way, all this is documented on videotape and has already been shown in numerous locations.

That same day, after *Maariv*, the Rebbe distributed the *D’var Malchus*. The distribution itself aroused

tremendous excitement, as from the name of the booklet, “*D’var Malchus*,” the intention was clear. Furthermore, to see the Rebbe standing and giving out a booklet with the words “*D’var Malchus* from the Lubavitcher Rebbe” printed on it was a further strengthening of the path we had taken and that the Rebbe agrees with publicizing that he is the Moshiach.

During the distribution, we sang “*Yechi Adoneinu*,” and as the Rebbe left we merited another gesture of encouragement.

## NEW OPPOSITION AND A TEMPORARY HALT

And then, after the open singing and declaration of “*Yechi Adoneinu*” reached a higher level with the Rebbe’s active encouragement, certain individuals cautioned the Rebbe that such things drive Jews away and interfere with outreach activities. They wrote that if “We Want Moshiach Now!” signs appear at the Lag B’Omer parades, it could adversely affect Chabad activities in the field of education. This was a reference to signs and slogans that

had been used for over a decade. However, there were *shluchim* who feared what effect the signs would have when coupled with our activities to express the faith of Chabad *chassidim* that the Rebbe is Moshiach.

The Rebbe issued a response on the 16<sup>th</sup> of Iyar stating that “if so,” they should remove these signs. These opposing forces rushed to inform all the *shluchim* that an order from the Rebbe to remove the signs had been received. They neglected to mention that the response was an answer to those who expressed concern that it will be a hindrance, rather they publicized it as a general instruction for all Chabad *shluchim*.

In the meantime, R. Shmuel Shmueli, editor of the *Yisrael Shelanu* newspaper, issued two publications entitled *Moshiach Now*. He wanted to write that the Rebbe is Moshiach, etc., in *Yisrael Shelanu*. He asked the Rebbe about it, and was answered: “According to partial results and the reports that have been received so far, the recent writings and publications have aroused new



Rabbi Dovid Nachshon and R. Avi Taub at the gravesite of the Tzemaḥ Tzedek and the Rebbe Maharash in Lubavitch



The *p’sak din* that was read at the gravesites of the Rebbeim

opposition that drive people away from the study of *chassidus* and all that pertains to it. As with all such arguments, particularly in print, questions are easily accepted whereas answers may be rejected. According to the prevailing situation, it seems more reasonable to halt [such activities] for the time being.”

We were very shocked when we heard these answers. Until now, we were used to the old-fashioned *misnagdishe* opposition. Suddenly, we now had new opponents – within Chabad ranks! And the fact was that these opponents had caused, at least as far as we could see, a state of concealment regarding the entire matter.

If this was not enough, we then heard that the Rebbe would not come out and speak before the children at the Lag B'Omer parade. This was very strange, as they had organized a big parade, and in light of everything that had occurred recently, it was expected that the Rebbe would come out. This was indeed painful. It was clear to us that something was going on behind the scenes.

In light of these developments, we called a meeting of all the *mashpiim* of Crown Heights, in the Mobile Centers offices. We decided to write a letter to the Rebbe in which we stated clearly that we do not share the minority opinion of those who think that the Moshiach publicity causes damage. We wrote that hundreds of thousands of children have been educated over the past ten years on “We Want Moshiach Now!” and it is impossible to stop it now. We could even testify to the fact that it only helps. We typed up the letter on Lag B'Omer, everyone signed it, and it was submitted to the Rebbe.

The Rebbe did not respond to the letter, but when we passed by the Rebbe, he gave us a pleasant look.



Rabbi Dovid Nachshon reads the *p'sak din* at the gravesite of the Rebbe Rashab in Rostov

After making a reassessment based on the answers we had received from the Rebbe, all of which

gave encouragement to continue the petition activities, we thought that perhaps the time had come to return

to Eretz Yisroel and lay the groundwork there. As I have already said, we were in New York at the time. Frightful rumors were spreading all over Eretz Yisroel, and we felt that we had to go back to clarify the situation. Furthermore, not all the *rabbanim* had signed the *p'sak din*, and we thought that we needed to take care of that matter, as well.

## RETURNING TO ERETZ YISROEL

Throughout this entire period, despite the fact that we had asked several times, the Rebbe did not give his permission for our return trip to Eretz HaKodesh. The Rebbe gave no answer whatsoever to the notes we submitted on this subject. Even when we passed by for dollars, as is customary, to inform the Rebbe of our impending trip, we didn't hear the usual *bracha* for a good trip nor did we receive *tz'daka* specifically for Eretz HaKodesh. Instead, the Rebbe said "Double portion of benedictions" (in English) to Avi Taub, "*kiflaim l'toshiya*" to me, and "*A dank oif di s'farim*" (thank you for the *s'farim*) to both of us. Not a word about the trip. We understood from this that the Rebbe wanted us to remain for the time being. It was only after Shabbos, the 20<sup>th</sup> of Iyar, that we received a positive response from the Rebbe for our trip.

In the later years, the Rebbe would only give us dollars prior to a trip back to Eretz Yisroel. Therefore, we were most surprised when after *Mincha*, the Rebbe sent the secretary to give us each ten shekel for the trip.

Just before the trip, I submitted a note to the Rebbe with a detailed account of our plans. Since they had not yet been fulfilled, I wrote that I intended to spend my time involved in these activities in Eretz HaKodesh until Shavuos, when I customarily return to *Beis Chayeinu*. I added that

since I was planning to return for Shavuos, if, *ch"v*, there will be no *hisGalus* by then, I will propose that the *rabbanim* send *shluchim* of the *beis din* to read the *piskei din* at the gravesites of the Rebbeim in Russia. On this letter, I received an answer: "*Azkir al HaTzion*."

Immediately upon our return to Eretz Yisroel, I called the secretary of the Chabad Rabbinical Court in Eretz HaKodesh, HaRav Yehuda Yeruslavski, and made an appointment to meet with him at Heichal Shlomo. I came with a

*Suddenly, we now  
had new opponents –  
within Chabad ranks!  
And the fact was that  
these opponents had  
caused, at least as far  
as we could see, a  
state of concealment  
regarding the entire  
matter.*

briefcase filled with documents, copies of the answers we had received from the Rebbe, and signatures of *rabbanim*. Rabbi Yeruslavski was most impressed to see such precise answers, especially in the face of the many rumors that had been spread in Eretz Yisroel. He signed the *p'sak din*, and he said that he would check the ways to pursue the matter further. The documents that I showed him changed his viewpoint.

## A CONTINUING (AND INCREASING) ACTIVITY

In preparation for Shabbos Parshas B'Har-B'Chukosai, I wanted to make a great *shturem* on the entire issue. I spoke with HaRav Tuvia Peles [of blessed memory] and asked to stay at his home, in order that I could make a *farbrengen* for *Anash* in Kfar Chabad.

We arranged a very large *farbrengen* in the Shikunim Chadashim. The entire Shabbos was one big *farbrengen*. I told again and again about everything that had transpired, and I gave out *mashkeh* from the bottle that I received from the Rebbe in connection with the signatures on *Kabbalas HaMalchus*. The atmosphere was electric.

On Motzaei Shabbos, I arrived back at my office in Natrat Illit, where I saw the Rebbe's answer to the letter I had sent on Friday regarding my trip to Kfar Chabad: **And it should be a continuing and increasing activity. The time has come. I will mention it at the Tzion.**

I noticed that the Rebbe wrote "increasing," meaning more *farbrengens*. Just then, someone asked me if I could make a *farbrengen* with the *bachurim* in Migdal HaEmek. Naturally, I agreed. I informed the Rebbe that I had been invited to Migdal, and I went to *farbreng*. I sat with the *bachurim* and showed them the file of answers. At once, all rumors were proven to be unfounded. I informed the Rebbe about this *farbrengen*, and immediately received an answer, similar to the previous one: **And it should be a continuing and increasing activity. The time has come. I will mention it at the Tzion.** This time, however, the Rebbe underlined the word "increasing." In response to the Rebbe's answer, I made another *farbrengen* the following day with all the "tankists."

I continued to collect signatures of *rabbanim* on the *p'sak din*, and

At this stage, the rabbanim instructed that the entire shlichus be kept secret. That same day, Erev Shabbos Parshas Naso, Rabbi Marlow submitted a letter from the rabbanim to the Rebbe, together with the document authorizing our shlichus.

aroused great interest in the need for the activities on *Kabbalas HaMalchus*. I arrived back at *Beis Chayeyinu* for Shavuot, without the slightest idea of the *shlichus* that awaited me.

# DOZENS OF CHABAD RABBANIM SIGN THE P'SAK DIN

B”H. Tuesday – “twice ‘it was good” – Parshas Naso, Isru Chag HaShavuot, “Year of ‘I will show you wonders”

P'SAK DIN

According to the law of our Holy Torah, the time of the Redemption has already arrived, as declared in

Yehuda Kalman Marlow [of blessed memory]. Rabbi Marlow spoke about it with Rabbi Yeruslavski, and they each said that Avi Taub and I were

the best candidates for this *shlichus*, due to our considerable involvement both in Moshiach activities and the renovation of the gravesites of our

Rebbeim. Rabbi Marlow put the appointment in writing, and said that it would be appropriate for the *Vaad HaRabbanim* to sign. He called HaRav Shneur Zalman Gurary, who said that he was prepared to sign. However, since the role of *vaad* president was subject to rotation and the position was temporarily vacant, he asked that we speak with the other members first. We spoke with them, and they agreed to authorize Rabbi Gurary to sign the letter of appointment in their name.

This is the text of the appointment we were given:

**B”H. Erev Shabbos Parshas Naso, the 11<sup>th</sup> of Sivan, “Year of ‘I will show you wonders”**

We, the undersigned, appoint R. Yisroel Dovid ben R. Mordechai Nachshon, *sh’yichyeh*, and R. Avrohom ben R. Hana Taub, *sh’yichyeh*, as messengers of the *beis din* to deliver the attached *p’sak din* to the Baal Shem Tov, the Maggid, the Alter Rebbe, the Mitteler Rebbe, the Tzemach Tzedek, the Rebbe Maharash, the Rebbe Rashab, the Rebbe Rayatz, and HaRav R. Levi Yitzchak Schneerson, of blessed memory, so that they can do all that depends upon them in the Heavenly Court to carry out the *p’sak din* calling for the revelation of the Rebbe, *shlita*, MH”M in actual deed before our very eyes (according to the Rambam’s *p’sak din* in “*Hilchos Melachim*,” Ch. 11) in this physical world, immediately *mamash mamash mamash*.

**YEHUDA KALMAN BEN R. AVROHOM YEHOSHUA, z”l, MARLOW (in the name of the Crown Heights Rabbinical Court – Brooklyn, New York)**

**SHNEUR ZALMAN BEN ESTER (in the name of Vaad Rabbanei Anash HaKlali)**

**YITZCHAK YEHUDA BEN CHAYA ESTER and R. MOSHE ZE’EV YERUSLAVSKI (in the name of Vaad**

## AN AUTHENTIC LETTER FROM THOSE DAYS

***A letter from R. Avi Taub to Rabbi Dovid Nachshon, written a few days before Shavuos:***

*Hod Sh’b’Malchus*, the 3<sup>rd</sup> of Sivan, “Year of ‘I will show you wonders”

Dear Dovid, *sh’yichyeh*:

Since I have regrettably decided that I am unable to travel with you today, I am writing to you the following.

First of all, there is today no doubt that the path that you took on Beis Iyar regarding Moshiach is the correct one. As such, it is appropriate for you to continue along this path on Shavuos with greater strength and fortitude. All the reactions – without exception – that I get from people that I meet (mainly non-religious) are very warm and positive. People accept the idea that the Lubavitcher Rebbe is Moshiach as a given fact. (I have not encountered a single case of contempt or ridicule – not even a smirk!) It appears to people as “something that is definitely possible, and if it happens, then we’ll do what has to be done, including becoming religious.”

Furthermore, many people (who know that we went to the Rebbe *shlita* in order to come back with him to Eretz Yisroel) have asked me with the utmost seriousness, “What exactly happened over there? Why hasn’t the Rebbe come to Eretz Yisroel and revealed himself as Moshiach?”

If, *ch”v*, the Rebbe will not yet be revealed to the world with the true Redemption after *Malchus sh’b’Malchus*, and we will have to travel to all the gravesites of the Rebbeim, I hope very much that I will be able to complete all my personal arrangements next week. This way I can head to 770 or directly to Moscow by the end of next week.

It is very important to me that you tell the Rebbe *shlita* that I wanted very much to be with him for Shavuos. However, by Divine providence, I apparently will have to be here. In any event, I am certain that through his *ruach ha’kodesh*, he will see me near you when he looks at you! ...

Regarding Moshiach, it is written in today’s *HaYom Yom* that “Chag HaShavuos is an auspicious time Above, and G-d Alm-ghty disturbs the accusing forces...” (clear to the wise.) Take note that this is an opportunity to go *L’chat’chilla aribber* on this matter. The Jews of Eretz HaKodesh are ready for the Redemption, ready for Moshiach – and it is clear to all of them that the only one in our generation who can be the Moshiach is the Lubavitcher Rebbe! So go bring him already!

If you come during *yom tov*, I’ll be at Kibbutz Lavi (Moshiach will arrive first in the north, won’t he?). Don’t worry, I’ll already hear you!

## SECRET MISSION

At this stage, the *rabbanim* instructed that the entire *shlichus* be kept secret. That same day, Erev Shabbos Parshas Naso, Rabbi Marlow submitted a letter from the *rabbanim* to the Rebbe, together with the document authorizing our *shlichus*. After *Mincha*, I also submitted a letter to the Rebbe with a copy of the appointment.

That Shabbos, as is known, the Rebbe unexpectedly called another *farbrengen* at *Mincha* time. There was hardly anyone in 770, when the Rebbe suddenly came downstairs, walked in the direction of the platform where he *davened*, and began to *farbreng*.

I was privileged to be among the

first ones there, and stood extremely close. The Rebbe sat on a chair on the platform, without a table. It was an unforgettable sight. Word of this sudden *farbrengen* spread quickly, and hundreds of *chassidim* began to stream in the direction of 770. The pushing was incredible, and it was extremely difficult to concentrate. The Rebbe spoke about the fact that Dovid HaMelech said, "I will bless, it is pleasant for me to bless." Afterwards, the Rebbe gave out "*kos shel bracha*." I literally felt that the Rebbe was accepting the *Malchus*. "It is pleasing for me to bless."

Among the things he said, the Rebbe mentioned the gravesites of our Rebbeim, and that when someone travels there, he recites in the "*Mayne Lashon*" the words "The body [of a *tzaddik*] is holy." I took this as a clear hint in connection

with our trip.

We decided not to delay matters even for a moment, and to depart on Sunday, the 13<sup>th</sup> of Sivan. That day, we passed by the Rebbe for dollars. Immediately upon seeing us, he turned to Avi Taub, who came up first, and said, "Bon voyage. Much success. *B'suros tovos*." To me, the Rebbe said, "*Bracha v'hatzlacha. Dahs iz far di n'siya*." (This is for the trip.) We didn't mention anything about the trip, yet the Rebbe turned to us on his own. I then asked the Rebbe for a *bracha* that we should merit that our success should be apparent (even) in the physical world. The Rebbe responded, "*Amen. B'suros tovos. Hatzlacha rabba*."

From that moment, it was clear to us that this is the Rebbe's *shlichus*.

(To be continued.)

B"H



**Mazal Tov!**

**מזל טוב!**

**Mazal Tov!**

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# THE YARMULKA OF THE REBBE MAHARASH

BY RABBI SHOLOM YAAKOV CHAZAN

*Presented in honor of Beis Iyar,  
birthday of the Rebbe Maharash*

Among the holy items in the Lubavitch Library is a *yarmulka* with this inscription:

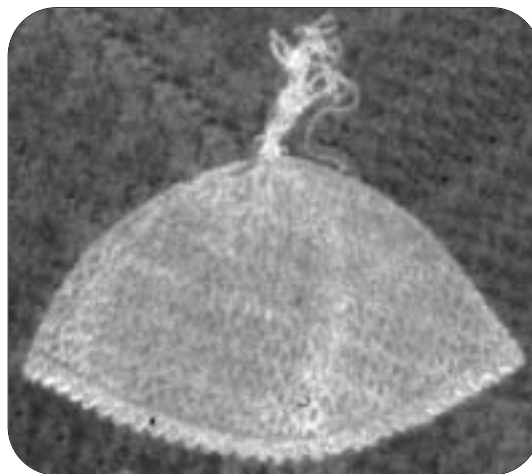
*Yarmulka.* According to tradition, this is the Alter Rebbe's *yarmulka*. It was found in a bundle of holy objects in a closet in the Rebbe Rayatz's *yeichidus* room. One of *Anash* related that the old Rebbetzin once told him that it was the Alter Rebbe's *yarmulka*.

This *yarmulka* was first described in *Kfar Chabad* magazine, issue 647, p. 41: "A white *yarmulka*, the threads mixed with silver, with a little tassel. The *yarmulka* is large enough to cover part of the forehead too ... perhaps it's the Tzemach Tzedek's, the one we see in the picture of him, a white *yarmulka* that sticks out of the *straimel*." *Beis Moshich*, issue 38, p. 30, followed up with evidence that it is actually "A white *yarmulka* with golden threads that was in the possession of the Rebbe Rayatz, which some say belonged to the Alter Rebbe."

From issue 40, p. 13:

"It was known from R' Sholom Dovber Butman, that the old Rebbetzin, the wife of the Rebbe Rayatz, said that they had in their possession the Alter Rebbe's *yarmulka*." (See *ibid* on p. 14 that its

origin is not determinable from the picture of the Tzemach Tzedek, for we know that the Alter Rebbe also



wore white garments which were passed on to his grandson, the Tzemach Tzedek, who wore them. Also see p. 15 *ibid* where it says that the Mittler Rebbe also wore white clothing, on Shabbos, and "the Rebbe Maharash also wore white silk garments, but only on special occasions, and only on a few Shabbasos.")

Here is something new about the *yarmulka* the Rebbe Rayatz had in his possession, which is apparently the same *yarmulka* we've been talking about:

This is what R' Shneur Tzvi

Schneerson from Chadera wrote in a letter dated Erev Rosh Chodesh Elul 5688:

To K"K Admur R' Y.Y. *shlita*,

First I must inform the Rebbe who I am. My name is Shneur ben Levi Yitzchok, grandson of Reb Chaim Avrohom, son of the Alter Rebbe. We were close friends with your father the Rebbe o.b.m. I remember His Honor from when you were still young. Your mother, the Rebbetzin, knows me.

I sent the Rebbe two *esrogim* from my garden, which is near the house, as a gift, and they are perfectly kosher. The tree is definitely not grafted.

My son planted about 2000 trees ... and when the trees were young he planted some near the house. After three or four years I found some *esrogim* on one tree. That was last year. The *esrogim* have all the *simanim* in *Shulchan Aruch* about not being grafted, and an *esrog* like this, even here in Eretz Yisroel, is truly precious. I also separated *trumos* and *maasros* properly.

I am also sending the Rebbe a *yarmulka* of his grandfather, the Rebbe Maharash, which your uncle R' Zalman Aharon gave me when I was in Lubavitch in 5630-5634. Until now I put the *yarmulka* on my sons and grandsons at their *bris*, and now in my old age I have no one to give this precious object. Thus, I send it to the Rebbe as a gift.

Enclosed is a note endorsing the *kashrus* of the *esrogim* from our *shochet*, Rabbi Yosef Chaim Orenstein of Yerushalayim, who is also of *Anash*...

With great respect, his nephew and relative,

Shneur Schneerson

\* \* \*

The Rebbe Rayatz wrote about this *yarmulka* (see photo):



Head covering of *Hod K"K AAZMU"R*  
*HRH"K Maharash ZTVKLLH"H NBG"M*  
*ZY"A*

I received it as a gift from R' Shneur  
 Tzvi Schneerson, grandson of HaRav  
 HaChassid R' Chaim Avrohom ZTVK"L. On  
 3 Elul 5688.



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## KO'ACH NISSAN: A REVOLUTION IN THOUGHT, A REVOLUTION IN ACTION

BY M. BEN YAIR

*The world was heading towards Geula from the moment it was created. \* With the Giving of the Torah and the building of the Mishkan, a new stage began. \* The revelation of chassidus marked the beginning of a new stage. \* 5711- a new strategy.*

An absentminded professor decided the time had come for him to purchase a car. Naturally, he wanted the best car on the market, and so after quickly learning how to drive he went to the dealership that sold the most prestigious cars available.

He had plenty of money and he wasn't choosy, so he quickly left with his prize car. It had twelve cylinders and everything was computerized, and he was quite satisfied with his purchase. He entered his luxury car, started the motor, and began driving. He looked for the exit to the superhighway as he wanted to test his car's motor.

He slowly ascended the ramp leading him on to the highway and then pressed firmly on the gas pedal. He couldn't believe his eyes – the motor, which was supposed to enable him to drive at the reckless speed of 300 kilometers an hour, didn't go faster than fifty KPH.

He angrily returned to the dealership and shouted his frustration to everyone in sight. "This is what you sold me?! I paid over one hundred thousand dollars for this piece of junk?"

The manager calmed him down and sent him to the nearby mechanic. They couldn't believe his story when

he told them what had happened. "You didn't manage to get past 50 KPH?" they asked in disbelief. The professor was willing to swear that the car didn't move any faster, and the incredulous mechanic said, "Okay, take a different car."

The exchange was quickly made and the professor headed for the highway once again. This time he managed to press the pedal down to the floor. The car made some strange noises, and he managed to quickly get it up to 55 KPH but where were the 300 KPH that he had been promised?

Back at the mechanic they simply didn't know what to tell him. The car seemed in perfect shape. "Maybe try to change the carburetor and clean the oil," the boss told his workers.

For the third attempt, the owner of the garage decided he'd join the professor for the ride. They got to the highway and the professor pressed down on the gas. The speedometer went up and up, until it reached 50, and then ... it stopped.

But this time the owner of the garage could see the professor's mistake for himself. The professor knew about second gear but was unaware of third gear ... He had passed the driving test without being told that when you get up to 50, you are supposed to shift

into high gear to enable the car to pick up speed. They didn't tell him, so he didn't know.

\* \* \*

What about us? Were we told that there are more than two speeds? Are we shifting into high gear, or are we stuck in the dark ages? What are the five steps to *Geula*? Read on for food for thought.

### THE PURPOSE OF CREATION

It says in the Midrash, "Hashem desired a dwelling place for Himself in the lower realms." Hashem wants to dwell in this world of ours. The ultimate fulfillment of the purpose of Creation is with the coming of Moshiach. This is when the world will look precisely the way Hashem wants it to look. That is when the seemingly impossible will happen, when this world will be a dwelling place for Hashem. There will be perfect harmony between physicality and spirituality.

*Yemos HaMoshiach*. This is the endpoint which Hashem yearns for, as it were. From the very moment the world was created the world began moving towards this goal: the true and complete Redemption. This was the plan when Hashem created the world, and the job of realizing this plan was given to us.

This is also the meaning of the statement of *Chazal* on the words, "and the earth was empty and desolate and a spirit of G-d hovered over the water" – "this is the spirit of Moshiach." This is because the coming of Moshiach was the purpose of Creation from the very start. Since that time – "the spirit of Moshiach hovers" – and accompanies every stage of the world's development.

Preparing for Moshiach is the golden thread that is woven through all places and all times. Every detail of every event is a part of the world's moving towards its goal: the coming of Moshiach.

This is the G-dly plan, generally speaking. Now, let us look back at our

past with the help of *chassidus*, and we will see how this plan was divided into stages. We can say that there are five critical stages through which the world progresses towards its destiny.

### EARLY STAGES

Adam HaRishon, and then the Fathers of our nation, began the process. From Midrashim we know that the Avos fulfilled the entire Torah before it was given, but they were unable to bring holiness down into the physical world. It is only the unlimited G-dly power that is able to connect physicality with spirituality. This ability was not granted to them.

It was only after the Jewish people refined their bodies with the slave labor in Egypt, that they merited the Giving of the Torah, the second stage. At *Mattan Torah*, Hashem revealed Himself and gave us that unlimited G-dly light which makes the unity of physicality and spirituality possible. This was a breakthrough which enabled the Jewish people to actually fulfill their mission of bringing holiness down to this physical world, thus building the “dwelling place down below.”

Moshe then built the Mishkan, and the *Sh’china* dwelled within it. This was not a permanent stage of affairs, for when they moved from place to place the holiness did not remain. However, when the first and second Beis HaMikdash were built, the *Sh’china* dwelled there and permanently affected the physical location of the Temple Mount.

Sounds quite ideal, but was this the final goal?

No. The Beis HaMikdash was destroyed and *Galus* followed in its wake, teaching us that the process is far more complicated. It includes peaks and valleys, incomparable to the achievements attained at *Mattan Torah* and when the Mikdash stood.

We were still on the march towards the future. We suffered, but we persevered in our march towards *Geula*.

### THE THIRD STAGE

On Rosh HaShana 5507 (1746), the Baal Shem Tov’s soul went up the “palace of Moshiach.” He described what happened there in a letter he wrote to his brother-in-law, R’ Gershon Kitiver:

“I asked Moshiach: when are you coming? And he said: when your wellsprings spread outward.”

These words reveal a new significance to the revelation of *Toras ha’chassidus*. *Chassidus* is what unifies all aspects of Judaism and directs them all towards the final objective: the true

*On Chaf-Ches Nissan 5751, the Rebbe, in a sudden sicha, began enumerating the special qualities of this day, and then raised the question: how is it that despite the unique qualities of the day, Moshiach hadn’t actually come?*

and complete *Geula*. This started the third stage in preparing the world to realize its purpose.

The continuation of this third stage was through *chassidus Chabad* which takes the G-dly light and shows us how to bring it into human intellect. Through *chassidus Chabad*, *chassidus* conquered a new path in the process of realizing Moshiach’s message: “when your wellsprings spread forth.” Chabad *chassidus* took the wellspring itself, *p’nimius ha’Torah*, and brought it to the “*chutza*,” the outside, to the

furthermost *chutza*, i.e., limited, human intellect.

Since then, as the wellsprings continue to spread outward, we continue to move ever closer to the last stage of the long journey that began 1900 years ago.

### THE FOURTH STAGE

On 10 Shvat 5711, we began the fourth stage, when the Rebbe announced that the six previous Chabad leaders had already brought the *Sh’china* down to the first heaven, and that our role was to bring it down to earth.

The Rebbe put himself at the service of the Jewish people and energetically led the way in the fulfillment of the historic *shlichus* of *Am Yisroel*. Forty years passed since Yud Shvat 5711 in which the Rebbe succeeded in significantly impacting on the character of our nation and the world. Thanks to his unprecedented charisma and his formulation of an enormous network of *shluchim* around the world, the Rebbe was able to set the stage for the dwelling of the *Sh’china*. Enthusiasm for Torah and *mitzvos* was no longer a foreign concept to millions of Jews. The time had come for the world to acknowledge the presence of Moshiach.

### THE FIFTH STAGE

On Chaf-Ches Nissan 5751, the Rebbe, in a sudden *sicha*, began enumerating the special qualities of this day, and then raised the question: how is it that despite the unique qualities of the day, Moshiach hadn’t actually come? The Rebbe exclaimed: “The only thing I can do is give it over to you: Do all you can to actually bring Moshiach Tzidkeinu immediately.”

This shocking *sicha* exposed the situation for what it was: the Rebbe, prophet of the generation, sees the *Geula* on the threshold, and he wants us to see it, too. The *chassidim* accepted the responsibility put upon them by the Rebbe, and immediately

gathered together to discuss how to best prepare the world for Moshiach. They decided to start *Mivtza Kabbalas HaMalchus*, i.e., a campaign to get people to recognize and accept the Rebbe's *Malchus*.

The Rebbe accepted this initiative. The Rebbe gave *brachos* and encouragement to gatherings which were called, "*Kinus LKabbalas Malchuso shel HaRebbe Melech HaMoshiach*." People want to know who Moshiach is. Now people heard. It's the Lubavitcher Rebbe. The yearning for *Geula* became ever more palpable.

From that point on, the Rebbe raised Moshiach and *Geula* awareness ever higher. *Chassidim* who continued

to work on publicizing Moshiach's identity were encouraged by the Rebbe.

If we were to summarize the beginning of the fifth stage which began on Ko'ach Nissan, we could say it was a complete revolution in a way of thinking. It was no longer a dream, no longer something theoretical. Moshiach is here, and we can identify him! He is the Lubavitcher Rebbe!

We progressed quickly in this fifth stage. The miracles of the Gulf War were just the beginning of many milestones that clearly pointed towards *Geula*. Then suddenly it looked as though we were going backwards. Even those who went along with us

until now changed direction and began moving against the traffic. The test is great. Sometimes it seems as though we are like the man who was driving the wrong way on the highway, who when he heard on the radio about some nut driving against traffic said in amazement: it's not just one person, they're *all* driving the wrong way except for me!

But when we open the *sichos*, the elixir of life that we have from the Rebbe MH"M, the *sichos* about which the Rebbe said this is the "*derech ha'yeshara*" to bring Moshiach, we are sure we are on the right highway and traveling in the right direction!

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## COUNTING DIAMONDS



For several years the Rebbe MH”M would stand for hours every Sunday and hand out dollars. Thousands of people would stand in two lines – one for men and one for women – and for five or six hours the Rebbe would give advice, blessings, and encouragement to each person, along with at least one dollar (to encourage others to give charity and to serve as an impetus for blessing).

Because the Rebbe was over ninety years old, had literally a 24-hour-a-day 7-day-a-week work schedule, and never had taken even one day off in his life (!), the *chassidim* were naturally worried for his health and they requested that the Rebbe at least shorten the time that he gave out dollars so as not to tire himself out.

The Rebbe answered them, “When you count diamonds, you don’t get tired.”

This week’s section contains fifty-two commandments; thirteen positive and thirty-eight negative. Among them: not to steal, not to rob, not to curse anyone, not to mislead others, not to hate, nor take revenge, not to slander, shame, or cause harm through speech (*lashon ha’ra*). But in this section is found one very special

commandment. In fact, it is the most important of all the commandments: Love your neighbor as yourself. It is so important that two of the greatest scholars and holiest Jews that ever lived, Rabbi Akiva and Hillel said of it that “This is the summation (*klal gadol*) of the Torah” (although Hillel said it in slightly different terms).

Let us try to understand what these men meant.

How is it that if a Jew loves his neighbor he will come to do the whole Torah? What has loving others got to do with, for instance, not cooking on Shabbos, eating only kosher food or not worshiping idols? Why would someone put on *t’fillin* or learn Torah day and night just because he loves others?

In fact, we see the exact opposite! The more that one wants to be accepted by others, the less observant he usually is. The *Shulchan Aruch* even warns us not to be affected by what others think, even if they scoff at you, because it weakens one’s Torah observance!

Conversely, the more that one is involved in Torah the more faults he can find in others and the less camaraderie there is! He can’t eat, dress, act, etc., like everyone else.

And, even more, we see that the myriads of commandments and ideas in the Torah create myriads of arguments, customs, and differences even between the religious people themselves!

So how is “Loving your neighbor” a main principle of the Torah?

In a nutshell, the answer to all this is that the whole Torah was given only to express the uniqueness and the true value of what a Jew is.

From the first word in the Torah “*B’Reishis*” we can learn that the entire world and everything in it, both spiritual and physical, was (and is constantly being) made in the merit of the Torah and the Jewish people (see Rashi there).

But the last sentence of the Torah (see Rashi there) tells us even more – that Moshe broke the Tablets; he smashed the Torah (!) in order to save the Jews from the punishment of the unpardonable sin of the Golden Calf.

He did it (and G-d praised him for it) because he realized that the Jews (even the sinners!) are higher than the holy Torah itself!

Moshe realized that each Jew is an “only son of G-d,” and has a ray of the essence of Hashem in him

(something like a miniature Holy Temple), and therefore has the potential to make peace, harmony, and blessing in the world (like the Holy Temple).

Without the shining of this Jewish soul, the world is without blessing, and meaning.

This is the "yourself" that Rabbi Akiva was talking about when he said, "Love your fellow as yourself." Namely, that when we try to find this holiness in ourselves we can then look for it in each and every Jew – something like finding a diamond in the earth.

This is the meaning of what the Rebbe said earlier, "When you count diamonds you don't get tired."

Incidentally, this does not in any way imply that Jews should love only Jews. In fact exactly the opposite is

***How is it that if a Jew loves his neighbor he will come to do the whole Torah? What has loving others got to do with, for instance, not cooking on Shabbos, eating only kosher food or not worshipping idols?***

true; the Jewish soul is from the essence of the CREATOR, and when

it is revealed, it inspires more love toward ALL of G-d's Creations especially other human beings (because all men are made in G-d's image). It's just that love begins at home, so Jews must first learn to love Jews.

The only way to bring this Jewish soul into action, however, is the Torah. The Torah, and the commandments therein, have the power to reveal and manifest in the world this living holiness hidden in each and every Jew (see chapt. 32 in the Tanya).

Therefore the Torah is called "power and peace," (T'hilim 29:11 see Talmud Z'vachim 116a) because it gives power to the Jewish souls to shine and bring peace into the world.

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## A BLESSING FOR GOOD NEWS – THE APARTMENT INCLUDED

BY SHNEUR ZALMAN BERGER

*A mysterious line in a letter in the Igros Kodesh. \* Criminal charges for something he didn't do. \* How it all worked out for Rabbi Y., a shliach of the Rebbe MH"M*

Rabbi Y. is a *shliach* in a *yishuv* in northern Eretz Yisroel. He had opened the *Igros Kodesh* to a series of amazing answers during the protracted battle the mayor waged against him. One of his answers was addressed to a Jew who had the same name as the mayor! Other letters spoke about proper *chinuch* and help from the city council to develop schools of the Reshet, which were the very issues for which he was being attacked.

The *shliach* merited amazing miracles, "But there's a postscript to the story," he told *Beis Moshiach*. The continuation of the story has to do with one line in one of the letters of the *Igros Kodesh* which said, **"a blessing for good news in all the aforementioned, and also in your personal matters – the apartment included."**

"I didn't understand the connection between this line and the trouble we were having, and I couldn't get it out of my mind. Why did the Rebbe mention something about my personal dwelling? Ten days later I understood the surprising answer.

"One day I received a notice in the mail calling me to court. I was being charged with criminal charges for a violation of the building code. The charge was basically correct. I bought my home, which also serves as the Chabad house and Chabad *shul*, from my brother, who had built an addition in the area designated for parking.

"I had converted the room into a *mikva*, which serviced many families from the *yishuvim* in the north (by the way, a number of them were blessed with children after years of barrenness). Now the city was taking me to court over the parking lot that had been converted illegally.

"I realized this was yet another act of war by the mayor against Chabad. Although we had come to certain understandings and had enjoyed a long period of quiet, this claim had been submitted long before and had only just now reached the point of a court case.

"I was absolutely convinced that the only purpose here was to give me a hard time, since my brother had built the addition, not me. Besides, it was a small structure that was made

by simply changing its intended purpose. The most they could do was set a fine. Charging me with criminal charges was ridiculous.

"I had plenty of experience with the courts because of my nursery schools, but this criminal charge worried me. I knew that if I was declared guilty, I could no longer serve in a public position and various rabbinic positions would be off-limits to me (aside from the big fine I'd have to pay).

"I spoke to the mayor, who said he could not stop the legal process at that point. I broke down the outer wall of the *mikva* and put up a large electronic garaged door, thus turning the *mikva* into a legally enclosed garage.

"Still, the charges were not dropped and I could only pray that it would all work out in the end. I was hoping a miracle would take place, and even before the court case I told the lawyer that we are *shluchim* of the Rebbe, and that, *b'ezeras Hashem*, it would all end miraculously."

"Fortunate are those who believe," she said skeptically.

\* \* \*

"Heavyhearted, I entered the courthouse accompanied by the lawyer, somebody quite experienced. The prosecutor read the charges against me. Oy, everything I had anticipated came to pass. I was charged for an illegal structure for which they wanted to slap me with criminal charges, they wanted the structure taken down, all in addition to a fine of tens of thousands of shekel.

"More than anything else I was afraid that there would no longer be a Chabad *mikva* in the city, and many families would have to travel long distances to a *mikva*.

"My thoughts were racing as the judge turned to the city council's





prosecutor and angrily said, 'I can't believe you're doing this. The honorable council, which works on behalf of the people, has nothing to do aside from getting involved in the lives of distinguished people who work on behalf of the public? Does it make any sense to bring a respected person here, and to charge him with criminal charges? For what? For deviating from the building code? You would think he had built a four-story building without a permit, when all it is, is a small room which he arranged legally. There's only parking there now, and for that he deserves a medal.'

"The judge hadn't finished. 'And I have another question for the city council: The illegal structure was

***"I was absolutely convinced that the only purpose here was to give me a hard time. The most they could do was set a fine. Charging me with criminal charges was ridiculous."***

made by this man's brother, the one who sold him the apartment, so why are you accusing him?"

"There was silence in the courthouse. Nobody had expected a verbal attack from the judge. After many minutes of tense silence the prosecutor recovered and said, 'Although the home was purchased from the brother, they are members of the same family and so the charges should apply.'

"The judge got angrier, 'I don't want this distinguished gentleman to be considered guilty, even indirectly. I ask that his name be removed from the charges!'

"He banged with his gavel and read his decision. 'The brother is fined 1000 shekel, which he can pay in two installments. The rest of the charges are dropped.'

Rabbi Y. could not believe his ears. He had feared a fine of tens of thousands of shekel along with a criminal charge, and had gotten none of it! His lawyer was even more excited than he was. 'I've been a lawyer for 22 years and I have never seen a judge conclude a case without hearing both sides!'

The *shliach* and lawyer left the courthouse. The lawyer concluded, "Tzaddikim, *melachtam naaseis al yedei acheirim*" (the work of the righteous is done by others).

"We are *shluchim* of the Rebbe," responded Rabbi Y. simply. He knew it was in the answer he had opened to in the *Igros Kodesh*, "a blessing for good news in all the aforementioned, and also in your personal matters – the apartment included."

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# THE LAST YUD-ALEF NISSAN & SEUDAS MOSHIACH IN CHEVEL YAMIT

BY SHAI GEFEN



*After midnight, the jeep circumvented the Israeli soldiers who surrounded Yamit and a group of Lubavitchers, led by Rabbi Sholom Dovber Volpe and Rabbi Yosef Hartman, entered the city to celebrate Yud-Alef Nissan and to encourage the remaining residents. \* We present a description of Yamit in the year before it was destroyed, and the work of Chabad in the doomed area.*

This year marks 21 years since the Yamit region with its seventeen settlements was destroyed by the Begin government. The defense minister at that time was Ariel

Sharon. The bloody wound which was the destruction of these *yishuvim* and the area being handed over to our enemies in Egypt, has still not healed. The consequences of the

Camp David Accords are felt till this very day.

Needless to say, the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach fought the Camp David Accords and the evacuation of the settlements, and he warned – at that time – that the Accords would lead to endless concessions to the Arabs, and would open the door to danger for millions of Jews in Eretz Yisroel.

Today we are amazed to see how the Rebbe's prophecy is being fully realized, but at that time people were euphoric. Israelis happily sang, "*Heiveinu shalom aleichem*," and most of the nation supported the peace agreement with Egypt. Only a



The Lag B'Omer parade near one of the main squares in Yamit



Newspaper headline: The I.D.F. finishes destroying Yamit

relatively small segment went to battle against the planned withdrawal from Sinai and the destruction of the settlements there.

The main battle took place in the months of Adar and Nissan 5742 (1982) as the appointed time to evacuate Chevel Yamit loomed closer. Most of the settlers in the area had agreed to leave in exchange for government compensation, but hundreds and thousands of those opposed to the withdrawal streamed into the area with the encouragement of the Committee to Stop the Withdrawal from Sinai of Gush Emunim. They brought in thousands of Jews to Chevel Yamit and to Yamit itself in order to fight against the evacuation.

The invasion of Yamit by those opposed to the withdrawal started back in Adar. Hundreds of families arrived in Yamit, Ofira, and Chatzar Adar. *Yeshivos* and *ulpanos* were established by the movement to stop the withdrawal from Sinai. People changed their addresses to settlements in Chevel Sinai, and they worked along with the original

settlers of Yamit and the region who refused to be evacuated. They all waited for a miracle to happen that would stop the evacuation.

The beginning of the churban

***“The first day of Pesach is an ‘arousal from Above.’ Shvii Shel Pesach is an ‘arousal from below.’ On the first of Pesach we were carried on eagles’ wings out of Egypt. On Shvii Shel Pesach we needed Nachshon to jump into the sea so that it would split.”***

began on 8 Adar I with the evacuation of Yishuv Chatzar Adar and Yishuv Talmei Yosef the next day. It was done with tremendous manpower and with violence against the settlers. Weapons of destruction were turned upon Jews who refused to leave.

As the days passed, those opposed to the withdrawal realized that the government was intent on destroying Yamit, too. Yamit was under siege since the army feared that many young people would show up to forcefully prevent the withdrawal.

Getting into Yamit was a complicated and difficult task, but as always, groups of Lubavitchers came to help those opposed to the withdrawal and to boost their morale. Among them were Rabbi Yosef Hartman and Rabbi Sholom Dovber Volpe who organized *mitzvaim*, children’s rallies, and *mitvza matza* for Yud-Alef Nissan.

Chabad’s work in Yamit began long before the forced withdrawal. Chabad operated there all year long, both in Yamit as well as in the other *yishuvim* in the area. The Rebbe gave his non-stop encouragement to this work. In a special interview for *Beis Moshiach*, Rabbi Hartman describes Chabad’s work in Chevel Yamit in that sad year, 5742:

“Our connection with the settlements of Chevel Yamit began ten years before that, in 5731. We began working among the *yishuvim* and *kibbutzim*. For example, we worked at Moshav Sadot through the Shefer family, who became very involved in *Yiddishkeit* as a result.

“Most of those living in the Chevel were not observant, so we didn’t lack for work to do. There were also children who came to the day camp we had in Nachalat Har Chabad. There was definitely a warm relationship with many families there. At a certain point we promoted *Mitvza Mezuzah* and many Jews

regularly wrote to the Rebbe.

"The one who took responsibility for the work in Chevel Yamit was the director of Tzach in Kiryat Malachi, Rabbi Lipa Kurtzweil. In 5741, less than a year before the destruction of Yamit, there was already the sense that this was the last year. That year a Lag B'Omer parade was organized in Yamit with the encouragement of Rabbi Ariel, the *rav* of Yamit (this was the second year since the Rebbe had announced Lag B'Omer parades). It was beautiful to see the residents of Yamit marching in the parade.

"I ran the program and the cries of the children reciting the *P'sukim* reached the heavens. The city that was so pretty was already shrouded in gloom over what was to come. Those who had been paid off by the government had already left, and the members of Gush Emunim had not yet arrived. A painful silence reigned in the streets and that Lag B'Omer parade gave Yamit a bit of life.

We printed a *Tanya* in Chatzar Adar at that time. Then we learned the *Tanya* with a special enthusiasm. A few weeks later they brutally evacuated Chatzar Adar. Heartrending scenes of that time will never be forgotten, as they dragged babies and their mothers from their homes, put them on trucks and sent them and their belongings out of the city.

I remember a children's rally that we made in Talmei Yosef. It was terrible to see how the children were sitting on one side, reciting the *P'sukim*, while not far off, just down the street, people were already dismantling homes and gardens. It's hard to believe that these events happened in Eretz Yisroel by a Jewish government.

"The next year, 5742, even the relatively large town of Yamit had become a ghost town. Most of the residents had left. Those who arrived in protest of the evacuation took over

empty houses and connected water and electric lines. It was terribly painful to witness how we Jews were ready to destroy an entire area and to hand it over to our enemies.

"The Rebbe didn't stop crying out about this situation. I was a writer and I would write up the Rebbe's *sichos* and put them in the paper

*She'arim*. I must mention R' Berke Wolff, *a"h*, for thanks to him, the Rebbe's view of *shleimus ha'Aretz* was spread all over. He even made sure that the *sichos* got into the biggest papers in the country.

"We kept up our work in Yamit, knowing that the Rebbe wanted us to, and we were encouraged by the



Rabbi Yosef Hartman with the *mivtzaim* tank in Yamit



The children of Yamit at the Lag B'Omer parade

*Mivtza T'fillin with the soldiers shortly before the evacuation*



Rebbe to do so.

"The Rebbe asked that the telegram he sent each year to be read at *Hakafos Shniyos* in Yerushalayim, Nachalat Har Chabad, and Kfar Chabad, be read at the *Hakafos Shniyos* in Yamit as well. So at the *Hakafos Shniyos* which was attended by thousands of Jews, I was asked by Rabbi Lipa Kurtzweil to read the telegram and to repeat what the Rebbe had said about the seriousness of evacuating *yishuvim* and giving up land to the Egyptians.

"I'd like to tell you an interesting story in connection with this. Rabbi Kurtzweil went to the Rebbe for Simchas Torah. On Motzaei Simchas Torah the secretaries searched for R' Lipa in order to ask him what had taken place in Yamit at the *Hakafos*

*Shniyos*. R' Lipa said he didn't know since he wasn't there, which is why he had asked me to read the Rebbe's telegram.

"The secretary told him that as far as the Rebbe was concerned it was as though he wasn't in the U.S. 'The Rebbe wants you to bring him a detailed report about what happened in Yamit on Motzaei Simchas Torah.'

"R' Lipa called me immediately in order to get the details so he could give them in to the Rebbe. The Rebbe responded with, "*t'shuos chein*" (thanks). From this we see that whatever we did in Yamit to encourage the people there and to strengthen the place, was of interest to the Rebbe."

"On Purim 5742, some groups of Lubavitchers went to all the *yishuvim*

in the area. By that time already, nearly all the residents had left, but we went anyway. It was heartbreaking to see the *yishuvim* which had been thriving, now in their destruction. We went among the soldiers and distributed *mishloach manos* even though we knew these soldiers were waiting for orders to forcefully evacuate the Jews from their homes and to destroy the city.

"We entered the offices of the commander of the area Brigadier-General Oded Tira, who was responsible for the evacuation. He explained how the nation was tired of war and had to give up the land. Naturally we repeated what the Rebbe said about the great danger in giving away Sinai to Egypt. Unfortunately we didn't fully grasp the depth of what the Rebbe had

said, namely that this would be a *bechiya l'doros* (crying for generations).

"The last time we went to Yamit was on Yud-Alef Nissan, the Rebbe's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. We went with the hope that Hashem would have mercy and would cancel our enemies' plans and that the city wouldn't be handed over to our enemies.

"When we arrived on the morning of Yud-Alef Nissan, it was impossible to get into Yamit. It was under siege. According to the military and the politicians it was supposed to be evacuated before Pesach, but Defense Minister Sharon postponed the inevitable until after Pesach as a goodwill gesture.

"Yud-Alef Nissan came out the same way as it did this year, on Sunday. R' Volpe, who led our group, had written the Rebbe's warnings in terrific books called *Daas Torah B'Eretz HaKodesh*, and *Shalom, Shalom, V'ein Shalom*. These books described in detail the fight to prevent the withdrawal from Sinai.

"By that time all the surrounding *yishuvim* had been destroyed and only Yamit remained standing, but we all knew this was borrowed time. We left Kiryat Malachi with a group of *Anash*. If I'm not mistaken we were eight men and two children. R' Gershon Levin was the driver. We were loaded up with *matza* and lots of pamphlets.

"We arrived at the *shul* in Kfar Maimon where we waited for the purpose of continuing on to Yamit via dirt roads, since the regular roads were blocked by the I.D.F. It was a terrible situation. We were accompanied by people from Kfar Maimon, some of whom were scouts in the army. It was in the middle of the night and it was foggy. We drove through desert and sand. From time to time the scout would get out and check to see that we were heading in the right direction.

"The trip itself was an unusual

experience, if you can call a trip like that an 'experience.' We arrived in Yamit at dawn on Sunday, Yud-Alef Nissan, cleverly circumventing the I.D.F. As soon as we arrived we located the mikva and then we went to one of the abandoned houses and unloaded all our stuff. I still remember the *Shacharis* we *davened* that day, a *d'veikus'dike Shacharis* that was fitting for such a special day as Yud-Alef Nissan, the birthday of the *nasi ha'dor* and its leader.

"After we *davened*, we went through the streets with loudspeakers, announcing a children's rally to take place in the local sports center. We hoped to fulfill the *pasuk*, "*Mi'pi olelim v'yonkim yisadita oz, l'maan tzorerecha, l'hashbis oyeiv u'misnakem*" (From the mouths of babies and sucklings You founded strength because of Your tormentors; to still foe and avenger). How relevant these words were! Hundreds of children came to the rally who *davened* to Hashem and pleaded that He avert the evil decree. We told the children about the Rebbe's fight against the withdrawal, we *davened* and said the 12 *P'sukim*. Then R' Volpe spoke to the children.

"The atmosphere was definitely tense. It was hard to hide this. Everybody felt we were poised on the edge of bad times. The feeling we had that day was that they would evacuate Yamit even before Pesach, and it wasn't at all certain whether they would be there for Pesach. Only the next day, the 12<sup>th</sup> of Nissan, came the announcement from Sharon that he was delaying the evacuation for two weeks, until after Pesach.

"It was interesting to see how the people prepared for Pesach. Stands were set up for the distribution of Pesach products, and the entire city prepared for *yom tov* with mixed feelings. The constant thought in everyone's mind was that this was going to be the last Pesach in Yamit.

"After the rally we went around all day distributing *shmura matza* and material from the Rebbe against the withdrawal. Wherever we could we tried to encourage the settlers who came to bodily prevent the withdrawal. All thanked us for coming despite the fact that at the time nobody was able to get in or out of Yamit.

"We even went to the famous tower in which Tzachi HaNegbi and Kahane's men were holed up. We went up there and encouraged them. The tower had a huge sign which said, "*Kol dimei achicha tzoakim min ha'adama*" (the voice of your brother's blood cries out from the ground).

"Then we visited the home of Mr. Avi Parchan, the man who remained in Yamit till the very last day, and when the entire city was demolished he walked to Yerushalayim. (Today he lives in *yishuv Eli Sinai* in the north of the Gaza Strip, and is re-experiencing the weakness of our leadership, led once again by Sharon).

"The work we did that day was very moving. We felt that this was the last time we'd be there. At the end of the day, heavyhearted and with tears in our eyes, we left Yamit. We had seen the beginning of the *churban* but as *chassidim* of the Rebbe we knew that even at this time we had to be there to help out."

Shvii Shel Pesach was one of the heartrending last days in Yamit, a brief moment before the final evacuation. Thousands of people in Yamit sang as they paraded towards the sea where they said the Song of the Sea with great emotion.

Towards evening, hundreds of them celebrated the *Seudas Moshiaach* along with Rabbi Moshe Segal, *a"h*, who had gone to Yamit to celebrate Pesach with the people there. You can't help but be moved by the description of that final *Seudas Moshiaach* in Yamit, a description

written at that time by Rabbi Yaakov Ariel, rosh yeshivas Yamit:

"The dining room of the yeshiva was packed. Hundreds of residents of Yamit came to celebrate the end of Pesach with us. The menu surprised me: *matzos* and wine, eggs, vegetables and fruit. Jam – a product of a preserves factory in Yamit which used fruit that grew in the region, oranges, tomatoes, and cucumbers. The crowd was enormous. I estimate that there were between 300 and 400 people. Many of them stood.

"On the main table sat teachers from our yeshiva and other yeshivos, *rabbanim* from various *yishuvim*, and in the middle sat R' Moshe Segal. I stood up to introduce him.

"According to *halacha* there is no need to eat a third meal on *yom tov*, but Shvii Shel Pesach (Acharon Shel Pesach outside of Eretz Yisroel) is different. The Baal Shem Tov had a third meal on Shvii Shel Pesach in

order to express the idea that Pesach does not end. The *Geula* process does not end. It continues on and therefore we do not part from Pesach. We continue as long as we can. Both *chassidim* as well as *misnagdim* identify with this custom, and this in itself can hasten our *Geula*.

"The one who will lead the gathering is one of the believers of *Geula* in our generation, R' Moshe Segal, a Chabad *chassid* who blew the *shofar* at the *Kosel* on Motzaei Yom Kippur. For this crime the British arrested him. He was one of the first to settle in the Old City of Yerushalayim, who had his vow not to leave Yerushalayim annulled in order to be with us for Pesach. He will lead this meal and just as he had the merit to sound the *shofar* at the *Kosel*, may he merit to hear the sound of the *shofar* of Moshiach echoing throughout our land, in Yamit too.

"R' Segal got up, poured himself a

cup of wine, and briefly explained the origin of the *Seudas Moshiach*, and about the significance of the day: "The first day of Pesach is an "arousal from Above." Shvii Shel Pesach is an "arousal from below." On the first of Pesach we were carried on eagles' wings out of Egypt. On Shvii Shel Pesach we needed Nachshon to jump into the sea so that it would split.

"The people here in Yamit are Nachshon. In his *z'chus* we will merit the *Geula* in our times, too. Let us drink the first of four cups of wine, *baruch ...borei pri ha'gafen*.

"A loud 'amen' reverberated throughout the room and R' Moshe drank his cup of wine. "*L'chaim, l'chaim*" – "*l'chayei Am Yisroel, l'chayei Am Yisroel, l'chayei Yamit*," everybody roared and broke into song. "*V'koreiv pezureinu u'nefutzoseinu ka'nes mi'yarkisei aretz...*," and other songs. The enthusiasm grew as each song was sung, and hands clapped and feet tapped along. Suddenly the elderly R' Moshe Segal got up, his white beard standing out among all the dark-haired people present. The singing stopped. "Let us drink a second cup."

"*L'chaim, l'chayei Moshiach Tzidkeinu*."

"*L'chaim*," roared the crowd and they belted out the next song.

\* \* \*

This is the sad story of the last Yud-Alef Nissan and *Seudas Moshiach* in Yamit. *Halevai* we merit to hear the singing once again in Yamit!

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## MORE THAN A MILLION CHILDREN VISIT THE TINY, OLD MATZA BAKERY

BY SHNEUR ZALMAN BERGER



*Every year as Pesach approaches, thousands of children from all over the country visit the matza bakery in Kfar Chabad. \* Who originated this idea? Why did problems crop up in the railroad schedule because of this mivtza? What proclamation did the Education Ministry send out to all schools regarding Mivtza Matza LaTalmid? \* A retrospective about the early days of the mivtza, more than forty years later.*

Big, air-conditioned buses enter the gates of Kfar Chabad and spew forth thousands of children every day. From that point on, you can see the children participating in a variety of educational activities in preparation for Pesach, with the highlight being the visit to the matza bakery. The children gaze in fascination at the circles of dough that are swiftly passed on to the man who makes holes in them, and then sent to the oven.

In this modern day and age, it's a bit strange to see how matzos are made so primitively. Today everything operates by machine. But perhaps this is the reason why the children are enthralled by their visit to the old-fashioned matza bakery.

Perhaps it's precisely because of the arousal of the Jewish *neshama*, which sees the "food of faith" being made according to *halacha* by Jews who say, "*l'sheim matzas mitzva*." Maybe. Or maybe it's a result of both reasons together.

There's no question that Mivtza Matza LaTalmid is one of the most popular campaigns, attracting tens of thousands of children each year. It's a wonderful project run by Merkaz Tzeirei Agudas Chabad (Tzach).

\* \* \*

*Mivtza Matza LaTalmid*, which received the Rebbe's blessings and encouragement, is one of the oldest *mivtzaim*. Since the establishment of the matza bakery in Kfar Chabad, in

the beginning of the 50's, students from the schools of the surrounding *yishuvim* came to see the matza-baking process from up close. The *mivtza* began in 5761 and many *talmidim* began coming to Kfar Chabad, but the big *shturm* started the following year.

It was R' Itche Gansburg who had the idea to transform the bakery into *Mivtza Matza LaTalmid*. He tells us about his idea and how he brought it to fruition despite the difficulties:

"I decided to turn the bakery into a place for '*aliya l'regl*,' which people would come to from all over the country. The baking of the matzos was under the Vaad of Kfar Chabad, which gave R' Yoske Perman the right to run it. In 5722 he expressed his desire to leave the bakery, and when I heard that, I asked my brother Aryeh Leib to ask the Vaad to appoint us in charge of running the bakery.

"My plan was to enlarge the bakery, and to use the attraction of the bakery to draw thousands of children from all over the country to Kfar Chabad, where we'd organize various activities for them that would instill the *chassidic*



experience.

“The Vaad agreed to give us the rights to the bakery, and in the following weeks I devoted all my energy and free time to expanding the bakery and preparing exciting projects to attract as many children as possible. Since I was familiar with the power of visual aids on children, I put in a lot of work into making fascinating slides that would convey the atmosphere of the *seider* as it is conducted in *chassidic* homes.

“We advertised our unique program in schools around the country, and the very first year we were visited by thousands of children. The numbers grew as the years went by, and there were some years when we had over 50,000 children coming from all over the country. Some time later the bakery was taken over by the Stambler family who expanded the bakery and made sure there would be enough room for all the groups of students who came to visit.

The *mitvza* was financed by Tzach, which was headed by Rabbi Yisroel Libov, *a”h*. The counselors that were in charge of the groups of children who came were from Tomchei T’mimim and Beis Rivka Seminary.

We spoke with one of the counselors who, over the years, became the organizer of the *mitzva*, Rabbi Yosef Hartman of Nachalat Har Chabad:

“The *mitvza* began right after Purim and ended when the students went on Pesach vacation.”

**Aren’t *bachurim* in *yeshiva* at this time?**

“Yes. I was learning in Lud at the time, and the *hanhala* did not allow the *talmidim* to be involved in things like this at the expense of the *yeshiva* schedule. But the Rebbe’s answer to them was to allow *bachurim* to go as the need arose. A

similar answer was sent to the Beis Rivka Seminary, and so there were *madrichot*, too.”

**What did the counselors do?**

“The children convened in the central *shul* to hear a lecture while

watching a slideshow. It had to be dark in order to see the slides, so every day after a wedding had taken place there we stuck up black sheeting, and the next day before a wedding, we took them down. So the work began at midnight every



The children receive detailed explanations of every stage of the process



The buses arriving at Kfar Chabad with a large sign, “Welcome to Mivtza Matza LaTalmid” greeting them

night, when the guests who had attended the wedding had left the *shul*."

Hundreds of students came each day to Kfar Chabad in order to watch the *matza*-baking process. Many buses were seen at the entrance to the Kfar each morning. But the uniqueness of those years was certainly in the involvement of the management of the Israeli railroad to the *mitvza*. At the Tel Aviv train station, the management placed a special car for the *talmidim* traveling to Kfar Chabad. At the end of the visit, the train would take them back to Tel Aviv. This caused delays and messed up the railroad's schedule.

When children arrived at Kfar Chabad, they were greeted by the counselors near the vocational school where they were divided into groups with a counselor assigned to each group.

Their first stop was the vocational school. "I remember how amazed the kids were when they saw that religious Jews can work, too," says R' Hartman. "Kids who came from *kibbutzim* expressed their surprise that Jews with beards could work at printing and farming. The counselor would also tell the children about the massacre that took place in this vocational school. The teachers and parents who accompanied the children remembered the attack in which five students were murdered back in 5715 (1955)."

The children's next stops were the barn and chicken coops. It was quite an experience for them to see *chassidic* Jews with long beards riding tractors, growing fruits, and maintaining the chicken coops.

After this tour the children gathered near the main *shul*. Each counselor explained to his group about Chabad *chassidus* and Kfar Chabad. He would briefly explain

what Pesach is about and what they would see at the bakery. To the tune of the *niggun* "*MiMitzrayim Ge'altanu*," the first groups entered the bakery.

"Although the bakery was in an old, narrow building at the time," says R' Hartman, "the crowding didn't take away from the experience of seeing how the water and flour were mixed together and

then a *matza* was quickly made and sent to the oven. The children were impressed by how the old *chassid*, R' Zalman Levin did his work so quickly despite his age. They asked questions and were thrilled when they saw what had just been flour and water moments before, become fragrant *matzos*.

**What was the background of the children who came to Kfar Chabad?**

### "YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU DID TO ME"

At the end of the program the children received a gift which included hand-made *matza*, a bottle of wine, and a *Hagada*. R' Itche Gansburg tells us about it:

Each child received a souvenir piece of *matza*, but most of them ate it before they got back on the bus. I realized they had to have a souvenir that would last at least until the *seider*, and so I came up with the idea of little bottles of wine. When a child gets a closed bottle of wine, he holds on to it until the *seider*, and then he proudly shows the gift he got from Tzach and pours himself a cup.

I spoke to the director of marketing at the Rishon L'Tziyon winery, a man by the name of Dr. Meir, and bought thousands of bottles of wine whose labels indicated that they were being distributed as a gift by the *matza* bakery in Kfar Chabad.

I met up with Dr. Meir years later. The first thing he said to me was, "Gansburg, you don't know what you did to me." I wondered what he meant and he didn't keep me in suspense. "My daughter was in second grade when she first visited Kfar Chabad and got the bottle of wine from the Rebbe. Today she's already married and has three children. When one of them is sick she gives them a few drops of wine."

Now we never distributed wine from the Rebbe, but she thought the wine the Lubavitchers were giving out was wine from the Rebbe, and she believed that his wine was good for her children's health.

I once told this story at a *farbrengen* and somebody said that the wine that the Rebbe's *shluchim* distribute also has *segulos*.

One year I wanted to print a *Hagada* in a special edition for the children who visited Kfar Chabad, so they'd have something else as a souvenir that would last for years to come. I wrote to the Rebbe about it and received his *bracha* as well as instructions to include the notes for "*MiMitzrayim Ge'altanu*" which the Rebbe taught in those years. I also wrote a letter to Rabbi Chadakov, asking that he send me a nice picture of the Rebbe to be printed in the *Hagada*.

Rabbi Chadakov told me that he brought some pictures to the Rebbe and asked the Rebbe which one he should send me. The Rebbe examined the pictures and then chose one of them, saying, "This one is most like me."



Happy kids with freshly made matza



Thousands of children participating

The children were from all sorts of backgrounds. We had children from Chinuch Atzmai and Beis Yaakov, and children from HaKibbutz HaArtzi and HaKibbutz HaMeuchad. It was heartwarming to see *chareidi* children and *kibbutz*

kids sitting and doing activities together.

When all the groups had finished their tour they convened in the main *shul*, which was adorned with Pesach signs. The secretary of Tzach, Rabbi Mordechai Goldberg,

who was one of the organizers of the *mitvza*, welcomed the hundreds of children and introduced the talented Meir Friedman who taught hundreds and thousands of children the song, “*MiMitzrayim Ge’altanu.*” He did this with incredible professionalism, and the kids absolutely loved it.

Rabbi Tzvi Greenwald of Kfar Chabad was the one who ran the rallies:

“In those years the Rebbe spoke a great deal about the importance of getting the fifth son to the Pesach table. This is the son who doesn’t even know what Pesach is about and doesn’t show up along with the other sons. The theme of my talks was always per the Rebbe’s directive. We showed the children slides and movies. One movie was against missionaries. I explained how important it is to convince a child who was ensnared by the missionaries to leave them and join the *seider* table.

“In one movie, the children watched the Rebbe speak at the Lag B’Omer parade of 5720 (1960). Sholom Eisenbach translated the Yiddish into *Ivrit*. When the movie was over, he would tell the children about the Rebbe. When he finished he would ask the children, many of whom came from irreligious homes, to repeat the *Shma* loudly after him. It was incredibly moving to see the children, their parents and teachers repeat out loud: *Shma Yisroel Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad!*

At the end of the program each child received a gift: a bag with a handmade *matza*, a bottle of wine, and a *Hagada*.

At the end of an exciting day, the children left Kfar Chabad amazed by the life of *chassidim* who knew how to farm, to bake *matzos*, to grow fruit, and even to drive a tractor.

We got non-stop positive feedback. Thousands of thank-you

letters poured into the Tzach office in praise of the impressive educational experience. We got hundreds of letters and thank-you notes from the children, too.

The principal of a public school told the organizers, "You succeeded in giving our children a new perspective about one of the nicest things in our nation's history. Your wonderfully organized program contributed a great deal towards instilling this new/old concept within the hearts of our young students."

R' Hartman adds, "For many of the children this was the first time that they saw a *shul* and could speak to *frum* Jews. I worked at this *mivtza* in the early years and I heard feedback even many years later. I remember once going on *mivtza t'fillin* in the Sinai Peninsula where I met a soldier who told me what fond memories he had of his visit to the *matza* bakery in Kfar Chabad."

Sometimes we forget how much we have to offer and how powerful the truth of *Yiddishkeit* is.

## OFFICIALLY ACKNOWLEDGED AND RECOMMENDED

The Ministry of Education and Culture officially acknowledged Mivtza Matza LaTalmid and recommended that people visit us. This is what was written in a system-wide circular from the office of the Director of Education in 5723, to all schools:

"Last year, a number of schools visited Kfar Chabad in preparation for *Chag HaMatzos*, and the teachers who accompanied the students evaluated the experience as most positive. This year, as well, before Pesach, we recommend that you organize visits to Kfar Chabad, to the factories of the Kfar and especially to the *matza* bakery. The children will hear an explanation about life in the Kfar and the Chabad movement, and will learn Chabad songs. As we did last year, we encourage these visits and schools interested in a tour can contact Tzeirei Agudas Chabad, Rechov HaRav Kook 16, Tel Aviv."

That year thirteen supervisors from the Education Ministry in the Tel Aviv district came to see the work that Chabad was putting into this project. The supervisors, who came especially to see the educational program, went through all the parts of the program along with the children. At the end of the program they said how impressed they were by all they had seen and heard, and they encouraged the organizers to continue their terrific work.

The Minister of Education at that time, Mr. Abba Eban, also expressed his desire to visit the *matza* bakery in Kfar Chabad but due to technical reasons he had to cancel his visit at the last minute.





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