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U.S.A

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ת.ד. 102 כפר חב"ד 72915
טלפון: 9607-290 (03)
פקס: 9607-289 (03)

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Beis Moshiach (USPS 012-542) ISSN 1082-0272 is published weekly, except Jewish holidays (only once in April and October) for \$130.00 in Crown Heights, \$140.00 in the USA & Canada, all others for \$150.00 per year (45 issues), by Beis Moshiach, 744 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, NY 11213-3409. Periodicals postage paid at Brooklyn, NY and additional offices. Postmaster: send address changes to Beis Moshiach 744 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, NY 11213-3409.

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BECAUSE OF A COVERING OF SILVER...

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



Once there was a poor man named Avrohom. He and his wife and six children lived a meager life in a small wooden hut at the end of the road. Often there was no more than bread and tea to eat, but there was always room at his table and in his heart for guests.

One day a very holy looking Jew appeared at his door and asked if he could enter. "Avrohom," the guest said, "you don't know me but I know you. Your kindness is remarkable and I am going to give you a blessing for wealth. Just don't let it go to your head. Keep your heart open to the poor and unfortunate."

Avrohom promised, and the mysterious man blessed him and left. A week later Avrohom found a box filled with golden coins. He invested the money, made a lot of right decisions, and a month later found himself a rich man surrounded by other wealthy men. He bought out factories, advised investors, purchased a big mansion for himself... In short, in a half a year he was a big wheel, and completely forgot his promise to worry for the unfortunate; he was simply too busy.

After a year of this, the holy Jew reappeared, entered the mansion without knocking and walked into Avrohom's study. Avrohom looked up

at the intruder, and when he realized who it was, he stood up, forced a huge smile and opened his arms in feigned joy. "Ahh Rabbi! What a pleasure to see you! What a wonderful surprise! How happy I am!" (Avrohom, now a businessman, learned to think quickly in all situations.)

"Come let me show you around my house. It's really all yours, ha ha! Don't think I've forgotten. I've been very busy though, and you know..." The Rabbi was walking through the rooms examining everything and Avrohom was trying to keep up with him, "I'm not used to all this money yet, ha ha! But as soon as things get settled down I'm... Uh, excuse me, Rabbi, but what are you doing to that mirror? It's a real beauty isn't it! I had it sent specially from France. Why are you scraping off the silver on the back?!"

The Rabbi paid no attention, he had a little pocketknife and he was scraping at the back of the huge mirror before Avrohom's front window. When he had scraped off a good sized patch he looked at Avrohom pointed to the good part of the mirror and said,

"Look here Avrohom. What do you see?"

Avrohom looked and answered,

"Why, I see myself, Rabbi."

"And what do you see over here where I scraped off?" the Rabbi asked.

"Well, Rabbi, I mean... I used to see my reflection, but well now... Ehh, well... You scraped off that coating on the back... Well, heh heh."

"Please Avrohom," the Rabbi interrupted. "I asked you to tell me what you *do* see."

Avrohom cleared his throat and looked again at the scratched mirror, "All right... Through the mirror I see the front window... Well, I actually see through the front window to the street."

"And who do you see in the street? Tell me everything you see."

"Well, I see Zalman the water carrier and Sara the widow with a few of her children, and Shlomo the beggar and some of the boys from the yeshiva, they don't look so good either."

The Rabbi put his hand over the mirror, to show that the lesson was over, and waited for Avrohom to look him in the eyes.

"You see, Avrohom, because of a little covering of silver, all you see is yourself."

* * *

That was what happened in this

week's section. Moshe sent out an expeditionary force of important, righteous men to spy out K'naan in order to encourage the Jews to conquer it.

But instead they did the exact opposite! They dissuaded the entire Jewish people from even considering the idea!

What happened? What went wrong?

They knew that G-d is the King of the World. They saw with their own eyes how He decimated Egypt and provided for millions of people in a barren desert. Why were they afraid?

Moreover, how could they go against G-d's express desire and refuse to enter the Promised Land... the land that was the core of the covenant between G-d and the Jewish people?!

One answer is that they wanted to learn Torah! Nothing can compare to learning Torah. In fact, the entire world was created for the Torah! And in the desert, G-d helped them to learn uninterruptedly. He miraculously provided all their needs and removed all their worries in order that they learn Torah.

On the other hand, they knew that in Eretz Yisroel thousands of distractions awaited them: battles, hard work, difficulties, etc. Thus, they began to think selfishly. After all, if a little coating of silver can make a person selfish, how much more so the Torah, which is far more precious than gold or silver! (Psalms 119:14 & 72)

The Rebbe explains in one of his first lectures that this mistaken attitude toward the Torah was caused by the spies. They ingeniously changed the perspective of the entire Jewish people with one clever trick: They reversed the order of their report.

Moshe told them that when they returned they should first tell the Jews about the inhabitants of K'naan, and then describe the land and its produce.

Moshe wanted to make G-d's will

the first priority of the Jewish people; to conquer the land no matter how fearsome its inhabitants. Then the bounty therein would be of secondary importance.

But the spies cleverly reversed it. They immediately praised the land, exhibited its huge fruits and explained how it flowed milk and honey. And then they told about its fierce, giant populace and well-fortified cities – a big risk to take just for a few fruits!

Like the unscratched mirror in our story, suddenly the Jews saw only their own reflection. From their new perspective it was clear that Moshe

“Look here Avrohom. What do you see?” Avrohom looked and answered, “Why, I see myself, Rabbi.” “And what do you see over here where I scraped off?” The Rabbi asked...

was wrong; G-d could not be so unreasonable to demand suicide, as it were. And they justified themselves by saying that they wanted to continue learning Torah in the desert (even though it says in that same Torah to always follow Moshe!).

Only two of the spies, Yehoshua bin Nun and Kalev ben Yefuneh, thought differently. They knew the only way to follow G-d ... is to follow Moshe unquestioningly.

Yehoshua's secret was that Moshe blessed him by changing his name (from Hosheia) giving him the power to withstand this temptation. (Because Moshe knew that Yehoshua was to be

the next leader, and without a leader the Jewish people are like lost sheep.)

But Kalev had to do it himself. He was so afraid that he too would begin thinking logically, as it were, like the others, that he went alone to Chevron and prayed for help at the gravesite of Avrohom, Yitzchok and Yaakov (Rashi 13:22). And that is what saved him.

But it wasn't so simple. Rashi explains that he did not just pray; he prostrated himself (his head at the same level as his feet); he completely surrendered himself (even his logic) to G-d's will. (That is why he prayed by the Fathers, because they bequeathed to us this unquestioning surrender to G-d.)

So it is today, every generation has its Moshe. (And every *chassid* should believe that his Rebbe is it – Sanhedrin 98b.)

The Rebbe's message is: “Conquer the world with goodness. Make the entire world into Eretz Yisroel.” The entire world and each human being in it is a potential storehouse of spiritual treasures, a Holy Land, but the Jews are the key to uncovering these treasures.

And only Moshiach will wake us all up. Therefore the Rebbe wants everyone to learn about Moshiach and do everything possible to bring Moshiach NOW.

In other words, we must be like the spies and learn about the “Land,” but unlike them we must not cling to the security of the “desert” and be afraid to change.

We can do it! Each one of us can change the entire world! One more good deed, good word, or even one good thought can tip the scales! Like Yehoshua we already have the special blessing of Moshe. All we need is to learn from Kalev: be brave, look at the world from Moshe's eyes and soon we will all be dancing in the Promised Land together with MOSHIACH NOW!

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

TECHNOLOGY AS A TOOL FOR CHASSIDIC EDUCATION IN THE ERA OF MOSHIACH!

BY M. B. LEDYOV
TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY

Is the world's growing technology a contradiction to the positive developments in chassidic education? How we can possibly use a modern-day technology that can also be used for negativity? What is the chassidic perspective in connection with technological developments? We posed these questions to the Rebbe MH" M's shluchim in Grenoble, France – Rabbi Yichye Lachiani, Director of Chabad Institutions in Grenoble, and his wife, Rebbetzin Batsheva, the principal of the Grenoble Chabad Day School, who are deeply involved in chassidic education with a technological angle.

In today's world, when newspaper headlines blare about educational bankruptcy, *Beis Moshiach* turned to professionals in the field to speak with them about the matter: How can a true *chassid* march forward in this modern world? Is there not a contradiction?

In the interviews, we tried to clarify the *chassidic* educational approach, so we can understand the interpretation of the word "education," and whether *chassidic* education means to refrain from walking in the path of the modern world.

Is modern technology a contradiction to the positive developments in *chassidic* education?

Rabbi Lachiani: Technological development neither prevents nor limits the education of Jewish children. On the contrary, it can provide assistance in education.

It is important to know that the Rebbe himself encouraged the use of modern technology in dealing with

matters of *Yiddishkeit*, while at the same time, we must remain firm regarding the education of our children that it should only be in accordance with Torah guidelines, in order to achieve a true level of progress.

Mrs. Batsheva Lachiani: In the world of *Yiddishkeit*, we have proven that modernization does not create a conflict. Just the opposite, it helps *Yiddishkeit*.

We see this in our daily lives. Centuries ago, in order to learn Torah, we had to read a *seifer* by candlelight. Today, we use electricity, and on Shabbos, we also use a timer, enabling us to enjoy our Shabbos without violating any of its prohibitions.

Another example: Modern telecommunication enables us on the spot to hear daily *shiurim* in *Tanya*,

Rambam, *chassidic* stories, *niggunim*, or even to consult with a rabbinical authority, etc.

Progress in the area of publishing learning material is also a source of tremendous assistance to educational institutions. Today, it is not uncommon for *s'farim* to include full color illustrations, aiding in the explanation of even the most difficult concepts, such as, the erection of the Mishkan, the Beis HaMikdash, *karbanos*, etc.

Even radio and satellite are important tools which can be used to spread *Yiddishkeit*, since they possess the power to unite Jews throughout the world, as the Rebbe himself said on numerous occasions.

There is no doubt that today's world continues to develop. Similarly, technology is also developing quite

rapidly. Every day, new modes of technology appear on the store shelves, and many of us have difficulty keeping up with the pace. Before we have a chance to acquaint ourselves with the newest computer software, an even newer version hits the market. Speed is the key word. Today, with the press of a button, your message has reached the other side of the world...

Spontaneity is also an existing concept in our generation. Therefore, we have to be extra careful not to make mistakes. The matter is brought to the test under pressure, when a person is tested on how he reacts. If he will have a proper line of defense, i.e., the teachings of Torah and the teachings of the Rebbe, at a moment of pressure, he will conduct himself as a *chassid*.



Spontaneity is also an existing concept in our generation. The matter is brought to the test under pressure, when a person is tested on how he reacts. If he will have a proper line of defense, i.e., the teachings of Torah and the teachings of the Rebbe, at a moment of pressure, he will conduct himself as a chassid.

How we can possibly use modern technology that can also be used for negative purposes?

Rabbi Lachiani: Technology carries with it a great deal of trial. Everyone can take these vessels and use them in a forbidden way, to the point of being “contemptible with the permission of the Torah.” If we don’t know how to use something properly, it can cause harm and destruction to the soul. So it is with every tool – without operating instructions, a person can cause damage.

It is written in our Holy Torah, “You will be holy,” and the commentators interpret this as meaning “separate.” The whole matter of holiness to make a separation. We must control the situation, and not allow it to control us. This is the essence of: the mind ruling over the heart.

How do we identify the dividing line between what is permissible and what is forbidden?

Rabbi Lachiani: The intellect can not judge and decide things on its own. Therefore, G-d gave us the Torah to be our yardstick, and according to which we must measure our actions and direct our conduct. Torah is infinite and limitless, and therefore, it reflects absolute truth at all times, in all places, and according to all conditions. It is impossible to say that Torah does not relate to specific situations, as modern as they are.

Mrs. Lachiani: In addition to our Holy Torah, G-d also planted faithful watchmen in every generation who operate the lighthouses, and help people to perceive the light of Torah.

Rabbi Lachiani: To put matters in clearer terms, anything that is forbidden according to Torah – is forbidden! However, the important thing here is not to express this in exaggerated terms. We must devote ourselves in what is permissible to us and to think always along the lines of “Know Him in all your ways.”

Therefore, we must set a time for everything. To watch a video of the

Rebbe is a good thing, but to sit in a chair in front of a screen twenty-four hours a day is a waste of time and *bittul Torah* in every sense of the word.

It is important that we should not be subservient to technology, and we must constantly work and toil – even if the job is not an easy one – in order that we don’t lose our human character. For example, we should not reach the point that when we ask a child how much is 2 + 2, he’ll need a calculator to figure it out. This must come naturally as a given fact of knowledge.

We must bring the child to a situation whereby he understands with his own intellect that a certain path is the correct and proper one, to the point that the child himself wants to act accordingly.

There are people for whom technological progress was no help, rather it created for them an extra dependency upon technology.

It says in Proverbs, “Educate the child according to his way, even when he will be old, he will not depart from it.” In other words, the education of children does not mean that they are forced to conduct themselves according to our demand. Rather, we must bring the child to a situation whereby he understands with his own intellect that a certain path is the correct and proper one, to the point

that the child himself wants to act accordingly. This also comes to solve problems that he will encounter as he matures and wants to set out on his own; his principles will accompany him along the way. This is the essence of education.

What is the *chassidic* perspective in connection with technological developments?

Rabbi Lachiani: G-d gave man the choice to conduct the world according to his understanding. Therefore, man can use the world’s wealth for good and useful purposes or, *ch”v*, to let them go to waste.

G-d bestowed upon man access to a variety of potent energy sources through which he can do positive things for himself and the world at-large. This is the essence of the concept of “making a dwelling place for Him in the lower worlds.”

With the help of today’s technology, we are able to see convincingly that G-d reveals His infinite wisdom to us through Torah and *mitzvos*. This assists us in surpassing our natural limitations and getting closer to G-d. When the Redemption comes, the ultimate purpose of Creation will reveal itself more and more.

The Rebbe Rayatz writes in his *Igros Kodesh* (Vol. 9, p. 387) that it is the job of every person who studies Torah to illuminate the light of Torah, further the cause of Jewish education, and work towards the spreading and strengthening of *Yiddishkeit* to the best of his ability and at every opportunity.

It is incumbent upon educators to instill within the hearts of their students, starting from a young age, the feeling of responsibility towards their fellow Jews and to train them to fulfill their future roles with love, goodwill, and self-sacrifice.

A few words in summation?

Rabbi Lachiani: Modernization is like a rose. It is a beautiful and fragrant flower, but we must not get caught in its thorns. With any situation that appears difficult or insufficiently clear,

we must consult an authoritative rabbinical figure who will provide proper guidance in accordance with the Torah.

Technology has developed in impressive proportions, attaining great achievements, to the point that man can send people into outer space. Yet, the most important thing to know is: Can man rise above his animal soul and reach the level of *yiras Shamayim*

and humility in the face of G-d's infinite wisdom?! For at times, a small concession to one's fellow is much harder than a trip to the moon...

Mrs. Lachiani: Modernization is a vessel for the Redemption through which it is possible to see G-dliness and the unity of the Creator. Technology is also a vehicle to hasten the Redemption. There is no doubt that the spreading of the wellsprings

outward has reached greater heights through the media of radio, satellite, and Internet.

Today, the Redemption is much closer than ever before, thanks in part to technology. There is no contradiction between the progress in the world of technology and *Yiddishkeit*. We just have to know the Torah's operating instructions on every technology, and how to use it properly.

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RUACH HA'KODESH & MIRACLES

THE CORRECT DATE OF BIRTH

One of the T'mimim had a *yechidus* on his birthday on Daled Cheshvan. The Rebbe asked him, "When is your birthday?"

He said, "Daled Cheshvan."

The Rebbe asked him again, "When is your birthday?"

And again, he answered, "Daled Cheshvan." This happened a third time. When he left, he asked his parents when he was born and he was told 1Daled Cheshvan.

RESCUING A JEW

A Lubavitcher told the Rebbe that he was going to Mexico on business. The Rebbe asked him, "What's the rush? Can't you go later?"

The man tried to explain that he couldn't travel later because he had to be there for business reasons, but the Rebbe repeated, "In any case, remain here."

A day or two went by and he heard of an earthquake in the place he had been planning to visit.

IN THE MERIT OF T'FILLIN

On Erev Yom Kippur 5719 a man came to 770 and waited for the Rebbe near his room. When the Rebbe came out, the man approached him and told him that he had cancer, and all the doctors said his last chance was an operation.

The Rebbe said: If you begin putting on *t'fillin* daily, you won't need an operation.

The man resolved to do so and within a short time he was completely well.

PRECISE TIMING

During the Yom Kippur War, in

The line moved along and when it came the turn of the person who thought it was a general bracha, the Rebbe gave him lekach, gazed at him and slowly said, "Shana ... tova ... u'mesuka."

the middle of a *farbrengen*, the Rebbe called over someone who would be traveling to Eretz Yisroel and gave him a bottle of *mashkeh* and said he should give it out at a certain hospital there. The man didn't understand the reason for this, but he didn't ask any

questions.

When he got to Eretz Yisroel, he went to the hospital and found a critically injured soldier there. He put a drop of *mashkeh* to his lips and after some time he recovered. Later on it was discovered that the soldier had been wounded just as the Rebbe had given him the bottle.

WHEN YOU HEAR GOOD NEWS

A woman went to the Rebbe for *lekach*, and when the Rebbe gave it to her he said: You should hear good news.

The woman had no idea what this referred to. That night her son lost consciousness and he miraculously regained consciousness in the morning. The doctor who came to tell her that her son had recovered said: Mrs. M., I have good news for you..."

T'FILLIN FOR A GOY?

A goy asked the Rebbe for a *bracha*. The Rebbe's response was that he should check his *t'fillin*.

The *shliach* who conveyed this message didn't know how to explain the Rebbe's answer, but it turned out that the man was actually Jewish from an assimilated family, and in his home was a pair of *t'fillin* he had received as an inheritance from way back. He had never thought of finding out what they were until the Rebbe told him to check them.

**FROM THE TWO OF YOU
AND YOUR DAUGHTER**

A couple, married for a number of years without having children, had a *yechidus* and wrote to the Rebbe about their spiritual state, but did not ask for a *bracha* for children. They just wrote their names and asked for a *bracha*.

At the end of the *yechidus* the Rebbe said: We should hear good news from each one of you, and from the two of you together with your daughter.

Some time later their daughter was born.

**EVERY BRACHA HAS AN
ADDRESS**

Two *chassidim* waited in line for

lekach on Erev Yom Kippur. They got into a bit of a debate as to whether, when the Rebbe blessed each person with a good, sweet year, he meant it as a personal *bracha*, or as a general *bracha*. The line moved along and when it came the turn of the person who thought it was a general *bracha*, the Rebbe gave him *lekach*, gazed at him and slowly said, "Shana ... tova ... u'mesuka."

**HE KNOWS WHAT WASN'T
WRITTEN**

A family had *yechidus* and understood from the secretary that they were only to write their names without any requests. The Rebbe looked at the names and then answered all the

questions they had thought of writing. At the end of the *yechidus* the Rebbe said: About the job offer in New York, go back to [...] but not to New York.

A HEALING FARBRENGEN

Once, in the middle of a *farbrenge*n, the Rebbe asked someone why he hadn't brought his young son to the *farbrenge*n. The man said his son felt unwell and had to stay home. The Rebbe said: Go and bring him anyway.

The man did so but the boy felt sick and fell asleep. When the *farbrenge*n was over, the boy woke up and said he felt fine.

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MOSHIACH & THE WORLD

I DON'T SKIMP

In the summer of 5747, the *shliach* R' Shlomo Cunin had a *yechidus* and he said to the Rebbe: *Baruch Hashem* there isn't a city or town in the world that the Rebbe hasn't conquered, and so the time has come...

The Rebbe's face became very somber and he said: "But Moshiach still hasn't come."

R' Cunin went on: But the Rebbe can raise his hand and bring the *Geula* in a way of *Lchat'chilla aribber!*

The Rebbe looked serious once again and he said: *Ich zhalve nit dem Lchat'chilla aribber* (I don't skimp on *Lchat'chilla aribber*). In any case, you should relate good news, including the *inyan* of the coming of Moshiach *Tzidkeinu*.

ACCORDING TO SHULCHAN ARUCH

R' Reuven Dunin once wrote the Rebbe saying that whatever the Rebbe told him, he would do, in order to hasten the *Geula*.

A note was sent out in response: ...According to *Shulchan Aruch*.

MOSHIACH WILL SEARCH FOR YOU

Rabbi Yisroel Jacobson, *a"h*, was a very active public servant. The Rebbe once told him at a *farbrengen*: Moshiach will come and search for you. He will go to the *yeshiva* and ask: "Where is Rabbi Jacobson?" and they will tell him that he's at Beis Rivka. He will go to Beis Rivka and ask about you and they will tell him: He's with the *esrogim*. He'll go there and ask

about you again, and they will tell him he's at the *chevra kadisha*...

THE REBBE IS MOSHIACH

The Rebbe once related that before R' Avrohom Pariz went to Eretz Yisroel, he said: *v'nizkeh zehm zich mit'n Rebbe'n* (we should merit to meet again with

In the early years of the Rebbe's nesius, some people were standing near the Rebbe's room and talking about Moshiach's coming, how it would happen. The Rebbe suddenly exited his room and said: He'll come like this (suddenly).

the Rebbe), and when the Rebbe asked him, what about Moshiach, he replied, *Der Rebbe is Moshiach* (the Rebbe is Moshiach).

When the Rebbe repeated this, he copied the way R' Avrohom had said it, using the same motions.

HOW WILL MOSHIACH COME?

In the early years of the Rebbe's *nesius*, some people were standing near the Rebbe's room and talking about Moshiach's coming, how it would happen. The Rebbe suddenly exited his room and said: He'll come like this (suddenly).

WHEN WE IMPROVE

The Rebbe once told a man who came with his son for a *yechidus*: At the last *farbrengen* it was said that Moshiach can come on Tuesday since this day was twice blessed. This does not negate the fact that he can come on Monday, even though that day wasn't blessed at all. The Rebbe concluded: If you, your father, and I improve, he will surely come.

IT'S LATE!

In Iyar 5734 the Rebbe was called from Eretz Yisroel with the question: Since Lag B'Omer falls on Erev Shabbos, should they make a big deal about it. The Rebbe said: Since it is Friday and it is the sixth millennium after midday, they have to make a big deal about it.

WHY DELAY IT?

A *rav* had a *yechidus*, and the Rebbe asked him what he learned. After the man listed his study schedule, it was obvious that *chassidus* was missing. The Rebbe told him he had to learn *chassidus* and added: *Vos halstu up Moshiach?* (Why are you holding Moshiach up?)

EVERY JEWISH HOME!

R' Reuven Dunin had a *yechidus*

after Tishrei 5735 and he told the Rebbe that he wanted to move with his entire family to the U.S. to be near the Rebbe. The Rebbe said: When Moshiach comes, we'll go with him to Eretz Yisroel.

R' Reuven said: When he comes, will he come to my house?

The Rebbe said: Moshiach will enter every Jewish home!

SOON WE'LL ALL GO

Someone asked the Rebbe if he

could come to the U.S. The Rebbe responded: Only for a short time because soon everyone will go to Eretz Yisroel, and so will I.

THAT'S MY COMPLAINT

R' Rami Antian, a"h, organized a day camp in the summer of 5751, with the theme being: Moshiach. Some time after camp, a mother of one of the children called Rami and said that her daughter didn't stop talking about Moshiach's coming, and she was

getting nervous about her welfare.

Rami wrote to the Rebbe and ended his letter with: And I ask, *Ribbono shel olam*, if only for the sake of one Jewish child who after thousands of years in which we don't see any signs - her soul yearns for Moshiach, isn't it only right that the *Geula* should come already through Moshiach Tzidkeinu?

The Rebbe responded, "That is my complaint in the well-known *sicha*. I will mention it at the *tziyun*."

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A WAR OVER YOUNG SOULS



“Chai v’kayam” is not just an abstract concept. When speaking of “chai v’kayam,” it’s meant literally, but in this lowly generation we have to see it with our eyes too, and the Rebbe in his great mercy, gives us this opportunity.

It has been a number of years now that the phenomenon of writing to the Rebbe and getting an answer through the Igros Kodesh has taken off. Hundreds of thousands of people, including rabbanim, mashpiim, and ordinary folk, have experienced for themselves that when they turned to the Rebbe with their problems, the Rebbe answered them through the Igros Kodesh.

Our history has never seen anything like it before. Some look upon it as nevua, while others regard it as a “wonder,” but all testify to feeling that the Rebbe is chai v’kayam, listening to them and answering them. As the Rebbe MH”M said regarding the Rebbe Rayatz, “the Rebbe will find a way to answer.”

The following story, prepared for publication by Shneur Berger, in addition to the myriad of stories that happen daily, testify like a thousand witnesses that the Rebbe is chai v’kayam!

“I was under tremendous pressure. The new school year was about to begin and the mayor, who was intimidated by Chabad’s success, arranged for court orders prohibiting entrance to the two nursery schools we had just built,” says Rabbi Y. the director of a Chabad house somewhere in northern Eretz Yisroel, who for obvious reasons, does not want his name published.

It all started with a notice that was sent to me by the municipality regarding the nursery school which was located in the building that I rented from the municipality. The notice, which appeared to be innocent enough, said, “As the rental for this year has come to an end, you must present a request to extend the contract, and if within 14 days the municipality does not oppose it, the contract will be in force for another year.”

I knew that the mayor wasn’t happy, to say the least, with the development of a Chabad community in his city. He saw *mosdos* growing one after another, he saw how people were enthusiastic about us, and now with the expansion of the nursery schools, he was really unhappy. He was afraid that kids from the public schools would switch to Chabad, and so he

began to plot against us.

Some friends and I came up with a strategy. I knew that the municipality would strongly oppose extending the contract, by orders of the mayor. Various ideas were discussed when I happened to discover that the deputy in charge of signing municipal leases was about to go on a two-week vacation. I found out precisely when he'd be away.

Minutes before the municipality offices closed on the last day before his vacation, I showed up and presented my request to extend the contract. Things worked out just as I had anticipated. The deputy returned two weeks later and so the required 14 days had passed and since the municipality hadn't contested the extension, the contract was automatically extended for another year.

The mayor was furious. He realized what I had done and bided his time. The following year he got a court order forbidding us to enter the nursery school. I paid for a famous lawyer, one of the top in the country, and he told the court that everything had been done legally, according to the contract between the municipality and Chabad.

The judge listened and decided in our favor. The mayor was even more furious, and he decided to wage war on Chabad on a different front.

At that time we were planning on expanding our schools by opening two new ones. For this purpose, the Chabad house had built a new house in the B'nei Beisecha neighborhood. It was done with all the necessary permits from the Education Ministry and was legal.

At a certain point we had to get the approval of the head of the planning committee at the municipality, as well as the mayor's approval. When we presented the necessary documents, the mayor strongly opposed the schools with the excuse that the location was designated as a residential one, not for schools. We thought of housing the schools in a private house

until things could be arranged, but the municipality opposed this, too.

The new school year was about to begin and we had no solution to this dilemma. Two weeks before school began, the mayor sent people to the parents of the schoolchildren in order to explain to them that the building was illegal and there were orders forbidding its opening. The hint was obvious: put your kids back in the public school system.

The night before the first day of school, I couldn't sleep. *Baruch Hashem*, our Chabad house is financially stable. Everything was fine,

The new school year was about to begin and we had no solution to this dilemma. Two weeks before school began, the mayor told the parents: put your kids back in the public school system.

but now we had this major problem.

The next day school was to start throughout the city, yet I did not have quarters for two nursery schools. What would I tell the parents? Where would the children go? Where would I get the money to pay the lawyers and how would I be able to cover the expenses of going to court?

The rest of the family was asleep. The next day our lawyer was going to court. Instead of the children starting school, they would demonstrate in front of the municipality. The media would certainly be there, and hopefully it would all work out. I wished myself and the children success and with great emotion I wrote to the Rebbe.

I poured out my heart in my letter to the Rebbe MH"M. I wrote about the many *tzaros* we had and then put the letter in volume 3. The letter I opened to was #4195, and it spoke directly to me and about my situation.

In the beginning of the letter, the Rebbe responds to my being overly emotional:

"I happened to find out that you easily become emotional ... You have certainly heard of the Rebbe [Rayatz] and have learned in his *sichos*, *maamarim*, or letters that there is nothing happenstance in the world; everything is by Divine providence. And we...must try to direct our actions to what Hashem wants. Who am I to



clearly know what Hashem wants, but since I found out about this matter, perhaps I can help at least to some extent...

“It is difficult for me to answer in detail about your complaints...since I don’t hear the complaints from you yourself. Therefore I will just provide a general response, i.e., in describing your situation, as I see the situation, and since you are *nogeia b’davar* (subjective) according to Torah, more than I, my testimony is more reliable. And that is that the Rebbe [Rayatz] established you in a “*keren ora*” [lit., a corner of light], which is Torah, and didn’t suffice with that but also gave you the illuminary of Torah; and didn’t suffice with that, but since then the Rebbe holds your hand and directs all your affairs, [helped you] build a house on the foundations of Torah and *mitzvos*...”

These words spoke directly to me. I was born to an unobservant family and over the years, the Rebbe “held my hand” and placed me in a “*keren orah*.” I merited to become a *baal t’shuva* and a Lubavitcher *chassid* and *shliach* of the Rebbe. Every word was on the mark.

The Rebbe went on to write about my financial situation which is, *baruch Hashem*, good:

“Thank Heaven, you had a need for your *parnasa* and the *parnasa* of your family, and now you have that, and you received *brachos* from the Rebbe [Rayatz] that it will continue to be like this in the future. And not only that but you will also be able to give *tz’daka* generously.

“This is a general picture of your spiritual and material position. And after all this, what are you excited about?”

It was hard for me to digest the answer. It wasn’t merely a *bracha*, not merely a topic that was similar to mine, but the Rebbe was referring to my life in stage after stage. The Rebbe spoke about my becoming a *baal t’shuva*, *shlichus*, my good financial state, and asked why I was all shaken up. The Rebbe’s answer gave me

tremendous *bitachon* and faith that everything would work out all right.

* * *

The children’s demonstration the next morning outside the municipality made a great impression on the residents of the city. The media covered it positively.

The lawyer went to court and said the building was privately owned and built by Chabad, and therefore, there was no reason in the world for the municipality not to allow the children to enter the building.

I wasn’t worried about the judge deciding against us. I was afraid of the extension which would be given to the municipality, in order to allow them time to respond. Generally three months are given, and for a school, that is an eternity.

In the course of the discussion, the judge was convinced that the municipality was doing this for political reasons, and he sharply rebuked the municipality’s lawyer. In the end, he told the municipality to respond within a few days and not in three months. This was the best decision we could have gotten.

In the meantime, the children started school in the Chabad *shul*. It was overcrowded and they didn’t have the basic amenities. The municipality took advantage of this in order to ruin our schools. They sent letters and emissaries to the parents, asking them to send their children to “normal” schools. “Why does your child have to suffer and learn in a *shul* and not in a regular school?” they wrote.

The Rebbe’s *bracha* stood by us and not only did they not leave our schools, but we even got some more students despite our difficult circumstances. I have no explanation for all this, except for the fact that it was the Rebbe’s work.

In the meantime, the legal proceedings dragged on. I kept on worrying that the children would leave, and it would fall apart because the situation went on for nearly three months!

I wrote to the Rebbe again and the answer in the *Igros Kodesh* gave me the strength to go on. The answer was in letter #3916:

“May your mind be calmed as you have calmed my mind, that fruits of his efforts among children of immigrants have been seen ... and they should also judge possibilities of founding a religious school within the Reshet. Even though it’s already in the middle of the school year and there are difficulties in this...”

I didn’t need any more than that. I saw additional encouragement in this answer, and I decided to open a new channel on behalf of the schools. I spoke to members of the Knesset and Ministers and they repeatedly spoke to the mayor, but it didn’t help. His stubbornness was tremendous.

On Erev Yom Kippur I decided to go to the mayor’s house and make an attempt at reconciliation. Maybe this would help. The man is a tough guy, intractable and aggressive, and to tell you the truth, I was afraid he’d slam the door in my face, but *baruch Hashem*, he welcomed me politely.

I said, “Listen, it is Erev Yom Kippur and I came for the purpose of reconciling with you. This whole thing with the schools isn’t a personal war against you or against the municipality, but our objective need for nurseries for parents who want to give their children a Torah education, as well as a new school.

For the first time he also poured out his heart. “It’s difficult for me to describe to you the tremendous problems I have,” he said honestly. “Dozens of children are transferring to your schools, and as a result, some public schools are about to close. How can I just stand by?”

I told him that I had no interest in setting up a competing educational system, but we were doing what we could for children whose parents wanted them to have an authentic Jewish education.

At the end of our unusual meeting, we agreed that after Yom Kippur we



would meet again in order to work out our differences. I harbored the hope that I had finally managed to get through to his heart.

Apparently the spiritual arousal a Jew has Erev Yom Kippur doesn't necessarily last. After Yom Kippur all promises were forgotten and all the nice words flew out the window. The mayor continued his battle against us.

As I said earlier, there was a court order which instructed the municipality to respond to the complaint within a few days. Since they hadn't done so, our lawyer went to court saying the municipality was in contempt of court. The judge agreed, but the legal proceedings dragged on and the children still remained in the *shul* without the basic amenities a nursery ought to have. The municipality continued its war of attrition against the parents.

I, as usual, felt overwhelmed and

pressured by this mess I was in. One option was appeasement, and war the other option. What should I do?

I wrote to the Rebbe once again and based on the answer I received, I decided on a new course of action.

The letter was to Rabbi Meir Blizinsky:

"In response to your letter of 6 Av in which you write about meeting Mr. X and the details about it, and you ask my opinion how to be *mekarev* him, and even more so to Chabad...especially when it is apparent from your letter that you are an emotional person ... In any case, based on your letter it seems you ought to speak with him *ahn hentchikes* (without gloves)..."

The letter ends with: **"I await good news from you in all the abovementioned as well as regarding the Reshet and the details."**

Once again, I saw that the Rebbe

was being quite specific. The Rebbe referred to my meeting with the mayor and about my request to be *mekarev* him to us. The Rebbe also referred to an "emotional person," which I am. Now I knew what I had to do – to deal with the mayor "without gloves."

I decided to go directly to the mayor's family. A friend and I went to his daughter's house. I told her what was going on and convinced her to speak to her father to let us get into the schools, but I didn't think anything would come of it.

I returned home with the feeling that there was nothing else I could do to get the schools back. I wrote to the Rebbe that I gave the job over to him and that I awaited a miracle!

The miracle happened, far quicker than I thought it would. The next morning which was a Friday, the mayor's daughter called up sounding upset.

"Maybe it happened because of you. I don't know how to explain it, but last night the family had bizarre dreams. Ima (the mayor's wife) dreamt that all her teeth fell out and my sister dreamt that she saw *Aba* preparing meat on Yom Kippur. She was very shaken by this and told him in the dream that it was Yom Kippur, but he didn't pay any attention and continued doing what he was doing.

"When we got up in the morning my mother and sister related their dreams and the family is really depressed. We went to *kivrei tzaddikim* this morning and to a few *mekubalim*, but nobody has calmed down. Maybe it's happening because *Aba* is fighting you?"

It took me a few minutes to understand this new state of affairs. Of course I could have said that this wasn't the reason, but I was bold enough to say that they could write to the Rebbe himself through the *Igros Kodesh*. I told her how one writes. She listened and agreed that I should write on the family's behalf.

I did this and the answer shocked her. **"To the honorable..."** followed by

the mayor's name!

The letter went on to say, "In answer to your letter in which you write that you are involved in the field of proper *chinuch*, may you increase your efforts in this, and as the Sages say, you must ascend in holiness..."

The second page of the letter said, "Regarding helping the municipality with the schools of the Reshet (Chabad schools), you have to keep on trying..."

I called the mayor's daughter and told her that the Rebbe blessed them for being involved in "*chinuch ha'kosher*"...

Some time passed after my conversation with her and she called me again. "I arranged a meeting with Aba and you for the middle of the week."

I suggested that she go to *shul* so that she could say the prayer about dreams during the *Birkas Kohanim*.

On Sunday, the daughter came to the municipality's department of nursery schools and asked which buildings designated for nurseries were empty, in order to provide a suitable place for our schools.

On Monday the family came to *shul* in order to say the prayer about

"When we got up in the morning my mother and sister related their dreams and the family is really depressed..."

dreams. His wife and daughters came prepared with letters for the Rebbe. They had all heard the amazing answer they had gotten before, and wanted *brachos*.

The daughter was the first one to put her letter into the volume of *Igros*. The answer amazed her. The letter was about "the poverty of the refugees..." They all understood this to be alluding to what they had seen, Jewish children learning in terrible circumstances with the crowding of refugees. At the end of the letter the Rebbe wrote, "Good news in your personal matters. Many thanks for your efforts until now, and

especially when you have seen the difficulties of the refugees, you will certainly continue making efforts."

The mayor's daughter turned pale. After she calmed down somewhat, she told me that she had one child, but seven years had passed and she had no other children. In the letter she had written to the Rebbe she asked for a *bracha* for children, and the Rebbe blessed her in her "personal matters."

She was so amazed that she decided to work energetically on behalf of the nurseries since she realized that her personal *bracha* depended on it.

It all ended well. We got two new nurseries thanks to her, and she returned a month later in tears of joy to tell me that she was expecting!

As soon as we got the schools from the municipality, I went to the *Kinus HaShluchim*. The first change I received in Crown Heights consisted of eight dollars, two of them being dollars of the Rebbe. Wonder of wonders – one had the date, 26 Cheshvan, which was that day's date.

I felt what the Rebbe had written back at the beginning: "Holds your hand and leads you in all your affairs."



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SHIRA'S CHASSIDIC STORY

*The Kupchik family of Tzfas went on shlichus to Poona, India. They are there alone, nine souls: R' Betzalel and his wife Rochel, and seven of their ten children, who reach out to Jewish tourists in India. * In a series of poignant as well as humorous letters that Rochel Kupchik wrote to the students of Beis Chana, where she worked until she left for India, she describes the challenges and adventures they are experiencing. * Part 5*

A HISTORIC LAG B'OMER PARADE IN POONA

Dear members of the Sunday Shiur (which I hope is ongoing),

Rosh Chodesh Sivan passed and I thought of our custom in recent years of making a Rosh Chodesh Sivan party. I wondered whether you had made one this year. This heartwarming party is, for me, always a prelude to my birthday party, which I so like to celebrate in the loving atmosphere with you. I believe that this year, too, I will feel a little of your loving and supportive friendship, for the place that a person desires to be, that's where he is... (yet it hurts a bit, too).

I just learned with the children the Rashi about "a flame that rises of its own accord," and I owe you a thank-you that because of this *shiur*, I remember the Rebbe's *sicha* of 5751. Here, without you, unfortunately I don't learn as well.

I tried to remember the details that the Rebbe brings in the *sicha*, and to check out their practical ramifications

at our Chabad house. To the best of my memory,

"*Shalheves*" refers to spreading the original, inner light.

"*Olah*" (rising up) – there's a progression, in the length and breadth and up and down; not to be complacent, but to progress...

"Of its own accord" – this is the ultimate goal, to be *mekarev* until the other person also is *mekarev* others! Every so often, we feel we've gotten that, a bit. For example, I heard that Meirav, who gets our weekly e-mail on the *parsha*, sends it on to her friends.

Yesterday, one of our Shabbos guests said that he thinks he'll be *niskarev* to the non-Meshichisten Lubavitchers. I have no idea where he got this from or why he said it, because he has a tenuous connection with Breslov, and is basically confused, and is also, sad to say, still dabbling in *klipa*.

Anyway, another guest, who is both sweet and serious though far from any *Yiddishkeit* at present, immediately asked, "What do you mean by a 'non-Meshichist Lubavitcher'? What

characterizes Chabad is its special connection to Moshiach!"

* * *

Believe me when I tell you that I go through experiences here while I think about my next letter. Over here I don't have the opportunity to meet with a friend at the grocery store or a *shiur*, or even to have a long phone conversation. So I type everything in my mind and say, I'll write this, but then time passes and things grow stale...

I'll try to recount a number of incidents.

Exactly two weeks ago, Thursday night, was Lag B'Omer. My husband and I returned from a tiring night-trip, early in the morning. We tried to get a visa but were unsuccessful. The visa we had to India was about to expire on Sunday. We were exhausted from the trip and had no strength to think about what to do. We asked an Israeli *mekurav* to find out what our options were from the local office.

We still had Mivtza Lag B'Omer ahead of us. Don't ask me why

everything was “last minute,” because all the previous “minutes” were simply packed and I can’t explain it all here.

Friday, Lag B’Omer. We decide to ignore the visa issue for a while and concentrate on the Lag B’Omer parade. We began working but suddenly discovered that the goy that we asked to arrange a meeting for us with a band, hadn’t done so all week. Meanwhile we had gone away, and now it looked as though the only thing we had in honor of Lag B’Omer was the aphorism, “Rabbi Shimon can be relied upon in an emergency!”

While we were gone, the children had started preparing decorations for the parade, and invited the children of the community for 1:00.

It’s worthwhile stopping here and explaining about the band. In our first weeks here in India, we witnessed the local, impressive wedding processions. Back then we already thought of using this for *k’dusha* one day.

A row of musicians who play the saxophone, drums, cymbals, and trumpets (I’m afraid their musical expertise is limited to a few songs that they keep repeating) is accompanied by a vehicle upon which sits an organ player who blares the music so loudly that you surely can hear it in Tzfas! Did I say a vehicle? I mean a vehicle made “Indian-style”: a wagon whose sides are decorated and which is pushed energetically from behind by another “orchestra.” And I shouldn’t forget the most important thing: the costumes! Colorful uniforms, gold buttons, beautiful leggings (under which sometimes peek the shabby pants of the qualified musician who was taken from some miserable neighborhood and dressed up for the occasion), and of course impressive hats. In short, what could be better than using them for the children’s parade? But the goy (an Indian, of course) we had asked to bring us their representative, didn’t do so, and thus we found ourselves an hour and a half before the event.

Suddenly we heard wedding music

resounding from the main street. Mendy ran to try and get them. The sounds had already faded off into the distance, but Mendy didn’t give up. He got on a rickshaw and “explained” what he wanted. In what language? Ask 12-year-old Mendy, because he never learned English or Hindi.

Anyway, the driver brought him to the “Performances Office,” which is actually an exaggerated way of describing a tiny room in the Yeruda Market, but let’s not get bogged down in trivialities. No one was there, said Mendy, and then, by Divine providence, the vehicle carrying the musicians showed up (i.e., an open truck that carried them and the “musical vehicle” together) for they had just finished their job.

I nearly fainted. Such a blatant request for a bribe! And where would we get the money?

“The driver translated for them what I said,” Mendy later explained to us, (from which language to which language?) and five minutes later the proud rickshaw driver stopped at the Chabad house with Mendy and the leader of the band!

We held brief negotiations and concluded our business. Three quarters of an hour later, the parade had set out. The streets of Poona, which are accustomed to wedding processions and religious parades, stopped to watch this unlikely sight.

The people of the Chabad House (more precisely, my children, for they were the main ones) marched along with the children of the Jewish community. Before them marched Indian musicians, and after them followed vehicles decorated with



pictures of the Rebbe and signs. The vehicles were only those of the musicians, and Yigali’s carriage. Every time I left him in order to straighten out the line of marching children, some Indian made sure to push the carriage, and with high regard, too (here stores and restaurants go on wheels, but not children; it’s very rare).

The music? Wow! It sounded amazingly similar to the original music in Miron, which has an Arabic sound to it. There were two short and happy parts that kept on repeating (the repertoire of these street musicians is very limited).

Opposite the German Bakery, where the Israelis congregate and which was the end of our route, we stood and recited the 12 P’sukim and “*Yechi*,” then danced a brief *chassidic* dance.

The cameras of the numerous tourists, Israelis and (*l’havdil*) goyim, caught this amazing sight, that of a parade of *k’dusha* on these impure streets. We were so happy, and I am sure that Rabbi Shimon, who was really one to count on in an emergency, rejoiced along with us.

We ended with a short kinus at the Chabad house, where we told the children of the community about the significance of the day.

* * *

I peeked into the kitchen, gave some instructions, moved some things myself, and then I remembered the visas. What should we do?

The *mekurav* came back with some information and I decided that we had to deal with it that day, i.e., we had to approach the office in order to

straighten things out.

I wrote to the Rebbe MHTM that we had a month left (yes, I was confused in my letter; there was a week left and you can imagine the pressure) till our visas expired, and we had no idea what to do, so I requested a *bracha*. I glanced at the answer, but didn't pay it close attention due to the time pressure.

We went to the office. The man told us that in order to get a visa we had to leave India. It was possible to arrange a visa through him without leaving Poona, but it would be extremely expensive, and there were other reasons which I won't go into as to why we couldn't do it that way.

So where should we go? The closest place is Sri Lanka. I sat there for an hour and the man patiently explained the routes and prices.

No problem!

A two-day train trip to southern India; the next day, a flight to Sri Lanka; the next day a train to Kanady where the consulate is; wait for the visas and return. A 10-15 day trip! And this is hoping there is place on the trains, an available flight, that we get the visas right away, and I think about the second class trains, the heat of southern India in the summer, providing food for the entire family (there is no Chabad grocery in Sri Lanka and no Glatt catering on trains in India, as far as I know).

I thought some more about this horrendous trip, but the price to pay made me think that I had no choice and that we had to do the only possible thing, pay and not leave Poona, despite the problems that entailed.

I returned home fifteen minutes before candle-lighting.

Shabbos. I opened the *Igros* to read the answer I had opened to earlier. Volume 7, p. 262 "As to what to do, I did not write in my letter that it's a *g'zeira* that you have to remain in X but you should not just negate this suggestion, and you need to weigh all the options you have and choose the best one for you and the family, both materially and spiritually. Based on the

information you have written thus far, looking at it superficially at least, it seems that the option of continuing the work...is better than the rest, and may Hashem lead you [to do] that which is best for you and the whole family, materially and spiritually."

"*B'gashmius*" – to schlep for twelve days?

"*B'ruchnius*" – Shabbos? *Kashrus*?

"*B'nei beiso*" – how do you schlep little children on a trip like this?

And then the end, "continuing the work" – to stay!

Apparently, the Rebbe wanted me to go and find out all the information, and that we should arrive at the conclusion we arrived at!

Obviously, this answer made my Shabbos. We knew we had made the right decision, and there's no joy like that of resolving doubts.

Don't think the Rebbe gave these *kochos* for nothing, I really needed them...

I went to the Foreign Office to arrange for a temporary extension of 15 days. After filling out endless forms and paying and taking pictures, going over the details time and again, trying not get confused (of course, I got confused), I got to the point where everything was ready and I was presenting the officer with it all. That's when he rose from his seat, in the hall full of other officers, and he informed me (and the *mekurav* who had come along to help me) that no, he could not extend the visa, it just wasn't possible.

So, what then? – I cautiously inquired.

Well, if we'd give him a certain sum – and he mentioned something exorbitant – then he would gladly help us.

I nearly fainted. Such a blatant request for a bribe! And where would we get the money?

I was staggered. I knew we were fighting for the continuation of the *shlichus*. We waged a battle, just like two contestants who keep an eye on all around them, looking out for where the next blow will come from. I knew I had

no choice and that I needed him. On the other hand, I had to lower the "fee" to something normal (even so, it would be an enormous expense), and he didn't want to lose a "fat fish."

When I repeated what had happened, later at the Chabad house, when I returned absolutely wiped out, Ilan, one of the Israelis, didn't understand why I let myself be pressured at all.

Pharaoh was forced to send B'nei Yisroel out because of what Moshe said, he said, and you also received a directive from Moshe, and this guy has to take care of things for you.

Yes, we ultimately prevailed, with the Rebbe's *bracha*, and got the fee down to a quarter of the original amount. The rain forests were damaged with the 12 sheets of paper required for each member of the family (12 copies for an extension of two weeks – do you understand what the bureaucracy is like here?). Mind you, this process took an entire week! In the middle of the process, I noticed that the area where the police are located is called G.P.U. – reminiscent of another police department called the G.P.U.... When I thought about what our brethren endured there with the Soviet police, I realized that this was all nothing. It's just a little bit of dust that remains from the last battle, in the last "round" of *Galus*. And *Geula* will be victorious!

So *l'hitraot*, without any papers or visas, in *Yerushalayim ha'b'nuya*.

Rochele

A GIRL BY THE NAME OF SHIRA

B"H

Monday, 20 Sivan 5761

Dear students,

I sat myself down and wrote you the "Megillas Pesach." Now I will write you little anecdotes of what happens here, and that will be easier, because whatever I manage to write I can send immediately.

Shiri. A sweet girl. They met up with her in the German Bakery (a coffee house frequented by Israelis, and where Lubavitchers go to meet them)



Kupchik kids leading the Lag B'Omer parade in Poona

and she came to us a number of times. At a certain point, on Pesach, I started a *shiur* with her and I asked her what she preferred that we learn. She gave me the topic: Death. Oy.

The *s'farim* were packed away in the old house (as this was Pesach) and so I didn't even have anything I could look into to find and teach her something on her chosen topic. I knew the background of her request despite the fact that she didn't tell it to me explicitly. She had been married to a gentile who had been killed in a car accident, and she was confused, as emotions concerning the accident were

mixed with thoughts of *emuna*.

I finally found a solution. I took the angle of the purpose of the *neschama* coming down to earth, and decided to use *chassidic* stories. I remember the famous story of the boy who was born to elderly parents through the *bracha* of the Baal Shem Tov, who died at the age of two.

I also told her the story a *tzaddik* told of his mother who had been widowed at a young age and had to support her five children herself. Once, as she lit Shabbos candles, she cried so much as she *davened*, that when she opened her eyes she saw that her tears

had extinguished the flames. This made her cry yet again, and miraculously, the candles re-lit.

I told her that I repeated this story for an assignment I had once had in seminary. We had been learning how to teach *halacha* and how a story can bring a *mitzva* to life. Each seminary girl had to bring a story associated with some *halacha*. I was a Lubavitcher at that time and so I naturally chose one of the *mitzvaim*, Mitzva Neshek, and I told this story (in more detail – it appears in *Talks and Tales*) as I had never told it before. When I remember it, I tremble each time once again.

The teacher was a *misnaged* with all his 248 limbs, and as he listened to me he cleared his throat uncomfortably and said: When I tell a *talmid* how the Chazon Ish washed his hands, then he understands how to properly wash his hands, but what will a girl learn from this story – that if she cries, her candles will relight?

Go explain to a *misnaged* the holiness and subtleties of a *chassidische* story...

This story is connected to her topic: Death. I told her that a debate ensued about *chassidische* stories (I was on "*shlichus*" then, not in Poona, but in Beis Yaakov). One teacher who was actually *chassidische*, was drawn into the discussion.

One of the girls said to her: All the Baal Shem Tov stories are fine, but what's the point in stories about *gilgulim*?

This teacher, who had previously lost a child, said to her: How would I overcome the death of my son if not for these stories?

I don't know what Shira got out of this *shiur* of mine on Death, but what is clear is that in the "*gilgulim*" I made from one topic to another, *chassidische* stories were emphasized as well as Mitzva Neshek, of course.

* * *

Shvii shel Pesach. They stayed up all night, but being exhausted, I went to sleep. I woke up a few hours later. When I heard that there were still



Ready for Moshiach – at the Lag B'Omer parade

guests around, I decided to join them.

I found Shiri (the girl I spoke about earlier), Moshiach and Avichai, sitting eastern style (are they Indian, or what?) in the Chabad house. 8-year-old Moshiach was reading a story to Shiri from *Sichos L'Naar*. 6-year-old Avichai was helping explain some words (which he had been helped with earlier when Shlomi had told him the story). And Shiri listened closely to the stories of Chassidim.

Great. I was free.

Shiri borrowed Rabbi Zevin's book of *chassidische* stories while she was here. And one day it happened. Shiri committed to keeping Shabbos.

Shiri wanted to travel to Delhi but at this time of the year you can't get a train ticket to Delhi. So days passed in attempting to get a ticket and finally, she happily announced that she had gotten a plane ticket at a special price, for Thursday night, from Bombay to Delhi.

When she left (oh, these partings) she wrote in the Guest Book:

BS"D

A neshama descends into the body but cries *vei, vei, vei*.

This descent is for the purpose of ascent, so that it is all worthwhile!

Winged Angels above you

Accompany your every step

From a distance a light is lit

Do not veer, so that you will be able to return

Dear, amazing Kupchiks!

Thank you for showing me the light! (also for the food, the company, the *shiurim*, and the stories).

I hope to go on and see you again along the way.

Shiri

Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu V'Rabbeinu Melech HaMoshach L'olam Va'ed

We later heard about the drama that took place at the airport. Shiri, and other Israelis who were supposed to be on that flight, were told that their flight had been cancelled and that another flight would leave Shabbos morning. Of course, Shiri had just committed to *shmiras Shabbos*... A test right at the

start.

There were Lubavitchers at the airport at the time who had been on *shlichus* in Poona for Pesach, and were on their way home to Eretz Yisroel. So you see how Hashem sends help along with a *nisayon*.

Shiri strongly resolved not to travel on Shabbos, come what may! And just like the water that threatened to drown Avrohom and Yitzchok, which was nothing but the Satan, vanished as the *Avos* walked on fearlessly, the same thing happened with Shiri: a seat was found for her on the Thursday flight.

So if we spoke about *chassidische* stories, this story is a *chassidische* story, the story of Shira.

L'hitraot,

Rochele

CONCEPTS AT THE CHABAD HOUSE OF POONA

To all beloved members of the Sunday *shiur* (which is also beloved),

I hope you're all fine. You're surely curious about what I am experiencing here on *shlichus*, and I'll try to describe it a bit, both *b'gashmius* and *b'ruchnius*.

I won't write everything there is to write, but I'll try, with a few concepts, to convey to you something of our *shlichus* experiences.

German Bakery

Chassidic terminology would designate this, "*chutza sh'ein chutza l'matta heimenu*" (the outside that has nothing lower).

In Poona, this is the name of a coffee house, dark *b'gashmius* and *b'ruchnius*, where most Israelis sit, and so every afternoon our *chevra* goes there in order to meet with them, to do *Mivtza T'fillin* and to invite them to the Chabad house.

"Schoolhouse"

My watch is broken and so I am watch-less. So what? I don't have to send the children to school at eight o'clock. Think of vacation when there's no school, no camp, and it's not just that you have to think of how you'll get through this time but you also have to be a substitute for all those settings.

Yes, it's an opportunity (or at least

an effort) to look at the lack of a playgroup and school and think about doing one's own *chinuch* at the "schoolhouse."

And, truth to tell, this doesn't always work for me.

Rickshaw

The local special, with which you jump to where you want to go. "Jumping" is not merely slang which describes getting from one place to another, but is meant literally: J-U-M-P-I-N-G.

Some of the rickshaw drivers have caught on, and one of them calls out from his rickshaw to Shlomi and Mendy: *Yechi HaMelech!*

Blondie

In Eretz Yisroel "*blondini*" is a word that describes a hair color, but here it's an oddity to see white-skinned kids with blond hair, so we attract a crowd wherever we go.

Parade

Until my husband came to Poona, they hadn't read from the Torah in 25 years, because there was nobody who knew how to read without vowels. So every Shabbos they walk five kilometers in the tropical heat to the *shul*, to make sure there's a *minyán*. I join them every so often. Would you believe it?

Shabbos

Our biggest day. About 70 people come for the meal. On the first Shabbos we had a hard time handling the amounts of food (because we expected fewer people) and it also happened that after the guests left that we, the crew, had to gather a few crumbs for us to eat.

Last Shabbos it was great.

As I describe a high point in our activities, I must point out something important. Sometimes it seems (from descriptions of other *shluchim*, who regularly describe only the light) that the *chevra* just shows up at the German Bakery (see above) and eight Israelis already come and listen to *divrei Torah* and put on *t'fillin* and have begun to grow beards. As though we just invite them for supper and a-l-l of them show



R' Betzalel Kupchik dancing with his children and mekuravim

up and begin to say T'hillim plus *Chitas b'iyun*...

And Shabbos? What do you think? 70 people show up? So half of them have *peios* the next day (they don't need a baldy haircut because they have that already) and the other half is busy schmoozing – in Yiddish, of course!

The truth is not like that at all.

Yes, there's a great willingness to listen, but their first interest is in coming to a warm home (and having a hot meal) and you have to talk and talk and "the work is not (always) for you to finish." So what? Avrohom had the same approach and *avoda* (and

apparently the same dust of idol worshippers).

It's true that *chevra* like these you rarely find in Chabad houses in Eretz Yisroel, but you've really got to work here. It's true, hordes of people come Friday night, but you've got to work really hard to quiet them down so *divrei Torah* can be heard and songs can be sung.

You have to see how the entire family (as it says, "with your youth and with our elders"), marshal their collective voices to loudly sing "*Adon Olam asher Malach*," or to vocalize "*Shab'chi Yerushalayim*," or "*V'ha'er*

Eineinu." However, with all the efforts to raise the vocal chords and voices of the children to *k'dusha*, (amidst cries of "Ima! He's bothering me!), and it can be said to elevate our voices too, to be raised in *k'dusha* – i.e., to use them for something more effective than "hurry up to bed" – it still sometimes happens that suddenly someone starts a secular "peace" song. And we end up pretty broken.

There are also *chevra* that can come to eat and chatter away while *divrei Torah* are being said, with no respect at all, and who leave without even a thank-you.

One of them who regularly behaves this way, we've nicknamed – "R' Eliezer's guest" – for the guest the Baal Shem Tov's father had, who came on Shabbos and didn't conduct himself nicely, etc., and R' Eliezer treated him like a prince as he did to everyone who came. So we also try not to insult, etc.

No, I didn't mean to depress you. I just wanted to raise the point that results on *shlichus* are not "instant." It is always Work. The *meshaleiach* sent us on a mission and we have to do it. "You are not required to finish the work" (and therefore, there's no reason to despair during the less positive moments), yet, "you are not free to desist from it."

Believe me, after all the "despair" of the secular "*shir l'shalom*," when a strong rendition of "Moshiach, Moshiach" is belted out, I believe with perfect faith! We all agree and all feel that all the work was worthwhile.

"You are not required to finish the work" and I don't have the strength to go on now, nor the time, and so I'll have to write you again in the future.

L'hitraot

Yechi HaMelech

Rochele

Readers of this column are asked to help support the Chabad house in Poona which is mekarev young people to their Father in heaven and hastening the Geula. A tax deductible donation can be sent to Rabbi Yehuda Friedman, Chabad House of Canarsie, 917 E. 82nd St. Brooklyn, N.Y. 11236



"Moshiach" on the Indian rickshaw

HERE WE GO AGAIN!

BY SHAI GEFEN

AD MASAI?

The Aqaba Summit was barely over and there were more than 25 dead, new victims of terrorism. The roads were barely cleaned up from blood and body parts, yet the heads of Security were sitting down with terrorist leaders, offering them sovereignty over strategic areas. Once again they are being believed. It's hard to understand how a State with self-respect can dare to gamble with the lives of its citizens, to capitulate unconditionally. Now we see the results of those meetings with terrorist leaders.

They told us that Arafat is out of the picture, and they brought us Abu Mazen. Suddenly we are informed that Arafat is the one who is ruling at the top, and he's the one who meets with terrorist leaders in Muktaa and dispenses orders.

People ask, and rightly so: How long will the violence continue? How long will the Israeli government act as though blind? How long will our leaders continue to bear responsibility for the murder of Jews?

On the one hand, there are those who are thrilled when the army "rubs someone out," yet even as they meet with Dachlan and ask him to take care of our security – the next suicide bomber is being manufactured. In contrast to the brainwashing that the Oslo architects did to explain to us that it was Hamas who was trying to ruin the peace process, now it's clear

that it's a matter of one hand washing the other. The attacks and murders orchestrated by Hamas and Fattah are being carried out for the purpose of breaking our morale, thus leading to our unconditional surrender.

"A wave of danger signals" was reported by Security Forces at the beginning of the week, but at the same time they sat with terrorists to agree upon the details of the I.D.F.'s withdrawal from Gaza.

The terrorists are right. They continue to attack and then (instead of halting the terrible process of handing over parts of Eretz Yisroel to them) our leaders continue to capitulate. The last ten years have proven that their tactic is working quite well. When they murdered 16 soldiers at the tunnels, Netanyahu rushed to bring Chevron to Arafat. After 820 Jews were massacred in the last two and a half years, Sharon announced that we are the "occupiers" and we must share the land. So why *shouldn't* they continue their terrorist activities?

The Rebbe MH"m summed up this point very concisely when he spoke with Rabbi Elimelech Neiman, saying that the murder of Jews, *r'l*, which comes about because of even discussing "peace" with Arabs, is "*al pi teva v'seichel*" (natural and logical).

In contrast with the foolish views espoused by the media that the attempt to kill arch-terrorist Rantisi started the "cycle of violence" all over

again, it was clear that long before they tried to kill him, the Shin Beit stopped twenty suicide bombers who were on their way to Eretz Yisroel. So it wasn't the attempt to kill Rantisi that was the problem, but the Peace Summit in Aqaba that was the cause. Experience proved once again that terror against Jews only helps their cause. The unsuccessful attempt to kill Rantisi is connected to the same Aqaba Summit.

SIYATA D'SHMAYA

The six missiles shot at Rantisi's car missed their mark, and he escaped. We cannot say we know the reason why, but when Minister Katzav visited the Rebbe on Yud Shevat 5752, the Rebbe told him, "**The security of Eretz Yisroel is from the One G-d, and if they act in accordance with all the necessary strength, as they ought, then there's nothing to worry about regarding the security of Eretz Yisroel.**"

Anyone who analyzes the situation objectively knows that when our side took strong measures against the enemy, without vacillating, we enjoyed incredible success. One example is Operation Defensive Shield, when despite the predictions of thousands of dead and great danger, etc., they showed that if the desire is there, it's possible to achieve all objectives, and with a minimum of casualties. But with a "zigzag" approach of concessions on the one hand, and "heroic acts" on the other, there is no success. The story with Rantisi just proved how true this

is.

AMERICA SHOWS US

America has shown us how to deal with terror. While President Bush denounces Israel for attacking terrorist targets, and Bush's special emissary to implement the Road Map lands in Israel, America is in Iraq where its military forces are engaged daily in dismantling the armed militias. Uncompromising skirmishes are carried out against those who don't want to capitulate. Over there, they don't come to any "understandings." They immediately wipe out whoever is unwilling to relinquish their weapons. The American forces go from house to house in order to rid Iraq of weapons being held in private homes.

Israel doesn't learn from the very country that hypocritically tries to force the Road Map on us. From Heaven they are signaling us not to be impressed by pressure from the U.S. We are supposed to understand that the country that is pressuring us to compromise does not disdain any means in order to be absolutely in control. In contrast to them, with us it's not a about an invasion but our very lives.

All attempts to excuse ourselves, as though concessions are made solely because of American pressure, are only a sad joke. We all know what Sharon would do if, *ch"v*, Kassam missiles landed on his property and damaged it or a family member, rather than landing in Sderot. Would Sharon tell us there is pressure, and not to react? Would he hand over security in Gaza to the murderer Dachlan then, too?

The issue of American pressure is not relevant when it comes to our security. Even if there was real pressure (which apparently isn't the case now), America doesn't have the slightest right to exert any pressure when it comes to our security.

Our problem is not American pressure but the one who caves in to pressure and wantonly abandons the

security of us citizens. Our real problem is that the government that was appointed to protect our lives, deliberately chooses to prioritize other considerations.

THEY WOULD RATHER DIE THAN RESIGN

Representatives of the people who were elected based on the slogan which said not to give terrorism a state sit in the government. They said that if Sharon would evacuate even one tiny stronghold, they would leave the government. They, and only they, would stop a Palestinian state. Some innocently believed them. They thought that this was the Right, and they wouldn't compromise on principles. But it turns out that the principle of remaining in the government supersedes all other principles.

If you paid attention, you noticed that those parties from the Right who stood for war against a Palestinian state, wrote simultaneously that they were in favor of a "canton plan" in Yesha. It was clear then that this meant that when the issue of a Palestinian state came up, they would not leave the government.

This must be clear: *Once the government decided to establish a Palestinian state, all the ministers, even those who opposed it, are now collaborators, willingly or unwillingly.* If they didn't leave the government, then they are part of this extremely dangerous process.

Their excuse for not leaving, that Labor will take their place, is a sad joke. Here's a quote from the Rebbe which precisely defines the purpose of their being part of the government:

(B'Haalos'cha 5730) "**Someone wrote to me about a new aphorism that they use in Eretz Yisroel, "yei'hareig v'al yifrosh" (be killed rather than leave the government). There's the *din* of "yei'hareig v'al yaavor" (be killed rather than transgress), and now there's a new aphorism, "yei'hareig v'al**



From Heaven they are signaling us not to be impressed by pressure from the U.S. We are supposed to understand that the country that is pressuring us to compromise does not disdain any means in order to be absolutely in control.

yifrosh!"

"I asked him: What does it mean? He said: What don't you understand? It means they are ready to do anything, even to be killed, the main thing being not to leave their seats ... To hold on to their seats it's okay to put two and a half million people in danger, *r"?!?"*

Need I say more?

TREASON!

After the “Peace Euphoria” in Aqaba, and in anticipation of the upcoming school year, Maariv had a long article about the P.A.’s new textbooks. In these new books, Yafo, Haifa, and Akko are cities in the Palestinian state. The map of Palestine appears as one geographic unit with no mention of Israel. The new books promote Jihad and suicide bombers. Yet we sit with the new representative of the Palestinians and want to give him a state!

When Hitler rose to power and spoke about annihilating a nation, they said it was just talk, and wasn’t meant to be taken seriously. Here, in Eretz Yisroel 5763, we all experience daily how neo-Nazis are trying to annihilate us. It’s not just pronouncements that appear in their textbooks but it’s actually happening, with thousands of suicide bombers who are sent to murder Jews on the streets of their cities.

Off to the side stand our leaders who continue to talk to them, to shake hands with them on well-tended green lawns. How will history judge these leaders?

When Rabin stood on the White House lawn in 1993 and announced, “enough widows and orphans,” his excuse was, “we’ve got to try,” “we’ve got to give peace a chance.” In the last ten years of this experiment, we have seen where the policy of appeasement has led us. What excuse can our leaders provide us with now? What will they say after over 1200 dead and tens of thousands of wounded and the destruction of an entire country? This is an unforgivable crime. Someone has to pay the price for it. This is a betrayal of the highest principle of all which every leader is obligated to observe, i.e., protecting his countrymen. Now, with our own hands, we are helping these neo-Nazis realize their dream.

During the era of Hitler, Jews were not partners to his crazy decisions. Here, our leadership is collaborating with Nazis. To the best of my

knowledge, there is still a law in Israel that Nazis and their collaborators are to be brought to justice.

A TZARA LIKE NO OTHER

At a time when Jews are about to be expelled from their land and they try once again to delude the public

with rash peace agreements, and once again they promise that this is what will save the awful economy, etc. it’s a good idea to read what the Rebbe said on 24 Teives 5742:

“According to their *shita*, that this rule also applies to the territories that are already in Jewish hands, this rule

WHY ARE THE SOLDIERS CRYING?

By Yitzchok Kohn

The seven-year-old woke with a start; his senses were suddenly alerted to the strange noise that had shaken him loose from his deep slumber. He looked around in the dimness of the room. The cuckoo clock chimed a few times and he knew it was three o’clock in the morning. His little sister in the next bed stirred restlessly. Very quietly, he slipped into his slippers and gingerly walked across the floor to the window. Pushing the curtains aside, he pressed his face against the window pane, and stared into the darkness. The noise was coming closer; there, straight ahead, he thought he saw the blinking lights. He was now fully awake; Abba had said that they were coming.

Quietly, so as not to wake his sister, he opened the door and disappeared down the hall to his parents’ room. Both parents were awake and peering out of their own bedroom window.

“Abba, they are coming! I saw the lights.”

The father bent down and, in a swoop, picked the boy up in his arms. “Yes, my son, they are coming. I can see the shadows of many soldiers on six or seven military trucks. Soon they will reach us and....”

He fell silent. Mother left the room to tend to the crying little girl who just woke up. In this vast, sparsely populated land, where noise carries far and seems louder; the shifting gears of the truck were quite audible, as they continued their climb up the slope, towards the few houses on the hill. They were still a few kilometers away. Steadily, the caravan on the horizon continued towards the mission; the orders have been signed.

“Pay close attention, my son; they’ll be here soon and I want to make sure you’ll never forget it,” the father said, as they all sat down on the bed. “Jewish history, my son, is replete with hundreds upon hundreds of expulsions – the forced evacuation of Jews from their homes and lands. It began with the Ten Tribes, continued in the days of *Churban Bayit Rishon*, and transpired yet again when the second Temple was burned. We were not given too much time to catch our breath. The list is long, my son: Babylon, Rome, Spain, England, Portugal, Sweden, Poland, Italy and Bohemia. There were so many, I doubt any country can be spared.”

The little boy shivered and moved closer. The sounds of the trucks and marching feet were distinctly audible now.

(first and foremost) applies to the Old City of Yerushalayim, together with the Kosel and all the *shuls* and *battei midrash* there. For just as the gentiles demand the return of the Golan Heights, they demand the Old City of Yerushalayim even more forcefully, may it not come to pass!

As is known and famous to all, when they signed the Camp David agreement, the opposing side said they were not talking about demands that Arabs would make in the future. For they first had to get back everything that was given under pressure, even though this was pressure of “*kol aleh*

nidaf” (the sound of a falling leaf). For if they had stood strong, the pressure would have dissipated. But this needs to be known: The demands of 100 million Arabs still stand! And their demand – to return to the 1967 borders – includes the return of the Old City. And after that they will see what else they can demand!

As was said a number of times, the Camp David agreement was “a *tzara* for Yaakov, the likes of which we never had before,” and till this day they cannot extricate themselves from the entanglement which signing that agreement wrought.

Firstly, they themselves gave the gentiles the most essential commodity [i.e., oil], that which is most vital to the economy of Eretz Yisroel and the security of Eretz Yisroel. Then they go on to say, “We ate and we’ll eat some more” – they promise to give the gentiles more and more. They try to delude the public by saying that this will engender the long-awaited peace, but it’s impossible to make peace by doing things that intensify the danger of war, may it not be, by giving the enemy weapons!

They expel Jews from their land with reasons of “justice and righteousness,” yet it is impossible for “justice and righteousness” to require that Jews be expelled from the Holy Land, *r*”!

Hashem demands that the Jewish people act in accordance with *Toras Emes*, especially when these are matters that pertain to Eretz Yisroel, the land about which it says, “*emes m’eretz titzmach*” (truth will sprout forth from the land)!

There are those who try to “bury” the “truth” in the “land” and regarding this we say that ultimately “truth will sprout from the land,” for there is no other way except the way of *emes*, for the path of peace is connected with Hashem, as *Chazal* say, Hashem’s seal is truth. This is the way that leads to true peace, for Hashem’s name is *Shalom!*”

“And usually, they came at night, to wake us, to frighten us into submission; and we never fought, we couldn’t. So we left everything behind and moved on. Dogs braying at our feet, soldiers with bayonets ready to prod us on, the multitudes of Jews moved on. The long lines of forlorn, beaten men, desperate women and wailing children was a common sight. We were jeered and laughed at and urged to move on. And then came the Nazis. Their expulsions encompassed most of the civilized world. Their solution envisioned no more evictions. Theirs was to be the last expulsion of Jews, ever. Had they succeeded, perhaps you and I would not have been here today to witness, once again, the expulsion and evacuation of Jews. We are the remnants that survived that unimaginable march. We came here... so that never again will we be expelled from our homes; or so we thought.”

The little girl, head slumped on her mother’s shoulders, slept peacefully, oblivious to the growing noise. The boy’s eyes were glued to his father’s lips, and his mouth hung open, swallowing every word.

Abba continued, “And all those expulsions and forced evacuations combined didn’t hurt as much as what is about to transpire.”

“Are the Nazis coming back?” the frightened child blurted out.

“No, my child,” the father replied, his hand caressing the boy’s cheek. “We must be stronger than ever, my son, because this time the pain is worse than all combined. Because, son, *they* are our own.”

The boy nodded his head as if that said it all. He seemed to understand.

The noise of the many engines suddenly died, and their headlights lit up the room. There was a loud knock on the door, and three soldiers stepped into the house..

The child’s eyes moved from soldier to father, to mother, and back again.

“We are ready to go,” the father addressed the captain, and silently, they all moved towards the door.

The soldiers moved aside. As father, mother, and sister exited, the boy looked back at the soldiers and stopped. He was baffled, confused.

“Why are the soldiers crying, Abba?”

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PURE TEC AND THE SUPER TEAM



What would you do if one of your children Chas Veshalom swallowed:
Shampoo!
Floor cleaner!
Laundry detergent!
sprayed the baby with bug spray!
Or made a Lechaim on toilet bowl cleaner!



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Jeanette Divine,
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GIMMEL TAMMUZ WEEKEND IN TANNERSVILLE, NY

This summer, as in the previous five summers, the internationally renowned Machon Chana Women's Yeshiva in Brooklyn relocates to the quaint, picturesque village of Tannersville. Surrounded by gorgeous views of the mountains of the Northern Catskills, Tannersville is approximately a two and a half-hour drive out of New York City.

"Machon Chana in the Mountains was created to give as many women as possible - of all ages and stages—the opportunity and tools to claim their inheritance of Torah study," says Mrs. Sara Labkowsky, director of Machon Chana Women's Yeshiva.

This year's eight-week program slated June 25-August 25, will begin with an exciting weekend on Hiskashrus in honor of Gimmel Tammuz. The Shabbaton entitled "Chassidus: the World's Best Kept Secret" will feature lectures, symposiums and workshops where both newcomers and Anash will be given a deeper understanding into the life and makings of a Chassid, his history, his mind set, his unique relationship with his Rebbe and what makes him tick -even today. Weekend visitors and summer long students will be joined by village local residents in an exciting and enlightening Shabbos in Chassidic joy, love, song, dance and storytelling.

Machon Chana in the Mountains is located this summer in the heart of Tannersville, within walking distance of the local park and lake, tennis and basketball courts and

the local Jewish day camp. Swimming, boating, scenic walking and hiking trails, horseback riding and other attractions are all close by. The country-style inn, on which our facilities are situated, includes over thirty-five comfortable rooms, dining hall, lounge, a Shul and classrooms. Many amenities are offered, including three delicious kosher catered meals each day.

The program is designed to give students of all levels of commitment and knowledge an opportunity to advance their Jewish education and Torah skills in a highly stimulating yet informal setting. Courses include Talmud, Jewish Law, the Fundamentals of Jewish Belief, Chasidic Philosophy, Tanach (the Bible), Prayer, and the Jewish Woman. Smaller skill acquiring classes in Hebrew, Chumash with commentaries, Rashi and Yiddish are offered daily. There is also one-on-one (chevrusa-style) learning in a smorgasbord of subjects. Evenings feature lectures on contemporary issues, informal discussions, movement workshops and Judaica craft workshops. Each weekend is exciting and informative and explores different themes that concern the contemporary Jew.

On staff this summer are Rabbi Berl & Devora Bell, Rabbi Yaakov Ringo, Rabbi Yosi Vigler, Rabbi Mendel Samuels, Rabbi Chaim Adelman, Rabbi Shimon & Leiba Andrusier, Mrs. Sara Labkowsky, Mrs. Raizel Weingrad, plus many guest lecturers including Professor

Branover, Rabbi Zushe Silberstein..

Machon Chana welcomes single women, married women, couples and families. Women with families can choose to stay on site or rent a local cottage, stay at a local motel and join us for meals and programs. Childcare and a day camp for children up until the age of five will be provided. Older children can join the local day camp. A mini learning program will be offered for husbands during the week, with full programming over the weekend. Machon Chana in the Mountains offers an opportunity to immerse oneself in Torah study for a summer, a month, a week, a weekend or just a few days.

Weekend and weeklong programs throughout the summer will be:

More than the Jews kept the Shabbos, the Shabbos kept the Jews
July 7-13

The Jewish Family Mission Statement, July 18-20

Marriage Made in Heaven, But Here on Earth, July 25-27

Living in the Moshiach Era, August 1-3

To Raise a Jewish Child: Solutions in Chinuch -Week of August 4-10

Maintaining a Smile Throughout the Journey August 15- 17

Prayer, A Ladder to Heaven August 22-24

For more information or to make reservations, please call Miriam Gittel Shpitsek at 718-735-0030, e-mail to MachonC@aol.com, or visit the web site at www.machonchana.org.

WHY SEND SPIES?

SICHOS IN ENGLISH



SHABBOS PARSHAS SHLACH; 28TH DAY OF SIVAN, 5749

1. The central topic of this week's Torah portion is the sending of the spies. The very fact that they were sent on this mission raises questions. Noting that the Torah states, "*shlach lecha*," "You send," Rashi comments that G-d did not order Moshe to send the spies. Rather, the Jews came to Moshe and requested that spies be sent. Moshe consulted G-d, who consented to such a possibility, but left the decision up to Moshe.

This represents a departure from the established precedent. Previously, Moshe had brought several matters suggested by the Jews to G-d, e.g., the offering of the second Paschal sacrifice, the offering of the sacrifices of the princes. In all these instances, he did not act until he received specific instructions from G-d. In this instance, the fact that he did not receive explicit instructions of this nature should have raised doubts in his mind. If so, why did he, nevertheless, decide to send the spies? Since G-d had

already promised the Jews that Eretz Yisroel was a good land and ordered them to enter it immediately, why was it necessary to send spies? Sending them opened up the possibility—as ultimately transpired—for the Jews to err and not to desire to enter Eretz Yisroel.

Furthermore, we find that Moshe, himself, had doubts about the success of the mission and prayed for Yehoshua, "May G-d save you from the counsel of the spies." Despite the fact that at the outset the people he chose for the mission were righteous and leaders of the people, he, nevertheless, felt it necessary to pray on behalf of Yehoshua. If so, why did he send the spies?[20]

The concept can be explained as follows: By leaving the matter up to Moshe's choice, G-d opened up a new realm of service, the possibility of serving Him even when no direct command is involved. A person must decide how to behave, hoping that he is acting in a manner where his individual will reflects G-d's will despite the fact that G-d has not

given him any explicit instructions.

To elaborate: There are two types of service of G-d: a) The fulfillment of His commands. This reflects the nullification of our minds and wills to fulfill His desires. To quote Pirkei Avos: "Negate your will before His." b) Service in the realm of *r'shus*, where there is no explicit Divine command. There a person's service involves working on his mind and his will until they reflect G-d's will. To refer to the above Mishna: "Make your will as His will."

The fulfillment of the latter service requires the granting of a special Divine potential. Thus, the Rambam writes concerning free choice:

Freedom of choice is granted to every man. If he desires to tend to a positive path..., the potential is his... There is nothing holding him back... This concept is a fundamental principle. It is a pillar of Torah and mitzvos.

Though we also have free choice whether to fulfill mitzvos or not, the very fact that G-d has commanded

20. The question is further reinforced by the behavior of Yehoshua himself, who was saved only because of Moshe's prayer and

saw the negative repercussions that resulted from the spies Moshe sent. He, nevertheless, also sent spies before conquering Jericho

even though G-d did not command him to do so.

us to perform these acts influences our choice since, by nature, every Jew desires to fulfill G-d's will. It is in the areas where there is no explicit command and yet man chooses to do good, that our potential for choice is expressed in the most complete manner.

In particular, the potential to choose is twofold: a) The very potential to choose, the ability to act independently, is itself a unique power. The natural state of creation precludes that man be under the dominion of his Creator. It is only because of G-d's gift that he has the potential to choose. b) G-d grants choice through the Torah's command, "And you shall choose life." This implies that G-d gives us the potential to choose good.

Both of these aspects are more clearly expressed in those areas where there is no explicit Divine command. When there is a Divine command to fulfill a particular mitzva, man's choice is influenced and his fulfillment of the command depends on the infinite power of He who gave these commandments. However, in those areas where there is no explicit command, man has a challenge, to use his limited potential to make the correct choice. Even in these areas, the potential to do so is granted to him.

Based on the above, we can understand why Moshe sent the spies: When G-d did not tell Moshe whether or not to send the spies, Moshe rejoiced at the opportunity for acting with free choice, without being "forced" by G-d's command,[21] rather man's own free will could parallel G-d's desires.

On this basis, we can also understand why it was this matter, the sending of the spies, which G-d left up to the Jews' free choice. Sending the spies was a preparatory step for the entry into Eretz Yisroel. The settlement of Eretz Yisroel was the ultimate goal of the exodus from Egypt and the giving of the Torah, for it allows for the establishment of a dwelling for G-d in the lower worlds.[22] For this reason, the manner in which the Jews approached the conquest of Eretz Yisroel was intended to be carried out in a natural manner, through war. Therefore, it was proper to

The fact that he did not receive explicit instructions of this nature should have raised doubts in his mind. If so, why did he, nevertheless, decide to send the spies?

follow the natural course of behavior that any army would take when approaching a foreign land, sending spies.

The spies, however, made one mistake. They interpreted their mission as also leaving up to man's discretion whether to enter into

Eretz Yisroel or not. This error caused their entire mission to be ill-fated. However, at the outset, their mission was intended to assist in the transformation of Eretz Yisroel into a dwelling place for G-d.

For this reason, the individuals Moshe chose were righteous and fit to receive the extra Divine potential that is associated with a mission that involves free choice. Although Moshe prayed for Yehoshua, he did so without any premonition of evil. Had he any negative suspicions, he would have surely prayed for the entire company. The fact he did not, indicates that this was a special measure of favor intended only for Yehoshua who was "a servant who never left the tent" of his master.[23]

A similar concept is also emphasized by the conclusion of the portion, the passage dealing with tzitzis. Tzitzis has an advantage over other mitzvos because it leads to the fulfillment of all the mitzvos as the verse states: "And you shall see it and you shall remember all the mitzvos and perform them." To quote our Sages, "the Torah considers [tzitzis] equal to all the other mitzvos and makes their [fulfillment] dependent upon it." Despite this unique importance, according to Torah law, "a person is not obligated to buy a tallis and wrap himself in it." Rather, he can wear a garment which does not require tzitzis.

It is possible to explain that G-d desired to leave the fulfillment of this mitzva up to a person himself. He must desire to perform this commandment which will lead him to the fulfillment of all the other

21. An allusion to this is found in Rashi's commentary which quotes G-d as telling Moshe: "I am not commanding you. If you want to, send them." Rashi's use of the negative implies that G-d did not pressure Moshe at all and left the matter totally up to his choice.

22. For this reason, the Torah refers to Eretz Yisroel, Eretz Canaan. The Canaanites were the most depraved of all the nations. Since the dwelling for G-d is to be established "in the lower worlds," the nation which the Jews were to conquer was the lowest of the human race.

23. On a deeper level, it can be explained that Moshe's prayer was "a prophecy uttered without the realization that it was a prophecy." Ultimately, it was Yehoshua who was to lead the people into Eretz Yisroel. Hence, he was to need the special influence of Moshe's prayer.

mitzvos.

There is also a connection between the above and the portion of the Mishneh Torah associated with the present day, the conclusion of Hilchos T'mura. There the Rambam states:

Even though all of the Torah's statutes are [Divine] decrees..., it is fit to meditate upon them. Whenever it is possible to explain them rationally, one should do so.

Thus, man must try to establish a connection with the mitzvos in terms which he can relate to. This approach must also be carried into the realm of r'shus, areas of life where there is no explicit Torah command regarding what to do and what not to do. In this realm where the decision of how to serve G-d and how to refine the world is left to man's choice and decision, man has the obligation to try to have his own personal desires conform to G-d's. This is a service which parallels the sending of the spies to discover the proper path of conquering Eretz Yisroel.[24]

May this service lead to the time when we will "Arise, go up, and take possession of it." This mentions two ascents, one associated with the redemption from Egypt and one with the Messianic redemption. At that time, we will fulfill all the mitzvos (as alluded to in the mitzva of Tzitzis)[25] and their performance will be permeated by a direct perception of G-dliness. "Your Master will no longer be concealed and your eyes will perceive your Master." "The glory of G-d will be revealed..." May it come immediately, now.

24. As mentioned above, there should not have been a question regarding the entry into Eretz Yisroel, the question left to the spies was how to enter Eretz Yisroel. Similarly, a person's obligation to carry out the essential service of refining the world and spreading the wellsprings of Chassidus is a given.

2. This Shabbos is the 28th (ko'ach) of Sivan. The word "ko'ach" means "power," and thus, today is associated with the "power of Sivan," the third month, which is distinguished by the giving of the Torah. Thus, the 28th of Sivan relates to the "the power of Torah."

The 28th of Sivan falls within three days of Rosh Chodesh Tammuz, the fourth month. One of the distinctions between the third and the fourth months is that the third month is associated with drawing down influence from above,

A baal t'shuva must transform his heart and break through the barriers created by his negative deeds.

while the fourth month is associated with the service of the lower realm on its own initiative. ko'ach Sivan draws down added power to facilitate this service, not only in regard to the service of Torah and mitzvos which we were commanded to fulfill by the giving of the Torah, but also service in the realm of r'shus, the area of our behavior where we have no specific command from G-d to guide us. The latter service is related to the concept of free choice described above.[26]

Carrying out this service requires

What is left to his own thinking processes is the manner in which to carry out these services.

25. The mitzva of tzitzis is also connected to the concept of redemption. The four corners of the tzitzis are related to the four prophecies

an additional gift of power from G-d. This power is granted on the 28th of Sivan, the day which expresses "the power of Sivan," the power of Torah, and prepares us for the service of the month of Tammuz.

There is an added dimension to the above concept. Moshe's prayer (recorded in this week's Torah portion), "And now, may the power of G-d be increased" is associated with the concept of t'shuva. The service of t'shuva reflects man's potential to serve G-d on his own initiative in an even deeper manner than the concept of free choice.

A baal t'shuva must transform his heart and break through the barriers created by his negative deeds. This requires drawing down influence from a level of G-dliness that transcends the Torah. This level is, nevertheless, revealed by the Torah. Indeed, it was when Moshe ascended to receive the Torah that he became conscious of the potential for t'shuva.

The concept of transformation is emphasized by the coming month, the month of Tammuz. Indeed, the very use of the name, Tammuz, as the name of a Jewish month, reflects a transformation since the name is derived from that of a Mesopotamian deity. This concept is also underscored by the fact that this month contains one of the four communal fasts which the Rambam explains will ultimately "be transformed into festivals and days of rejoicing."

The awareness of this concept is more powerful in the present age after we have witnessed the redemption of the Previous Rebbe on

of redemption found in the Torah. Similarly, Yechezkel's vision of Jerusalem begins by his describing how G-d "took him by the tzitzis of his hair." Also the Moshiach is described as "peering (maitziz) through the lattice."

26. The interrelation of these concepts is further

Yud-Beis Tammuz. This redemption is a taste of how ultimately the entire month, including the 17th of Tammuz, will be transformed into “a month of redemption.”

The redemption of Yud-Beis Tammuz is also related to the 28th of Sivan. One of the results of the Previous Rebbe’s redemption was his coming and settling in America. America was referred to as “the lower half of the world,” a place where, according to our Sages, “the Torah was not given.” Thus, bringing the Torah to America is associated with service on our initiative, drawing the Torah into the lowest levels of our world.

That service was given added power on the 28th of Sivan[27] when the Previous Rebbe injected new energy into the efforts of spreading Yiddishkeit and Chassidus by founding the institutions, Machne Israel, Kehos and Merkos LInyonei Chinuch. The activities of these institutions have continued even after his passing and receive new energy this year, the fortieth year following that event.

The above concepts must be brought down into deed, for “deed is most essential.” The 28th of Sivan should be set aside for a day of farbrengens. (Indeed, we have seen the positive results of these

farbrengens for more than three years running.) These efforts should inspire us to apply more effort in the mission with which we were charged by the Previous Rebbe, spreading Yiddishkeit and spreading the wellsprings of Chassidus outward. In particular, emphasis should be placed on using the summer months to involve children in programs of Torah education in which for all twenty four hours of the day, they are found in a Torah environment.

May these activities hasten Moshiach’s coming and may he arrive even before the beginning of the month of Tammuz.

emphasized by our Sages’ statement that the spies were sent out on the 29th of Sivan. After receiving the power for independent service on the 28th of Sivan, Moshe felt the

spies were ready to undertake their mission. 27. Translator’s Note: The 28th of Sivan was the day on which the Rebbe Shlita and the

Rebbetzin, a”h, arrived in the United States in 1941.

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APPLYING WHAT WE ARE TAUGHT ABOUT MOSHIACH

BY SARAH GRANOVETTER

The following are excerpts from “Divine Power,” by Rabbi Yehuda Loewe ben Bezalel, The Maharal of Prague, together with related material and commentary, with a focus on how these insights may apply to the unique times we live in.

[S. Granovetter: Moshe Rabbeinu (Moses) was the “Nasi HaDor,” the leader of the generation, and the First Redeemer of the Jewish People. In each generation, there is a *nasi ha’dor*. Today this leader is the Rebbe MH”M. Our Sages state that the First Redeemer (Moshe) is the model for the Final Redeemer (The Melech HaMoshiach, King Messiah, who is

The Rebbe), so we can learn about the Messiah by learning about Moshe. In this book, the Maharal of Prague describes some qualities of the *nasi ha’dor* and the Messiah, and he explains why kingship is fundamental to Judaism and why G-d commands us to have faith in the *nasi ha’dor*.]

I. MOSHE

“Understand that regular people are parts of the general group, and each individual thus possesses only a partial share of attributes and consequently a partial growth capacity. The part, because it is a part, is not in itself whole and complete... Moshe, our teacher, however, was *nivdal* [separate] from all other created beings. He was not a part of the general group...”

“Moshe can be considered a higher being, completely *nivdal* and completely unrelated to the lower *chomer* [material] aspect of reality. When he was born the house was filled with light, light which signifies that which is *nivdal* from *chomer*. It is obvious that light does not contain coarse palpable elements, and it is therefore used as a symbol for even the Holy One.”

“Because he looked into the distress of Israel, we see that Moshe was not egocentrically inclined, and he put aside his own personal business because of his concern for others. The Holy One, therefore, said to Moshe, ‘I too will set aside the upper and lower world, so that I can speak to you.’ The meaning here is that the Holy One is universal since He includes within Himself all reality. He therefore only associates with those who are likewise universal. Since Moshe was of a universal character, Hashem saw it fit to relate to him.”

“Understand words of deep wisdom. Moshe, as we have pointed out, was himself equivalent to all Israel, hence the verse in Shmos 18:

“Yisro the priest of Midyan, the father-in-law of Moshe, heard everything G-d had done for Moshe and for Israel,’ thereby equating Moshe and all Israel, as Rashi points out.

“Moshe was equivalent to the six hundred thousand members of Israel.

“Moshe is on a universal level, equivalent to all Israel.

“It was appropriate for Moshe, since he was on a G-dly level, to rule nature.

“We know that Moshe himself was equivalent to all Israel... However, many Scriptural episodes illustrate the fact that Moshe was always delighted to transmit his high level to others. Thus, Israel would be able to sing the entire “Az Yashir” just like Moshe – he conveyed his high level to all of Israel, and they all experienced the same feeling of longing [for Hashem] together with him.”

II. THE MESSIAH

“The spirit of the L-rd rested upon him, a spirit of wisdom, of reasoning – so that he could give advice and exert power – and a spirit of knowledge’ (Isaiah 11/2). We thus see that regarding Messiah, ‘reasoning’ is emphasized.

“While the Messiah is only a young calf, before he is fully matured and developed, he will be dependent upon and dwell within the Empire of Edom [the USA].

“Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi asked Eliyahu of blessed memory, ‘Where is the Messiah now sitting?’

“Said Eliyahu to him, ‘He is sitting at the gate of Rome [the world superpower, i.e., the USA].’”

Sanhedrin 98a

“He thus indicated to him the bond that exists between the Messiah and the fourth empire [Rome], for the Messiah is basically and intrinsically associated with their end.”

[S. Granovetter: When the Rebbe has “fully matured and developed,” i.e., when he is ready to usher in the Complete Redemption, he will, of course, leave the United States and build the Third Temple in Jerusalem.]

[S. Granovetter: There will be resistance to the Messiah, just as Moshe experienced opposition.]

“Just as Israel merited two men, who stood out in the quality of their



characters [Moses and Aaron], so correspondingly, Israel incurred two men who stood out in their inferiority and their capacity for evil [Dasan and Aviram]. In this world, evil must always be in balance with good. Hence, the opposition and conflict between these two pairs – Moshe and Aharon on one side, and Dasan and Aviram on the other, was a necessary and basic one. We learn in Midrash T'hillim (chapter 106): Israel wanted to appoint Dasan in place of Moshe, and Aviram in place of Aharon, as the verse states, ‘Let us appoint a head and return to Egypt’ (BaMidbar 14/4). What interfered with their plan? ‘The earth opened up and swallowed Dasan, and covered over the congregation of Aviram’ (T'hillim 106/17). We thus find that Dasan and Aviram constantly

opposed Moshe and Aharon.”

[S. Granovetter: Moses faced opposition that was coming from the other side, and so too does the Lubavitch movement face opposition that comes from the other side. Rabbi Ahron Soloveichik wrote in the Jewish Press:

“June 19, 1996

“In response to the many inquiries about my position on the Lubavitch movement vis-à-vis its Messianic beliefs.

“Before [Gimmel Tammuz], I included myself among those who believed that the Rebbe was worthy of being the Moshiach. I strongly believe that had we – particularly the Orthodox community – been united, we would have merited to see the

complete Redemption. Insofar as the belief held by many in Lubavitch, based in part on similar statements made by the Rebbe himself concerning his predecessor the Previous Rebbe—including prominent Rabbanim and Roshei Yeshiva, that the Rebbe can still be Moshiach, in light of the Gemara in Sanhedrin, the Zohar, Abarbanel, Kisvel HaArizal, S'dei Chemed and other sources, it cannot be dismissed as a belief that is outside the pale of Orthodoxy. Any cynical attempt at utilizing a legitimate disagreement of interpretation concerning this matter, to besmirch and to damage the Lubavitch movement—that was, and continues to be, in the forefront of those who are battling the Missionaries, assimilation and indifference—can only contribute to the regrettable discord that already plagues the Jewish and particularly, Torah, community.

“The Torah community should galvanize all of its energies to unite in the true spirit of Ahavas Yisroel, to battle the true enemies of Israel. I repudiate and call for an end to all efforts to discredit Lubavitch or any other legitimate movement within Torah Judaism.”]

[S. Granovetter: In response to the question, “how can the Rebbe be the Moshiach after Gimmel Tammuz?

“And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from Mount Sinai, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron and they said to him, Rise up, make for us gods” (Exodus 32:1). Rashi explains: “When Moses went up to the mountain he said to them, ‘At the end of 40 days I shall return.... The 40th day was on the 17th of Tammuz. On the 16th day Satan came and brought confusion into the world, and showed (the Israelites) a kind of thick darkness and confusion so that (they) should say, ‘Certainly Moses has died therefore confusion has come upon the world.’ (Satan) said to them:

‘Moses is dead....’ Satan showed to them a sort of replica of Moses being carried in the space of the expanse of the sky [a coffin]. (So they made a molten calf.)” ... But it is derived that the entire tribe of Levi acted properly (Yuma 66).”

[S. Granovetter: Did the entire tribe of Levi not see the vision of Moshe’s “death,” too? They did, but they believed Moshe more than their own eyes – Moshe said “I shall return.” By believing Moshe more than the testimony of their own eyes, the Talmud assures us that they behaved properly. The Rebbe said that he is

***In the final
Redemption this
repetitive pattern will
again occur...
Moshiach will first
fall short of
completing his
mission, then he will
reappear and
succeed.***

Melech HaMoshiach. So each of us has the free will to make the same choice as our ancestors: believe the Rebbe or believe what we think we saw on Gimmel Tammuz. Interestingly, the Rebbe himself said (in the name of Rambam) that in our generation every person can belong, as it were, to the Tribe of Levi if he so chooses! Make what you will of that....]

Midrash Rabba Shmos Ch. 1:31:

“Pharaoh sent for a sword that had no equal and struck him 10 times upon his neck, but the neck of Moshe became like an ivory pillar and he could not harm him, as it is said, ‘Thy

neck is as a tower of ivory.’ And Moshe fled from the face of Pharaoh.” Said R. Yannai: Is it possible for a man to escape from the king? No; but when they seized Moshe and condemned him to be beheaded, an angel from heaven descended in the form of Moshe, and while they seized the angel, meanwhile Moshe escaped.”

[S. Granovetter: Apparently, G-d made it seem as if Gimmel Tammuz should be reckoned with as reality. Why did He do this? Says the Maharal:]

“My love is like a deer” (Shir HaShirim 2/9). Just as it is in the manner of a deer to peek out and reveal itself, then to hide, and then to again reveal itself, so, too, the first savior of Israel revealed himself, then hid, and then revealed himself (Midrash). We can surmise from this Midrash that this was not a mere coincidence, but was part of Hashem’s original order of the Exodus. In the future Exodus [the final Redemption], this repetitive pattern will again occur... The Messiah will first fall short of completing his mission, then he will reappear and succeed. This derives from the very high level of the Exodus. It stems from such an exalted level that it cannot be accomplished in one step, but requires two stages.

III. IT IS A MITZVA TO HAVE FAITH IN THE NASI HA'DOR

“Rebbi says, the faith that Israel had in Hashem, this by itself was powerful enough to tear the sea apart.’ The people placed their confidence in Hashem... In the merit of this faith, Hashem indeed tore the sea apart for Israel. [This faith is described in the Torah as:] ‘They had faith in Hashem, and in his servant Moshe’” (Shmos 14/31).

“Faith is the most Divine quality, and it directly leads to the adherence to G-d. Hence it was the faith of Israel that caused the sea to split.

“The L-rd said to Moshe, I will

hereby come to you in the formation of a cloud, so that the people can hear Me speak to you – they will also have faith in you forever...” (Shmos 19/9)

“Note, since this lesson in faith demonstrated Hashem transmits His Divine attributes and qualities into the world, Hashem took this opportunity to make it especially clear that He has transmitted Divine attributes to Moshe, and that Moshe is His Prophet.... This clearly shows that Hashem is constantly associated with mankind, communicating with mankind, and introducing Divine attributes, especially the Divine Torah (which embodies true justice) into the world of man. This indeed is the important aspect of faith called ‘Divine Revelation,’ which is a foundation of Judaism. Anyone weak in this aspect of faith will find himself standing at a doorway to hell.

“Korach became convinced that Moshe managed to sneak a few things of his own into the Torah, that were

contrived by Moshe himself, and were not Divinely revealed, namely that his brother Aharon should be the High Priest... This in effect amounted to a weakness in faith that the Torah in its entirety is Divinely revealed, and that Hashem constantly protects the Torah from forgeries and corruption.”

IV. LONG LIVE THE KING!

The term “might” [oz] refers to royal power, for it is the King of Israel who makes Israel mighty. The King of Israel is endowed with Divine power... All royalty is an expression of might and power, but this especially applies to the royal power of Israel. Hence, ‘devastating might of the L-rd’ refers to the royal power of Israel in particular.

“The Torah is obviously the mind of the nation, and the King is the soul of the nation. It is the soul that organizes and harmonizes [the parts of body] ... in the same way that the one King brings unity and guidance to the many diverse people... The nation of

Israel corresponds to body [and the King is the soul].

“The Midrash also associates ‘might’ with royal power, for ‘Temple,’

‘Torah,’ and ‘Royalty’ go together. The nation of Israel cannot exist without the Temple and the Priests who serve there, for the Temple associates Israel with G-d. So too, without the legislative body (the court), represented by the Torah, and without Royal leadership and unifying guidance (of the king) Israel could obviously not survive, for the nation would lack order and unity. This especially applies to the Royal House of David, for no other royal house was as closely associated with Divine Power, as this royal house. Hence, the Royal House of David in particular unified the entire nation, including the Priesthood and Legislative body. In the merit of this Divine and perfectly harmonious leadership, the Holy One led Israel to its ultimate perfection, during the Exodus.”

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