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The international weekly heralding the coming of Mashiach  
**BEIS MOSHIACH**

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### **U.S.A**

744 Eastern Parkway  
Brooklyn, NY 11213-3409  
Tel: (718) 778-8000  
Fax: (718) 778-0800  
admin@beismoshiach.org  
www.beismoshiach.org

### **ERETZ HA'KODESH**

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

### **EDITOR-IN-CHIEF:**

M.M. Hendel

### **ENGLISH EDITOR:**

Boruch Merkur  
editor@beismoshiach.org

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# WHAT WE WERE CHOSEN FOR

SICHOS IN ENGLISH



## SHABBOS PARSHAS SEITZEI; 9<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF ELUL, 5749

1. This week's Torah reading both begins and ends with the subject of war. It begins, "When you go out to war against your enemy..." and concludes with the mitzvah to wage war against Amalek and annihilate that nation entirely.

This raises a question: All existence was brought into being by G-d.[216] Why then, did G-d bring into being enemies – and particularly, an enemy such as Amalek – whom the Jewish people must wage war against?

The resolution to this question is associated with the purpose of the creation as a whole, that G-d brought the world into being so that He would have "a dwelling in the lower worlds." For this purpose – so that the Jews could perform mitzvos with material entities, e.g., t'fillin with parchment, tzitzis with wool – G-d created the entire realm of material existence.[217]

Since G-d's desire was for a

dwelling in the lower realms, and more precisely, in the lowest possible realm, within this world were created entities whose existence is directly opposed to G-d. For He desired to derive pleasure from the existence of evil and its transformation into good.

Intellectually, it is impossible to comprehend how G-d could bring into being – and indeed, continually bring into being – an entity whose entire existence opposes the very creative force which brings it into being. Nevertheless, G-d is not bound by the limits of intellect and indeed, is truly infinite, transcending all boundaries. Thus, it is within His potential to create such an entity.

This concept also has ramifications in regard to the service of the Jewish people. Since the existence of evil stems from G-d's essential infinity, tremendously powerful G-dly energies are invested in it. The expression of the positive nature of these energies cannot, however, come in a direct manner, merely revealing the hidden. Instead, this is comparable to the creation of a

new entity, for it involves the transformation of darkness to light. The power to bring about such a transformation has been endowed to the Jewish people by G-d. Since "Israel and the Holy One, blessed be He, are one," the essential power to bring a new entity into existence is possessed by the Jewish people. They have the potential to transform this lowly realm into a dwelling for Him.

Thus although the material environment in which we live possesses great strength, as mentioned above, a person who carries out the service of transforming that environment into a dwelling for G-d possesses even greater strength. This greater strength is not revealed until the person begins his endeavors and struggle to transform his environment. When the person begins his task of refinement, the strength is taken from all opposing entities, and the potential is granted to transform them into holiness.

There are two explanations for this phenomenon: a) Since a Jew's soul is "truly a part of G-d," there is

216. And, indeed, as the Baal Shem Tov teaches, G-d renews the creation at every moment.

217. This material existence is not merely imaginary in nature, but is true, as reflected by the fact that the Torah states, "In the beginning, G-d created

the world," i.e., the Torah attests to the world's creation. Similarly, the Rambam states that the world was created from "the truth of His being."

no other entity which can be compared to it; b) The entire purpose of the soul's descent to this material plane where opposition and conflict exist, is so that it can carry out this service of transformation.

Accordingly, the opposing forces exist for the sole purpose that they be vanquished, as it were. Therefore, any serious attempt to vanquish them will surely be successful.

These concepts are reflected in the verse, "When you go out to war against your enemy, G-d... will give him into your hand, and you will take captive his prisoners." The verse emphasizes that on one hand, the enemy is a powerful entity, so powerful that it can capture prisoners. Nevertheless, a Jew is granted even greater power. Indeed, in the verse cited above, the Hebrew word translated as "against," literally means "above." Even when a Jew merely "goes out to war," i.e., he is in the first stages of his service, he is "above his enemies." And, he can rest assured that ultimately, "G-d... will give him into his hand." He will be granted Divine assistance in performing his task of refinement, for this is the ultimate purpose of creation.

In this manner, he will "take captive his prisoners," i.e., the prisoners captured previously by the enemy. This refers to the refinement of the sparks of G-dliness that have fallen into the realm of evil. Indeed, the entire reason these sparks of G-dliness could have descended into the realm of evil is that they eventually be elevated and thus lifted to a rung higher than their original level. The

higher level reached can be compared to "the advantage darkness possesses over light." For when darkness is transformed into light, it produces a light which is more powerful than ordinary light.[218]

These concepts relate to the conclusion of the Torah reading which mentions the war against

*Since the existence of evil stems from G-d's essential infinity, tremendously powerful G-dly energies are invested in it...*

*The power to bring about such a transformation has been endowed to the Jewish people by G-d.*

Amalek. Amalek represents the ultimate power of the forces of evil, for Amalek has the advantage of being a descendant of Avrohom. This power is reflected in the Torah's description of Amalek's confrontation with the Jewish people, "he met you on the way." Significantly, the Hebrew

word translated as "he met you," is interpreted in Chassidic thought to mean "he cooled you off." Amalek has the power to quench a Jew's fervor for the service of G-d.

This, however, is merely the preliminary stage. Ultimately, through the confrontation with Amalek, a Jew can reach the highest levels. In this vein, the refinement of Eisav, Amalek's ancestor, is associated with the Era of the Redemption, when "saviors will ascend the Mountain of Eisav."

These concepts also relate to the opening verses of next week's Torah reading: "And it shall come to pass when you enter the land..., You shall take the first fruits of the land." Through "going out to war against your enemies," one brings about refinement in the land, and this enables one to bring its produce to Jerusalem,[219] to the Beis HaMikdash, where the Divine presence is revealed.

The ultimate expression of this service will come in the Era of the Redemption when it will be openly revealed that the world is G-d's dwelling. For the Jews will have revealed that the truth of the existence of every entity is G-d's essence.

2. A connection can be found between the above concepts and the portion of the Mishneh Torah studied today, the seventh chapter of Hilchos Mechira, "The Laws of Transactions." In the realm of our spiritual service, transactions refer to the manner in which G-d "acquires heaven and earth." This is accomplished by the

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218. To explain the parallel to these concepts in the personal realm: The merits that come through the transformation of evil into good, i.e., the merits possessed by a Baal Tshuva, surpass the merits possessed by a righteous man who has never sinned. For this reason, even after the enemy's

prisoners have been taken captive by the forces of holiness, they are referred to as "his prisoners." Since they reveal a higher dimension of light, they remain unique and distinct.

219. The mention of the first fruits in the verse relates to the concept of the transformation of evil mentioned

above. For in actual fact, Eisav was the firstborn and our service involves transforming Eisav into the realm of holiness. The potential for this service stems from the fact that Yaakov was conceived before Eisav (see Rashi, B'Reishis 25:26). Similarly, the prophets describe Israel as G-d's "first fruits."

Jewish people who take the elements of our material existence from the public domain and make them part of the private domain, i.e., infuse them with oneness.

Such “transactions” are completed in three ways, “with money, with a document, or by manifesting ownership.” These in turn refer to the three services “on which the world stands,” Torah, prayer, and deeds of kindness which are representative of the three s’firo, chesed (kindness), g’vura (might), and tiferes (beauty).

The connection to the concepts mentioned above can be explained as follows: The fact that a transaction is necessary indicates the power possessed by the worldly dimensions of existence. The need for their transfer to G-d’s domain to be formalized through legal means as it were indicates the strength of their existence. Nevertheless, the Jewish people possess even greater power and they are capable of bringing about such a transfer.

Why do the Jews possess such power? For they are totally one with G-d, married to Him, as it were. Therefore, it is within their potential to acquire material entities for G-d, i.e., to make this world a dwelling for Him.

The particular laws studied today also provide a significant lesson. Today’s portion of study includes the following law:

When a person gives payment, but does not draw the produce [into his domain], the transfer of the goods has not been completed.... Nevertheless, whoever – whether the purchaser or the seller – reneges [on his commitment] has not acted in a Jewish manner and must receive [the following condemnation]:

“May He who exacted retribution from the men of the generation of the flood, from the men of the generation of the dispersion, from the men of Sodom and Amora, and from the

Egyptians whom He drowned in the sea, exact retribution from one who does not honor his word.”

One the surface, one might ask: Why are all the examples taken from situations in which gentiles were punished before the giving of the Torah? Why aren’t examples of retribution visited upon the Jewish people cited?

To explain the above within the context of our spiritual service: kesef – the Hebrew for “money” – also means “yearning.” Thus it refers to the revelation of G-dly light from

***Jews are by nature beyond the material dimensions of existence. A Jew is, in essence, one with G-d. He descends into this world – “When you go out to war” – only to fulfill G-d’s command.***

above, the subject of our yearning. Drawing an object into one’s domain refers to our service in elevating the material realm. Ultimately, the transfer of an object to the realm of holiness involves both of these activities.

When, however, one only pays money, i.e., there is only the revelation from above, the service has not been completed, i.e., the world as it exists within its own context has not been elevated. This allows for the possibility that one may renege, fail to complete this service of

refinement. To do so, however, is not Jewish conduct. For all Jews “truly desire to perform all the mitzvos” and complete the service of making this world a dwelling for G-d. To encourage a Jew to complete his service and to impress him with the seriousness of the matter, he is told “May He who exacted retribution....”

Why do all the examples involve gentiles before the giving of the Torah? For precisely such subjects reflect how the world exists within its own context, and how it is in need of being elevated and refined.

This would not be apparent by making reference to examples involving the Jewish people. For the Jews are by nature beyond the material dimensions of our existence. A Jew is, in essence, one with G-d. He descends into this world – “When you go out to war” – only to fulfill G-d’s command. Indeed, even as a Jew exists within the world, the manner of refinement most natural to him would be the revelation of G-dly light. For by revealing G-dly light powerfully, one can attract sparks of G-dliness. Thus the divine light revealed by King Shlomo attracted the sparks of G-dliness of the kingdom of Sheba.

Therefore, to emphasize that the service of drawing down G-dliness alone is not sufficient, we recall the gentiles who existed before the giving of the Torah. These individuals reflect the coarsest dimension of material existence. Nevertheless, since the ultimate goal is to affect them as well and make them a part of G-d’s dwelling, the service of elevating the material realm is necessary. Therefore, these gentiles are mentioned. This should inspire us to complete the service of refining the world and transforming it into G-d’s dwelling.

3. The above concepts also share a connection with the chapters of Pirkei Avos studied this week, chs. 1 and 2. Chapter 1 begins “Moshe

received the Torah from Sinai.” This reflects how the spark of Moshe which exists within every Jew is given the entire Torah. This expresses itself in service in the three vectors of Torah, avoda (prayer), and deeds of kindness, “the three pillars... on which the world stands.”

In a more particular way, these three vectors are represented by the three services mentioned at the conclusion of the first chapter, “judgment, truth, and peace,” for these establish harmony within the world and enable it to become a dwelling for G-d.

This in turn will lead to the expression of the lesson communicated at the conclusion of the second chapter of Pirkei Avos, “Know that the righteous will be given their reward in the World to Come.” The present era is the time when service must be performed, and

in the world to come, the Era of the Redemption, we will receive our reward.

As an introduction to these concepts, it is customary to recite the Mishna, “All Israel has a portion in the world to come,” which reveals the essential positive nature of every Jew. Even before “Moshe received the Torah,” every Jew has an essentially positive core, for he is “the branch of My planting, the work of My hands in which I take pride.”

Why then did “Moshe receive the Torah”? For the reason stated in the Mishna recited after studying Pirkei Avos, “Because the Holy One, Blessed be He, desire to endow Israel with merit, He granted them an abundant measure of the Torah and [its] mitzvos.”

4. To conclude with directives for action, for “deed is most essential.”

Parshas Ki Seitzei emphasizes the importance of going out into the world and carrying out our divine service in such an environment. This involves the five modes of divine service associated with the month of Elul: Torah study, prayer, deeds of kindness, t’shuva, and Redemption.

Encouragement to carry out this service can be derived from the fact that “the King is in the field,” and receives His people there. Similarly, the positive influence will be contributed by the commemoration of the founding of Yeshivas Tomchei T’mimim, the central Lubavitcher Yeshiva, which took place on the fifteenth of Elul. The founding of the Yeshiva is associated with training “soldiers of the House of David” who will prepare the Jewish people and the world at large for the Redemption. May this come about in the immediate future.

## PLEASE HELP

A fund has been established in the loving memory of  
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A web-site has been established in the loving memory and also featuring the works of Reb Mordechai Staiman, obm. You can find it at:  
<http://www.torah4blind.org/staiman>

# NO HORSE- AND-BUGGY RIDE

FARBRENGEN WITH RABBI CHAIM ASHKENAZI, MASHPIA, YESHIVAS TOMCHEI TMIMIM, LOD  
TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY

*Dear brothers, don't worry about the future. Soon we will travel to the Rebbe! Yet chassidim worry that their trip to the Rebbe shouldn't be some horse-and-buggy ride. Instead, they pray that the window to their hearts will open to the revealed spiritual light, which will continue to shine even after they return home. Excerpts from a chassidic farbrengen.*

## WHY AND WITH WHAT DO THEY COME?

In every generation, *chassidim* have been known to prepare themselves for a trip to the Rebbe for at least a full year, and in many instances, for several years. This is alluded to in the *pasuk*, “and with this the maiden came to the king, six months in myrrh oil and six months in the fragrances and perfumes of the women.” This is explained as follows: Half a year to

deal with the bitterness over how far away he is from G-dliness – “*mor*” (myrrh) is a derivative of the word “*merirus*” (bitterness) – and half a year to deal with the delight and pleasure of G-dliness – “*fragrances*.” Even though we are not on such a level today, the principle still remains: everyone is obligated to prepare himself, as is fitting.

To understand the type of preparation that is required, we must emphasize what the purpose of the journey is and why there must

be a preparation.

There are those who travel to the Rebbe because of the holiness of the place, the *t'fillos* there are accepted much more easily. Others travel to the Rebbe to receive advice and direction in both material and spiritual matters. All such reasons are very good and quite correct.

However, there are those who travel to the Rebbe in a manner befitting a trip to the Beis HaMikdash, as is written, “all your men shall appear,” and our Sages say, “just as a person comes to be seen, so too, he comes to see.” These are dependent on one another: “to be seen” is a prerequisite “to see.”

This “seeing” in the Beis HaMikdash is not a one-time experience; its effect continues throughout the year. As the Rebbe Rayatz writes in *Likkutei Dibburim*, the time spent in the Beis HaMikdash influences a Jew's way of life thereafter. When people come back from the Beis HaMikdash, they perceive the world in a completely

different manner. As the Rebbe expressed himself in a *sicha*, they see that the entire world is merely a tent, something temporary, transient. This is the foundation of a Jew's life in this world.

### SO WE SHOULDN'T SINK

This *chassidic* interpretation is best illustrated in the *Krias Shma*, in which we say, "And you shall love G-d," etc., and immediately afterwards, it speak about, "And you shall gather in your grain." How do these two things go together? When the "And you shall love G-d" is such that "your Torah is permanent and your labor is temporary," only then is it permissible and possible to be involved in worldly matters. Only then is it possible to gather and receive the lofty life force within them. However, if one's labor is the main thing, it is forbidden for him to be involved in worldly matters, because they bring him spiritual

descent (in addition to the overall descent of his soul coming down into this world).

There is the story of the Baal Shem Tov, who showed his students an ox in Shabbos clothes, because of a certain Jew who wanted so much to fulfill the *mitzva* of eating a *seudas Shabbos* with oxen meat that he appeared as an "*ahks mit a shtreimel*" (ox in a *streimel*). Therefore, we have to clean our soul before its entry into Gan Eden, since it is impossible to bring an ox, a car, a pizza, etc., into Gan Eden, for there is no place for such things.

(I once heard from one of the elder *chassidim* a description of how the Gan Eden of a wagon driver looks: He is given a wagon reined with several gallant horses and a long whip to spur them on along an endless road. They run at high speed without any obstacles, and the wagon driver is eternally happy.)

Therefore, a Jew's day begins with *Krias Shma* and morning *brachos*, and only afterwards can he eat something before *davening*. While it is permissible to eat before *davening* – and according to the Rebbe *shlita*, this is even an obligation – nevertheless, this cannot be done before *Krias Shma*. A Jew can engage in worldly matters without sinking only when he declares that his Torah is primary and his work is secondary. Similarly, at the day's conclusion, he makes a sum total and declares again at *Krias Shma* that his Torah is primary and his work is secondary. Otherwise, every moment that he spends in this world will have been a waste of time, *ch"v*.

For this reason, Jews went up to celebrate Yom Tov in the Beis HaMikdash, to see and to be seen, to return home with greater feeling, understanding, or knowledge – each



according to his level – for the entire world is merely a tent, a temporary dwelling place. This is how a Jew would fulfill his duty until the following Yom Tov, when he would again go up to the Beis HaMikdash, not just to refresh this feeling, but in a mode of “elevating in spiritual matters.”

### STARTING TO SEE THINGS DIFFERENTLY

This is done today by traveling to *Beis Rabbeinu*, which is “our Beis HaMikdash.” In particular, it has been established that 770 has a special connection to the Mikdash itself, as explained in the *kuntres* “*Beis Rabbeinu Sh’B’Bavel*.”

Thus, it is most important to travel to the Rebbe, to the point that it is said among *chassidim* and in *sichos* that a *chassid* considered the day that he came to the Rebbe for the first time or the occasion of his first *yechidus* as his birthday. In truth, such a day marks the birth of his soul. At birth a child’s eyes open to see what physical eyes see; on the day that a *chassid* comes to the Rebbe, his eyes are opened to see what the eyes of the soul see.

This is the very reason why a trip to the Rebbe demands a great deal of work and preparation. Up until now, in both quality and quantity, a Jew has accustomed himself to see the world according to his physical eyes alone. Suddenly, he has to change the program and view things differently. The truth of the matter is that this is not just a program; until now this was his very being and his (animal) soul: to see the world with its haughtiness and lies, crying out, “Me – and nothing else besides me.”

As is said among *chassidim*, the *Shulchan Aruch* begins with “he shall strengthen himself as a lion” in his morning *avodas Hashem*, and the Rama adds that he should say

*Tikkun Chatzos* at night. What connection is there between the two? According to the Rama, if a person sleeps like a dog, how can he wake up like a lion!

Similarly, we find with regard to traveling to the Rebbe. If there is not a correct preparation and his vessel is filled with the world and its materialism, how can he expect the revealed light to shine within him?

Our Sages say, “in human measure, an empty vessel can contain, [whereas] a full vessel cannot.” If a person is a vessel filled

***As much as we open up, the real opening is when, “I will open for you the entrance of a hall.” However, this must be prefaced by the opening the size of an eye of a needle.***

with the wants and desires of physical materialism, this is his world. This is what interests him and makes him happy. Yet, in such a vessel, there is no room for anything else, particularly, from another world, in another language, with different thoughts and emotions – and on a much higher level.

As is known from the esoteric interpretation of, “For the desert closed in on them,” the emptiness closes in on him from every direction. How can a person confront such a situation from its very inception? What is the solution

for a person to “get out of the desert” and prepare the vessel?

### OPEN UP!

Regarding the above, it is said, “Open for me the eye of a needle...” This is the smallest possible physical aperture from which it is possible to proceed, after which, there can come, “and I will open for you the entrance of a hall.” When someone wants to enter a particular place and the door is closed, as much as he knocks and knocks, it is all to no avail. However, once they open a small crack between the door and the doorpost, he slips in a finger, then a leg, and afterwards, part of his body, and so on.

Similarly, in order for the Rebbe to come in, the person has to open up. No matter how much he opens, it will be on the level of an eye of a needle. Still, the Rebbe sticks in a finger. This causes pain to the Rebbe, yet the Rebbe does it.

R. Mendel Futerfas was known to say the following: It is written that the stones fought among themselves over which one Yaakov Avinu would rest his head upon. The question is asked: If we were talking about soft, fluffy pillows, then we could understand why each one wanted that the *tzaddik* would feel comfortable upon it. But in this case, why would a rock want that a *tzaddik* should get a headache specifically from it?!

“True, the Rebbe will get a headache,” R. Mendel would say. “Nevertheless, I want the Rebbe to rest his head upon me!”

And so, as much as we open up, the real opening is when, “I will open for you the entrance of a hall.” However, this must be prefaced by the opening the size of an eye of a needle. Of course, no one can give each person a sure-fire prescription for what “an eye of a needle” is in his case. As a result, a person must consult his



*mashpia* and his *rav*. However, the principle remains the same.

There is a famous story about the Alter Rebbe's *chassid*, R. Shmuel Munkes, who made the resolution when he went in to the Rebbe for the first time that whatever he *wants* – even something totally permissible – he will abstain from. We learn from this that even without fasting and afflictions, one can open the size of an eye of a needle.

In the memoirs of the Rebbeim, there is a lengthy discussion about R. Boruch, the Alter Rebbe's father. He once heard a story about R. Boruch Moyazin and how he prepared to go in to his teacher and mentor, a great *chassid* and *lamdan*, in order to receive guidance in *avodas Hashem* by accepting upon himself a series of fasts. When this great Torah scholar found out about this, he admonished him, "Where did you learn this custom of fasting?"

*Chassidus* reveals that instead of afflicting the intestines (which serves no purpose since they are not to blame), we simply have to rein in our thoughts, speech, and action, doing so in a manner of "little by little, I will drive them out," of course.

This excludes eating for lustful reasons, as this is not afflicting the intestines, but reducing the influence of worldly desires. This also excludes idle talk, verbal abuse, mockery, and to replace it with more serious spiritual content.

## RESOLUTIONS AND ACTUAL PREPARATION!

So when we define and limit our limbs in actual deed and decide not to conduct ourselves in such a manner – this is a preparation! As long as a person begins to do this as soon as possible prior to the trip, this will make the opening of the crack much easier when he comes to *Beis Rabbeinu* "to be seen," and the Rebbe instills inner strength within him, seeing what he has done.

There is a widespread malady where a student decides that from Sunday he will start to improve in his studies. Sunday comes along, and then he decides that when they start a new *sugya*, then he'll start to learn. Afterwards, he decides that from Rosh Chodesh, he'll start a new time period. Then, he decides to start after Pesach, and finally he says, "Let's wait until the new year." Then he thinks to himself, "I didn't make it in *yeshiva k'tana*, but when I reach *yeshiva g'dola*, I'll get a hold of myself." Afterwards, "when I go on *k'vutza*, I'll change my ways." Suddenly, he discovers that most of his life has gone by with decisions alone, making him rich and even scholarly in the business of decision-making. Yet, not only has he not changed for the better, but to the contrary, as is written in *Tanya*, "he has coarsened himself with the passage of time through his eating and drinking and other pleasures of this world."

On such a scale, it can be said, "better one action than a thousand decisions." Learn at least the second chapter of the Rebbe Rashab's *Kuntres HaAvoda*, and learn it several times. Picture to yourselves how the Rebbe Rashab describes the need for what is called the "*teudas z'hus*" (identity card) of *yiras Shamayim*.

And then, "and with this the maiden came to the king," and more than that, to the inner courtyard and the revelation of the Rebbe *shlita MH*"M, which represents the most inner aspect of all our *avoda* in this world and of the *seider hishtalshlus*, immediately, *mamash*, NOW!

The following is a recent story that happened with Bassie Nachles from Detroit, Michigan:

Bassie Nachles wrote a letter to the Rebbe for a *bracha* for a particular thing but was very reluctant to put it into the *Igros Kodesh* until her mother convinced her to do so. Bassie's argument was, "Is the *Igros* some sort of magic or something?"

Bassie and her mother were utterly stunned to read the following letter she opened to randomly in the English *Igros* book called *The Letter & The Spirit*. The Rebbe elaborates on the concept of magic and miracles. (See image.)

The letter concludes with a wish for a joyous Purim. Bassie wrote her letter just a few days before Purim.

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# THE CHILDREN CAN TAKE THE SH'CHINA OUT OF GALUS

*A compilation of sichos and letters on the topic of chinuch  
as we begin the new school year.*

## MESIRUS NEFESH OF OUR REBBEIM

One of the outstanding features of Chabad-Lubavitch is the emphasis on *chinuch*, an emphasis which is expressed in wide-ranging action with *mesirus nefesh*. This tradition comes originally from the Baal Shem Tov, the founder of *chassidus*, who began his educational work long before his revelation as a *tzaddik*, when he was a *melamed* for little children. His devotion and love for children was boundless. His successor, the famous Maggid of Mezritch, wished that while kissing a Torah he would feel the same feeling the Baal Shem Tov felt when he kissed a young child!

This tradition continued with the *talmid* and successor of the Maggid of Mezritch, the Alter

Rebbe, and with all Chabad leaders, including my father-in-law the Rebbe ...

The Rebbe the Tzemach Tzedek, as is known, was a giant among *g'dolei ha'Torah* in his time and was world famous as a *halachic* authority, a *gaon* in *chassidus* and *kabbala*, as his numerous *s'farim* testify. In addition, he was the leader of the generation, who was frequently invited by the government to Petersburg for consultation about the state of the Jewish people at that critical time. Despite this, he would pull himself away from his studies, his writing and all other responsibilities, in order to personally test his young grandchildren once a month, and he would give them monetary gifts for excellence.

These stories (the fact that they

were told to us proves their relevance to each one of us) teach us how far *mesirus nefesh* for *chinuch al taharas ha'kodesh* goes – not just easy forms of *mesirus nefesh* like monetary donations and personal exertion, but also the difficult form of *mesirus nefesh* of pulling oneself away from his personal learning and other communal matters, for as important as they were, *chinuch al taharas ha'kodesh* is more important.

*(Igras Kodesh vol. 24, p. 47-48)*

## THE ALTER REBBE – A ROLE MODEL

The Alter Rebbe was a *dugma chaya* (role model), even in his private life (if we can say so) of everything he taught and expounded in his Torah teachings, even before he was revealed as a leader of the Jewish people.

Regarding our topic, three essential points need to be made: 1) the idea of helping another, which in general is the pillar of *tz'daka*; 2) *hafatzas ha'Torah*, *nigleh* and *p'nimius ha'Torah*; and 3) the "bolt that runs through both these things" is *chinuch al pi Torah al taharas ha'kodesh*, for it is through this that *hafatzas ha'Torah* and *tz'daka* come together, spiritual *tz'daka*, which is

given to those being educated, as well as monetary *tz'daka* in support of Torah ...

Regarding *hafatzas ha'Torah*, it is known that he was involved in teaching Torah to the public, whether to those great in Torah or simple people, and he took care of *chinuch* for boys and girls (apparently he even wanted to begin *Likkutei Amarim*, *Tanya*, with

the section called "*Chinuch Katan*," but for reasons unknown it was printed as the second part of the work).

*(Igros Kodesh vol. 22, p. 399)*

#### ME'OREI OHR:

*Chassidic melamdin* are the real "me'orei ohr" (luminaries of light) in Jewish homes. *Chassidic melamdin*, *baalei avoda*, are the "Avrohom



*The children, with the breath of their mouths, with their Torah study, are suited to accomplish more than Abayei and Rav Papa – that's what Chazal say. They are capable of taking the Sh'china out of Galus, the entire Jewish people and their parents from Galus, and to bring Melech HaMoshiach.*

Avinu” in every generation. They disseminate G-dliness in Jewish homes. The Mittlerer Rebbe would greatly *mekarev* the *melamdim*, more than *rabbanim*. The Mittlerer Rebbe said: The *melamdim* make Jews “receptacles” for G-dliness.

(From the introduction to *Kuntres “U’maayan”* p. 36)

## THE MESIRUS NEFESH OF THE REBBE RAYATZ

The main point to contemplate is the *mesirus nefesh* of the *baal ha’Geula* for the *chinuch* of very young Jewish children, as well as the youth and adolescents; he worked and toiled to found and strengthen *mosdos chinuch* for them, *chadarim* and *yeshivos*, and it was this *avoda* in particular that aroused the anger of the hostile government and was one of the main reasons for his incarceration.

The outstanding point here is that he devoted himself for the sake of *chinuch* for children and youth, knowing that he put his life in danger thereby, and along with this, all his work to strengthen *shuls*, *mikvaos* and all the other vital needs of adults, for they too were dependent on him.

This demonstrates clearly to what extent he valued the *chinuch* of children and youth, both for their sakes as well as for our entire nation whose future is dependent on them, and as *Chazal* say, “If there are no young goats there are no mature goats.”

And from this we derive a lesson which is understood even with light contemplation, that applies to all the students (boys and girls) in every location: If their education in Torah and *mitzvos* precedes everything else, to the point of literal *mesirus nefesh*, then it is understood how their longing and diligence and efforts in Torah study and *mitzva* fulfillment on their part

ought to be, especially when there are no obstacles from the outside, on the contrary. This matter is dependent solely on their will.

(*Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 13, p. 248-9)

## A GOOD MELAMED

My father-in-law the Rebbe said that a “good *melamed*” doesn’t only succeed in teaching a *talmid* the *inyan* that he is currently learning with him, but he teaches him an approach to learning so that he can learn on his own.

This also applies to the *chinuch* that Hashem gives us (*neshamos Yisroel*) that the perfection in this is expressed in that we ourselves become *mechanchim* (educators). So it turns out that those involved in *chinuch* express the perfection of Hashem’s education.

(*Toras Menachem* vol. 4, p. 91)

## THE MAIN JOB

Our generation’s main job is *chinuch*. Every single person (male and female), and not only grownups but also young people, must be involved in *chinuch*, for our generation, which is the generation before Moshiach, is “doubled and redoubled darkness.” Therefore, every person must put all his efforts into turning the darkness into light,

first and foremost though educating Jewish children in Torah.

Every single person (male and female), big and small, is not only obligated to be involved in *chinuch* but is suited for this.

Although our generation is a “midget generation” compared to previous generations, but our predecessors, our holy Rebbeim, endowed every one of us, even the little ones amongst us, with *kochos* and directives and guidance for success in the holy work of *chinuch*.

(*Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 24, p. 424)

## THE BREATH OF CHILDREN

Strive with all abilities and efforts that every Jewish boy and girl be found in the tent of Torah and fear of Heaven, i.e., in a Torah educational environment, so that every Jewish child be involved in Torah in a way of “and you shall teach them,” “when you sit in your house and go on the road and lie down and rise up,” and loudly announce, “The Torah that Moshe commanded us is an inheritance of the congregation of Yaakov.” This will bring a cessation of the enemies and avengers, and every person will be redeemed from his personal exile, and all Israel will be redeemed from *Galus* with the true

## THE BEGINNING OF THE SCHOOL YEAR, IN ELUL

A number of times lately we have spoken about (and I asked that it should be publicized) exerting special efforts in the *chinuch* of Jewish boys and girls, particularly the *chinuch* of young children, starting with the smallest, especially when nowadays in these countries the new school year begins in Elul. You must take advantage of this time (as our Sages say, when you come to a city, follow its customs) in order to bring boys and girls to learn in proper schools, especially schools where they are educated *al taharas ha’kodesh*, a holy *chinuch*. Then – as the saying of our Rebbeim – “*vi m’shpant ayn, azoi geit dos, m’shpant ayn glaiach, geit doz glaiach*” (the way you harness it is the way it goes; when you harness it straight, it goes straight). And when the beginning of the year is with a kosher *chinuch* and with *chinuch al taharas ha’kodesh*, then the entire year will be straight and good.

and complete Redemption.

It should be emphasized to boys and girls, the great privilege and responsibility they have that despite the fact that they themselves need counselors and teachers, they are suited to building and maintaining the Beis HaMikdash through their own learning and their learning with others.

The children, with the breath of their mouths, with their Torah study, are suited to accomplish more than Abayei and Rav Papa – that's what *Chazal* say. They are capable of taking the *Sh'china* out of *Galus*, the entire Jewish people and their parents from *Galus*, and to bring Melech HaMoshiach.

(*ibid.* p. 425)

### THE GREAT RESPONSIBILITY

The verse says that man is like a tree of the field, that the house of Israel is like the vineyard of Hashem Lord of Hosts, and the fruits are the children, like sons and daughters. Indeed, how great is the responsibility of the leader and gardener into whose care the owner of the vineyard gave his vineyard. Thus, *Chazal* say that teaching children is called G-d's work, and how great is your merit that Hashem appointed you to guard his vineyard. We see that any improvement, however small, in the seed, causes great beauty and praise in the tree that grows from it.

(*Igros Kodesh*, vol. 1, p. 83)

### PIKUACH NEFASHOS

Especially regarding proper *chinuch*, which is one of the most important things in every place and at every time, especially in our time of doubled and redoubled darkness in which the words of the prophet were fulfilled in their entirety (Yeshaya 5:20), woe to those who call evil good and good evil. This is considered *pikuach nefashos* and not

*If their education in Torah and mitzvos precedes everything else, to the point of literal mesirus nefesh, then it is understood how their Torah study and mitzva fulfillment on their part ought to be.*

only to bring them to life in Olam HaBa but to protect them in this world, and as you palpably sense the wildness and licentiousness, etc., etc. Of course, we are not permitted to go on at length about the disgrace of, etc.

(*ibid.* p. 222)

### EMISSARIES OF HASHEM

Especially regarding the youth, for man is a tree of the field, and every slight change in the young sapling, all the more so in the seed, can influence the entire course of the life of the tree for better or worse, *ch"v*, especially nowadays, where destructive winds blow not only in the streets, but they also penetrate the *mosdos chinuch* and even *yeshivos*, how much greater is the responsibility (and naturally, the privilege) of all those who have the ability to influence and whose voices are heard among the youth.

These educators and men of influence ought to regard themselves as Hashem's emissaries in a certain place and in a certain time, to illuminate, to bless, to refine, to sanctify their surroundings with the candle of a *mitzva* and the light of Torah and the source of light in Torah.

(*Igros Kodesh*, vol. 8, p. 190)

### MEASURE FOR MEASURE

The saying of my father-in-law the Rebbe, based on the statement of our Sages, is known – that Hashem metes out measure for measure, that all those who are involved in proper *chinuch*, Hashem repays them measure for measure that they should raise their children with the candle of a *mitzva* and the light of Torah and the way of life, etc.

(*ibid.* vol. 4, p. 424)

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# CHOOSING A MASHPIA

BY RABBI AVROHOM RAYNITZ



*The Rebbe said, “asei lecha rav” – appoint someone to consult with and to whom you will be accountable. \* Beis Moshiach spoke with Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Offen, mashpia of the Chabad community in Ramat Shlomo and mashpia in Chabad yeshivos in Yerushalayim and Tzfas, and clarified this directive of the Rebbe.*

It says “asei lecha rav” (make for yourself a rav) in the Mishna. What is the Rebbe’s innovation to this directive?

You can ask the same question about Mivtza T’fillin – what did the Rebbe innovate? After all, according to *Shulchan Aruch* every Jew is obligated to rebuke his fellow, and all Jews are responsible for one another! Furthermore, when the Rebbe once said that those who disobey his limits on drinking *mashke* should not go on his *shlichus*, the Rebbe said that these same individuals must still go on Mivtza T’fillin because this is a requirement of *Shulchan Aruch*.

You can ask a similar question

about the principles of *chassidus*. Take for example the *inyan* of “forever Hashem, Your word stands in the heavens,” that if the *dvar Hashem* would cease, *ch”v*, even for a moment, the world would revert to the nothingness it once was. This explanation is attributed to the Baal Shem Tov and is one of the foundations of *chassidic* philosophy, even though its source is Midrash T’hillim!

The explanation is simple. Although this is written in Midrash T’hillim, in *Shulchan Aruch*, and Pirkei Avos, who paid attention to it? The Baal Shem Tov took an obscure Midrash and brought it to the

attention of hundreds of thousands of Jews. The Rebbe took a *halacha* in *Shulchan Aruch* that nobody connected with Mivtza T’fillin and that nobody implemented, and brought it down from the realm of *halacha* to the realm of action. This is aside from the spiritual aspect, and the selection of a specific time to bring this to our attention, about which we have no understanding at all.

The same is true for the Mishna which says “asei lecha rav” (appoint for yourself a rav). For thousands of years Jews have learned Pirkei Avos in the summer, yet there was never a widespread effort for everyone to appoint themselves a private mentor.

The injunction to appoint a *rav* appears twice in Pirkei Avos. The first time, it says, “asei lecha rav v’histalek min ha’safek” (appoint for yourself a rav and avoid doubt), and the second time it says, “asei lecha rav u’k’nei lecha chaver” (appoint for yourself a rav and acquire for yourself a friend). The *rabbanim* we’ve had over the centuries are the ones who help us avoid doubt, for whenever a Jew had a question he would approach a *rav* who resolved the issue.

But there’s another sort of *rav* who

is in the category of “acquire a friend for yourself.” Sometimes there are no doubts. We know good and well that a particular thing is unsuitable for *chassidim*, but we find it hard to muster the spiritual strength to overcome the *yetzer*. In such a case we don’t consult with the town *rav*, but our personal mentor who is like a friend who can help us out. We can pour out our hearts to him and confide our struggles to him, and we can get the spiritual *chizuk* we need to deal with our conflicts.

Again, this is a Mishna, but until the Rebbe brought it down to earth it remained something that was studied but not implemented. Even after the founding of the *chassidic* movement, when an emphasis was placed on the importance of a *mashpia*, it was generally a *mashpia* for a congregation as opposed to one’s personal *mashpia*.

Even when the Rebbe referred T’nimim to *mashpiim*, these were instructions to individuals and not a general injunction to all. The Rebbe’s *chiddush* is in the implementation. The Rebbe took the directive of the Mishna and made it part of the daily life of thousands of *chassidim* and *mekusharim*.

The real *chiddush* of the Rebbe is in the details. For example, the Rebbe said that everybody ought to give a *duch* (report) to his *rav*. This detail is not mentioned in the Mishna. There are other details which we’ll get to later, which are *chiddushim* of the Rebbe.

**Is this meant for Lubavitchers exclusively or is this something which we should encourage others to do, too?**

This is stated in the Mishna, so obviously it applies to everybody. The question can be asked about the details which the Rebbe innovated. Even the details are for everyone for the Rebbe said they apply to all.

During the preparation period for Yud Shevat 5747, the Rebbe suggested that during the thirty days of preparation, everybody should take three tests given by his *rav*. The Rebbe said that each person taking a test ought to give his *rav* permission to tell the test results to the Rebbe, since when a Chassid knows that the test results will be seen by the Rebbe, it spurs him on to prepare better so as not to be embarrassed by the results.

Now, tests are not mentioned in

the Mishna, yet the Rebbe said this suggestion is meant for everyone (male and female) of *Anash* including those who would join *Anash* tomorrow, as well as those who would ultimately be convinced to join *Anash*.

The Rebbe concludes: “In other words, it is an *inyan* that pertains to every single Jew, as in the famous statement of the Alter Rebbe that *Toras ha’chassidus* is not the province of one group or party, but of all Jews. As my father-in-law, the Rebbe, announced, the time has come for this, i.e., *Toras ha’chassidus* actually and openly belongs to everyone, as a result of which every person (male and female) will be ‘*Anash – Anshei Shlomeinu*.’”

The Rebbe once mentioned that it is well known, especially among the Litvish, that the Vilna Gaon had a “*mussar zoger*” whom the Gaon called upon from time to time to tell him – the Gaon – *divrei mussar*, which he would implement!

**Who has to appoint a *rav*? Everyone, or only those who need ongoing spiritual counsel?**

Obviously, some people need more guidance than others. There are two categories. There are people who generally do the right thing who need a *rav* only to prevent them from making mistakes that result from lack of knowledge or because a person is subjective. This can be in learning, in *avodas ha’t’filla*, in *g’milus chassadim*, and in daily good conduct. A person in this category wants to do things right and makes the effort, but may err. Therefore he needs a *rav* to consult with regarding his doubts and questions.

There’s another category of people who don’t take the responsibility to improve themselves in all areas. It is more necessary for this type to have a *rav* since the *rav* will let them know that they can’t remain in their present state and will urge them to get out of



the muck and make spiritual progress.

Since it is the Mishna in Pirkei Avos that says, “*asei lecha rav*,” and Pirkei Avos is “*milei d’chassidusa*,” i.e., beyond the letter of the law, the Rebbe learns from this that the Mishna is also talking about someone who is doing fine and who doesn’t need a *rav*. Even a person like this ought to go *lifnim mi’shuras ha’din* (beyond the letter of the law) and appoint a personal *rav* for himself.

In the *sicha* of Parshas D’varim 5746, in which the Rebbe began to promote the idea of *asei lecha rav*, the Rebbe makes it clear that even someone who is a *gadol ba’Torah* and *yiras Shamayim*, who finds it difficult to find someone greater than him, also has to follow the instruction of the Mishna. The Rebbe quotes the Meiri that “even if he won’t find someone greater than him, let him take someone lower than he, because a person is subjective and cannot see himself as another does. Thus, he fulfills ‘*asei lecha rav*’ – appoint a mentor, even if he is not worthy.” And the Rebbe adds that this is why the Mishna says, “*asei lecha*” – literally “make for you,” even if you have to force yourself.

In the *sicha* of the 3<sup>rd</sup> night of Chol HaMoed Sukkos 5747, the Rebbe said that even someone who is a *rav* needs to fulfill the Mishna of *asei lecha rav*, even more so! Since a *rav*’s conduct and *piskei dinim* affect many Jews, it is even more important for him to fulfill this Mishna because it’s not just about him but about many Jews. All the more so in instances when he heard, from a number of Jews, among them *rabbanim* with *smicha*, that in their opinion he has made a mistake in a certain *p’sak din*, he can certainly not rely on himself but must clarify matters with his “*rav*.”

And the Rebbe says that the very fact that there is this injunction of

*asei lecha rav* proves that if we really want it and make efforts in this direction, we will certainly find a *rav*, as Chazal promise, “*yogaata u’matzasa*” (put in the effort and you’ll find).

To someone who thinks it is beneath his dignity to go hear someone else’s view, the Rebbe says on the contrary, doing this shows he is smart, as the Mishna says, “Who is wise? He who learns from everyone.”

***Naturally you’ll ask:  
How can a man be  
commanded to  
appoint a rav who is  
like an angel when  
we’ve never seen an  
angel? And what’s the  
point in picking a rav  
when you’ll always  
wonder whether your  
rav is like an angel or  
not and whether or  
not you should listen  
to him?***

The Rebbe once complained about the painful reality that those who really need a *rav* don’t get one, while those who would conduct themselves properly in any case are the ones who get a *mashpia*.

**How do you choose a *rav-mashpia*?**

For the most part, everyone knows hundreds of people in his immediate environment, among

whom he can certainly find dozens of people worthy of being a *rav* in the capacity of *asei lecha rav*.

The “*rav*” must be someone you feel close to, someone in whom you can confide. At the same time though, it has to be clear from the outset that the *rav* can say something you won’t like and you have to accept that and act according to his guidance.

There are some who prefer choosing someone whose official role is that of *rav* or *mashpia*, but you can certainly select a *chassidic balabus*, a Jew who acts in accordance with *Shulchan Aruch* and is particular about fulfilling the Rebbe’s *horaos*. After all, even when you have a *halachic* question, you don’t always go to an official *rav*. There are many *chassidim* who have *smicha* for *rabbanus*, who, despite the fact that they don’t serve in that capacity, can answer questions. When it comes to *halacha* there are certain things that only a practicing rabbi should answer, as we heard numerous times from the Rebbe – that there are things that only an active *mora horaa* can answer, but when it comes to *yiras Shamayim*, which is the main point in *asei lecha rav*, every *chassidic* Jew can be a “*rav*.”

When you choose a *rav*, the main thing is to choose someone who will guide you on the proper path, not a *rav* who will allow you to do what you want.

The Rebbe once said that in the Gemara it says on the *pasuk* (Malachi 2:7), “*Ki sifsei Kohen yishmiru daas, v’Torah yivakshu mi’pihu, ki malach Hashem Tzivakos hu*” (For the lips of the Kohen should safeguard knowledge, and people should seek teaching from his mouth; for he is an agent of Hashem, Master of Legions) – that if he is like an angel of Hashem, they should seek Torah from him. That means, a *rav* has to be someone who is like an angel!



Naturally you'll ask: How can a man be commanded to appoint a *rav* who is like an angel when we've never seen an angel? And what's the point in picking a *rav* when you'll always wonder whether your *rav* is like an angel or not and whether or not you should listen to him?

The Rebbe responded to this question and said that this is explained in the Rambam. We won't go into it at length here; just the main point: The Rambam writes that "In Olam HaBa there are no bodies, etc., just souls of *tzaddikim* without bodies, like ministering angels." So the Rambam says that in order to be like an angel, you have to be in a state where the soul is not "bribed" by the body, similar to the state of the soul in the Future, without jealousy and competition, war and hatred, and the like.

To those who want clear and simple criteria, the Rebbe says that at the very least the *rav* must have the three signs of a Jew: *rachmanim*, *baishanim*, *gomlei chassadim* (merciful, bashful, kind). When these three signs are readily apparent, he is worthy of being considered a *rav* who is "like an angel."

Also, the *rav* must be appropriate for the *talmid*. The Rebbe once said that a five-year-old should not be posing questions to a great *rosh yeshiva*. Why? Because he steals precious time from the *rosh yeshiva*, and he'll need to wait a long time until the *rosh yeshiva* has time for him. A child of this age ought to ask his *melamed* who can answer him quickly and in a way that is suitable to the child.

Therefore, everybody must choose an appropriate *mashpia* and when you have a question, ask him, and in the event that your *rav* can't answer your question, then ask someone greater than him.

#### **What about those who can't find someone suitable?**

Regarding the type of person who looks into things extensively, who says he needs a great deal of time in order to find the most suitable *rav*, since it's a pity to let time go by without fulfilling the *hooa*, he should appoint a temporary *mashpia* (without excessive research) until he finds the right *rav*.

#### **Can children pick their parents or teachers as their *mashpia*?**

Sure! The Rebbe says that students (and those in *yeshivos* in general) should ask the "*rosh yeshiva*" or the like; businessmen should ask the *rav* they appointed; women should ask their *mashpios*, and young children should ask their parents, teachers, or counselors.

#### **When you pick your teacher, you end up having a new *mashpia* each year. Is there anything wrong with that?**

I don't see that as a problem. Young children change from year to year and so the current teacher has an advantage over last year's teacher in that he knows the child as he is now. And those who don't want to change *mashpia* every year can keep the one from the previous year. There are no rules; it is up to the student.

#### **What responsibility does the *rav* have towards the *talmid*?**

After taking someone on as your *talmid*, you are obligated to take an interest in him, as *Chazal* say, "and you shall teach your sons – these are your students." Once he's your *talmid*, he's like your son and you have responsibilities towards him.

If someone accepted you as their *rav* and you see he is not serious and he doesn't come and consult with you, you are under no obligation to deal with him as it is clear from the outset that he isn't serious, and that he appointed you as his *rav* merely to go through the motions.

#### **What should you consult your *mashpia* about? Should it be about everything or just certain essential things?**

There were many statements by the Rebbe in connection with *shluchim* who asked the Rebbe about every single thing that the *shliach* has to use his judgment and make his own decisions and not ask about everything from overseas while sitting idle until he receives a response.

The same is true for "*asei lecha*



rav.” When you’re not sure whether to study 15 or 20 minutes, to learn this “Hemshech” or that “Hemshech,” there’s no need to consult with your *mashpia*. The main thing is to learn! When it comes to these kinds of questions, you can figure it out for yourself.

This is something the Rebbe said explicitly. On Shabbos Parshas Bo 5749 the Rebbe said that the rule is that Hashem gave every single person the ability to use his own *kocho*s to find a solution to his questions and doubts, and Chazal promise, “*yagaati u’matzasi...*”

Once he works on finding his own solutions there are certainly other areas which he doesn’t understand on his own, and with those areas he shouldn’t be reticent about asking someone else.

The *horaa* of *asei lecha rav*, said the Rebbe, is part of *your avoda*, and not the *mashpia’s avoda*. You have to go and appoint a *rav* that you can consult with, and the *rav’s* job is to improve and expand the *chochma*, *bina*, and *daas* of the *talmid*.

At the same time, since there are things in which one is likely to be subjective, in such cases you need to hear someone else’s objective opinion.

Even weighty questions should be asked of a *rav*; not just spiritual issues but *gashmius* matters, as well. When you make a significant change in life, you should consult with your *mashpia*. This is apparent from the *sicha* the Rebbe said on Shabbos Parshas Nitzavim 5748 in which he spoke about *Shnas HaBinyan* (the Year of Building) and said that construction should take place after consulting with a *mashpia*, in accordance with his directive.

Experience has shown that there are people who don’t know anything, who ask a *rav* everything, even the most trivial things. A *rav* with such a *talmid* needs to guide him in what to ask and what not to ask.

Since the Mishna says, “*asei lecha rav*,” and doesn’t list which issues to discuss with him, the *yetzer* is liable to convince you to consult with the *rav* only about issues that you know the *rav* will decide in your favor. Naturally, the *yetzer* convinces you that this is not in contradiction to the Mishna, for you appointed a *rav* and you ask him various things except for one, the one that you know that the *rav* will disagree with you on, and even in this, you don’t say that you refuse to consult with him; you just push off asking him!

Says the Rebbe, you need to ask him about this topic, too. For even if the commentators on the Mishna don’t say so, every person knows himself and that even after appointing a *rav* he hesitates about asking certain questions.

In the Rebbe’s words, “It is a great *mitzva* in the ways of *musar* to emphasize the necessity of asking a *rav* regarding all your issues. In fact, precedence should be given to a question about something which he knows he’s not handling properly or worse, etc., and issues that he’s doubtful about or things he heard about from someone who is not authoritative, or even if he observed someone indicating his displeasure with him, for certainly this was shown to him by Divine providence (as in the teaching of the Baal Shem Tov that everything takes place by Divine providence, and as my father-in-law the Rebbe explained that the *inyan* of Divine providence is connected to Adam Kadmon, etc.) in order for him to learn a lesson in his service of his Maker.”

**What about the present situation in which many people get answers from the Rebbe through the *Igros Kodesh* – is it okay to consult with the Rebbe instead of your *mashpia*?**

This is something in which, unfortunately, many people err. The answers from the Rebbe don’t cancel

the directive of *asei lecha rav*. *Chassidim* have always known that even when having a personal *yechidus* with the Rebbe and getting direct answers from the Rebbe, you go to a *mashpia* afterwards for him to explain what the Rebbe said. It often happens, since man is subjective, that a person interprets the Rebbe’s answer incorrectly. The *mashpia* knows more *chassidus*, knows the Rebbe’s *sichos* and views on various issues, and he can better understand the Rebbe’s answer.

I once heard from R’ Dovid Raskin that in the early years of the *nesius*, a *bachur* had a *yechidus*, and the Rebbe told him to stay up and learn Thursday night. The *bachur* took the Rebbe literally and was so exhausted that he didn’t show up to learn *chassidus* Friday morning.

When a member of the administration asked him to explain his absence, the *bachur* said he had gotten an explicit directive from the Rebbe. The *hanhala* reported this to the Rebbe and the Rebbe said they should tell the *bachur* that when he said he should stay up Thursday night, he meant a half-hour more than other nights. And even this half an hour was on condition that it didn’t interfere with the next day’s schedule, and even then – only on condition that he got the okay from the *hanhala*!

From this story we can learn that even when receiving an explicit *horaa* from the Rebbe, you have to ask a *mashpia* before doing anything, and the Rebbe gives *kocho*s to the *mashpia* or the “*asei lecha rav*” to know how to properly understand what the Rebbe said.

If this was the case when people got direct answers from the Rebbe in private audiences, or written responses, all the more so today when the answers are derived from the *Igros Kodesh* and they aren’t always clear, and there’s room for

interpretation. You have to present the question and answer to a *mashpia* who can explain the Rebbe's answer.

If you ask the Rebbe a question and decide on your own what the answer is, you can really miss the boat. When I learned in the *yeshiva* in Kfar Chabad, there was a *bachur* who was a big *oveid*, who didn't ask the *mashpiim* anything. He made his own decisions.

R' Shlomo Chaim called him "oveid bar," and explained that just as there are *chayos bar*, wild animals, so too there can be an *oveid* who is "bar." There can be big *chassidim* who ask the Rebbe everything, but without fulfilling the Rebbe's *horaa* of consulting with the *asei lecha rav*, they are "wild."

#### **What if you have a difference of opinion with your *mashpia*?**

Of course, we have to be *mevatel* (nullify) our opinion to that of the *rav*. There's a reason why the Mishna says "asei" – make yourself a *rav*, as opposed to "choose" a *rav*. You need to "make" a *rav*, with the implication of forcing, and what he says goes – even if you disagree!

There was someone who asked me to be his *rav* and he himself was a *rav* to others. I remember a few occasions when we had a difference of opinion. He understood that as my *talmid* he had to accept my view, but he asked whether he could tell his *talmidim* his view!

The Rebbe once said: "You shouldn't pick a *rav* that will be easy on you. Oy vei to such a *rabbanus*, because then you'll tell the *rav* – woe to you if you tell me something I don't want to hear, for then you won't be a *rav* but a chimney sweep."

I'm not saying that you can't change *mashpiim*. If you chose a *rav* who lives in your neighborhood and then either he or you move, you can certainly pick a new *rav* who lives nearby. Another situation in which a

new *mashpia* is in order is when the *talmid* reaches a higher spiritual level than the *rav*. He needs to choose a *rav* who is higher than him. But even in this instance, as long as the other one is his *rav*, he has to listen to him.

The rule is that you don't change *mashpiim* because he doesn't think as you do.

#### **Today, when there are differences of opinion in *inyanei Moshiach*, it happens sometimes that the *rav* doesn't see eye to eye with the *talmid*. What should be done in these cases?**

If you're talking about the personal opinion of a certain *talmid*, and the *rav* doesn't see it the way he does, he has to be *mevatel* his view to that of the *rav*. Remember what the Rebbe said (leil Sukkos 5747), that *asei lecha rav* is not a personal order, but a general order that precedes all others, and it is specifically through *asei lecha rav* that all other directives will be fulfilled properly. Therefore, only by fully following what the Rebbe said can we fulfill the other things the Rebbe said to do, including and especially the main *shlichus*: Mivtza Moshiach.

An exception would be when you're talking about a view held by many Lubavitcher *chassidim*, like on the topic of publicizing the identity of Moshiach. If your own *rav* thinks you have to go undercover and that it is forbidden to publicize who Moshiach is, since most Chabad *chassidim* think (in accordance with the Rebbe's *sichos* and following *maaseh rav* with the Rebbe's encouragement of the singing of "Yechi") that we should continue to publicize the *besuras ha'Geula* without changes, it is clear that the difference of opinion between him and his *rav* doesn't come from lack of *bittul* or bias. In such a case, he can speak to a different *rav* and accept his view, even though this goes against what his own *rav* says to do.

At the same time, this is not a



*The hanhala reported this to the Rebbe and the Rebbe said they should tell the bachur that when he said he should stay up Thursday night, he meant a half-hour more than other nights. And even this half an hour was on condition that it didn't interfere with the next day's schedule, and even then – only on condition that he got the okay from the hanhala!*

reason to stop consulting with your own *rav* in other matters that don't pertain directly to publicizing the *besuras ha'Geula*. I know of a number

of “*rabbanim*” (*mashpiim*) and “*talmidim*” who differ when it comes to *besuras ha’Geula*, but the *rav* understands that his *talmid* is not acting on personal whim, and he guides him according to the general ideology of the *talmid*, which as I said, is something that many *chassidim* consider valid.

The point is: are we talking about a philosophy that has no basis among *chassidim*? In that case, we can assume that he is biased and other things are mixed in here. In such a case, he must nullify himself to his *rav*’s view. It’s only when his views are in accordance with that of large numbers of *chassidim* that he can speak to a different *rav* and follow his guidance, even if it opposes the views of his usual *rav*.

It is important to clarify that even in such a case, you should not make the decision on your own. You have to ask someone who is worthy of being a *rav* and pick him to be a *rav* in these matters, and follow what he

says. It goes without saying that this *rav* should also have all the criteria a *rav* ought to have, as the Rebbe said, and as I mentioned earlier, he must be a learned person who knows *halacha*, a *chassidische Yid* who is knowledgeable in the Rebbe’s *sichos* and who follows the Rebbe’s directives.

Another point that needs to be made is about *talmidei ha’yeshivos*. The Rebbe said many times that *talmidim* in *yeshivos* are absolutely subordinate to the *hanhala*. He can consult with his *rav* about general things that don’t oppose the *ruach* of the *yeshiva*, like whether he should learn with this *bachur* or that *bachur*, but he certainly can’t do anything that goes against the explicit *ruach* of the *yeshiva*.

**To what extent do you think people are aware of the Rebbe’s *horaa* of *asei lecha rav*?**

Nearly all Lubavitchers know about this *horaa*. The vast majority of people already have chosen a *rav*,

although I have to say that many just *picked* one but don’t go beyond that. Even if they consult with the *rav* from time to time, this is still not what the Rebbe wants. The Rebbe wants us to go to the *rav* once a month with a report about our progress that month. How many people do that?

Every so often people get inspired to do it right, and *Beis Moshiach* certainly gets credit for bringing the issue up these past many weeks. I is very important, and as I said earlier, the Rebbe stressed that this is a general order that precedes all others. There’s no question that if everybody fulfilled this *horaa* as the Rebbe wants that we’d be in better shape in all areas.

In these final moments of *Galus* we must strengthen the fulfillment of this *horaa* in all its details, and by doing so, we will certainly hasten the *hisgalus* of the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach, who as you know, is both king and *rav*.



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# THEY ENTERED THE “PARDES” AND LEFT IN PEACE

BY SHNEUR ZALMAN BERGER

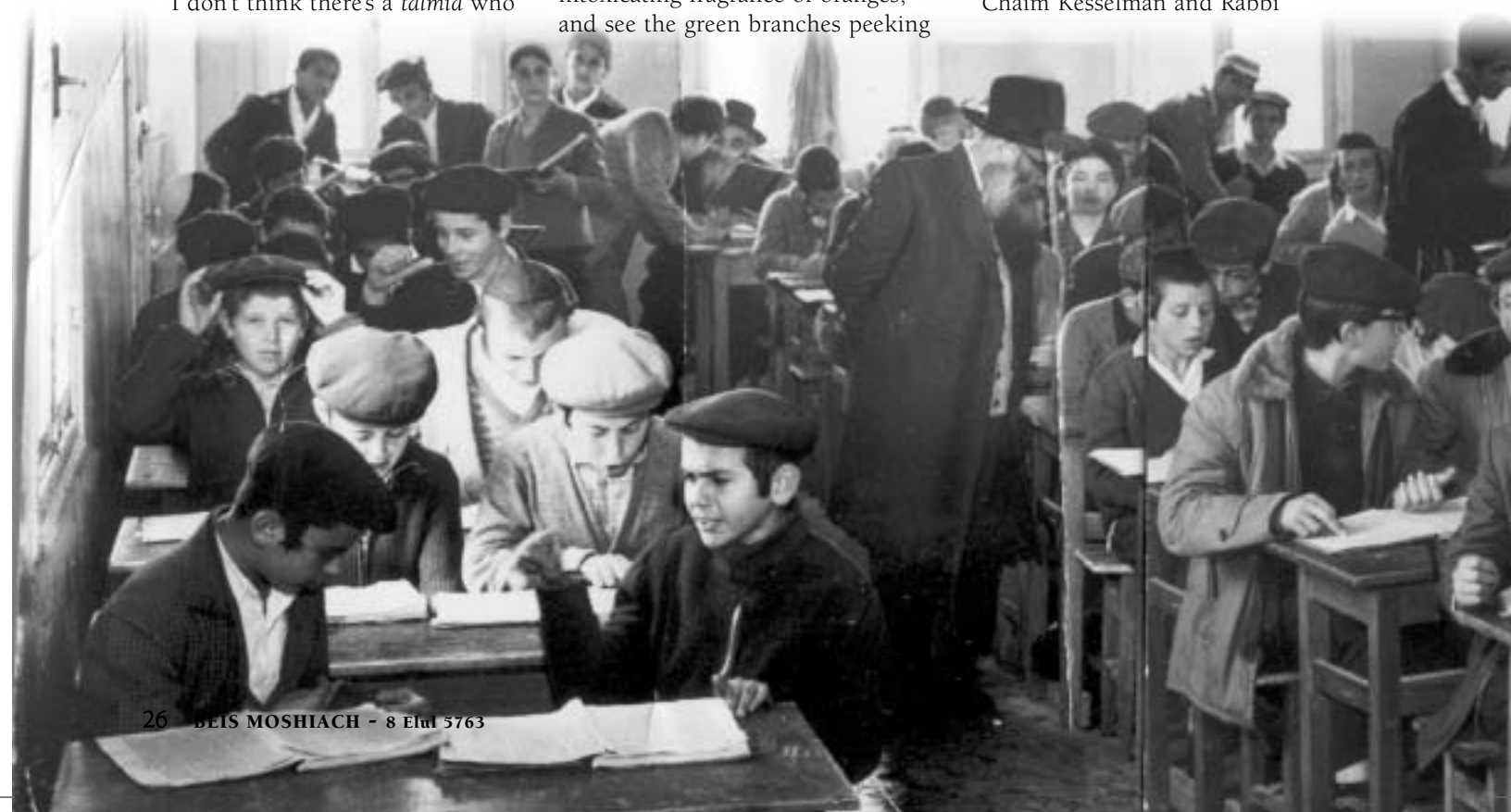
There's something fascinating about the nostalgia when recalling the days in “Pardes.” It was actually the Tel Aviv Chabad *yeshiva* which moved to Lud, where it was situated in an orchard, hence its name.

I don't think there's a *talmid* who

spent his days and years in Pardes who doesn't miss the atmosphere that prevailed there at that time, a homey, *chassidic* atmosphere. There was an enthralling blend of factors. You could sit in the *zal* and smell the intoxicating fragrance of oranges, and see the green branches peeking

in the windows. This gave an otherworldly feeling, the sense that one was learning in Gan Eden!

The spiritual atmosphere was enhanced by the presence of the renowned *mashpiim*, Rabbi Shlomo Chaim Kesselman and Rabbi



*After the Chabad yeshiva moved from Tel Aviv to Lud, it found its home in an abandoned Arab building in an orchard in Lud, near the railroad. There, far from the hustle and bustle of the world, lived hundreds of T'mimim in an elevated chassidic atmosphere. \* In honor of Tes-Vav Elul, which marks the founding of yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim, we present the history of the yeshiva in the "Pardes," which was supervised by the renowned mashpia, Rabbi Shlomo Chaim Kesselman, a"h.*

Avrohom Maiyor-Drizin, both men of stature, and there's no doubt that this contributed to a greater diligence in learning, and a desire to increase and learn and be strengthened in the ways of *chassidus*.

In order to get a sense of what it

was really like in the *yeshiva* in Pardes, we spoke with four people, each one fascinating in his own right. They agreed to talk to us about their *yeshiva* days, though they emphasized that there is far more to say than what they said, "because

those were incredible times and it is difficult to express it in words."

**Rabbi Avrohom Sosonkin:** Many people said that the atmosphere in Pardes was "like in Lubavitch." The T'mimim were immersed in learning *nigleh* and *chassidus*, in *t'filla* with *avoda*, and in the *avoda* of *iskafia*. The isolation allowed us to focus our thoughts on *ruchnius*. And this was despite – or because of – the difficult physical conditions. We all felt we had to sacrifice somewhat in order for the *yeshiva* to develop. Nobody looked for luxuries or an easy life. So for example, we had to hike to the *mikva*, which was at the edge of Ramle. It wasn't easy but who thought to complain?

**Rabbi Yaakov Zohar:** The *yeshiva* had a special atmosphere of rare unity among the T'mimim. The *mashpia*, R' Shlomo Chaim Kesselman, who was the spirit of the *yeshiva*, united all the T'mimim into one family. It's important to point out that he behaved the same with all types, as in the Rebbe's *horaa* to learn *chassidus* even with those from *eidut ha'mizrach* – meaning the young Teimanim (Yemenites) like myself.





Elimelech Zwiebel



Yaakov Safranovitz



Aharon Pinchas  
Zilberman



Yitzchok Horowitz



Shimon Lazarov

The Rebbe added that Teimanim and Sephardim who learn Kabbala have *emunas tzaddikim*, and it is easier to learn *chassidus* with them. Thanks to him, my friends and I who are Teimanim, established *chassidic* families, and we have children and grandchildren who are Lubavitchers and *mekusharim* to the Rebbe.

But beyond that, I want to say that we felt a deep connection to the *yeshiva*. We didn't try to find excuses to go home. Even when we had a vacation, R' Shlomo Chaim would guide us as to what to learn and how to behave at home.

**Rabbi Nachum Kaplan:** We were immersed in learning and *avoda*, not only during the time for learning but during the breaks, too. Nobody left to buy anything as *talmidim* do today, going to stores and kiosks near their *yeshivos*. Anyway, the nearest kiosk was at the train station, quite far from the *yeshiva*.

Some *talmidim* lived in Lud, including me, but we didn't know what it meant to "drop in at home." In the morning we went to *yeshiva* and we returned home late at night. The *hanhala* was extremely particular about showing up on time. For all these reasons, we were isolated from

the world throughout the day, and were immersed in an atmosphere of learning and *chassidus*.

By the way, I must mention the *niggunim* at the *farbrengens* or during the *seider ha'niggunim*. When the T'mimim would sing *niggunim* with R' Shlomo Chaim, it had a singular flavor and a unique atmosphere. Those who learned in Pardes have fond memories till this day of those hours of *niggunim*.

Every Shabbos towards evening, we'd have a *seider niggunim*, which ended with the recitation of a *maamer*. If one of the T'mimim tried





Avrohom Zerach Slavin



Yosef Kahana



Yaakov Yosef Friedman



Shlomo Dzilovsky



Feivish Hertzog  
(London)

to start the *niggun* for the *maamer*, the others would shush him and begin singing something else so as not to rush the Shabbos.

**Rabbi Avrohom Meizlich:** We were in *yeshiva* all year. There was no such thing as traveling home or a “free Shabbos.” Those who had to travel, traveled, but it wasn’t something official.

The *mashpia* R’ Shlomo Chaim Kesselman accompanied us not only within the walls of the *yeshiva*, but



**Rabbi Kaplan:** We were immersed in learning and *avoda*, not only during the time for learning but during the breaks, too.

also outside of it. Before we went home he would tell us: “When you go to your parents, you are going to your parents’ house, but your home is here in *yeshiva*.” This was the atmosphere in *yeshiva*. Our entire lives revolved around the *yeshiva*. We didn’t think about anything else. The only place we went to was the *mikva*, which was at the entrance to Ramle. We walked through the orchards until we came to the entrance to Ramle, where the *mikva* was in a little house. Sometimes the *mikva* was closed and then the T’mimim would walk until the center of Ramle where they *toiveled* in the rainwater *mikva* in the yard of Rabbi Bamberger.

It’s important to emphasize that *mikva* before *chassidus* was a matter of fact. No Tamim dreamed of learning *chassidus* before going to the *mikva*.

In the *chassidic* guidance we received, the emphasis was placed on *avodas Hashem*, on *t’filla* with *avoda*, and the abstention from all things that had no connection to a Tamim.

It seemed that R’ Shlomo Chaim’s entire existence was about *avodas Hashem*. His influence left its mark and in the *yeshiva* you could find many *ovdim*, among them Rabbi Moshe Naparstek, Rabbi Meir Tzvi Gruzman, Rabbi Berel Shaykevits, and others.

A lot of the atmosphere could be attributed to the fact that R’ Shlomo



**Rabbi Zohar:** We felt a deep connection to the *yeshiva*. We didn’t try to find excuses to go home.

Chaim lived in the *yeshiva*. Along with the sense of *yiras ha’kavod* that one felt in his presence, there was also a family atmosphere. R’ Shlomo Chaim was both the father and the mother of the T’mimim. If in the morning, for some reason, they forgot to bring *mezonos* before *davening*, he would go to his room and bring out a cake his wife had





Eliyahu Heber



Yitzchok Tzeinwirth



Yisroel Lipsker



Moshe Pinkowitz



Moshe Shlomo Levitin

baked, or something else, and put it down for us and say that T'mimim need to eat before *davening* and not fast.

Another thing I remember is from Motzaei Shabbasos. It happened often that T'mimim would spend Shabbos in Mizrahi *yeshivos* in order to spread *chassidus*. There wasn't always perfectly kosher wine there, and they would make Kiddush on *challos*. But they couldn't make Havdala on *challa*, and when they returned late after Shabbos, the kitchen was closed and R' Shlomo Chaim would bring them to his room and give them a bottle of wine for Havdala.

**Rabbi Sosonkin:** The fact that R' Shlomo Chaim lived in the *yeshiva* with his wife gave us the feeling that he was part of the *yeshiva*. He ate what we ate and slept in the rooms of the *yeshiva*, and he was completely involved in the *yeshiva*. He was a personal example for us T'mimim.

**Rabbi Nachum Kaplan:** R' Shlomo Chaim would approach the T'mimim every so often, slap them lovingly on the back and ask if they lacked anything or if they had any problems. I still remember him going through the rooms at night to see if any *yarmulkes* had fallen off. That's how he knew who needed to work more on *yiras Shamayim* ...

**Rabbi Meizlich:** Credit for the atmosphere also goes to the *rosh yeshiva*, Rabbi Boruch Shimon



**Rabbi Sosonkin: The theme of the *farbrengens* was *t'filla* at length and *iskafia*, and R' Shlomo Chaim instilled in the T'mimim the awareness that *davening* must be done at length.**

Schneerson, *z"l*, who lived in the *yeshiva* three days a week. He was a special person who gave the *yeshiva* an atmosphere of learning, and it was he who gave us foundations in learning and in understanding *sugyos*.

**Rabbi Sosonkin:** The *rosh yeshiva*, R' Boruch Shimon Schneerson, was certainly a figure worthy of emulation. He conducted himself with utter *bittul* and was very close with the T'mimim. He was very open with us and included us in issues pertaining to the *yeshiva*. You could sense the *chassidus* in him. You could feel the *chassidus* he learned.

**I understand that he placed a great emphasis on *t'filla* with *avoda*.**

**Rabbi Zohar:** There were many T'mimim who *davened* with special *avoda* on Shabbasos, among them I remember Rabbi Gershon Mendel Gorelik who is a *shliach* in Italy today, Rabbi Maishke Naparstek of Kfar Chabad, and greatest of all: Rabbi Meir Tzvi Gruzman.

**Rabbi Meizlich:** In *yeshiva* they would say that each Shabbos they had to look hard to find a *minyán* of T'mimim who didn't *daven* at length so there would be a regular *minyán*.

I remember quite well the Shabbasos of special days like Yud-Tes Kislev and Yud-Beis Tammuz. R' Shlomo Chaim would finish *davening* at three in the afternoon. Most of the T'mimim *davened* at length and finished at one or two in the



Dovid Brand



Boruch Kievman



Sholom Ber Kievman



Nosson Wolf



Yisroel Shmotkin

afternoon. They all learned *chassidus* or finished reviewing the sidra with Targum, and at three they sat down to *farbreng* and make Kiddush.



**Rabbi Meizlich:** *In yeshiva they would say that each Shabbos they had to look hard to find a minyan of T'mimim who didn't daven at length so there would be a regular minyan.*



Adar 5722, less than a year before leaving.

The adults in the second row from the bottom from right to left: Rabbi Nachum Kaplan; Rabbi Munia Shneur; Rabbi Lazer Horowitz the mashgiach; Rabbi Elimelech Kaplan the rosh yeshiva; Rabbi Zalman Feldman; Rabbi Shlomo Greenwald; Rabbi Aryeh Druck; Rabbi Zelig Feldman; Rabbi Yaakov Reinitz the madrich

**How did R' Shlomo Chaim instill t'filla with avoda in the T'mimim?**

**Rabbi Zohar:** During *farbrengens*, R' Shlomo Chaim would latch onto the *chevra* who were suited for *t'filla* with *avoda*, yet did not *daven* properly at that time. He would talk to them at length about the greatness of *t'filla* with *avoda*. During conversations with *talmidim* (which we called *yechidus*) he would talk a lot about *avoda* and *iskafia*, the very essence of his existence.

I remember that one of the T'mimim (who is in the U.S. today) before going to R' Shlomo Chaim to get direction in *avoda* from him, spoke with me about it. He said that he agreed to *daven* with *avoda* but

refused *avoda* with *iskafia*. I told him that R' Shlomo Chaim wouldn't allow him to *daven* with *avoda* without his working on his middos. And so it was. With time, that Tamim progressed tremendously in *avoda* and *iskafia*.

**Rabbi Sosonkin:** The theme of the *farbrengens* was *t'filla* at length and *iskafia*. That's what R' Shlomo Chaim's *farbrengens* were about, and he instilled in the T'mimim the awareness that *davening* must be done at length.

**Rabbi Meizlich:** *T'filla* with *avoda* doesn't come just like that. R' Shlomo Chaim worked on it a great deal. Aside from talking about *t'filla* with *avoda* at *farbrengens*, he would



Pesachya Lipsker



Ben-Tzion Lipsker



Mordechai Ashkenazi



Yitzchok Yehuda  
Yaroslavsky



Avrohom Alter Heber

receive *bachurim* in his room every Thursday night. Whoever wanted to speak to him did so. Generally, his conversations with the boys were about *t'filla* with *avoda*. Naturally, the rest of the T'mimim sat and learned *chassidus* all night Thursday night.

In order to understand what sort of *t'filla* with *avoda* was demanded of a Tamim in those days, I'll tell you an incident that occurred with one of the T'mimim. R' Shlomo Chaim once asked a Tamim, "With which *maamer* do you *daven* with during the week?" The boy answered, giving the opening words of a certain *maamer*.

R' Shlomo Chaim took out a pocket watch and put it on the table and told him, "Think through the *maamer* from beginning to end." The Tamim began thinking and R' Shlomo Chaim *shuckled* opposite him, as if he was learning.

When the Tamim finished thinking through the *maamer*, R' Shlomo Chaim told him, "I finished thinking through the *maamer* before you, so in addition to thinking of the *maamer*, you had to be thinking about other things, which is why it took you that much longer to finish."



Founders of the *yeshiva* in Pardes



The *yeshiva* building in Pardes



The new *yeshiva* building

We trained ourselves to think of a *maamer* as long as possible without losing our train of thought from the *inyan* in *chassidus* we were thinking of then.

We didn't learn *chassidus* from beautifully bound *s'farim* like they do today, but from stencil copies. One of the T'mimim got a hold of a *maamer*, and someone would type it, and they would copy the *maamer* and distribute it to the T'mimim.

I remember that I had decided to take a *maamer* from R' Avrohom Pariz which was said in 5703. I traveled to where he lived in Petach Tikva, and he looked for it and finally found the Hemshech of Rosh HaShana 5703.

He asked for a deposit, but I had no money. I offered my identity card, but he smiled and said he would rely on me to return it. We copied the *maamer* and distributed it among the T'mimim.

**Rabbi Kaplan:** R' Shlomo Chaim would *farbreng* on special days until around five in the morning. You could never see any signs of tiredness on him; he was always alert. Sometimes the T'mimim would *farbreng* amongst themselves, sitting under the palm trees

which surrounded the *yeshiva*. They would drag a table and bring some *farbaisn* (edibles) and *farbreng* all night.

**How was *hiskashrus* expressed?**

**Rabbi Meizlich:** We wrote to the Rebbe, and in those years we got many answers. We spoke about *hiskashrus* at *farbrengens* and at every opportunity. A trip to see the Rebbe was what every Tamim yearned for, although only very few were able to travel every year. Traveling in those days entailed many difficulties which

are hard to understand in light of the conditions nowadays.

The first obstacle was getting permission from the army to leave. The army was very particular about those who sat and learned not leaving the country, no matter the reason for going. T'mimim who managed to get permission to go anyway had to exert themselves to obtain a visa, a challenge unto itself. The embassies made it very difficult to obtain visas.

After managing to overcome these

two obstacles, you had to buy a plane ticket which cost many times more than an average salary, and T'mimim didn't work, so where would they have money from? Very few managed to get together the required sum of money from their parents and relatives.

We hardly ever got *sichos* from the Rebbe. Once in a long time someone would send us excerpts from this *sicha* or that one. In general, we barely knew what the Rebbe said in his *sichos* since phone calls to the U.S. were no simple matter. It's hard to understand this today, but at the beginning of the 50's, in order to call from Yerushalayim to Tel Aviv, you had to call via the telephone exchange, and forget about calling abroad, which cost a fortune.

**What were the physical conditions of the *yeshiva* like in those days?**

**Rabbi Meizlich:** Today, in nearly every *yeshiva*, there are air conditioners. In our day, in the early years, we didn't even have electricity! The building we were in had belonged to Arabs and the building had no electrical wiring. For a number of years we learned by candle light and for Shabbos we lit kerosene lamps.

Even after they put in wiring, the electric company refused to connect us to electricity. The *hanhala* bought a generator and that's how we had electricity, but even then, who dreamed about fans or heaters?

In those years, 5709-5720 (1949-1960), the country experienced a period of shortages in which food was purchased with coupons. The economic situation was terrible. It was very hard for *yeshivos* to obtain food for the *bachurim*, and therefore the Joint Distribution Committee of the U.S. and Canada sent care packages with food. This followed the strenuous efforts of Rabbi Efraim Wolf, the *menahel* of the *yeshiva*, who



A classroom in Pardes



Graduation picture of the *yeshiva* in Lud in recent years

did his best to take care of the boys.

**You spoke about *iskafia* as well as a period of shortages when there wasn't much to eat. So what was there to do *iskafia* on?**

**Rabbi Zohar:** There wasn't much, but we weren't hungry. Personally, I lacked for nothing since I had come from Yemen, where there really wasn't anything to eat, and so relative to the situation in Yemen, it was good for me.

As far as *iskafia*, of course we ate, but we trained ourselves not to be into our food. There were, for example, T'mimim who didn't eat bread with jam because jam is sweet and is considered a *taava*.

**Rabbi Sosonkin:** *Iskafia* was done by eating slowly, not gobbling food. Some left over a bit on their plate, etc.

**Rabbi Kaplan:** R' Shlomo Chaim strongly instilled in us the idea of *iskafia* – to the point that we were afraid not to do *iskafia* ... The *iskafia* in *yeshiva* didn't just center on food. I'll tell you a story that is etched in my memory:

In the first days of the war in Sinai, one of the newspapers had a second edition since the news at night from the front was different than the news of the morning. We in *yeshiva* were cut off. We certainly didn't have a radio, and there was a debate among the T'mimim whether it was permissible to read a newspaper that was completely devoted to covering the war. It didn't take long to conclude that it was forbidden, and we continued to learn diligently, and as far as what was going on at the front, we had to be satisfied with what we heard.

**We spoke about *mikva* in the morning. Let's end with your memories of Krias Shma at night.**

**Rabbi Kaplan:** The *avoda* of Krias Shma at night was special. We always said it in either the *zal* or one of the classrooms, and we wore a hat and jacket. We devoted a great deal of time to it. I especially remember Yisroel Dubruskin (may Hashem avenge his blood) and Rabbi Moshe Naparstek.

**Rabbi Meizlich:** If you went into the *zal* late at night you could hear quiet singing from the T'mimim who were saying Krias Shma.

**Rabbi Zohar:** Some T'mimim found hiding places, whether in the area of the pool which was in the courtyard of the *yeshiva*, or in side rooms. The T'mimim said Krias Shma at night with *kavana*, and some even



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# ZAKA 770

BY SHAI GEFEN  
TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY

*In the recent murderous terrorist attack that took place in the heart of Yerushalayim, cameramen captured the image of R. Avi Sabbag, resident of Kfar Chabad, dealing with the murder victims in the midst of the carnage. In an interview with Beis Moshiach, R. Avi Sabbag talks about his activities with Zaka (Hebrew acronym for Disaster Victims Identification) and the Chabad unit within this organization – Zaka 770 – comprised of Lubavitcher chassidim who have volunteered for this holy work.*

Zaka has long since been known as an organization found in every possible location, engaging in very holy activities.

Five years ago, several Lubavitcher *chassidim* from Kfar Chabad and the surrounding region became Zaka volunteers, and founded a unit comprised entirely of Lubavitcher *chassidim*. The Zaka 770 crew was also at the scene of the suicide bombing in Yerushalayim, and the picture of R. Avi Sabbag was constantly flashed in the media, as he cleared the victims out of the remains of the bloody bus.

**When was the Zaka 770 unit founded?**

We founded the unit

approximately five years ago. We took a course together with several other *avreichim* from Kfar Chabad and the entire region. This crew has seventeen volunteer members – all of whom are Lubavitcher *chassidim*.

**What makes your unit stand out among others?**

We actually cover the entire area of Highway #1 leading to Lod Airport. This is a strip of road with its fair share of traffic accidents. In addition, there are also numerous criminal incidents in the Lod-Ramle area, so naturally, there is plenty to do.

\* \* \*

R. Avi Sabbag decided to volunteer for Zaka activities, despite the fact that he really wanted to work helping living people as part of Magen Dovid Adom. He took the appropriate training and was accepted within the ranks of those dedicated to the holy work of Zaka. During this time, a group of Lubavitcher *chassidim* got together and formed a unit, headed by its commander, R. Chaim Galinski, resident of Lod.

**As residents of Kfar Chabad, how did you actually come to reach the site of the terrorist attack in Yerushalayim?**

That night, a large Zaka conference took place in Yerushalayim together with the Home Front Command, led by the Minister of Defense Mr. Shaul Mofaz. The conference marked the



conclusion of a Home Front Command course to acquaint the participants with the necessary tools with which they work, and to learn the proper conduct to be followed in the event of an actual disaster, *ch*"v.

At the ceremony's conclusion, we started to head home. Then, in the midst of our journey, as we left Yerushalayim, I received word on my beeper that there had been an explosion on a bus in the heart of Yerushalayim.

**Then what?**

In truth, I did not take it all that seriously. We receive many such reports of this type every day. Sometimes, it just turns out to be a tire blowout or something similar to that. In this instance, I thought that it sounded like another occurrence of this nature. Nevertheless, I decided to go back to Yerushalayim and get to the location. We arrived in less than seven minutes, and the sight that lay before our eyes was horrific.

**You found yourself right on the scene in the midst of it all, what did you do?**

I don't deal with the wounded and injured. I am not qualified for that. However, I do handle the dead. It's safe to say that I have been at the scene of about 80% of the terrorist attacks, so this is nothing new for me. Yet, there is no doubt that the situation this time was far worse than usual. You see Jews that were just coming back from the Kosel – women and infants. In fact, we had already experienced similar painful visions such as those at previous terrorist attacks in Yerushalayim's Beit Yisrael neighborhood and in Emanuel. However, this one was especially difficult.

**Your picture was publicized throughout the world. What exactly was your job there?**

Just moments before, R. Yehuda Meshi-Zahav, Zaka chief of

***Even the non-Chabad volunteers say to us, "The Lubavitcher Rebbe was so right. It's a pity that they didn't listen to him."***

operations, had appointed me as crew commander in charge of removing all relevant items from the bus. I then discussed with him what should be done with all valuables belonging to the dead and wounded. We were speaking with the unit in

charge of defusing explosives when the snapshot was taken. We saw heart-rending scenes there. Body parts were collected together with *siddurim* and *T'hillim* of righteous women who were returning from the Kosel, remnant of our Beis HaMikdash, from where the *Sh'china* never departs – all this mixed together with blood and fire.

**Was the entire Zaka 770 unit there?**

A part of the unit was on the scene, and they dealt with the matter with the utmost dedication, as the situation demanded.

\* \* \*

**Beyond your activities as a Zaka volunteer in the framework of this**



Chabad unit, how is it to look upon such horrible things from the point of view of a Lubavitcher? Does this have any additional meaning?

First of all, we are really envied by many of our fellow Zaka workers. We are a special crew comprised entirely of Lubavitcher *chassidim*, and there is no doubt that the feeling is much stronger. We are as one body, built on a *chassidic* foundation.

There is no question that when we are at serious terrorist attacks, we understand better why the Rebbe cried out in warning about the endangerment to life for millions and millions for Jews in Eretz Yisroel. I have at home the CD "HaRabi Shel Kulam" (Everyone's Rebbe), which contains excerpts from Sunday dollars with leading public figures where the Rebbe pleads with them not to make any territorial compromises and warns them of the potential danger.

To our great regret, we have seen that the Rebbe's words have been realized down to the letter. As Lubavitcher *chassidim*, we feel the pain seven times more. More than once, we have said, "Why didn't they listen to the Rebbe? The blood of thousands of Jews could have been spared, if only our leaders would have listened to his voice!" There can be no doubt that these words come to light again and again, and even the non-Chabad volunteers say to us, "The Lubavitcher Rebbe was so right. It's a pity that they didn't listen to him."

*During my military service, I served at the radio station of Galei Tzahal. People there really don't know what a religious person is. They think that they come from another planet. Our assistance and work in such volunteer programs have definitely opened up people's hearts.*

**How do these terrorist attacks affect your life at home?**

The first attacks were much harder to endure, and they had an absolutely powerful effect upon our daily lives. Regrettably, routine does its part. So many attacks. Yet, the difficult feelings remain, particularly, when the victims are small children. This proves very trying.

\* \* \*

**As a Zaka team in the Kfar Chabad area, have you encountered**

**special cases?**

Absolutely. For example, there was the accident on the Kfar Chabad train tracks, which resulted in the tragic death of a three-year-old boy. There was also the particularly bloody terrorist attack at a pub in Rishon LeZion. As any Lubavitcher *chassid*, we consider the work we do with Zaka to be a form of actual *shlichus*.

**From a Chabad point of view, how you do see the volunteer work that comes from the *chareidi* sector?**

I can tell you that such things make a tremendous sanctification of G-d's Name. I see this at every step of the way. During my military service, I served at the radio station of Galei Tzahal. People there really don't know what a religious person is. They think that they come from another planet. Our assistance and work in such volunteer programs have definitely opened up people's hearts. I think that that the *chareidi* community itself is not aware of how great a *Kiddush Hashem* these things create.

Without question, this *shlichus* with Zaka has brought a greater sense of awareness into the *chareidi* community and its relation to all parts of Israeli society. They always saw only Chabad, and now, in my opinion, this whole matter has brought the entire *chareidi* sector closer to the rest of the people.

May it only be for good and happy things.

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# THEY SHOULD PACK THEIR BAGS AND LEAVE THE COUNTRY

BY SHAI GEFEN

## OUR BROTHERS' BLOOD CRIES OUT TO US

The massacre that took place on the #2 bus in which 21 people were killed is disturbing, to say the least. There are disturbing questions, especially when the massacre took place during the *hudna* (ceasefire), and yet another Israeli illusion burst. This *hudna*, as we wrote in previous articles, gave terrorists time to reorganize for the purpose of murdering Jews.

"*Hudna shmudna*" said the politicians after the bloodbath, when the Palestinians asked to reinstate the *hudna*. Well, what did you think from the very beginning? That it would actually help matters? The prime minister knew what would happen. The consequences were written on the wall in bloody letters.

After the massacre, the P.M. said, "They behave like animals." If so, the question is that much more serious. If even Sharon knows that these are wild animals, how is it that just a week before the attack, he released 340 animals from jail and gave them the freedom to perpetrate more atrocities? If you know they are animals how did you agree to transfer four additional cities to them? If you know they are animals, how did you dare make a *hudna* with them?

The real problem is that nothing changed. We still believe them. We still give them hope. Nobody seeks out the

real reason for the attacks and the poor security situation. Instead of liquidating the terrorists and letting them know there's nothing to talk about, we continue the policy of concessions and capitulation. This

*"Since the beginning of the hudna, the Arabs carried out 240 attacks against Israelis, including 145 shooting incidents. Security forces managed to thwart 50 attacks and to stop 230 terrorists, among them dozens of suicide bombers."*

approach has been taken since the day after the Six Day War. Not one Israeli government has tried the simple approach of, "and in a city near the border, you go out against them with weapons, lest the land be easy for them

to capture." A few words which provide us with the best security.

The *halacha* in *Shulchan Aruch* clearly says: Don't discuss *hudnas* with them. Don't sit and negotiate with them, even if they're wonderful people who only want some straw and hay for their animals, go out against them with weapons so that in the future they won't be able to conquer the entire country. It's that simple.

The funniest thing is that "certain politicians" said that after the next attack, they'll fly Arafat out of the area. Really...?! Two years ago, Dick Cheney, vice president of the U.S. told the commanders in the area that as far as he was concerned, they should hang Arafat. Who stopped them then? 854 Jews were murdered in the past three years. It's not only because of Arafat, and not only because of Dachlan, and not even only because of Achmad Yaasin who was freed from jail by Netanyahu. They were also murdered because of the government's policies, and thanks to the speech at Latrun in which Sharon said there would be a reward for acts of terrorism, i.e., a sovereign state.

## THE HUDNA AND THE CONSEQUENCES

If, after all this, there are still people who think that the *hudna* gave us some quiet, here are the facts which Security has provided us with:

"Despite the sense of calm, the facts



show that terror continued during the *hudna*. Since the beginning of the *hudna*, seven weeks ago, no less than 28 Israelis were killed and 160 were wounded and maimed.

“Since the beginning of the *hudna*, the Arabs carried out 240 attacks against Israelis, including 145 shooting incidents. Security forces managed to thwart 50 attacks and to stop 230 terrorists, among them dozens of suicide bombers.

“The terrorist infrastructure continued to use the ceasefire and the easing of restrictions of movement to arm and fortify in anticipation of the “day after the ceasefire.”

In honor of the *hudna*, the P.M. released hundreds of terrorists and cities were given to their authority.

### “DAAS TORAH” – CAREFUL ABOUT TRAVELING TO THE KOSEL!

Every attack is frightful. It makes no difference whether it was new immigrants, people in development towns, or *chareidim*. Jews must always make a spiritual accounting. We are all brothers.

This time, the attack targeted *chareidim*, Jews who punctiliously observe Torah in their daily lives. Editorials in *chareidi* newspapers did serious soul-searching and they blamed, among others, the Eged bus company for not having enough buses, thus crowding the passengers which made the tragedy all the greater. Others demanded a *cheshbon nefesh* on various things like *tznius*, *shmiras Shabbos*, etc.

All this is good and fine, but it is a pity that nobody put their finger on the real problem. Unfortunately, *rabbanim* and *askanim* in the *chareidi* world have always seen the problem of the territories as irrelevant to them. They are interested in stipends for children, daylight savings time, autopsies, and more classes in *talmud Torahs*. The problem of the territories,

they explained, is the settlers’ problem. They see security problems as a nuisance, as though *daas Torah* has nothing to say about security and political problems.

This was the basis for the most astonishing conduct, and the reason they allowed themselves to vote in favor of giving away land and being part of a government that gives land away to *goyim* in exchange for money for *mosdos Torah* and *chesed*. When Jews were murdered in Emanuel, a *chareidi* Knesset member got up and said that as far as he was concerned, they should leave Emanuel. So too when Rabbi Shlomo Raanan was killed in Tel Romeida, a *chareidi* newspaper blamed Rabbi Raanan because he lived in a dangerous place. Another *chareidi* paper said we should stop going to the M’aras HaMachpella because it’s dangerous.

Let me guess what their next announcement will be: The *chareidim* should not go to the Kosel anymore!

### PACK YOUR SUITCASES

In the *sicha* of 20 Av 5738, the Rebbe MH”M said that all those *rabbanim* who *paskened* that because of *pikuach nefesh* we need to withdraw should pack their suitcases and leave the country:

**In order to further clarify the matter to us, Hashem showed us that those who do not love Jews openly said that the Jews who came to Eretz Yisroel after 1948 should pack their bags and leave Eretz Yisroel. And if they don’t, they should know it is dangerous, since by angering them they won’t make peace but will wage war, *ch”v*.**

This means that those who don’t want to connect the present situation with the clear *p’sak din* of *Shulchan Aruch*, who claim that because of danger to life we must make concessions to all those who are the opposite of Jew-lovers, in order not to anger the *goy*, are declaring, *r”l*, that all

*If the view (of the posek) is that because of pikuach nefesh it is forbidden to anger the goy, and therefore concessions must be made to prevent danger to Jews – he should be the first to pack his bags and leave Eretz Yisroel*

Jews who came to Eretz Yisroel after 1948 (among them some of those who want to say that because of *pikuach nefesh* we should make concessions to them) should pack their bags and leave Eretz Yisroel, *r”l* may it not happen, and seek a city of refuge somewhere.

Since the Torah is *Toras Emes*, it is impossible to make compromises in Torah, and when a *din* is *paskened* – it needs to be *paskened* in an open manner ... so that it is understood that if the view (of the *posek*) is that because of *pikuach nefesh* it is forbidden to anger the *goy*, and

therefore concessions must be made to prevent danger to Jews – he should be the first to pack his bags and leave Eretz Yisroel (since this is what the goyim wants), and being that Jews around him look at him and therefore don't leave Eretz Yisroel, and therefore the Arabs (or those in Libya, etc.) will get angry and this could lead (according to his reasoning) to war, *r"l*.

Hashem set up the situation in a way that is clear: we are talking about “a city near the border,” and some of the enemy say that they are coming only for straw and hay, the Torah clarified hundreds of years ago that no matter where the question is asked – in Eretz Yisroel or abroad, even the most far-flung corner of the world, wherever Jews live – “you go out against them with weapons and desecrate the Shabbos because of them.” This is the way to protect the entire country with all the Jews therein, for this is *pikuach nefesh*, which sets aside the entire Torah.

Especially when under the circumstances nothing needs to be set aside. You just need to explain the law written in “*Hilchos Shabbos*” as is, literally and to the point, because when it comes to *halacha*, *p'shetlach* and allusions make no difference. If it is written in a place where *piskei dinim* are to be found, you must first pasken the *din* according to what it says in *piskei halachos*.

Every word of this *sicha* sounds like it was said today. The *din* of Chevron and Tel Romeida is like the *din* of Rechov Shmuel HaNavi in the center of Yerushalayim; the *din* of Emanuel is like the *din* of Kiryat Belz and the Kosel ... If the *rabbanim* and *g'dolei Torah* want to fortify the *chareidi yishuv* in Eretz Yisroel, they ought to immediately announce a *psak halacha* based on this *din* in *Shulchan Aruch*.

### AN HONEST ACCOUNTING

The real *cheshbon ha'nefesh* that the *frum* community, led by *rabbanim* and *anshei Torah*, ought to make should not only focus on the past but on the

future, as well. They must publicly accept the *psak din* brought down in *halacha* in *Shulchan Aruch siman 329*, which negates any political negotiations with *goyim*, even in places which won't endanger people's lives in the near future, even if there's a shadow of a doubt that in the future it will endanger our security.

The Torah, *Toras Emes*, which was given from Heaven by the eternal G-d to the eternal people as an eternal inheritance, says that even in such a case we are not allowed to negotiate with *goyim*, and the only thing to do is “to go out against them with weapons.”

***The Rebbe cried that  
three million Jews  
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B'nei Brak,  
Yerushalayim, Kfar  
Chabad, and Tel  
Aviv. Sad to say, they  
closed their ears to  
his pleas.***

When the *nasi ha'dor* screamed and begged *chareidi askanim* not to support the giving away of land, they mocked him and said, “it is none of our business.” They supported the Camp David accords. The words of the prophet of the generation fell on deaf ears. The Rebbe cried that three million Jews were in danger and that it would reach B'nei Brak, Yerushalayim, Kfar Chabad, and Tel Aviv. Sad to say, they closed their ears to his pleas.

A few weeks ago, we wrote that the Rebbe deviated from his usual practice and in a letter to the sixth Knessia G'dola of Agudas Yisroel in 5740, he

warned of the dangers inherent in political agreements. The *askanim* chose not to read the letter to those who attended the conference.

In 5750, the Rebbe prevented the Peres government from happening, at the last minute. Their *askanim* and *rabbanim* were furious. They preferred to think about their budgets and apartments.

We need an honest self evaluation. Why were 50,000 children taken out of *yeshiva* to protest budget cuts and Knesset member Meir Porush waged a hunger strike in a protest tent about budget cuts, but they never brought the thousands out to scream about Jewish blood being spilled, which sets aside the entire Torah, even budget cuts that affect children.

### CHEVRON FOREVER

Chevron is the barometer by which we measure the government's leadership and Security. The media is making noise about a new Jewish underground. Yitzchok Pas of Chevron, father of slain infant Shalhevet Pas, was placed under arrest without bail. They turned him and his friends into world-class criminals. The secret police and the regular police are investing time and energy into the settlers of Chevron as though there they'll find the most dangerous people on the face of the earth.

The Arabs get a *hudna*. The roadblock in Chevron was stopped thanks to the *hudna*, and that's where that despicable terrorist came from. Instead of providing security and protection to the residents of the Holy Land, our security forces are busy with Jews who lost children, and in persecuting Jews and in de-legitimizing them, the main goal being covering over their security lapses.

The time has come for us to open our eyes and understand that those who threw off the yoke of heaven have lost their humanity. Instead of being cruel toward the murderers, they persecute the merciful and capitulate before murderers.