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

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# NOT SOUNDING THE SHOFAR

SICHOS IN ENGLISH



## SHABBOS NITZAVIM-VA'YEILECH; 23<sup>RD</sup> DAY OF ELUL, 5749

1. This Shabbos is the Shabbos on which the month of Tishrei is blessed. Indeed, there is an added dimension to that blessing this year when Rosh HaShana falls on a Shabbos. The Baal Shem Tov taught that although the blessing of the month is not recited by the Jewish people, the month is blessed by G-d, Himself. That blessing is expressed by the Torah reading which begins, "You are all standing today." "Today," refers to Rosh HaShana, the day of judgment. The Jews are all "standing," victorious in judgment.

Blessing the month in this manner has a unique connection to the celebration of Rosh HaShana this year because it falls on a Shabbos. In regard to such a Rosh HaShana, the Mishna relates that "the shofar was sounded in the Beis HaMikdash, but not throughout the country."

The mitzvah of blowing the shofar is one of the fundamental aspects of Rosh HaShana—"the mitzvah of the day is [performed] with the shofar." Rav Saadia Gaon explains this concept,

264. In contrast, the festivals (including Rosh HaShana) are dependent on the service of the Jewish people as emphasized by the blessings, "Blessed are You L-rd, who sanctifies Israel and the festivals," and "...who sanctifies Israel and the Day of Remembrance."

associating the blowing of the shofar on Rosh HaShana with the sounding of the shofar at the coronation of a king. Rosh HaShana represents the acceptance of G-d as King of the world as our Sages declared: "The Holy One, Blessed be He, states: 'Recite before Me verses of Kingship... to make Me king over you.'" The blowing of the shofar plays an important role in this process of crowning G-d as King as our Sages continue "With what [is this brought about]? With the shofar." If so, why did the Sages nullify the performance of the mitzvah of blowing the shofar when Rosh HaShana falls on Shabbos? How can our acceptance of G-d as King be complete without this mitzvah?

These questions are the subject of several Chassidic discourses which explain that when Rosh HaShana falls on Shabbos, the influence of Shabbos compensates for that of the shofar. The acceptance of G-d as King involves the arousal of His will to rule by revealing the quality of pleasure. Generally, this is brought about through the blowing of the shofar. When, however, Rosh HaShana falls on Shabbos, there is a

Our Sages explain that this text indicates that it is the Jews "who sanctify the festivals."

265. The Sages' established this decree in the period of the Second Beis HaMikdash when the spiritual level of the Jewish people had declined. During

dimension of pleasure which is drawn down by the Shabbos itself which is constant and not dependent on the service of the Jewish people.[264] Hence, the efforts of the Jews to arouse Divine pleasure through blowing the shofar are unnecessary.

There are, however, several levels in Divine pleasure. Therefore, in the Beis HaMikdash, where a higher level of Divine pleasure could be drawn down, the shofar was sounded on the Shabbos as well. Throughout Eretz Yisroel, however, it was not possible to draw down this level[265] and, therefore, the shofar was not sounded when Rosh HaShana fell on the Shabbos.

This explanation, however, appears to require amplification. One of the fundamental aspects of the acceptance of G-d as King is that it is effected through the service of the Jewish people. They are the ones who "Recite... to make Me king over you;" it is their service which brings about His Kingship.

The latter is associated with the idea that Rosh HaShana is celebrated on the anniversary of the sixth day of creation,

the time of the First Beis HaMikdash, the people were on a higher level and were able to draw down the higher dimension of pleasure throughout Eretz Yisroel, not only in the Beis HaMikdash.

the day of the creation of man and not on the anniversary of the creation of the world at large (the 25<sup>th</sup> of Elul). At the beginning, G-d created the world as an expression of His kindness. Afterwards, everything depends on an arousal from below through service on the part of man.

An example of this service can be seen in Adam's actions directly after his creation. Adam caused G-d's kingship to be proclaimed throughout the totality of existence when he approached all the creations and told them, "Come let us bow down and prostrate ourselves before the L-rd, our Maker." Similarly, each year, Rosh HaShana is celebrated on the anniversary of the creation of man for it is the service of man—and more particularly, the Jewish people[266] — which expresses G-d's kingship over the world at large.

Accordingly, the nullification of the mitzvah of blowing the shofar when Rosh HaShana falls on the Shabbos appears problematic. Although the aspect of Divine pleasure is drawn down by the Shabbos irrespective of the service of the Jewish people, the fact that this service is lacking would appear to detract from the acceptance of G-d as King which is dependent on the Jews' service as explained above.

This difficulty can be resolved by explaining that not blowing shofar is—like the actual sounding of the shofar—an act of service with symbolic connotations.[267] It does not represent the failure to perform a mitzvah, but rather an act of service, indeed a higher act of service than the actual sounding of the shofar when Rosh HaShana falls during the week (for surely, the influence of Shabbos is not intended to lead to a reduction in our service to G-d).

To explain: Blowing the shofar expresses the quality of bittul (self-nullification). As we accept G-d as King, we nullify ourselves before Him in an act of homage, giving ourselves over to His service. This bittul arouses G-d's desire to accept our homage and desire Kingship.

Shabbos is also connected with the concept of bittul. On Shabbos, a Jew

***Not blowing shofar is an act of service with symbolic connotations. It represents an act of service, indeed a higher act of service than the actual sounding of the shofar when Rosh HaShana falls during the week.***

ceases his personal activities and stands before G-d in an attitude of bittul. During the week, G-dly light is not in open revelation. Hence, there is no difficulty in man expressing his own identity through his service. Shabbos, however, is a day of holiness conveyed by G-d. Each Jew is "standing before the King," as it were. In such a situation,

any service is inappropriate. Our Sages relate that, in the king's presence, making even the slightest gesture is considered equivalent to an act of rebellion.

To apply these concepts in regard to the blowing of the shofar: The coronation of G-d as King on Rosh HaShana represents a higher level of bittul than Shabbos. The combination of the two factors, Shabbos and Rosh HaShana, however, produces even a deeper dimension of bittul.

To explain this concept in terms of the service of Adam, the first man, as cited above: The bittul which Adam was able to bring about with his statement, "Come let us bow down and prostrate ourselves before the L-rd, our Maker," was incomplete. Firstly, it was a bittul based on a rationale—because G-d is "our Maker," therefore, we nullify ourselves to Him. Furthermore, the expression of homage is through the performance of an activity, prostration, which itself reveals that the individual paying homage feels his identity at the moment he is performing this act of self-negation. In contrast, on Shabbos, a person does nothing to express his homage. Instead, he stands before G-d in complete and total bittul.

Thus, we see two levels of bittul:

One in which a person negates himself to G-d totally. As a servant who gives himself over totally to his master, he gives over his will and his soul to G-d. Nevertheless, the person's identity is still felt. The process of giving oneself over is a service.

One in which a person loses all consciousness of his individual identity. It would be improper to say that there is a person who negates himself to G-d. The person's identity is not felt at all, all that is felt is G-d.[268]

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266. Our Sages state that it is Israel alone which is called Adam—the Hebrew for "man." Similarly, it is explained in Likkutei Torah that Adam's soul included all the souls of the Jewish people and that each Jew contains a spark of Adam's soul.

267. Note the Rambam's statements (Hilchos T'mura) which explain that, in addition to the actual deed required to fulfill a mitzvah, there is a spiritual

dimension which is intended to shape our characters. In particular, this applies to the mitzvah of shofar concerning which the Rambam writes (in Hilchos T'shuva), "Even though the sounding of the shofar... is a decree, it contains an allusion..." and continues to explain the spiritual dimension of the mitzvah.

268. This bittul emanates from a point in the soul which transcends the level of

Yechida. In regard to Yechida, it is stated, "Yechida affirming Your oneness," i.e., implying that an act of affirmation is necessary and that a certain measure of importance is conveyed upon the one who affirms. On a deeper level, there is the essence of the soul which cannot be described with any name. This level of soul is united with G-d on a level where there is no concept of separation.

On this basis, we can explain the difference between the bittul brought about by the blowing of the shofar on Rosh HaShana and the bittul that exists on Rosh HaShana which falls on a Shabbos. The blowing of the shofar represents an active expression of bittul, paralleling Adam's proclamation, "Come let us bow down..." It describes a level where a person gives himself over to the coronation of G-d as King. There is, nevertheless, a consciousness of one's own identity as the one who performs this act of coronation.

When, however, one proceeds in the service of bittul to the point where one's existence is not felt at all, i.e., not that one consciously negates one's existence, but that one has no sense of self whatsoever, it is not appropriate to blow the shofar to crown G-d as King or to call others to pay homage to Him. There is no need for such activities for one does not feel any existence apart from Him. One is standing before the King, Himself. Therefore, it would be improper to bow down or sound the shofar for such activities have no place—and indeed are out of place—in His presence. Thus, not blowing the shofar on Shabbos represents a higher and more complete level of bittul than the sounding of the shofar.

A parallel to these two levels of bittul can be found in the two expressions of G-dly light within our world. There is one level of G-dly light which enclothes itself within the world to bring it into being and grant it life. Though a person (and the world at large) must negate himself to this G-dly light, this level of G-dly light recognizes the existence of the world and views it as an entity. There is, however, a higher level of G-dly light which transcends the world. From the standpoint of this level of light, there is no existence apart from Him and the existence of the world is, in essence, negated.

The difference between Shabbos and the days of the week parallels the differences between these two levels of

G-dly light. The G-dly light revealed during the week represents the level of light which recognizes the existence of the world and undergoes the tzimtzumim necessary to enclothe itself within such a world. On Shabbos, however, the G-dly light rises to its source and a level of complete bittul, "only He exists and there is nothing apart from Him," is revealed.[269]

Accordingly, when Rosh HaShana falls during the week, the bittul which our service expresses relates to the G-dly light that is enclothed within the world. Therefore, it is expressed through an activity, blowing shofar, which emphasizes man's identity while it negates it. In contrast, when Rosh HaShana falls on Shabbos the bittul relates to the level of Divine light which transcends the world. Therefore, this bittul is complete, nullifying man's existence entirely and is expressed by our not blowing the shofar and standing in total nullification before Him.[270]

The above explanation raises a problem. As mentioned above, even when Rosh HaShana fell on Shabbos, the shofar was blown in the Beis HaMikdash. Surely, in the place where G-d's presence is openly revealed, the fullest state of bittul would be reached. If, as explained above, the blowing of the shofar reflects a lower level of bittul and a consciousness of self, why was the shofar sounded there?

This difficulty can be resolved as follows: Even the complete negation of one's existence, which characterizes the service of Rosh HaShana which falls on Shabbos, still has a certain connection to one's individual existence. The very fact that one's individual identity has to be negated, even though that negation is complete and total, reveals a trace of personal existence. If an entity had no concept of individual existence whatsoever, there would be no need to mention its negation. To borrow a concept, in Tanya, the Alter Rebbe states that it is ludicrous to describe the sophistication of an intellectual concept

by saying that "it is so uplifted, you can't touch it." The two subjects, intellectual concepts and physical sensation, exist in two totally different frames of references and it is improper to use them together. Similarly, when a person operates within a framework of utter negation, the concept of an individual identity, even when mentioned in the context of negating that identity, is entirely foreign.

To illustrate the concept in terms of the example mentioned above: When a person stands still in complete self-nullification before the king, unable to move a limb because he negates his authority over his entire being, there remains a concept of self. Thus the concept of self is negated (in a complete and total manner), rather than expressed, but the person has not transcended this entire frame of reference.

When, however, a person is concerned with the king and has no sense of self whatsoever, there is no necessity that he remain still. When the king desires that a particular activity be performed, he will not hesitate to perform it. Since he is not concerned with his own identity—even the negation of that identity—and his only desire is to fulfill the king's will, he will perform these acts naturally, without the necessity for a conscious decision.[271]

This is the level of bittul which was expressed in the Beis HaMikdash when the shofar was sounded on Rosh Hashanah which fell on Shabbos. As long as a person has any conception of self (even the negation of self), it is impossible for him to perform the activity of blowing the shofar amidst the revelation of G-dliness. The performance of any activity runs contrary to the bittul which he has achieved. In the Beis HaMikdash, however, the place where the absolute unity of G-d and the Jewish people is revealed, the blowing of the shofar does not present a difficulty. Since the blowing of the shofar is a mitzvah of the Torah, the performance

269. In Kabbalistic terminology, Shabbos represents the elevation of the Worlds of Bria, Yetzira, and Asiya into the World of Atzilus, the world of oneness.  
270. Similarly, the revelation of G-d's

Kingship within the world at large which is expressed when Rosh HaShana falls on Shabbos is greater than when Rosh HaShana falls during the week.

271. Note the Sichos of Parshas R'ei which describe the high level of service reflected when a person's body "bows on its own accord," as a reflex action. The level described above represents a

of this activity is not an expression of the person's individual existence, but rather, reflects how he has no identity whatsoever and is totally given over to G-d's will. Therefore, he fulfills His will as a natural response.

This service is made possible by the revelation of a level of G-dly light which transcends utterly our frame of existence. Previously, it was explained that Shabbos represents a level of G-dly light which transcends our existence. The very fact, however, that the revelation of this light necessitates the negation and the cessation of worldly activity (work is forbidden) reveals that it still shares a connection to our frame of reference (as the person who stands motionless in complete self-nullification before the king still has a connection to self).

In contrast, in the Beis HaMikdash, G-d's essence, a level that stands entirely above our frame of reference—so much so that describing it as transcending our existence is inadequate—is revealed.[272] Therefore, the shofar was sounded in the Beis HaMikdash even when Rosh HaShana fell on Shabbos. This level of G-dliness does not require the negation of one's existence. On the contrary, this is the level which is the source for G-d's desire to create the world. Thus, at this level, man's actions in coronating G-d by blowing the shofar find favor.

This concept can be further illustrated—and explained on a deeper level—through the comparison between Torah and mitzvos. Mitzvos represent G-d's commands to man, instructing him how to behave within the context of our world. Thus, they give place for the identity of man and for the world. In contrast, the Torah stands above the world and from the standpoint of Torah, man and the world do not exist as entities with an independent identity. They exist only to allow for the fulfillment of the Torah's directives on the level of deed.

To explain this contrast within the context of the mitzvah of blowing shofar: From the perspective of mitzvah, both the world and man possess an identity and the mitzvah of blowing the shofar represents the subjugation of these identities and the coronation of G-d as King over both man and the world.

From the perspective of Torah, however, the only concern is the coronation of G-d. Nevertheless, G-d desired that His coronation come about

*A person is concerned with the king and has no sense of self whatsoever, there is no necessity that he remain still. When the king desires that a particular activity be performed, he will not hesitate to perform it.*

through man's efforts in blowing shofar. This does not endow man with any importance. On the contrary, man and the world exist only as intermediaries through which G-d's will is carried out.

Therefore, in the Beis HaMikdash which is identified with the Torah—for the ark, the essential element of the Beis HaMikdash, contained the tablets of the law and a Torah scroll—man's blowing of the shofar does not represent a contradiction to the concept of bittul.

On the contrary, from the perspective of Torah, man's efforts are not important in their own right. The essential thing is the coronation of G-d.

A parallel to this concept also exists at present, the recitation of the verses of Shofaros in our Musaf prayer. These verses are recited on the Shabbos as well. Since this reflects the Torah's conception of the blowing of the shofar—and are recited by man in a manner of “My tongue will repeat Your statements,” i.e., they are “Your statements” and we only repeat them—these verses are recited on Shabbos as well.

As mentioned above, this concept is related to the blessing of the month of Tishrei which, in contrast to all the other months of the year is blessed by G-d and not by the Jewish people. The fixation of the calendar is related to the service of the Jewish people. The Midrash relates that:

The angels come before the Holy One, Blessed be He, and ask Him: “When is Rosh HaShana?...” The Holy One, Blessed be He, answers them: “Why are you asking Me? Let us go and enquire of the earthly court.”

Nevertheless, when it comes to blessing the month of Tishrei which was instituted in place of the sanctification of the month, we do not bless the month ourselves. Instead, this blessing is performed by G-d. This implies, as explained above, that the Jews stand in a state of complete bittul to the extent that they are not able to bless the month themselves and leave the blessing to G-d. G-d's blessing, however, is expressed through the Torah reading which is recited by the Jews, emphasizing how, in a manner similar to the blowing of the shofar in the Beis HaMikdash, the bittul of the Jews does not prevent them from performing an activity. Rather, their unity[273] with G-d is so complete that they act, not as independent entities, but as mediums to express and reveal

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deeper commitment, the person does not even feel that he is bowing, he transcends any and all self-concern.

272. This concept can be illustrated by a positive interpretation of King Shlomo's rhetorical question in I Kings 8:27,

rendering that verse: “The heavens and the celestial realms cannot contain You, but this house can.”

273. There is an allusion to this absolute oneness in the Torah reading of Parshas Nitzavim which describes the covenant

established between G-d and the Jews. A covenant is established by passing between two halves of an animal and thus, describes a bond of unity that transcends the limits of intellect.

G-d's blessing[274] within the world. This state of utter bittul is the proper preparation for the coronation of G-d as King on Rosh HaShana in the following week.

2. Erev Rosh HaShana is the birthday of the Tzemach Tzedek. This year, that date receives additional significance for it is the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Tzemach Tzedek's birth. Accordingly, this day should be used in a full manner to spread Torah and mitzvos and, in particular, to spread the teachings of Chassidus.

The day should be used to study the teachings of the Tzemach Tzedek, both in Nigleh and Chassidus.[275] and to hold a Chassidic farbrengen (if not on Rosh HaShana itself, on the days which are close to it according to the local situation).

The two names, Tzemach and Tzedek, both refer to Moshiach. Thus, the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Tzemach Tzedek's birth, the day when "the spiritual source of his soul shines powerfully," is a proper way to conclude 5749, the "year of release," and enter 5750, the "year of miracles."

3. Today is also the yahrtzeit of my

grandfather, Rav Meir Shlomo Yanovsky a"h. The two names Meir and Shlomo reflect a fusion of opposites, conceptually similar to the fusion of opposites represented by this week's two Torah portions, Nitzavim and VaYeilech.

Nitzavim, "standing," represents the establishment of a position of strength. In contrast, VaYeilech, "and he went," alludes to the concept of progression. Reading the two portions together reflects the fusion of the services together.

Similarly, the name Meir refers to a high rung of understanding as we see in regard to the Sage, Rabbi Meir, that the other Sages were unable to grasp the full measure of his understanding. Although he tried to communicate to them, they could not comprehend him entirely. Thus, this relates to VaYeilech which indicates that there is always a higher rung to aspire to reach.

Shlomo relates to the word shleimus which means "completion" and thus, alludes to the concept of revelation within this world as in the era of King Shlomo which was an era of peace, prosperity, and tranquility. Thus, the fusion of the two represents the revelation of these high levels in a full

and complete manner.

On a deeper level, each of the two names reflects both of these qualities. Though Rabbi Meir's wisdom transcended that of his colleagues, he was also the author of most of the Mishnayos in the Talmud; i.e., he was responsible for formulating the text used for instructing the Jews in the actual fulfillment of Torah law. Shlomo also possessed the quality of being uplifted. He "sat on the throne of the L-rd" and was exalted over the level of the people at large.

The life of my grandfather, Rav Meir Shlomo, also reflected both these qualities. On one hand, he was one of the young men who lived in Lubavitch to study with the Rebbe Maharash who is identified with the adage, L'chat'chilla Aribber, ("My first impulse is to climb over"), this representing a high spiritual peak. Later, he served as the Rav of Nikolaiav, a large city where he was forced to decide a variety of halachic questions regarding business law and participate in affairs involving the government officials. Needless to say, this post required him to express these qualities within the context of this world.

274. There is even a higher dimension to the blessing of Parshas Nitzavim than the sounding of the shofar in the Beis HaMikdash. Even after the explanation that the sounding of the shofar in the Beis HaMikdash reflects an utter state of self-nullification to the point that the

individual is acting, not in expression of his self, but in expression of G-d's will, his blowing of the shofar appears to be a human act, ostensibly no different than the sounding of the shofar outside of the Beis HaMikdash. In contrast, the blessing of Parshas

Nitzavim remains G-d's words, not man's.

275. Indeed, the Tzemach Tzedek's teachings are distinguished by the fusion of both Nigleh and Chassidus together.

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Boruch Hashem, Elul 5763

101 years of the Rebbe's MH"M birth

## Mivtza: HELPING THE NEEDY

**To every member of the Lubavitcher community:**

During this month of preparation for Rosh Hashonoh, the "head" of the New Year, we fondly recall our Rebbe's words that this is an especially auspicious time for strengthening our deep bond of Hiskashrus with the "Rosh Bnei Yisroel," the "head" of the Jewish people and leader of the generation.

Our Rebbeim explain that **an important way to strengthen Hiskashrus is by participating in the Rebbe's activities and concerns, consequently, by supporting an organization that brings together a number of these activities, the Hiskashrus is greater and stronger.** Such an organization is Kupas Rabbeinu, which seeks to continue many of the Rebbe's activities and concerns without change from the way he would conduct them himself.

Every year at this time, the Rebbe would call upon us to contribute generously to help needy families with their extra expenses for the coming month's many Yomim Tovim. This also coincides with the special emphasis during this month of giving extra Tzedokah, (indicated in the Hebrew letters of the word "Elul," as explained in many Sichos etc.), as a vital way of preparing ourselves for the new year and arousing Divine mercy upon us.

We therefore appeal to every individual man and woman to contribute generously to Kupas Rabbeinu, enabling us to fulfill the Rebbe's desire to help all those who anxiously await our help. The greater your contribution, the more we can accomplish.

Your generous contribution to Kupas Rabbeinu will be the appropriate vessel for receiving the abundant blessings of the Rebbe, who is its Nasi, that you may be blessed with a Ksiva Vachasima Tova for a good and sweet year, materially and spiritually. May it help to bring the full revelation of Moshiach - our Rebbe - immediately now!

Wishing a Ksiva Vachasima Tova for a good and sweet year,

**In the name of Vaad Kupas Rabbeinu**

**Rabbi Sholom Mendel Simpson**

**Rabbi Yehuda Leib Groner**

P.S. Of course, you may send to Kupas Rabbeinu all contributions that you would send to the Rebbe; all will be devoted to the activities to which the Rebbe would devote them.

You may also send Maimad, **Keren-Hashono** (this coming year 5764 - 355 days), Vov Tishrei, Yud Gimmel Tishrei Magbis etc. to Kupas Rabbeinu.

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# WHY WE TRAVEL TO MELECH HA'MOSHIACH

BY RABBI ELAZAR KOENIG  
TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY

*The elder chassidim look at the young T'mimim and fail to understand. Why is so much energy expended to travel to the Rebbe at a time when there are no revelations? Of course, everyone yearns in anticipation of the immediate hisgalus, but until then, why all the rushing and pushing?*

There is a well-known description by the Rebbe MH"M *shlita* of the difference between a Lubavitcher *chassid* and a Polish *chassid*, both in this world and in the World to Come. When a Polish *chassid* travels to his *rebbe*, the "Torah" that the *rebbe* says is brief, but the "*shirayim*" are in great abundance, especially on Yom Tov.

In general, it's quite nice to be with the *rebbe* in all its connotations. There's dancing and singing, and before the trip back, people also receive a *bracha* for a successful year with children, health, and sustenance, a dowry for their daughter of

marriageable age, good *parnasa*.

So when the *chassid* comes home and tells his wife about all the *brachos* he received, the *parnasa* he was promised in the coming year, and the other details of his trip, she is simply overjoyed. As a result, she helps him to prepare for his next trip by supplying him with all the provisions he will need for his journey. Without question, he has his *Olam HaZeh*.

Even when he arrives in the World to Come, he is not denied. Everyone asks him who he is and what he did in the physical world, and he has no need to

stammer whatsoever. He has his answer ready to go: "I was a *chassid* of... A *tzaddik* 'gives life' through his faith, and he did everything for me."

"Just a moment," they ask him, "did you fulfill everything your *rebbe* commanded you?"

"My *rebbe* gave me *brachos*," he replied, "and he even said that I must keep Torah and *mitzvos*, and that I should have a regular *shiur* in Torah study. So I fulfilled his instructions."

In the end, it turns out that all of Gan Eden and the entire World to Come was not enough for him.

Then comes the description of the Lubavitcher *chassid*, who came to his Rebbe. He was even pushed up front, not to grab some "*shirayim*," but just to *hear* the "*maamer*." Naturally, with all the pushing around him, it was a bit difficult to hear. Thus, a *chassid* only hears and understands the *maamer* with some difficulty.

The Rebbe describes a personal account he heard from a certain Jew who was a guest for Shabbos in Lubavitch. He was pushed the entire time, and succeeded



with great difficulty to hear the question at the start of the *maamer*. He didn't have time to eat anything that Shabbos, since there was a *chazara* immediately after the *maamer*, followed by *davening*. Since he *davened* a bit longer, it went on until almost Mincha, and so he passed through the whole Shabbos exhausted and hungry – and he didn't even know the *maamer*.

When the Lubavitcher *chassid* went into *yechidus* with the Rebbe, he was embarrassed to tell the Rebbe about his material situation. He didn't want to take up the Rebbe's time to tell him that his wife gives him no rest because there is no meat for Shabbos, no bread for weekdays, and the grocer is no longer willing to sell to him on credit. Instead, he asked the Rebbe for a *bracha* that he should have *ahavas Hashem*, *yiras Hashem*, *kabbalas ol*, and to be able to *daven* without *machshavos zaros*.

He returns home to his wife, who was waiting to hear the Rebbe's *bracha* for *parnasa* and a dowry for their daughter of marriageable age, and he tells her that he didn't ask for these things, but for the ability to *daven* without disturbances over problems in the area of *parnasa*. You can understand what her reaction was... The following year, when he wants to travel to the Rebbe again, she yells that he is better off working as a *chazan* or a *shamash*, and earning a few *kopkes* for the *parnasa* of the home. No *Olam HaZeh* for him.

When he arrives in the World to Come, and they ask him who he is, he responds with complete faith, "I am a Chabadnik!"

"Do you know what Chabad stands for?" they ask him.

"Of course, *Chochma, Bina, Daas*," he replies.

"So did you carry it out?" they inquire. "Let's test your knowledge."

The *chassid* is silent.

"Maybe the Rebbe didn't teach you," they suggest.

"The Rebbe most definitely taught me," he says. "And even when I couldn't come to the Rebbe, the Rebbe sent me a printed copy of the *maamer*. The Rebbe taught me and demanded of me. I heard *maamer* after *maamer*. But..." We'll let you finish the sentence for yourselves.

## WE ALSO WANT TO RECEIVE

When we contemplate this story, we see that we also have a lot to learn from it, even as Lubavitcher *chassidim*. There can be no ignoring the fact that we travel to the Rebbe with high aspirations. This applies whether we do so in the hope of receiving a *bracha* for *nachas* from our children, good *parnasa*, and other material needs, or for greater progress in the spiritual realm: improving our level of Torah study, *chassidishe* conduct, etc. But after all is said and done, there can be no hiding the concept of the Polish *chassid*: traveling to the Rebbe in order to receive.

We hear almost every time the wishes before a trip to the Rebbe: We should come back as better, warmer, and livelier



*chassidim*, i.e., to receive the improvements we need during our stay with the Rebbe, including on the spiritual level – but above all, to receive. Each and every *chassid* dreams of the moment that he can sit with the Rebbe in *yechidus*, lay out his problems before him, and receive advice and guidance, both material and spiritual.

Who among us doesn't remember making a "*shuvchem l'shalom*" *farbrengen*, during which he tells everyone what **he** received, which *brachos* **he** merited, how much higher **he** rose materially and spiritually. In short, how much **he** received from the Rebbe.

At we stand in this unique time, just a few precious moments before the Rebbe *shlita's* full *hisgalus*, we see that even on

this point there have been a number of new innovations.

## SEVEN GENERATIONS ON THE ROAD TO THE ESSENCE

One of the innovations that began in the days of the Alter Rebbe was the idea of "*avoda* with a person's own strengths." Polish *chassidim* say that "a *tzaddik* lives by his faith." However, the Alter Rebbe interpreted this to mean that a *chassid* must *serve* according to his individual strengths.

Another matter about which the Alter Rebbe spoke was not to take the leftover crumbs but to desire only the essence. In numerous *maamarim* in *Likkutei Torah*, the Alter Rebbe repeats this point, quoting the *pasuk*, "What do I have in Heaven and with You I did not desire on earth." As he was known to say in moments of intense *d'veikus*, "I don't want Your Gan Eden, I don't want Your World to Come, I want nothing other than You alone."

These two points – *avoda* according to one's individual strengths and the desire for the essence alone – are, in a manner of speaking, the basic foundations of Chabad philosophy. Nevertheless, it is impossible to ignore the reality that this is how things appeared over seven generations.

Looking first at *avoda* according to one's individual strengths, we see from *chassidic* stories over the years that we simply can't say that *avoda* was just according to a *chassid's* individual strengths; each *chassid* had his own personal guidance that he received from the Rebbe. The Rebbe led, directed, and even encouraged the *chassid* the entire way. Without question, the *avoda* was steered by the Rebbe's clear guidance.

Even at the beginning of the seventh generation, when the Rebbe told *shluchim* and directors of institutions on numerous occasions that they must take their own initiative, we see that at almost every step along the path of *mivtzaim*, the main innovations and initiatives came from the Rebbe himself. They were even accompanied by the Rebbe's persistent urging and encouragement. It seemed as almost nothing moved completely on its own.

This not only applied in connection with self-motivated *avoda*, but also with the fervent desire for the essence. If we

contemplate the words of *chassidim* of generation past, we see that despite what the Alter Rebbe said, that “he doesn’t want Gan Eden,” the fact is that they did want a little Gan Eden. *Chassidim* wished for themselves “*a lichtikn Gan Eden*” (a shining Gan Eden), and when *chassidim* of previous generations passed away, they were accompanied by the hope that they will merit to reach the *tzaddik’s* holy chamber. Even their *avoda* went along these lines. *Chassidim* sought to attain higher levels as they saw revelations from the Rebbe, heard another miracle story, progressed in their *ruchnius*, receiving another crumb and another crumb. These were very lofty and spiritual crumbs, but crumbs nevertheless, as they were not going after the actual essence.

It can be said that all this was also according to the directions of the leaders of the generations, perhaps due to the fact that they knew this would take another seven generations. Therefore, they allowed *chassidim* to receive a degree of revelations so they could hold out until they reached the “inn.”

However, in our generation, specifically the latter portion, from the moment the Rebbe MH”M *shlita* appointed us to carry out the final remaining *avoda* – greeting *Moshiach Tzidkeinu* – it was all too clear that a sharp turn had been taken in regard to these two points.

### WHAT’S SO BAD ABOUT SCREAMING “AD MASAI?” AS ORDERED?

In the famous *sicha* of the 28<sup>th</sup> of Nissan 5751, the Rebbe *shlita* said that the fact that *Moshiach* hasn’t come yet is because when people scream “*Ad masai?!?*” it’s because they were told to do so. Such a statement is a bit surprising. Why is it bad when people act upon orders? *Yiddishkeit* on the whole is based upon *kabbalas ol*, *naaseh v’nishma*, etc. So how all of a sudden has this turned into a problem?

However, this is exactly the point. When we talk about the latter *avoda* of bringing the revelation of the essence – no more “crumbs,” just the essence – it is impossible to be satisfied just with *avoda* on command. Now, there literally must be *avoda* with one’s own strengths! Not because we were told to and not due to revelations from Above – everything now

must come completely from below.

It’s hard to say this, but to a certain extent, as long as we could see the Rebbe, the *avoda* was still not from our own strengths. Specifically in this situation, when we can’t see the Rebbe with our physical eyes, we can reach this level of *avoda* with our own strengths in the fullest sense of the word.

Specifically in this type of *avoda*, the Rebbe shows us the special value of service achieved from our own strengths in its most absolute sense, an *avoda* from which there can be no feeling of embarrassment, since it was done completely on our own.

*If we contemplate the words of chassidim of generation past, we see that despite what the Alter Rebbe said, that “he doesn’t want Gan Eden,” the fact is that they did want a little Gan Eden. Chassidim wished for themselves “a lichtikn Gan Eden” ...*

This is the reason why the Rebbe said what he did in the Ko’ach Nissan *sicha*. The Rebbe taught us that from this point on, everything must be totally from our own power, as this is the only way to bring the Redemption.

Similarly, we find in relation to the second point the clear aspiration for the essence, and nothing else.

In the *maamer* “*V’Ata Tetzaveh*,” the Rebbe *shlita* says that a Jew today is not broken over the fact that there are no revelations, nor does he long for illuminations. He is totally broken and crushed due to the lack of attaining the

essence. “*Kasis la’maor*” – crushed for the source of the light, not for the light itself. A Jew cannot continue for another moment without the essence.

In the *maamer* of “On the Eleventh Day,” the Rebbe also says that this is the true sign of shrewdness. He wants neither revelations, nor the “ministers” that surround the king; he wants only the king himself – “*mer nisht az dich alein*” (nothing other than You alone).

The Rebbe *shlita* says that all the Alter Rebbe’s innovations cannot just remain in a storeroom. Now is the crucial moment for them to be brought out into effective action. The final *avoda* of bringing the *Sh’china* down into this physical world must come about totally with lowly physical powers, motivated by the sole desire of “*dich alein*.”

### TRAVELING TO THE REBBE WITHOUT RECEIVING A CRUMB

If we look for the realization of these two points in absolute terms, there is no better place to see this than Tishrei with the Rebbe. Just think about such a trip: thousands of T’mimim and *avreichim* who saved every penny from the beginning of the year until the end of the year, spared no efforts to obtain visas, passports, etc. This more than anything else demonstrates an expression of these two points!

T’mimim today do not travel to the Rebbe to see revelations! Absolutely not! You can speak to any one of them and see this in great detail from their daily conduct. Traveling to the Rebbe *shlita* is not in order to get a *bracha* or an improvement in one matter or another. The trip is not to see great and wondrous revelations. Not to receive *lekach* or dollars. It’s not to receive, but in order to give, to greet him, and to bring about the complete *hisgalus*.

This never happened in the previous generations, not even at the start of the seventh generation. *Chassidim* would travel to the Rebbe’s court to receive a *bracha* for children, health, and *parnasa*, to take in the unique atmosphere, to see the Rebbe *shlita* at the *t’fillos* of Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur, to be included in *Birkas HaBanim*, to see the Rebbe’s strong encouragement at “Napoleon’s March,” to get *lekach*, to shake the Rebbe’s *lulav* and

*esrog*. In the end, they came with the desire to get some crumbs – very holy crumbs, of course, yet crumbs nevertheless.

This is not the essence, this is not the main thing. The main goal is the *hisgalus* of the Rebbe MH" M: bringing the *Sh'china* into this physical world.

Specifically in recent years, we see this in the simplest terms. People come to the Rebbe with only one purpose in mind: *kabbalas ha'malchus*. The elder *chassidim* look at the young T'mimim and fail to understand. Why is so much energy expended to travel to the Rebbe at a time when there are no revelations? Of course, everyone yearns in anticipation of the immediate *hisgalus*, but until then, why all the rushing and pushing?

However, the simple answer is that T'mimim do not come out of a sense of longing for past revelations. They don't come with nostalgic memories. The T'mimim come with a true inner objective: to greet the Rebbe, to accept his

sovereignty, to bring about the full manifestation of the essence, the full revelation of the *Sh'china*. This includes everything, even children, health, and *parnasa*, and even the highest of all spiritual levels: the essence itself.

The main thing is that the Rebbe *shlita* continues today to have an active effect upon all of us, and this is what we truly want. Each of us feels now that everything depends on us, and it is within our power to bring the *hisgalus*. We are not looking to receive something from the Rebbe *shlita*, but to give and to do what we can to bring the full *hisgalus*. We don't come to look for *lekach* or *kos shel bracha* according to the limited concept of coming only to get. We want *the whole world* to receive *kos shel bracha*, blessings in all things. With this in mind, we prepare ourselves, we travel to the Rebbe, and we live.

This is how things are from the point of view of the desire for the essence and the whole concept of *avoda* with one's own strengths. There is perhaps no place where

this can be seen so clearly as in a trip to the Rebbe for Tishrei. Thousands of T'mimim, *avreichim*, guests, and even a large assemblage of children who never saw the Rebbe with their own eyes, who never received a wave of encouragement. On the contrary, at the beginning, there were many of those who raised an eyebrow, saying, "What are you going for? What do you expect to see there?"

However, those who came were not affected, and they swept more mature, even elder *chassidim* along with them. The situation today is that the *mashpiim* and elder *chassidim* come to 770 to be caught up in the spirit of enthusiasm and liveliness of the younger crowd. They look with excitement at the self-sacrifice of the tender flock, and draw vitality from them to last them the entire year.

This is noticeable every moment that a person stays in 770. Everything comes completely in a manner of "from below to above." On their own initiative, the T'mimim established a *hachnasas orchim* organization, and decided to set up regular *s'darim* of learning, based in 770.

Throughout the *yeshiva* world, Tishrei is a time when students take a break from their studies, and 770 was no exception. Suddenly, there came this historic innovation. Students came to 770 to sit and learn in *seider*, every day, from morning until night. Whose initiative was all this? Not the *yeshiva* administration, not the *mashpiim*, but the T'mimim themselves out of a sense of good will. They are the ones who learn, oversee, and get everyone seated in his place – everything from below.

This is exactly what is written in the *maamer* "*Basi LGani*": To whom does the king give his greatest and most secret hidden treasures? Not to the commanders, not to the generals, but to the simple soldiers. The king squanders his treasures to them.

The T'mimim are also the living spirit of *Simchas Beis HaShoeiva*, even remaining to dance until the early morning. They organize the *farbrengens* each night of Sukkos for their friends and supporters, even carrying the *mashpiim* along. Everything through the soldiers. All the treasures...

In the *D'var Malchus* from Parshas R'ei, the Rebbe *shlita* reveals the secret to



success in this lofty *avoda* through a most profound point. The Rebbe emphasizes that there are five acronyms to the name “Elul,” which allude to five types of service of G-d. The first three are Torah, *avoda*, and *g’milus chassadim*, and the fourth corresponds to *t’shuva*. In effect, these four represent the four spiritual worlds of *Atzilus*, *Bria*, *Yetzira*, and *Asiya*.

However, there is also a higher level, alluded to in the fifth acronym: “*Ashira Lashem VaYomru Leimor*.” This acronym of Redemption makes a reference to the highest level, called in *chassidus*, “the fifth to Pharaoh,” symbolizing the service of a Jew from the aspect of his *yechida*, the ultimate unity with G-d.

This means that the *avoda* of Moshiach and the Redemption is specifically from the essence, to the point that the essence itself is recognized. As the Rebbe puts it in the continuation of the *sicha*, “The service of man in a manner higher than measure and limitation in its truest and most complete sense is only relevant in connection with the true and complete Redemption through Moshiach Tzidkeinu, whose soul is of the level of the *yechida* of all Israel. As a result, there is revealed the individual level of *yechida* (the spark of Moshiach) within each and every Jew, the fifth level, which is instilled in every detail of *avoda*.”

Thus, specifically through the vitality and *avoda* in connection with Moshiach, we can reach these two levels of 1) service from one’s own strengths and 2) the aspiration for the main thing – not just crumbs – as this comes only from *avoda* with the essence.

This explains why this was not seen in every generation. The Alter Rebbe explains the *pasuk*, “If a person gives all the wealth of his home with love, it will be despised,” as meaning that any aspiration for something, even if it is Gan Eden, and even if it is *Your* Gan Eden, will be despised, if it is not the essence.

Nevertheless, we did not see throughout the generations that they rejected Gan Eden. In fact, as we noted earlier, they wanted a little Gan Eden. It can be said perhaps that this is the reason why the Alter Rebbe emphasized so strongly, “I don’t want Your Gan Eden!” What would have been so bad about saying that Gan Eden is good, but G-d Himself is better, as it were? However, this is exactly the point: we must emphasize

that we don’t want it! For if we don’t emphasize this, then we do want it – maybe only a little, but we want it. So how is it that they didn’t see this in every generation?

The point is simple: Such a level is attainable only through *avoda* with the *yechida*, and this *avoda* is only relevant

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upon reaching the final stage of bringing the *hisgalus* of Moshiach to the world.

This is what the Rebbe demands from each and every one of us today: the service of the Redemption through the very essence. We can see this in the continuation of the *sicha*, in which the Rebbe MH”M *shlita* explains how a Jew’s

*cheshbon nefesh* must be in these times. In his holy words, “We are already standing at Rosh Chodesh Elul, the month of accounting for the entire year, the conclusion of which is ‘*Ad masai?!*’

“Can it be that after eleven months of the year of ‘I will show you miracles,’ Moshiach Tzidkeinu has not yet come?”

The Rebbe illustrates for us in plain language that the time for crumbs is over. It is impossible for there to be a *cheshbon nefesh* with a mere sum total of why didn’t we improve in this or that. We must reach the point that our *cheshbon nefesh* comes directly to the crux of the matter: “Why hasn’t Moshiach come yet?”

A few lines later, the Rebbe says, “It’s not enough that they hear (and understand) that ‘Here comes (Melech HaMoshiach)’; they have to see it with their physical eyes. And not only ‘I will show you’ in the future tense, but ‘R’ei’ (Behold), in the present tense, and in the form of a command!”

This means that we are no longer satisfied with crumbs. We don’t want to simply hear and understand; it is impossible to make excuses any longer that it will occur in the future. We want the essence in its simplest form, the immediate *hisgalus!*

Indeed, the Rebbe has this effect upon all of us, as we can see openly in the T’fillin Campaign, the giving of *tz’daka*, and in every aspect of our lives, primarily in connection with a trip to the Rebbe *shlita* for the month of Tishrei. There’s not just one stubborn person, but thousands of them, thousands of *Chayalei Beis Dovid* for whom the matter is so elementary. They don’t travel for revelations, they want neither Gan Eden HaTachton nor Gan Eden HaElyon – only him. This is not a passing stage, but a continual mode of expression.

When we see that this is so in the truest sense, that every *Tamim* is appalled and broken that we have not yet merited the main thing, then the demand made of G-d is clear: We want You alone! We are truly worthy due to all the preparations for the trip to the Rebbe MH”M *shlita*, and may we immediately merit to see the source of the light with the Rebbe’s *hisgalus* before all the nations, and then we shall proclaim before him:

*Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu v’Rabbeinu Melech HaMoshiach l’olam va’ed!*

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# WERE THE COMPUTER FILES ERASED?

BY AVROHOM RAYNITZ

*An amazing miracle story told by a Litvishe rav  
at a chassidische farbrengen*

The following story was told by R' Yosef Yitzchok Horowitz of Crown Heights at a *siyum* in 770 a few weeks ago:

Two weeks ago I took my family to a hotel in Swan Lake in the Catskills. Since it was Shabbos Mevarchim, we had a *farbrengen* after the *davening*. It went on for a long time, and dozens of guests at the hotel, *chassidish* and Litvish, joined us as the conversation interested them.

Naturally, various miracle stories of the Rebbe were told, as well as the Rebbe's *hanhagos* and various *sichos*. This bothered a Litvish fellow who sat there, and at a certain point he exclaimed: Enough talking about the Lubavitcher Rebbe! Aren't there any other *g'dolim* in the Jewish world?

For a moment there was silence. The Lubavitchers didn't want to respond and get into a pointless debate. Then, unexpectedly, someone spoke up.

Among the people sitting together was the *rav* of the town. His father-in-law was staying at the hotel and after eating the Shabbos meal at the *rav's* house, the *rav* accompanied him to the hotel where he joined the *farbrengen*. After hearing what the Litvak had to say, the *rav* responded:

You ask whether there aren't other

*g'dolim* in the Jewish world aside from the Lubavitcher Rebbe. I, who was born a Litvak, and till this day live as a Litvak, will tell you a story and you'll see who are *g'dolim* and who is the real *gadol* of the Jewish people.

Before serving as a *rav*, I was in business. *Baruch Hashem*, I did well, but then I got into trouble. The I.R.S. was after me, and one day I got a letter in the mail from them. If you've ever evaded paying taxes, you know what the letter signifies.

The letter informed me that the I.R.S. was aware of the source of my income and they entered a claim against me to the tune of hundreds of thousands of dollars. I was in shock. Even though I always knew they could catch up with me, it was hard for me to face the bitter reality.

I was called to court. I knew I had no chance against them, but I hired a lawyer in the hopes of reducing the severity of the punishment and the fine. The lawyer who examined the case prepared me for the worst, and said that in any case it would entail a fine of hundreds of thousands of dollars.

When I realized that I was trapped, I tried spiritual avenues. I went to *g'dolei Yisroel* in the U.S., to *roshei yeshivos* and

famous *Admurim*, and asked for *brachos*. I also asked one of the *g'dolim* in Eretz Yisroel. They all gave me *brachos*, but nothing helped. The date for the court case was fast approaching and the material that the I.R.S. was accumulating made my situation worse by the day.

My father-in-law knew what deep trouble I was in. He is a Belzer *chassid* who is acquainted with *g'dolei Chassidei Chabad*. After the Holocaust, when he was in liberated Europe, he met Lubavitcher *chassidim* like R' Peretz Mochkin and R' Nissan Nemenov, and they kept in touch over the years. When he heard the details of my problem he told me: Listen, the Lubavitcher Rebbe gives out dollars every Sunday, and thousands of people have been helped by his *brachos*. Go to him and ask for a *bracha*!

At first I didn't want to listen to him. Although I respect him and his opinions, I didn't see myself, a born and bred Litvak, going to the Lubavitcher Rebbe and asking for a *bracha*.

The day of the court case was approaching, and when I couldn't take it anymore I decided to compromise on my principles and to go and ask the Lubavitcher Rebbe for a *bracha*.

I went on Sunday and stood in the

long line, thinking about what I would say to the Rebbe and how I would word my request. I didn't think for a minute that when I would stand before the Rebbe I wouldn't be able to utter a sound.

When my turn came, I couldn't say a thing. Everything I had prepared to say flew out of my head. I passed by the Rebbe without saying anything and the Rebbe gave me a dollar for *tz'daka* and said the standard *bracha*: *bracha v'hatzlacha*.

I was blown away by the intensity of the spiritual experience. I had visited many *g'dolim*, in both the Litvishe and *chassidishe* worlds, and had never been at a loss for words.

I went home and my father-in-law called to find out what had happened. When he heard that I hadn't asked for a *bracha*, he couldn't believe it. "Why didn't you ask for a *bracha*?" he asked. I explained that I simply could not open my mouth. He insisted that I return the following Sunday and ask for a *bracha* and promise that I'd get out of my mess.

This time I had no problem going to the Rebbe. I had seen for myself that he was an *Ish Elokim* (a G-dly man). The next

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Sunday found me standing in line again.

It was my turn. I mustered my courage and managed to tell the Rebbe that I had a problem with the I.R.S., and I was asking for a *bracha* to get out of it. The Rebbe gave me a dollar and said, "*bracha v'hatzlacha*." I thought to myself that I had gotten that same *bracha* the week before, and I said: Rebbe, I want a guarantee!

The Rebbe smiled and said, "*bracha v'hatzlacha*." I realized that the Rebbe considered this to be sufficient.

That week, my lawyer called me with good news: You can relax for now because the computer with your file in it crashed. The I.R.S. decided to freeze your case for now due to lack of data. But you should know that it's still possible that a technician will retrieve the information and then you're back in hot water.

I was happy about the good news, but naturally, my *simcha* wasn't complete. I kept thinking that the computer experts on the job would retrieve the data and I'd be back where I was before.

This all took place in the winter of 5748. When I heard of the Rebbetzin's passing on Chaf-Beis Shvat, I wanted to be *menachem avel*. I had seen the Rebbe up close, and more and more I realized how great he is.

A few weeks later I went for dollars again. I didn't think of asking anything specific, and went by like everyone else. The Rebbe gave me a dollar, wished me, "*bracha v'hatzlacha*," and I turned to leave.

Suddenly I heard R' Groner calling me. "The Rebbe asked you to come back," he said.

I was very nervous. I had no idea why the Rebbe wanted me back, and I returned quickly to where the Rebbe was giving out dollars. The Rebbe stood there and with a smile he asked, "*Shoin ingantzen opgimekt?*" (Already completely erased?) And without waiting for my answer the Rebbe continued, "*bracha v'hatzlacha*."

I returned, overwhelmed, to my house and was sure that a big surprise awaited me. That week I got a letter from the I.R.S. in which they informed me that since the ruined disk couldn't be fixed, they had decided to close the case on me and absolve me of all blame!

Nu, you tell me: are there other *g'dolim* in the world?



# “I THANK G-D THAT YOU’RE IN MY YESHIVA”

PREPARED FOR PUBLICATION BY MENACHEM ZIEGELBOIM

*A thought-provoking panel discussion about chinuch that took place in Eretz Yisroel, organized by Aguch.*

## PARTICIPANTS:

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## M.C.:

Rabbi Shlomo Lifsh – rosh mesivta in Kiryat Gat

## A MECHANECH IS A DOCTOR, NOT A POLICEMAN

**What is the Alef-Beis of successful chinuch?**

**Rabbi Hillel:** I once taught a class of *mitzuyanim* (top students). In the first couple of days I noticed that I wasn't getting feedback. I said to myself: "This is a class of *mitzuyanim* and I must change my outlook and approach towards the children." I tried different things but I didn't manage to penetrate their heads until I found what worked, and then I had the kids with me.

This story says it all. When you enter the classroom and are about to interact with young men, the question is

whether your way of thinking is rigid. If you have been teaching fifteen, twenty years, you get up in the morning and go and teach, and you are fixed in your thinking. You're locked into a certain way of thinking.

I like a challenge, and when I got a class that wasn't on a high level, I had the challenge of elevating them. I started with an unconventional approach, and it worked.

We must change our approach. If a *talmid* causes disruption, it's not enough to say, "be quiet," or give a fine, or send him to the principal or the *mashgiach*. That's a well-oiled approach that has worn itself out. They send a kid to the principal, from there to the *mashgiach*, who gives it to him over the head, and

from there to the parents.

A teacher told me about how he met a parent and said to him, "Listen, your son is such-and-such."

The parent said, "I sent my son to your *mosad* in order for you to tell me what to do?! I sent him so that you will deal with the problem! You have all the authority to do so."

A *talmid* once came to us. They said he had been wandering around for three weeks. I tested him and saw he had the intellectual ability to absorb what I'd be teaching, and that here was someone to work with. The boy was talented and learned Gemara well. We accepted him without asking why he had been thrown out of his previous *yeshiva*. He's been learning by us for nearly a year. Just a month ago I found out that he was thrown out for stealing. Today, this *bachur* is straight as a ruler. I believed in him.

A *bachur* is really a child. He looks like he's sixteen or seventeen, but underneath he has a sensitive soul. This soul wants you to pat him on the shoulder and ask what the problem is.

Rabbi Wechter once told me, "Your approach needs to be that of a doctor, not a policeman. If you're a policeman, they're smarter than you are, like cops and robbers. You stand facing fifteen *talmidim* and they'll play with you and



you won't be successful.

"If your approach is that of a doctor, however, then your *talmid* will sense that, and when he knows that you're his doctor, he'll let you give him a shot and operate on him. He knows you mean it for his good."

This is the message that the teacher must give his students.

### THE FATHER MUST BE A ROLE MODEL

How can we convey to our children the desire to do *mitzvos b'hiddur* and go in the ways of *chassidus*, when we ourselves are sometimes lazy?

**Rabbi Jacobson:** As far as the parent, that's what *avoda* is all about. It's a daily battle within us between two *nefashos*, the G-dly soul and the animal soul.

The difference between an adult and a child is that an adult has *daas*. A *katan*

***"Your approach needs to be that of a doctor, not a policeman. If you're a policeman, they're smarter than you are, like cops and robbers..."***

doesn't have *daas*, and only at *bar mitzva* does he become a man. What is a man? It's brought in *chassidus* that an "*adam*" is someone who has control over his life despite his *taavos* and the things that attract him, whether positive or negative. A *katan*, on the other hand, readily submits to his inclinations.

I don't know what it's like for everybody sitting here, but I know that I'm not on the level of *tzaddik gamur*, and not even on the level of *tzaddik sh'eino gamur* whose evil is only subconscious. And probably not on the level of *beinoni* who never sinned and never will sin.

The issue that an adult needs to consider is that if you're not interesting in working on yourself, that's your choice, but don't think that the children will be *tzaddikim* instead of you. My children, our children, will learn from us how to continue enjoying *Olam HaZeh*.

There's a story about the Tzemach Tzedek, who interviewed two *melamdim*. One was very charismatic but lacked *yiras Shamayim*, while the other was less talented but had *yiras Shamayim*. The Tzemach Tzedek chose the second *melamed*.



(From right to left:) Rabbi Shlomo Lifsh, Rabbi Y.Y. Jacobson, Rabbi Chaim Ashkenazi, Rabbi Moshe Hillel

The first *melamed* protested, saying he was more capable and would teach the material far better, and that he could teach about *yiras Shamayim* far better, too!

Said the Tzemach Tzedek: That's what I'm afraid of – that you'll teach my child how he should teach *his* child about *yiras Shamayim*, but the other *melamed* will teach him how to actually be a *yerei Shamayim*.

We have to decide: If I want my children, with Hashem's help, to grow up to be *yerei Shamayim*, I must work on myself. You can't want all the *taavos* of *Olam HaZeh* on the one hand, whether permissible or forbidden, and do what you please, but forbid it to your child. It can work for a day or two or even a year, but you have to know that you can't fool your child!

(There are instances of *siyata d'Shmaya* when a child is independent and is not connected to his parents, like Avrohom, who came from Terach – but don't count on it!)

I'd like to add another point from a different angle. One morning, an 18-year-old *talmid* came over to me. He was on the verge of leaving *yeshiva*. He told me he didn't want to *daven Shacharis*.

What happened? There had been a *farbrengen* and he asked the *mashpia* who was *farbrenging* a question that really bothered him. The *mashpia* – with all due respect, he wasn't too smart – said to him in the old *chassidic* style: Ah, you're talking like an animal, like a *sheretz*, like a *misnaged*!

The *mashpia* thought he could be like R' Mendel Futerfas, or like the other legendary *mashpiim*, R' Nissan Nemenov, R' Shlomo Chaim Kesselman. He thought he could pour cold water on him, but it doesn't work that way, because those *mashpiim* were unique personalities. Everybody knew that R' Mendel sat in Siberia for ten years, and didn't eat throughout the eight days of Pesach. When a *bachur* heard rebuke from R' Mendel in that rough *chassidic* style, he knew who was talking.

(I myself began reviewing *sichos* of the Rebbe thanks to R' Mendel. When I was 9 or 10, the Rebbe said long *sichos* on Sukkos. Then they did *chazara* with R' Yoel Kahn. There were 200 *bachurim*

crowding around, and R' Mendel said he didn't have the strength to push anymore and he said to me: start *chazering*.

I said: but I'm only ten!

I don't remember it properly. R' Mendel didn't accept that and urged me: Start, start, others will help you.

And he drew it out of me. I began

***Hashem wants to live in a human heart, in a heart that probably has machshavos zaros, whether permissible or forbidden. This is the heart of a human being. It's within your heart that Hashem wants to dwell. Tell your heart: Ah mechayeh, I'm impure and now Hashem is coming to dwell with me in my heart.***

*chazering* the Rebbe's *sichos* each night. Thanks to R' Mendel, I became one of the *chozrim* of the *farbrengens* in the later years. I would *chazer* the *sichos* and have 200 people around me, but when I finished the *chazara* two hours later, R' Mendel made sure to put me in my place.

But it didn't make me run away from Lubavitch, because I knew that this Jew

sat in Siberia for ten years. I knew he had the right to give it to me.)

Fine, I grew up in Brooklyn, I ate steak with ketchup and French-fries every night. I got it from R' Mendel. But when the *mashpia* who called the *bachur* names had steak himself the night before, and didn't sit in Siberia for ten years, his approach doesn't work!

So the *bachur* came to me before Shacharis and said: Rabbi Jacobson, I'm not interested in *davening* today. I don't care!

He thought I'd tell him: You're a *misnaged*, *sheretz*, animal, but I just smiled. He was shocked. I said: Welcome to the real world. Welcome to humanity. What do you think, that the teachers here *do* want to *daven*? You know what? I don't feel like *davening* either.

The stunned *bachur* immediately asked: So why do you *daven*?

I answered: Hashem desires a dwelling place down below. What does this mean? Hashem wants to dwell within a human heart, with all its impurities. You would pick a palace in Switzerland as your *dira*, but Hashem wants to live in a human heart, in a heart that probably has *machshavos zaros*, whether permissible or forbidden. This is the heart of a human being. It's a heart that isn't interested in *davening*. You don't feel like *davening*? Then you're the best person in the world to *daven*. It's within your heart that Hashem wants to dwell. Tell your heart: *Ah mechayeh*, I'm impure and now Hashem is coming to dwell with me in my heart.

This was the revolution of the Alter Rebbe in *Tanya* regarding the *beinoni*. In *Tanya*, the Alter Rebbe says that when a person has bad *taavos*, it's not a tragedy. It needn't break you. This is Hashem's intention. As it says, "Perhaps this is why you were created?" – that your entire life you'll fight *taavos*. Not a *taava* of "don't stray after your heart and after your eyes," for this is why you were created! At the same time, you need to know that within the animal soul there's "literally a part of G-d above."

When a *bachur* hears that his difficulties are natural and normal, and everybody has them, but they don't have

to cause him not to *daven*, he's encouraged and he overcomes his difficulties.

The same is true with adults. When you talk about a *cheshek* to do *mitzvos*, what do you mean? Now I'm a *tzaddik gamur* and now my child will see that I'm a *dugma chaya*? No! It means that your child will see that you work on yourself, that you fight with yourself, that you have challenges. You're allowed to talk to children about the inner challenges in *Yiddishkeit*, but they should see that they are challenges, that you're working on it, that you're growing, that you're fighting, that you're thinking. That's what's meant by a *cheshek* to do *mitzvos*.

It comes after working on yourself. How do you work? By learning every day. If you don't learn *nigleh* and *chassidus* every day, then you won't have a *cheshek* for *Yiddishkeit*, because the world is far greater than *Elokus* (at first glance) and learning Torah gives the G-dly soul the strength to see the inner truth.

Without Torah study, it won't work. A father who doesn't have a daily commitment to Torah study, not even twenty minutes in *nigleh* or *chassidus*, won't have a *cheshek* for *Yiddishkeit*. You can't just *daven* Shacharis, Mincha, and Maariv and think you'll be a good role model for your children.

Women also need to learn, but because of the nature of men, as brought in *chassidus*, without Torah study it just doesn't work for them; they go into spiritual depression. Someone like this can't be a good person, a good husband, nor a good father. It's impossible without Torah study and working on *middos*. It's impossible without "acquire a friend for yourself," and "make a *rav* for yourself." Without true friends, without working on ourselves, it doesn't work. But the main thing is it should be a challenge; at least let there be a battle.

## NO-GOOD KIDS: KEEP THEM, OR EXPEL THEM?

Can a high school or elementary school expel students who are exposed to negative things at home, who are liable to bring these things to the *yeshiva*?

**Rabbi Ashkenazi:** This is one of the most difficult questions nowadays. In earlier generations this question didn't arise because a child like that didn't attend a *yeshiva* since his parents weren't interested in a *chareidi* school. A home that wasn't *chareidi*, didn't send their children to a *chareidi* school.

Today it's different. You have families that are not *chareidim* who send their children to *chareidi* schools. And the opposite: You have homes that seem, on the outside, to be *chareidi*, but inside it's

*You're allowed to talk to children about the inner challenges in Yiddishkeit, but they should see that they are challenges, that you're working on it, that you're growing, that you're fighting, that you're thinking. That's what's meant by a cheshek to do mitzvos.*

all rotten. The Internet was mentioned here before. It has unbelievable dangers. So today the question is very relevant, and very painful.

The answer isn't simple. It's like asking whether we can send our child shopping when we know there are forbidden things to see. Can a mother take her son shopping to buy pants when you have to go out to the street, get in a taxi, travel by train, and in all these places there's terrible *pritzus*? Maybe we should close ourselves off.

There are *chassidic* groups that do this. How successful are they? This is not the place to discuss that. There's a *chassidus* that in the last two or three years has established that any child who declines just a bit, is thrown out. They want a clean *chassidus*. Forgive me for the example, but the Germans wanted a pure nation, without the aged and the ill. All had to be healthy in body and mind. They believed that an old person who became a burden ought to be killed.

We don't accept only those who are good; we accept everyone. If you have a hard time with someone, he can be put in a different setting, but he certainly shouldn't be thrown out in the street.

We are Chabad, and Chabad is spread throughout the country and the world. Why don't we all live in Kfar Chabad? When Shazar spoke to the Rebbe, he suggested that all Chabad *chassidim* live in Kfar Chabad, and he even promised to give them everything they needed for their exclusive Chabad enclave. The Rebbe didn't agree to this. The Rebbe wants Chabad *chassidim* to spread out around the world. The Rebbe convinced the Lev Simcha of Ger of this too, and now Gerrer *chassidim* live around the country. Belz followed. They are still sheltered in these locations, but there's a definite improvement.

This is the power of *shluchim* around the world. They are in spiritually unfriendly places, some of them are located in places where *avoda zara* is right under their window, but we have been given the ability to fill our children up with content and values so that they aren't impressed by what's going on around them. Otherwise, a man doesn't have the right to leave for the Far East, where idols abound. After all, it says that a person should live in a place of *chachamim* and *yiras Shamayim*.

Once, after the Satmar Rebbe, *z"l*, spoke against Chabad *chassidim* going out to be *mekarev* Jews because not only was it against *tznius*, but the very connection with irreligious Jews is forbidden, the Rebbe said (when I was a *bachur* in 770) that the Satmar Rebbe was right from his perspective, because he didn't have the abilities that the Rebbe has from his father-in-law. We have the broad shoulders of the Rebbe.

The *shluchim* have to stand guard. The fact that the Rebbe said that the chinuch of their children is on his shoulders, doesn't mean they're allowed to go wherever they please. The responsibility the Rebbe took is in conjunction with the father standing guard, for then the Rebbe will help him. But if the children are left to themselves, the Rebbe won't help.

This issue isn't simple. When a child has television or the Internet at home, the *hanhala* must speak with the parents politely but firmly and tell them, "You sent your son to this school and you expect your son to be a *tzaddik* and *chassid*, but you're giving him the opposite at home."

If you see that a child is ruining other children, he cannot remain in the school. Chabad is based to a great extent on drawing close, but you mustn't err and think that this means we allow negative things in our midst.

Some people think that Chabad is *ahavas Yisroel*, and therefore, certain things are allowed a bit more than in other places. It reminds me of Shulamit Aloni saying that because of *ahavas Yisroel* you ought to allow a Kohen to marry a divorcee, and because of *ahavas Yisroel* you should allow *mamzerim* to marry Jews.

When somebody comes and knocks on the door and want to sell us his *stupidities*, because of *ahavas Yisroel* we throw him out! That's real *ahavas Yisroel*: not to allow him to sell his *stupidities*. *Ahavas Yisroel* is not a reason to compromise in Torah and *mitzvos*.

The bottom line is that we accept everybody in our schools because of *ahavas Yisroel*, but you have to watch and see whether children aren't ruining others, and find ways to ensure that they don't ruin others and themselves. And if necessary, any veering off the path must be firmly cut off at the pass.

There's nobody in the world who must contend with what Chabad *chassidim* have to contend with. On the one hand we are asked to be in contact with the world, to be *mekarev* and to remove gold from dross, but on the other hand, we can't be affected by this. We have to go to Rechov Allenby (the Israeli equivalent of Times Square) and

put *t'fillin* on people and not be affected by our surroundings. That's why we must constantly stand guard. And it's up to the *menahel* and the teacher in the classroom, and the parents at home.

Sometimes it's not about television or the Internet. The damage can come through the newspaper or even a circular. Who doesn't get circulars in the mail at home? Most of them contain inappropriate things. Parents need to be alert to this and make sure not to let it in the house.

## GIVING THE BACHURIM A "CHASSIDISHE KISS"

**Rabbi Shlomo Lifsh:** Regarding "undesirable" *talmidim* in our schools, when Rabbi Yaakov Katz, *rosh yeshiva* in Kfar Chabad, had a *yechidus* with the Rebbe, he asked when a *talmid* could be expelled. The Rebbe said that as long as he did no damage, the *talmid* should remain, but the moment he adversely affected others, there was no choice but to expel him.

The same is true for discipline. When a child ruins a classroom, either the teacher has to be changed or the *talmid* has to go.

**Rabbi Jacobson:** There's an expression in Yiddish, "Before I begin talking, I'd like to say a few words..." I must comment here. You mention the Rebbe's answer to Rabbi Katz, that as

long as the child doesn't do harm, keep him, otherwise, you have no choice but to expel him. I wasn't at the *yechidus*, but sometimes one word makes all the difference, or even an emphasis on a word.

Maybe the Rebbe said that if a child does harm, then you should *consider* whether to send him out of the *yeshiva*. When the Rebbe said there's no choice, it wasn't about a teacher who can't take it anymore, who announces that he can't handle the boy and the boy must go before he ruins others.

The Baal Shem Tov says, "you will be a desired land," that within every Jew lies hidden treasures, and if you dig you find them. The same is true with a boy or girl who makes trouble. You need to dig and find the treasures.

When the Rebbe Rashab was four or five, he cried and asked why Hashem hadn't revealed Himself to him as He did to Avrohom Avinu. The Rebbe says that since then every Jewish child is capable of feeling the same way and asking the same question. If you see that a child does not cry about this, it is because the *mechanech* didn't speak to him with words that come from the heart.

Sometimes a problem *bachur* is a popular boy who influences others. This is a *bachur* who has a deep *nefesh* which affects others and the *mechanech* must approach the boy and give him what his

## HOW DO YOU BEGIN THE NEW Z'MAN

Rabbi Moshe Hillel: We've spoken about a change in approach on the part of the *mechanchim*. As school begins once again, it's important to know that all *talmidim* need a relaxed atmosphere and peace of mind. I remember when I attended the *yeshiva* in Lud, the *maggid shiur* would enter the classroom, open the Gemara, and ... he had to remember his *shiur*, what the Rashba finds difficult and what the Maharsha answers. He was oblivious to the thirty *bachurim* sitting there.

Last year I started the winter *z'man* after Tishrei. I brought cake and cold Coca Cola to the first *shiur*. I invited the boys to eat and drink, and said I wanted to hear how Yom Tov was. Each boy spoke, and we had a most enjoyable two hours. At the end, I gave them an hour's motivational talk in which I said how I thought a *bachur* ought to behave, what goals he ought to have, and together we planned a "work plan" for the next half a year.

The *talmidim* loved it. The next day, when I began the first Gemara *shiur* of the *z'man*, the atmosphere was terrific. Just as you need to learn in an atmosphere that is physically air-conditioned, so too you need air-conditioning for the soul.

*nefesh* wants (not only so that he won't influence others but also) so that he begins to grow.

In our *yeshiva* there were *bachurim* whom the *hanhala* wanted to expel. I took responsibility for them. When I arrived in the *zal*, I went over to the table of these *bachurim* and began hugging them. They laughed at me the *meshugana*, a *mashpia* who hugs the *bachurim*, but I know that the mother of this *bachur* yelled at him as though he was a juvenile delinquent, and his father is a harsh person. For nearly twenty years he hasn't gotten a hug. This boy needed love. He needed self-confidence. I gave this to him with affection. Why not hug him? Why not shower him with love?

I recommend that *menahalim* show affection. Why shouldn't every *mechanech* tell a *bachur*, "I thank Hashem that you are in my *yeshiva*. I love you. I respect you," and mean it?

There are a lot of problem homes these days. A busy father may have ten children, and his boys need lots of love. They need a hug that will give them self-confidence.

Don't tell me that it's not the *chassidische* way to kiss because the Rebbe Rashab said that when he wanted to kiss the Rebbe Rayatz when the latter was a boy, he gave him a "*chassidische* kiss," i.e., a *maamer chassidus* that he wrote.

What did the Rebbe Rashab say? That he *wanted* to kiss the Rebbe Rayatz, so he thought about how he could give him the *deepest* kiss, and he wrote a *maamer chassidus*.

I sat and thought: I want to give a *bachur* the deepest kind of kiss. I won't give him a *maamer*, but tonight, at eleven o'clock after school, I'll go to his house and talk to him. That's a

*chassidische* kiss.

Everybody is a *chelek Eloka mi'maal mamash*. In my humble opinion, the Rebbe gives us tremendous *kochos* in order that 99% of the *bachurim* will attain continuous growth in Torah and *mitzvos*. They won't all be *gaonim*, or *shluchim* or *ovdim*, but all of them will be upstanding Jews and good *chassidim*.

I ask those *menahalim* who want to

***If you see that a child is ruining other children, he cannot remain in the school. Chabad is based to a great extent on drawing close, but you musn't err and think that this means we allow negative things in our midst.***

throw boys out of *yeshiva*: We can go to India or California to be *mekarev* Jews who are living the lowest of lives, but our own *talmidim* who have *machshavos zaros* we can't be *mekarev*? The *shluchim* who have to be *mekarev* others learned from the Rebbe how to speak to a Jew, but many of our *mechanchim* didn't learn this, and then they go and blame the *bachur*.

When you expel a *bachur*, it's literally *dinei nefashos*. Before the war, when they expelled a *bachur*, he became a shoemaker or sold fruit and sat near his grandfather who recited T'hillim. Today when a boy is expelled, he goes to Dizengoff and Ben Yehuda, to all the bad things there. They can easily find members of the underworld. This boy doesn't deserve *kiruv*? He is not a *chelek Eloka mi'maal*?

Unfortunately, many *menahelim* don't understand *bachurim*. The *menahel* needs a nice *yeshiva*. What's important to him is what's written on the cover of the book and not what's going on in the boy's heart.

A Vizhnitzer *chassid* told me that in his *yeshiva*, the *rosh yeshiva* heard that a *bachur* was *mechalel Shabbos*. He quickly expelled him. The principal, who had a Jewish heart, said to the *rosh yeshiva*: I'm not a *meivin* but it says in Meseches Sanhedrin that you need a Sanhedrin of 23 men to judge *dinei nefashos* (capital cases). Did you have a Sanhedrin of 23 who decided to throw this boy out?

The *rosh yeshiva* said: If we take the boy back, I'm leaving!

The *menahel* said: Expelling a boy is *dinei nefashos*. If you leave, that's *dinei mamonus* (a monetary issue), and the Mishna says that *dinei mamonus* is judged with 3 people or one expert. I'm the one expert, and therefore, I prefer the *bachur* and will take him back into *yeshiva*. The *rosh yeshiva* angrily left the *yeshiva* and the next day the *menahel* had to give his *shiur*. Today that *bachur* is a great *rav* in Eretz Yisroel.

This was not a Lubavitcher *yeshiva*, but this *menahel* was a Jew who didn't go according to the rules, but according to the *neschama*. He didn't think about himself or the *yeshiva*, but about the boy.

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# THE YESHIVA: A PLACE TO LEARN, A PLACE TO LIVE

BY RABBI SHLOMO GALPERIN, A"H



*In the wealth of writings that Rabbi Shlomo Galperin left, he longingly describes the special days he spent in Tomchei T'mimim in Samarkand, Peking, and then in Pardes in Lud. \* He emotionally describes the atmosphere in yeshiva, the mashpiim, all with a fiery chassidic tone fitting for the days of Elul.*

## THE YESHIVA IN SAMARKAND

*This excerpt was found in Rabbi Galperin's writings. The beginning was missing.*

With the schedule of learning that was in Lubavitch, their being *chassidische melamdin*, *baalei madreiga* (men of stature) and *talmidei chachamim*, and there were also *farbrengens* led by Rabbi Nissan Nemenov, z"l, who also gave a general *shiur* in *Tanya*.

We learned [in the *yeshiva* in Samarkand] *D'aCh* (*chassidus*) and some learned *Derech Mitzvosecha*, the *mitzva* of belief in G-d, and there were boys who knew *Tanya* by heart. There were always those who spent a long time on their *davening* – on a weekday and especially on Shabbos – and they contemplated *chassidus*

before *davening* in *avodas ha't'filla*. Some spent a long time on *Krias Shma* at night. You could smell *chassidus* and *nigleh* and the correction of *middos* in the air.

Ah! How good and how precious it was to see a Jew who worked on correcting his *middos* in his daily life, making progress toward his goal and desire to fulfill the *shlichus* of "Hashem's wanting a dwelling place down below." A dwelling place is where the *etzem* (essence) is to be found in all its expansiveness, and Hashem decided that right here, in this world, He would have a dwelling place. A person makes a spiritual accounting and thinks about Hashem leaving the upper realms with its multiplicity of emanated beings, etc., and angels, etc., and stands behind our door and cries and pleads and asks, "open a door like the eye of a needle." Consider a human king who rules

over most of the world. He adorns himself in gold and silver and a golden crown set with sparkling diamonds. He surrounds himself with ministers and wise men and advisors and thousands of servants standing behind him, etc., all with swords on their sides. Imagine this great king standing like a pauper at the door of a simple man and asking and begging for a small corner of his house, and promising to make him a great man and to enrich him if only he gives him a place in his simple home. But the simple man is too lazy to properly welcome the mighty king, who descended from his royal palace. Is there any merit or explanation to defend such a man?

Moreover, consider a mighty king who leaves his royal palace with his entire retinue, ministers, advisors, and soldiers, and comes to the house of one of his people and asked for a corner of his home, something which not even the ministers are privileged with, etc. And this person grabs the king's head and thrusts it into a bucket full of filth, r"l. Is there atonement and forgiveness for such a person? When standing before the king it is forbidden to even motion with one's hand (as *Chazal* say, "one who signals with his hand in front of the king is deserving of death"), all the more so when immersing the king's head into a pile of refuse, r"l!

The *nimshal* (analogue) is in reference to the Jewish people and Hashem. By using thought for improper and forbidden things, it is like immersing the *neshamah*,

which is a part of G-d, as it were, in garbage. What is needed is *kabbalas ol* before Hashem. Indeed the animal soul remains as it was, but we must stay away from evil and do good, and it has to be with great effort in order to achieve true *avoda*, refinement of the *middos*. This is done primarily through the *avoda* of love, for there is no service like the service of love.

How pleasant it was in *yeshiva* to see how the *bachurim* stood in prayer, especially observing the *davening* of R' Nissan Nemenov, z"l. It really revived our souls. We had great spiritual pleasure hearing the *p'sukim* that R' Nissan said, which reached our ears with such sweetness, *chayus*, and pleasantness. They caused us a great elevation of our souls until we were liable to break out in song and enthusiastic dance hearing those portions. We were immersed in a *chassidic* environment, heart and mind. We saw how others learn and *daven* and how they *farbreng*, which is the foundation of life. Most people absorbed the image of R' Nissan, for they respected him and he served as a foundation who will never be forgotten, and rightly so.

We learned with R' Elya Chaim [Roitblatt]. We learned well with him. He is a great *yerei Shamayim*, a *talmid chacham* and *anav*, a *chassidic* man with elevated *middos*. He would also *farbreng* with us from time to time.

## THE YESHIVA IN POKING

The *farbrengens* in *yeshiva* were done in a special way. The *g'dolei* and *ziknei ha'chassidim* of that time, *farbrenged* with us: R' Yisroel Levin, R' Shlomo Chaim Kesselman, R' Nissan Nemenov who was called Nissan der Geller, z"l; as well as R' Avrohom Maiyor, a"h, R' Yehoshua Karp, R' Elya Chaim, R' Peretz Mochkin, z"l, and others.

They spoke about their *mashpiim* and about the elder *chassidim* that they knew and learned from, as well, of course, what they received from the Rebbeim, *nesiei Chabad*, and various aphorisms. Fortunate am I for having merited this.

The atmosphere in the *yeshiva* in Poking was one thread of involvement in *inyanei chassidus* and *avoda*, *t'filla*. It was all one thing. The *talmid* thought about the *Tosafos* and the commentators, as well as how to *daven*, what to think about when meditating, and after a *farbrengen* – what

we heard and how to implement it in daily life. And then washing for a meal, how to behave at mealtime, etc., the appropriate approach to *iskafia*, etc. Everybody was involved in the atmosphere of a different life than what we have today.

The *yeshiva* was not only a place to learn but the place where most *talmidim* lived. Even when *bachurim* were many miles away from the *yeshiva*, the goal was the *yeshiva*, and as the Rebbe says, not only a *kvius b'z'man* (a commitment in time), but also a *kvius b'nefesh* (a soul commitment). The main thing is the soul commitment. A *talmid* could have been far away, but his heart was very, very close to the *yeshiva*. Holy matters as well as personal matters were connected with the *yeshiva* because that was our home!

## LUD – ERETZ YISROEL

Before the great *mashpia*, R' Shlomo Chaim Kesselman, came from France to Eretz Yisroel, we learned with Rabbi Chaim Shaul Brook, z"l, who taught in Tel Aviv on Rechov HaRav Kook. There were classes of learned students who learned *Likkutei Torah* with him. We heard *shiurim* and *pilpulim* from Rabbi Dovid Chanzin, z"l.

The *gashmius* wasn't that great since there wasn't an organized *mosad*, and this was due to the lack of a qualified person to take care of the financial end of things as well as the means to do so. We slept elsewhere, in the *shul* on HaMeilitz Street, but the learning was somewhere else (in *shul*) and we ate in yet another location.

In the building on HaMeilitz learned such talented individuals as: Rabbi Yoel Kahn; Rabbi Gershon Mendel Gorelik, *shliach* to Italy; Rabbi Leibel Raskin, *shliach* to Morocco; Rabbi Meir Gruzman, one of the great teachers in Tomchei T'mimim of Kfar Chabad, and others. Many of these *talmidim* serve as *klei kodesh* in Eretz Yisroel and around the world.

When R' S.C. Kesselman came from France, we learned *chassidus* with him and R' Brook went to Rishon LTziyon and started a *yeshiva* there called Achei T'mimim, and put in a great deal of energy into it. He put his life's blood into founding that *yeshiva*.

After moving to Lud, they set up learning among the trees of the orchard and there was a pool for *t'villa*. In Lud, classes were divided and everything was wondrously organized. They also hired

more teachers and taught *limudei chol* such as arithmetic. The food was also organized and was served at set times because the kitchen operated properly. They got a great *rosh yeshiva* who said a *pilpul* a few times a week.

Among the *roshei yeshiva* were: the son-in-law of the *gaon* of Tchebin [Rabbi Boruch Shimon Schneerson, z"l] who later ran the *yeshiva* Kochav MiYaakov in Yerushalayim, and Rabbi Yisroel Grossman.

In the *zal* was a room for R' S.C. Kesselman the *mashpia*, where he learned and *davened* and where *talmidim* came to consult with him and to ask him questions in their learning.

The teachers and *madrichim* in *yeshiva* were *chassidim* and ardent *baalei Torah* who were selected by the *gadol* in *chassidus* and *nigleh*, Rabbi Avrohom Drizin. He was among the people about whom the Rogatchover said, "There came to speak with me, these blonde and dark-haired Jews, who know how to learn."

Rabbi Avrohom Drizin was known by the name Avrohom Maiyor for the city he came from. He was a *chassid* of the Rebbe Rashab, a man who was completely devoted to the Rebbeim. His *mesirus nefesh* for Torah and *mitzvos* in Russia is well known. He was a giant of the spirit who, along with other Lubavitchers, supported Jews so they would remain strong in Torah and *mitzvos*.

His *davening* and *farbrenging* were elixirs of life which healed the soul for all the young men and *talmidim* and *bachurim* who thirstily drank in his every word. He was a fiery flame, and was a source of energy for the soul. As was known to those who *farbrenged* with him, he was the first speaker everywhere since he was clever and had been educated among the *g'dolei ha'chassidim* in Lubavitch and elsewhere. As *chassidus* would put it, he was an *ish tziyur*, and here in Lud, before he moved to Brooklyn, the *talmidim* got strong and deep foundations in *chassidus* from him.

\* \* \*

When writing even a little bit about the *talmidim* who were forged in the fire of *chassidus*, the *ziknei ha'chassidim*, who educated us according to what they saw from the Rebbeim, one senses just how unworthy he really is. And I, who write these lines, merited to be among these students because of *z'chus avos*.

# THE LONG WAY HOME

BY NOSSON AVROHOM

*Shabbos meals in Sydney, davening on Yom Kippur in Bangkok, and a long visit at the Chabad house in Venice, all led Shai Ezran to the Chabad yeshiva in Tzfas. Today, a number of years later, he runs his own Chabad house in Goa, India.*

Goa is a state on the west coast of India. A Portuguese colony until 1961, Goa is particularly known for its beautiful beaches and relaxed lifestyle. The fragrance of things in bloom strikes the nostrils of visitors. Long rows of palm trees face the beaches of the Indian Ocean.

Some people know that not that long ago, there was a religious Jewish community here. A little over thirty years ago, the youth began moving away. All attempts by the old-timers to restrain emigration failed. Today two older Jewish women live in Goa after returning from the West.

This is where three *bachurim*, with plans for reaching out to the many Israelis who visit Goa, came. “Most of the Israeli tourists stay in a village called Anjuna, which is why we headed there and looked for a suitable place for our headquarters. After days of looking, we found a spacious building in the center of the village,” says Shai Ezran.

“When we checked it out, we saw a

cross on the gate of the building. We weren’t going to allow it to remain there even one day, and in the dark of night we removed it. By the next day, word of what we had done had gotten around and the entire town was up in arms. Due to pressure from the neighbors, the owner of the building asked us to leave.

Our help came from an unexpected quarter. One of the distinguished members of the town came to us and blessed us for coming. This was the signal for things to calm down.

“On the first Shabbos we hosted over 300 Israelis. It was tremendously exciting. Many of them said happily, ‘We knew you’d come here. There’s no place in the world that you don’t reach out to.’

“One of the first things we did was look for a place to *toivel* every morning. We looked for a secluded place on the beach and came across a well-hidden spot with four rocks which formed a kind of enclosed pool that had steps naturally built in. It was like this mikva was here and waiting for us since the

beginning of time!

“Every Friday it was exciting to greet lots of Israelis who came early in the day to help prepare for Shabbos. On Shabbos the place was packed with dozens of Israeli tourists, often far more than we expected. The courtyard was crowded, but still they insisted on staying and enjoying the singing from outside.

“Every day of the week, from early morning on, dozens of them came to the Chabad house. Sometimes they stayed until late at night. They attended *shiurim* in *chassidus* and learned the Rebbe’s teachings. We also had *shiurim* in *inyanei Moshiach* and *Geula*. The *shiurim* were tailored to the crowd. The traditional ones quickly joined in the *davening* and *shiurim*. Their questions were relevant and substantive. The kibbutzniks took longer to get involved, but the Israeli magnetism didn’t leave anyone feeling indifferent. Many of them confessed that back home they would have been embarrassed to enter any religious place, and forget about learning about Judaism! But over here, they felt completely different.”

\*\*\*

Shai grew up in a traditional home in Ashdod. “The guy with the ponytail,” is what his friends called him. When he was sixteen, he heard about a special course in haircutting, given by a world-famous hairdresser. He left school, enrolled in the course, and was accepted. When he finished the course, he worked for a year in an exclusive salon in Tel Aviv.





Despite his traditional upbringing, as an adult he found himself looking into Eastern religions. When his friends were drafted, he worked at whatever he could in order to save up enough money to travel to the East.

The first stop he made in realizing his dream was Sydney, Australia, where he met up with other Israelis. He joined them on their tour.

“It was a period of time when I lacked clarity in my life. Each one, in his way, dealt with the difficulty in not understanding the meaning of life. There was a boy in the group who was also from a traditional family, and together we spent hours discussing religion and *hashgacha pratis*,” recalls Shai.

Like many young Israelis, Shai covered all of northern Australia and the Far East without foregoing a single dangerous adventure. Throughout his travels he was preoccupied with thoughts about the meaning of life and the proper way to live. He quickly

reached the point where having a good time was no longer satisfying, and he needed to find meaning.

Shai credits his involvement in *Yiddishkeit* and Chabad in particular, to the Friday nights he spent in *shul* in Sydney. “The money I had, had run out and I headed for Sydney again. I found some Israelis who had just come. Together we rented an apartment and each one did his own thing.

“One of the customs that Israelis in Sydney seem to have is that on Erev Shabbos they all stop what they’re doing and head for the Chabad *shul*. The *t’filla* there is very special, with singing and real *simcha*. After the *davening* there’s a Shabbos meal in the course of which the guests forget their daily worries and experience an authentic Shabbos table. I’ll never forget the amazing atmosphere, the singing, and the unusual *achdus* that these meals provided the participants.

“We got together the next morning too, for a number of hours, and one of

the *chassidim*, an old man with a distinguished look, would give us *shiurim* in *sichos*. I remember that despite our ignorance, his words left a tremendous and unforgettable impression.

“Over time, more and more of the Jewish *neshama* was revealed, so that one day, while having a routine conversation with my mother, I asked her – to her tremendous surprise – to send me a pair of *t’fillin*. I explained that I wanted to use them every day. She was in shock.

“When I left Australia for the Far East, despite the hardships involved, I put on *t’fillin* every morning and said some *t’fillos* that I remembered from my childhood. I spent a long time with three other Israelis in an encampment somewhere deep in the forest, far from civilization.

“The year ended and it was almost Yom Kippur. I felt a strong yearning to fast and *daven* on this special day. I knew that the place I was in wouldn’t allow me



A natural *mikva*



The entrance to the Chabad house in Goa

to do this, and that I had to travel to Bangkok. Friends told me that some Lubavitcher there did programs with Israelis.

“The holy day was approaching and in my mind I could picture how millions of Jews would be making their way to various *shuls* spread out across the world. This thought strengthened my resolve to get up and do something. I packed my stuff and hit the road.

Due to the lack of motorized transportation, I covered the distance on foot, with my backpack on my shoulders. After over fifteen wearying hours, I was walking the narrow streets of Bangkok. I headed for the local Chabad center. The Yom Kippur *t'fillos* in the company of the *shliach* were uplifting. You can say that the Yom Kippur *t'fillos* in Bangkok pushed me a few steps further on my path to Judaism.

“When I returned to Sydney for the third time, I began looking for work. I found a job in a salon. Along with the new job, I began learning more about Judaism. My thirst for the complete truth intensified.

“I went to Holland in the hopes of finding solutions. I met a Jewish guy who, upon hearing about my thirst for Judaism, told me about a place in Amsterdam where there were *shiurim*. After a long trip, I found myself entering a corner of Judaism much like an island

of *k'dusha* in a sea of the profane. I was amazed. It was an unbelievable sight: in the middle of a busy street sat a few dozen *bachurim* learning. One of the *bachurim* noticed me and invited me to join them. A few minutes passed and I found myself immersed in Torah study.

“I spent a few weeks in this *yeshiva*, and from there I went on to Venice.

There too, I met a *shliach*, Rabbi Rachamim Benin. I was a guest of the Chabad house for a few weeks, and there I learned Jewish concepts and *sichos* of the Rebbe. My clothes, which were in the Far Eastern style, didn't stop me from progressing towards Judaism, stage after stage. Without thinking much about it, I often found myself

## THANK YOU CHABAD

Many thank you letters are written in the Chabad house Guest Book. We picked two of them:

Wonderful and Dear Anshei Chabad,

We don't have the words to describe the fantastic experience we had here with you. We learned a lot from you, and there's no doubt that we'll remember you through our life's journey, until the coming of *Moreinu V'Rabbeinu Melech HaMoshiach*.

Many thanks,  
Yossi and Dafna  
Moshiach Now!!

\* \* \*

We enjoyed every minute of our stay in your warm, good, blessed and holy presence. *Yashar ko'ach and chazak v'amatz*, may your footsteps lead in the pathways of HaKadosh Baruch Hu, and with you – all the Jewish people, and all this on the way to the true and complete and eternal *Geula*.

Thank you Shai, Menachem, and Refael for the beautiful moments of *chesed, simcha*, joy, and light. All your actions should bear fruits among us, the “*am segula*,” and we will remain together as one.

Yaniv and the rest of the gang



With Israeli tourists



Opening hearts and souls

accompanying them to put *t'fillin* on the many Jewish tourists who flooded the area.

“It didn’t take much longer for me to arrive at the Chabad *yeshiva* in Tzfas where I finally switched to *chassidic* garb, got a *chassidische* haircut, and seriously tackled *nigleh*, *chassidus*, and *Shulchan Aruch*. All this was done in a fantastic atmosphere of *hiskashrus*. I knew this was my place.”

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“After a year on *k'vutza*, I found myself wanting to go on *shlichus*. For weeks I thought about this seriously, and I heard that they were looking for *bachurim* to go on *shlichus* to Goa, India.

“One evening, I sat in 770 and wrote a long letter to the Rebbe MH”M about what I had experienced and how I wanted to go on *shlichus*. I put the letter into a volume of *Igros Kodesh*, and the Rebbe’s answer was in volume 7, p. 229: **Blessings to all those involved in the fund, both the participants and the helpers, that Hashem should grant the merit to the Chabad house that they be compelled to give free loans not because of the material necessity but only in order to be a *merkava* to the *s'fira* of *chesed* of Atzilus, as told in the *sichos* of the Rebbe, my father-in-law.**

“After consulting with my *mashpia* and getting his approval, I spoke to the

director of Merkas L'Inyonei Chinuch and the Rebbe’s secretary, Rabbi Sholom Mendel Simpson, and told him about what had occurred. He spoke with me at length, a number of times, about what *shlichus* and the *ratzon* of the *meshaleiach*

***“When we checked it out, we saw a cross on the gate of the building. We weren’t going to allow it to remain there even one day, and in the dark of night we removed it. By the next day, word of what we had done had gotten around and the entire town was up in arms...”***

are about, and what was demanded of me as *shliach*.

“Things moved very fast after that, despite the many difficulties I had to contend with. I went to Goa with two other T’mimim, Refael Kadvil and Menachem Asraf. One of them knows how to *shecht*.”

With Hashem’s help every step of the way, Shai, Menachem, and Refael left for Goa, prepared for the mission they had undertaken, i.e., returning lost Jewish souls to their Father in heaven.

\*\*\*

The threesome saw results within the first few weeks. A group of boys from Tel Aviv who would visit the Chabad house every Shabbos, enchanted by the *t'fillos* and the Shabbos meals, decided that every Friday they would go to another part of Goa, with wine, challos, and other Shabbos foods, and make Shabbos with the local tourists.

“The first Yom Tov we had to prepare for was Purim. A few days before Purim, a few Israelis showed up and offered to assist in preparing the Chabad house for the Yom Tov. The girls helped cook, and the boys helped decorate and straighten the place up. Within a day the place was unrecognizable. The floor had been carefully scrubbed, the yard cleaned up, and some gorgeous plants found a new home. Many tables had been assembled

from all over Goa, and the place was ready for action!"

News that the Chabadnikim had come to town and were making a huge Purim feast, spread quickly. Dozens of tourists came for the Megilla reading that night, among them many who were hearing the Megilla being read for the first time in their lives.

After the Megilla reading, everybody sat down to the Purim *seuda*. Despite the physical and spiritual distance from home, they could still eat hamentashen and other Yom Tov foods. The atmosphere was Purim'dik, and every hour brought more and more groups of Israelis. A lot of work was done the next day, too.

Another month of outreach passed and Goa was beginning to wake up from the long winter. The mountains became stunningly scenic. The spring weather was a change from the rain and frost. This is when tourists leave Goa for other parts of India and the Far East.

The other two T'mimim left, leaving Shai alone. "I was uncertain about whether to make a Pesach *seider* or go back to Eretz Yisroel until the next

season. I had also used up my money. I put a letter into the *Igros Kodesh*, and the letter I opened to was a *hooaa* from which I learned that I had to stay and make Pesach in Goa. At the end of the letter, the Rebbe writes, "And thanks to the woman who gave a donation.

"Although only five days remained until Pesach, and I didn't have matzos and wine, I believed that the Rebbe's *bracha* would be fulfilled. I told all the Israelis remaining in Goa that there would be a Pesach *seider*. I began feverishly preparing for Yom Tov.

"The next day, a Jewish woman who had heard about the upcoming *seider*, came and gave a handsome contribution. That same day, an Israeli *bachur* who visited the Chabad house, loved the idea too, and gave a nice donation.

"A few days before Pesach, four *bachurim* came from Tzfas, each one bringing lots of wine and matzos. Although we didn't expect too many tourists because this was the first *seider* being made in Goa, and most Israelis had left the area, over 100 tourists showed up. They were all impressed by the turnout.

"The *seider* was incredible. The singing could be heard throughout the quiet village. It reached a point that, the next day, a group of soldiers were flown in special from Bombay, at the request of the local governor, in order to protect the celebrating Jews.

"The role of a Chabad house like this is multifaceted. Along with the Jewish content that we provide, we also deal with Israelis who fall prey to drugs. We were a great help to them as we contacted their families in Eretz Yisroel and helped them get in touch with their sons in order to fly them back home.

"As to what the tourists think of the message of Moshiach and *Geula* – in Goa, the *besuras ha'Geula* and the identity of Moshiach are accepted matter-of-factly. Many of them are familiar with the topic from their visits to other Chabad houses in India or other places. Often, the guests, on their own, start singing "Yechi." Sometimes, the Shabbos meals in Goa are like the Shabbos meals in the *yeshiva* in Tzfas."

At the moment, Shai is in Eretz Yisroel, preparing for the next season of *shlichus* in Goa.

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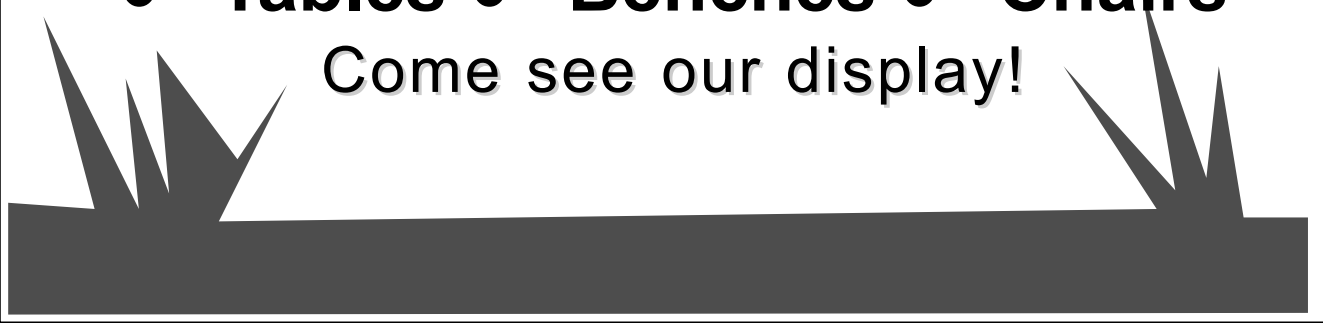
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# WHY THE ATTACK FAILED AND WON'T SUCCEED

BY SHAI GEFEN

On Shabbos, Parshas Ki Seitzei, the leaders of Hamas were under one roof planning their next murderous attacks against Jews. They were more pleased than ever because of their success in reorganizing during the Hudna and in establishing a better infrastructure for their acts of murder. Sheik Achmad Yassin, who was freed by Israel under Netanyahu, sat at the head of the table and gave instructions.

The intelligence information was precise. Nothing was missing, and the success of the mission was assured, except that they failed and all the murderers were left unharmed. How come? Apparently the U.S. had given the green light for the attack, but had asked that the size of the bomb be small (unlike what they used in Iraq) so that innocent people wouldn't be killed!

Understand? The terrorist leaders have convened and only because of American pressure, they reduce the size of the bomb so the world shouldn't shake its head and tsk tsk! Reducing the size of the bomb made all the difference between black and white, between life and death, between the murder of Jews and the prevention of the murder of Jews.

The question is: how did the prime minister and the heads of Security allow these murderers to live until now and kill Jews? If they knew where they were, and what they were planning, why weren't they eliminated before?

Not only did they not kill them, but

just a month ago they made an agreement with them indirectly, namely a ceasefire. They gave the murderers a free hand to kill Jews in cold blood.

Apparently when you play with the lives of Jews, the *siyata d'Shmaya* is missing, as we've seen a number of times in recent weeks. The Rebbe often stressed that when Jews behave according to the laws in *Shulchan Aruch*, they have Heaven's help for success, because true security is only from Hashem, Guardian of Israel, and when we do as we should, then He does His part. But when Jews harm their security (the Road Map, Hudna, Abu Mazen) then they are unsuccessful.

Another question that needs to be asked is: What happened all of a sudden that Israel is out to liquidate the heads of Hamas? Israel has known about them and

their terrorist activities for three years. Fathers and sons, mothers and babies, boys and girls, old and young, brides and grooms, have been killed, yet the response against the terrorists has been minimal, so what happened now?

Maybe – I'm cautiously speculating – it's in order to change the headlines from the corruption of Sharon and his sons to another topic? *Chas v'chalila*. It's forbidden to suspect a Jew, especially our prime minister. At least we can comfort ourselves with the thought that they've come to the right conclusion. We need to cut off the head of the snake.

(Ed. note: Three days later, on Tuesday, 15 people were killed and dozens injured in two attacks, one in Tel Aviv, and one in Yerushalayim; Hamas was responsible.)



## HYPOCRITES

After the attack on the #2 bus, we read how President Bush was urging Sharon to eliminate terror and had given him the green light to wipe out Hamas. Then a relatively small bomb was dropped on them and failed to kill them.

“If we wanted to get them, no matter what,” said a senior security official, “nothing would have remained of the building except for dust. That’s the American policy, yet it was the Americans who asked us to be more moderate when it comes to stamping out terrorism.”

## THE RIGHT (AND OBLIGATION) TO REMAIN SILENT

The Mishna says, “because you drowned, you will be drowned.” For three years now, we’ve been hearing Sharon talk about the importance of restraint and not responding to acts of terrorism. “Restraint is a component of strength,” he explained knowingly, hours after twenty young people were murdered in the Dolphinarium. We’ve often heard his thoughts about why he chooses “the right to silence” and has not reacted.

Unfortunately, some people have been taken in by Sharon’s delusions, and were certain that if Sharon – Mr. Security – was silent, then there was something to it. However, Sharon’s shallowness and cynicism have been shown for what they are. Terrorism has struck time and again, and his right to remain silent hasn’t worked. And his strength, in the guise of restraint, hasn’t helped either.

The Sharon family is under police investigation following a number of acts of corruption which seemingly have to do with them. The police are waiting for Papa Sharon to return from India. Here too, the Sharon family prefers the “right to silence” and no reaction. “The right to silence” which was used regarding the blood of our people, is now being used to the police. Apparently there too, they have to act with “restraint” with the investigators.

Just as the Sharon family’s thunderous silence raises a storm, so should it become even more intensified when we’re talking about the lives of a thousand Jews. We need to know there is a Judge and justice, sin and punishment. We don’t rejoice over

trouble, *chalila*, yet the Sharon family ought to make a serious *cheshbon nefesh* about why they are in trouble with the law.

## “THE TRUTH IS, THEY ARE GREATLY MISTAKEN”

The murderous attack on the #2 bus raised many questions about why it happened. We’ve already addressed this from various perspectives, including the *cheshbon nefesh* that *chareidi leaders* ought to make about the *pikuach nefesh* of millions of Jews.

A few months before the attack, two unfortunate meetings took place. We need to remember them, not because we want to talk disparagingly about Jews, but in order to learn lessons and to understand how important it is that the views and voices of our *rabbanim* be heard.

The first meeting took place about three months before the bus attack. *Rabbanei Chabad* spoke to a distinguished *Admur* about something. The *Admur* responded angrily and told them, “I see that you’ve put out a *Kol Korei* against the Road Map, saying it’s not relevant. Why aren’t you fighting against budget cuts that affect children when there are hungry children?”

A few weeks after that, there was a meeting of hundreds of *rabbanim* to *pasken* against giving away land. A delegation was sent to a distinguished *rav* who heads a party that supported the Oslo Accords. They invited him to the meeting. According to what was reported, the *rav* yelled at them and asked, “Why are you only interested in Eretz Yisroel and not in the cuts for *yeshivos’* budgets?”

It grates. *Chareidi* leaders are approached by *rabbanim* and are asked to join a protest against the Road Map which entails palpable danger to the lives of millions of Jews in Eretz Yisroel, and they respond negatively and even yell at them for not protesting budget cuts.

We’ve already publicized the letter of Knesset member Litzman from Agudas Yisroel who writes, “Yahadus HaTorah doesn’t get involved in security matters.”

On countless occasions, the Rebbe MH”M warned that when *rabbanim* distort *halacha* or refrain from saying what the *halacha* is, this itself causes the



*Not only did they not kill them, but just a month ago they made an agreement with them indirectly, namely a ceasefire. They gave the murderers a free hand to kill Jews in cold blood.*

continuation of the danger and the bloodshed of hundreds of Jews, *r”l*. In a special *sicha* that was said on Shabbos Parshas B’Reishis 5740, the Rebbe explained this painfully at length. It is important to quote it here in order to understand the seriousness of the matter:

**There is a clear *p’sak din* in *Shulchan Aruch* that when gentiles besiege a Jewish city, even if they only ask for hay and straw, and even if they really mean it, and even if they are only “preparing to come,” it is a *mitzva* of the Torah to take weapons – even on Shabbos – and stand on the border, in order to prevent gentiles from entering Eretz Yisroel.**

As a commandment of the Torah, this is not a “*g’zeira*” or a “*chukka*,” but it has a reason, something logical that can be understood intellectually, according to the

seichel of Torah, that, *r"l*, this can open the land before them. This is a matter of *pikuach nefesh*.

Someone who wants to understand this *p'sak din* in *Shulchan Aruch* differently, is going against the *Shulchan Aruch*, and against the danger of opening the land and literal *pikuach nefesh*.

There are those who don't understand what the noise is about in saying that so-and-so explains the law in *Shulchan Aruch* differently. The explanation is: due to the doubled and redoubled darkness of *Galus*, it has come to a shocking state when there are those who think to themselves that if Jews *pasken* that it's forbidden to give away land, according to *halacha*, this bears no connection to the world, since the world doesn't ask what the *p'sak din* is in this case. And since they don't ask, even when you tell them the *halacha*, they don't listen. Therefore, they maintain, there's no difference "to conclude the discussion according to the [practical] *halacha*," and

there's no point in *paskening* this *l'halacha*, because it won't help anyway.

The truth is that they are greatly mistaken, since this is a crucial matter – that the Torah is the *balabus* of this physical and material world, and the condition of the world is established according to *piskei din Torah*.

As we've said a number of times, there's an explicit Yerushalmi, and it's *paskened l'halacha* regarding [the verse] "L'Keil gomer alai" that there is great significance in how Jews *pasken halacha*, for if the world was different before the *p'sak halacha*, after the *p'sak halacha* the world changes to fit the *halacha*. A Jew who thinks that the Torah can't *pasken* how the physical world should be, i.e., that the world will continue to act in opposition to Torah, is an *apikorus!*

*if the world was different before the p'sak halacha, after the p'sak halacha the world changes to fit the halacha. A Jew who thinks that the Torah can't pasken how the physical world should be, i.e., that the world will continue to act in opposition to Torah, is an apikorus!*

the world to act like the *p'sak*, you need a majority to *pasken* this way, since, "incline after the majority." Those who remain silent, and those who don't want to get involved in this *din*, need to know that this silence won't help; this silence will cause more danger, *r"l!*

Every moment in danger means that many Jews live in fear. So why is the danger prolonged? Because there are those who scream against the *halacha*, and those who know the *halacha* but they say the *p'sak* privately. As explained at length, you don't need to explain to anyone the importance of the *inyan* of *pikuach nefesh*.

When any *ray* clarifies the matter and arrives at a *p'sak halacha*, he tips the scale, even if he wasn't asked, and even if he thinks that's he's a *batlan* and not a politician. Since this is a matter of *pikuach nefesh*, "*yafa shaa achas kodem*" (the earlier the better), which means "*rega echad kodem*" (one moment earlier).

This should be done in a manner of "don't fear anyone," since "G-d is with us." When he will *pasken* this *din*, nobody can harm him. The claim that he is in danger because of threats, imagined *pikuach nefesh* of an individual can't compare to actual *pikuach nefesh* of dozens – I don't want to say hundreds – of Jews!



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**CORRECTION:**

*We regret the inaccuracies in issue 429 regarding the story of Yaakov Lefkefker found on page 20.*



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## A SIMPLE AD SOLVES A COMPLEX PROBLEM

It started as a simple ad in one, then two newspapers. "What makes someone Jewish" was the opener. The article promoted the book by Rabbi Dr. Immanuel Schochet *Who Is A Jew?* Of course, this seifer had already been available for quite some time. The charge of the ad was to make it easy and fun to present this title to a wider and perhaps unaffiliated public. The reader could either send in a nominal fee to have the seifer mailed to his house, or he could go to the Shofer Association's website ([www.whoisajew.com](http://www.whoisajew.com)) and download it for free!

This is the Shofer Organization's project, under the direction of Rav Yitzchok Springer, to educate the masses on *Mi Hu Yihudi*. The response has been overwhelming! The following is but one of the many letters the Shofer Association receives every week since the ad first appeared. May this be an inspiration for all of us to continue our efforts in this and in all of the *mivtzaim*.

*Subject: I was quite impressed.*

*May G-d's blessings be upon you taking the time and effort to write this short but concise and encompassing analysis of the issue. As was pointed out in the piece, it really is not a question of "Who is a Jew" but rather "Who is a Halachic Jewish Convert." I must agree, the secular government of Israel or any country has no business deciding a citizen's religion.*

*I personally am a convert under a Conservative Rabbi and Conservative beis din. There is certainly no doubts to the depths of my soul nor to the inner chambers of my heart that the quality of my conversion is real. And, based on all readings, including this one, it was halachic. Except that Orthodox would not accept my rabbi as a rabbi nor the authority of the beis din. But, if you met my Rabbi, you would accept him as fully*

*halachic. And if you met the other two dayanim, you would accept them as well to be halachic.*

*But that aside, after reading this, I am going to seek an Orthodox beis din. Because, it is important for me to be accepted as a Jew by all Jews, and to be able to pray with Jews no matter where I go.*

*I adopted the name.....upon my conversion. If going to an Orthodox beis din and pleading my "case" is the only way I can fulfill the meaning of my second name, then that is what I will do.*

*B'shalom,*

## CLASSES IN T'HILLIM

Last week we had a very interesting evening in the holy city of Tzfas and we would like to tell you about it.

Mrs. Z.O. is a loyal and devoted follower of the Rebbe. For many years, as her birthday comes around, she writes a letter to the Rebbe regarding the activities she is involved with. She also asks for a *bracha* for the coming year in all that she does.

This past year as her birthday approached, she wrote to the Rebbe as usual. In answer she received a beautiful blessing. Along with the blessing was the following instruction: in addition to the classes that she teaches, she should add one more. She must begin teaching T'hillim in depth.

She began teaching the following week at the home of a Mrs. S.B.H. The word spread. Women came to learn and everyone enjoyed the class thoroughly.

Up until then, T'hillim had been something that people would do because it was expected. It was something to resort to when they were in trouble or in need of some kind. It was why they would get up earlier on Shabbos Mevarchim: so that they would have time to finish the entire book. It was a good way to pray for others, by reciting each chapter that was appropriate for the age of the

person. But we never really understood what we were saying or the depth of the meaning.

This class provided a very good opportunity to explore the beauty of the words and the meaning behind each sentence or phrase. It seems that David HaMelech enters our minds and our hearts and identifies with all the trials and tribulations that we experience and rationalize. It is as though he knows exactly what I am experiencing now, some 3,000 years later. We can find consolation as he relaxes us and speaks to us on our terms. Nothing is too trivial for him to mention or too mundane. He gives us the right to be who we are in very real terms. Without fail David HaMelech always leads us to the truth.

There were some mornings that she would learn T'hillim with the commentaries of the Alshich HaKadosh. He too would speak about the problems that were either bothering me or that I was thinking about that very day. I was always uplifted.

Having completed learning the entire book, which took about nine months, I made a *siyum* at the home of Mrs. D.A. Everyone who was invited came, and we learned the last chapter, 150.

The result from this *farbrengen* was that I have been asked to teach two more classes starting from the very beginning. With the help of Hashem we will go through the entire book of T'hillim using the Alshich's commentary.

This was the very instruction that I received for my birthday, to add classes in T'hillim. This was truly a very uplifting experience, one that benefited not only me but all those who are willing to share.

I just wanted to share this with you.

*May we all be inscribed for a safe and healthy and peaceful year.*