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

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APPROACHING TRUE UNITY

SICHOS IN ENGLISH



SHABBOS PARSHAS VA'YIGASH; 9TH OF TEIVES, 5750

1. The names of the different Torah portions express the nature of each of these portions, and include the entire portion within them. This week, the entire portion is characterized by the word “*VaYigash*” (and he approached.)

We must understand how the name “*VaYigash*” includes within it all the events mentioned in the portion, among them, the revelation of Yosef to his brothers and the descent of Yaakov and his household to Egypt. Although these events resulted from “*VaYigash*,” Yehuda approaching Yosef, it does not appear that the word “*VaYigash*” includes those events. In addition, the sale of the Egyptians and their land to Pharaoh, described at the conclusion of the Torah portion, does not appear to have any connection to “*VaYigash*.”

The *haftora* always presents a theme from the Torah reading of that week. The *haftora* chosen for Parshas *VaYigash* expresses the general significance of the name “*VaYigash*.” The *haftora* relates how in the Messianic age, the kingdom of Yosef will be united with the kingdom of Yehuda. Our Sages explain that both Yehuda and Yosef were kings who represented different spiritual approaches. Their meeting symbolizes a unification of these different

approaches. The *haftora* relates that this will initiate the era when “I will take Yisroel from among the nations...and make of them a single nation... One king will reign over them.”

VaYigash represents the oneness of the Jewish people and the oneness that pervades the world at large. It expresses “the great general principle of the Torah: love your fellowman as yourself.” *VaYigash* demonstrates how this unity is expressed, not only as a spiritual concept, but on the level of deed.

Before *davening*, we state, “I hereby take upon myself the fulfillment of the *mitzva*, ‘Love your fellowman as yourself.’” It is not sufficient to meditate on this concept. Although saying the words could interrupt a person’s concentration and preparation for prayer, the Alter Rebbe, in his *siddur*, nevertheless requires the statement to be made.

Instituting this statement before *davening* is significant, indeed. To explain: From a spiritual perspective, there is nothing revolutionary about the concept of the oneness of the Jewish people, as the Jewish souls are “all fitting, with a single Father. Therefore, all Yisroel are called brothers because of the source of their souls in one G-d... It is [rather] the bodies which separate them.” When the soul descends into a

physical body, however, factors arise which can separate one Jew from another. This is particularly true in the time of exile, when the Jews are “scattered and dispersed among the nations.” Even in the midst of such separation, from a spiritual perspective, the Jews are one and share a single desire — to fulfill G-d’s will. The *mitzva* of *ahavas Yisroel* is intended to establish and express this unity within the world at large. Therefore, it is important to make a verbal statement of this unity. “The movement of one’s lips is considered as deed.” This deed leads to other deeds of oneness, e.g., the distribution of *tzedaka* by the other limbs of the body.

VaYigash represents Jewish unity expressed in the physical world. When Jews unite with *ahavas Yisroel*, their unity has the potential to bring about even greater blessings than those brought down by the angel Michael.

This concept applies to the purpose of our service in the world. The entire world is pervaded by Divine oneness. Our task is to recognize and express that oneness. Every particular creation that experiences this unity in our “world of separation” reveals its ultimate purpose, the revelation of and expression of G-d’s glory.

Based on the above, we can

understand the connection of *VaYigash* to the other events mentioned in the Torah portion. The entire portion revolves around the concept of unity, the beginning focusing on the unity of the Jewish people, and the conclusion, on the expression of unity in the world at large.

The meeting between Yehuda and Yosef resulted in a connection between Yosef and his brothers after so many years of separation. This has been the source of the oneness of the Jewish people throughout the centuries, which will reach its fullest expression in the Messianic era. The union between Yehuda and Yosef also represents and brings about unity throughout the world. To quote the Zohar, it brings about “the drawing close of one world to another world to establish oneness between them, uniting the upper world with the lower world.”

Unity among the Jewish people (for whose sake the world was created), establishes unity in the world. Thus, first the *haftora* says, “I will make you into a single nation,” and then, “And the nations will know that I am the L-rd...and the L-rd will be King over the entire earth; on that day, the L-rd shall be one and His name, one.”

Parshas *VaYigash* describes the settlement of Yaakov and his descendants in the land of Egypt, morally, the lowest place on the earth. The Torah describes Egypt as “the nakedness of the land” and the Egyptians as “the most depraved of the nations.” Their spiritual level was so low that Pharaoh, their king, considered himself a god, saying, “The river is mine for I have made it.”

Yaakov and his sons settled in Egypt to elevate the land and to reveal G-d’s oneness there, as stated before, the ultimate revelation of G-d’s oneness comes in the place of division. The potential for this service of refinement comes from *VaYigash*, the unity established between Yehuda and Yosef.

[Also of significance is Yaakov’s “sending Yehuda before him to show the way,” interpreted by our Sages to mean

that he sent him to establish a *yeshiva*, which in turn opened the gateways to the transformation of Egypt into a place of Torah.]

These activities led to *VaYechi* (and Yaakov lived,” interpreted by our Sages to mean that the best years of Yaakov Avinu’s life were spent in Egypt. He and his sons dedicated themselves to Torah study there, thus, transforming the darkness of Egypt into light.

2. The all-inclusive nature of this unity is also accentuated by the conclusion of the Torah portion, which describes Yosef’s acquisition of the Egyptians and their land for Pharaoh. A superficial reading of this portion, however, may lead to an opposite conclusion. But, in truth, this narrative also reflects the expression of the oneness of G-d.

The narrative mentions how Yosef

Unity among the Jewish people establishes unity in the world.

did not buy the lands of the pagan priests. On the surface, it would seem that their idol worship gave them a certain degree of power, which even Yosef had to reckon with. It would, therefore, seem to represent the very opposite of the oneness of G-d. Nevertheless, the service of *VaYigash*, particularly the contribution of Yehuda, is able to reveal G-d’s oneness even on this plane.

Yehuda represents the service of *hoda’a*, the acknowledgement of G-d with *bittul* (self-nullification) and *mesirus nefesh* (self-sacrifice). Yehuda nullified himself to Yosef, thus he approached Yosef. Yosef was, — and in the present age, is — the *mashpia* (source of influence) and Yehuda, the *mekabel* (recipient). The *bittul* of Yehuda is what leads to his unity with Yosef.

Yehuda represents “those who serve

G-d with their bodies,” while Yosef represents “those who serve G-d with their souls.” To establish unity between them, Yehuda had to express *bittul* to Yosef.

This *bittul* increased Yosef’s power and gave him the potential to reveal G-d’s oneness completely, breaking the power of the Egyptian idolaters. Yosef alone did not have the power to break through and express G-d’s oneness on this level; only when he joined with Yehuda was this possible.

To interpret these concepts in the realm of our individual service: On the level of Yosef, the level of Torah study, the possibility exists for such a lack of *bittul* that a person feels self-important. The approach of Yehuda, the level of deed, on the contrary, involves pushing oneself against one’s nature with *bittul* and self-sacrifice. The person does not feel his individual identity at all. He is totally absorbed in carrying out the deed he was commanded to perform.

Thus, Yehuda introduces the potential for Yosef to experience this complete level of *bittul* as well, to study Torah *lishma* (for G-d’s sake) with self-sacrifice. This perspective sees no external goals for Torah study, not even the attainment of a portion in the World to Come. Rather, one studies out of love, “because one’s soul is bound up in the love of G-d and is totally obsessed with it.”

This point is implied in Yaakov’s sending Yehuda to establish a house of study. Although study is the realm of Yosef, in order for Torah study to transform Egypt into a place of Torah, to break the barriers of Egyptian paganism, the influence of Yehuda is necessary. His *bittul* provides the power to reveal G-d’s oneness.

Thus, in the Messianic age, Yehuda will be on a higher plane than Yosef, as the *haftora* states, “And my servant Dovid [from the tribe of Yehuda] will be the *nasi* over them forever.” The *bittul* of Yehuda emanates from the essence of the soul. Hence, when the ultimate unity between Yehuda and Yosef will be established, Yehuda will be on the

highest level. This, in turn, will facilitate the revelation of G-d's oneness in a complete manner. "The deeds of the patriarchs are a sign to their descendants." The unity caused by Yaakov's settling in Egypt generated the potential for his descendants, the Jewish people of subsequent generations, to express G-d's oneness within the boundaries and limitations of the world, even in the time of exile. This has been the ultimate goal of the service of the Jewish people throughout the centuries.

Thus, the first step in ending the exile is spreading unity among the Jewish people. This point is emphasized in the *Haftora*, which, as mentioned above, relates how the establishment of unity among the Jewish people will lead to the end of the exile and ultimately, to the spreading of the knowledge of G-d throughout the world.

In this context, we can understand the progression in the weekly Torah portions. *VaYigash*, the complete expression of unity despite the exile, leads to *VaYechi*, a Jew's full expression of life in the last moments of exile, true life that permeates every aspect of one's being. This process leads to eternal life, as our Sages state, "Our Patriarch, Yaakov, did not die." Eternal life will be realized in the Messianic redemption, associated with the book of Shmos, the book which relates the story of the redemption of the Jews.

These concepts reflect eternal spiritual truths that are particularly relevant in the present generation, when "all the appointed times for Moshiach's

coming have passed." According to all the signs mentioned by our Sages, the Messianic Redemption should have come already. The Rebbe Rayatz declared that all that is necessary is to "polish the buttons and stand prepared to greet Moshiach." Since that declaration was made many years ago, we can conclude that this service has been completed already and in the very near future, Moshiach will come.

Therefore, at this time, there must be a greater stress on the establishment of unity among the Jewish people and the spreading of unity in the world by encouraging the observance of the seven universal laws given to Noach and his descendants.

Additional emphasis on the above comes this year, the fortieth year after the Rebbe Rayatz's passing, when G-d grants us, "a knowing heart, eyes that see, and ears that hear," enabling us to "attain the wisdom of one's teacher" in all matters associated with the Rebbe Rayatz.

Significantly, *VaYigash*, Yehuda's approach towards Yosef, took place in the fortieth year of Yosef's life. This emphasizes the importance of spreading unity — among the Jews and in the world at large — in the present era. We must dedicate ourselves to directing our thought, speech, and action to Jewish unity. On a simple level, when Jews gather together (e.g., as Yehuda approached Yosef), their meeting must generate benefit for another Jew (as the above meeting benefited Binyomin). The effects of this activity will not be

self-contained, but will ultimately bring about good for the entire people (as that meeting benefited all the brothers).

Jews are frequently categorized into two groupings: Yisachar, students of Torah, and Z'vulun, businessmen who are involved in the performance of good deeds. The divisions between these categories must be nullified. Students of Torah must occupy themselves with deeds of kindness, as our Sages declared, "Whoever says, 'All I have is Torah,' does not even have Torah." They must increase in *tzedaka*, giving freely and generously. And the businessmen must steal time from their occupation to study Torah.

In the previous generations, each person was predominantly occupied with a particular emphasis in his service. These categories, however, never represented a totally rigid division. In the present age, to complete the final preparations for the Redemption, any distinctions have to be further nullified. Businessmen have to establish many times for Torah study until their efforts parallel those of Torah scholars. Similarly, Torah scholars must give to charity over and above their limits, as do businessmen.

The unity brought about through these efforts will have an effect in the world at large and hasten the establishment of Jewish unity in all places. Then, we will proceed, "with our sons and daughters," the entire Jewish people together, as we leave the exile in the ultimate and complete Redemption.

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With blessings,

Rabbi Kalman Weinfeld
Menahel Ruchni

HOW TO CARRY OUT THE ONLY REMAINING SHLICHUS: **KABBALAS P'NEI MOSHIACH TZIDKEINU**

BY NOSSON AVROHOM, PINCHAS PIZEM, AND SHAI GEFEN

Twelve years ago, on Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sara 5752, the Rebbe said:

“As the Rebbe, my father-in-law, nasi doreinu, the sole shliach of our generation and the only Moshiach of our generation, announced that all the avoda has been completed, it is understood that the “send please, in the hand of the one You will send,” the shlichus of the Rebbe, my father-in-law, has begun.

“And from this we understand that the only thing left to do now in the avoda of shlichus is to actually greet Moshiach so that he can fulfill his shlichus and take the Jews out of Galus!”

*Beis Moshiach spoke with seven shluchim and asked them how they implement this new shlichus. * Part 1 of 2*



**RABBI YAAKOV
 SHMUELEVITZ**

Shliach in Beit Shaan, Eretz Yisroel

**“WHEN EVERYTHING YOU
 DO IS MOSHIACH-RELATED,
 YOU ENJOY GREAT
 SUCCESS”**

How do you view *shlichus* today?

You can say that since 5752, when the Rebbe redefined *shlichus*, *kabbalas p'nei Moshiach Tzidkeinu* has become the focal point of *shlichus*. As the Rebbe said then, we already see Moshiach's impact on the world, like in the reduction of arms, etc.

Here too, we see more and more people, whether in Beit Shaan or in the surrounding *kibbutzim*, who are interested in hearing the word of Hashem and want to observe Torah and mitzvos. This is why we brought out another *shliach* to Beit Shaan, Rabbi Shmuel Raynitz, in order to increase the number of people who are ready to greet Moshiach.

A little incident. Rabbi Raynitz

went on *Mivtza T'fillin* this week and met a businessman who never put on *t'fillin* before. The man was so impressed by his being a *shliach* of the Rebbe that he agreed to put on *t'fillin*, and the man has since been brought very close. There is a very great public consciousness of all the Chabad house activities.

With the arrival of the new

shliach, we opened a Chabad house in the center of town and we see that when all our projects revolve around *inyanei Moshiach* and *Geula*, it all works differently, and we are far more successful than we would have expected.

How do you actually make “kabbalas p'nei Moshiach” an integral part of every aspect of *shlichus*?

If you closely examine the *sicha* the Rebbe said to the *shluchim*, you see that the Rebbe says, “All the details of the *avoda* of *shlichus*, of spreading Torah and *Yiddishkeit* and the wellsprings outward, need to be penetrated with this point: how does it lead to greeting Moshiach... Every *shliach* needs to prepare himself and all the Jews in his place and his city, etc., to greet Moshiach by explaining what Moshiach is all about as it is explained in the Written and Oral Torah. [This should be done] in a way that will make each person able to accept it according to his intellect and understanding, including and especially by learning *inyanei Moshiach* and *Geula*, especially in a way of *chochma*, *bina*, and *daas*...”

This is an explicit instruction from the *meshaleiach*, and this is why everything we do is immediately connected with Moshiach. Every *shiur*, and whenever *divrei Torah* are said, memorials, happy occasions, ceremonies, etc., are connected with preparing for Moshiach’s coming, and the Rebbe’s prophecy that we are the first generation of *Geula* and “*hinei, hinei Moshiach ba.*”

We see that despite the concealments, when you tell a Jew the *besuras ha’Geula*, it sinks in and he accepts it most naturally. This is because when you say things with the power of the *meshaleiach*, and you yourself are completely permeated with the subject, it’s only natural to convey it to others.

Do you encounter difficulties on *shlichus*?

Every day that Moshiach doesn’t come is extremely difficult. We wait expectantly for him, but there’s an inexplicable delay. However, the smart son, as it’s brought in *chassidus*, knows that the distance and concealment are in order to increase the *emuna* and anticipation of Moshiach.



Naturally, there are the usual challenges on *shlichus*. We are far from any center of *Anash*, and the financial woes the country is experiencing affects us, too. The day is short, and the work is great, and the *baal ha'bayis* – i.e., the Rebbe – urges us to finish the work already.

The Rebbe constantly says that *inyanei Geula* has to reach the lowest possible level. How does the public react to the *besuras ha'Geula*?

The subject of *Geula* is very popular these days, not only in Chabad. Today's *tzaros* lead people to conclude that there is one solution: Moshiach! Our *avoda* is to know how to direct the yearning towards Moshiach and to inspire people with hope and faith.



**RABBI NECHEMIA
SHMERLING**

Shliach in Kfar Yona, Eretz Yisroel

**“WHOEVER DOESN'T PUT
MOSHIACH INTO HIS
SHLICHUS IS MISSING THE
POINT FOR WHICH HE WAS
SENT ON SHLICHUS”**

Every *shliach* today has to work on the sole remaining *shlichus*, *kabbalas p'nei Moshiach*. How are you in Kfar Yona handling this?

First of all, we need to remember the opening line in *Shulchan Aruch*, “don't be ashamed of those who mock.” We must say things straight, not less and not more. When we quote

As the Rebbe said to Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu, the *Geula* is already here and the only thing left to do is to open the door and drag *Geula* into the house and to greet Moshiach. Looking back, we can see what an enormous change has taken place with regards to the topic of *Geula*. Once upon a time, even when the Rebbe began focusing on this subject, it was hard to speak to people about *Geula* and that the Rebbe is Moshiach, etc. Today, people are far more receptive. They're just waiting for us to bring the message and to permeate everything with *k'dusha* and *Elokus* with the topic of Moshiach.

Have you done any interesting projects along these lines?

the Rebbe we are assured that people will be receptive, even those we are nervous about. Therefore, as with everything else, the *shliach* needs to live with the subject. You speak with someone, you're in the supermarket, they ask you something and you talk, and somehow, the conversation ends up being about Moshiach.

Does this work?

If the Rebbe says that this is the way to reach Jews nowadays, obviously it works. Many young people are being *niskarev* and we see open miracles from the Rebbe.

We had a painter doing work for us and while doing the job he became very close with the Rebbe and the topic of Moshiach. One night many cars were stolen, including this man's car containing all his valuable tools and equipment. He was extremely upset and he asked me to write to the Rebbe.

The answer was a letter to the residents of Kfar Chabad in which the Rebbe tells them that *parnasa* is to be found in the Kfar and they don't need to look outside the Kfar. I told the

We have a regular column in the local paper called “*Chabad Al HaZ'man*,” where we discuss current events along with a *Geula* message. We know that hundreds of people from Beit Shaan, Afula, and the *kibbutzim*, read it.

For example, we announced that we were going to the Rebbe for the *Kinus HaShluchim* and we connected this to *Parshas Chayei Sara* – eternal life – that the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach is *chai v'kayam*, and sends out *shluchim* and does miracles, and we offered to take people's *panim* with us. The phone didn't stop ringing. We see how much people love the Rebbe and want to connect to him. You just have to give them the opportunity, and let them know we are serious.

fellow that it seemed as though he needed to look for work within the Kfar and not outside of it. I didn't really understand the significance of the answer.

The robbery was on Friday. On Monday he called me and excitedly said, “Look at how precise the Rebbe's answer was! They found the car within Kfar Yona along with all my stuff. They didn't touch a thing.”

This is a Jew who had no connection with anything having to do with *chassidus*. We see that today, connecting Jews to the Rebbe and *chassidus* is something we can achieve, and we see amazing things happening along the way.

What do the people in your area think about the *besuras ha'Geula*?

The Rebbe, who spoke to us *shluchim* in 5752, said it has to be “in a way that will make each person able to accept it according to his intellect and understanding.” Everything the Rebbe told us can be explained. You just need to know how to do it. When you present it properly, according to the personality of the people you're talking

to, then you see amazing things. You are effective and many Jews become close to the Rebbe.

Even when they ask you, ‘Do you Lubavitchers think the Rebbe is Moshiach?’ or ‘Is the Rebbe *chai v’kayam*?’ you have to know how to answer. The rule is, everything the Rebbe said can and must be explained in a way that suits your audience.

As for those people who don’t know how to answer, they should

make a serious effort to learn about Moshiach and *Geula* so they’ll be prepared with answers.

There are *shluchim* who say it’s difficult to explain these topics, and they prefer to avoid them.

If the Rebbe told us to prepare to greet Moshiach, and asked that all things revolve around this point, and defined it as the “only *avoda*,” then with all due respect, whoever doesn’t make Moshiach the focal point of his

shlichus is missing the point for which he was sent on *shlichus*.

A *shliach* needs to be proud of whom he represents, and then people will take his words seriously. This is even if he says things that sound hard to accept at first, because he has the power of the *meshaleiach* behind him.

In the past, the world wasn’t ready to accept things like this, but today we see that even intellectuals accept what you have to say when you say it with pride and show how it’s based on the Rebbe’s *sichos*. This corresponds to what we see in the realm of opposition to holiness – that seemingly irrational things are accepted. The world is ready, as the Rebbe says, and we just need to make sure that we are prepared to convey the message properly.

Is it easier to convey the message that the Rebbe is Moshiach and that he is *chai v’kayam* today?

Today, people are searching for something genuine, and the Rebbe’s words are just what people need to hear. Which era did the Rebbe address if not our confused era? If you examine what the Rebbe said in 5752, you see this clearly.

Jews who you wouldn’t think had an interest in the Rebbe and Moshiach, are excited about it. As I said before, the only question is how you are going to present it.

We have a teacher who belongs to the religious-national camp. One day she told me that she spoke with her sister who learns in Kfar Chabad, who told her about *Igros Kodesh* and miracles. That same morning she got stuck in traffic on her way to work, and after that conversation with her sister she was moved to say “*Yechi*” out loud. In other words, when you say things based on your strong faith, you inspire others.

It’s no secret that there are differences of opinion about this among Lubavitchers.

On numerous occasions, I’ve seen

In the past, the world wasn’t ready to accept things like this, but today we see that even intellectuals accept what you have to say when you say it with pride and show how it’s based on the Rebbe’s sichos.



that for the most part we all think the same and agree. You see this even when you speak with people who aren't necessarily living with Moshiach...

When you start talking, you realize you're coming from the same place. Nobody is truly opposed. You just need to know what to say and how to say it. And it's important not to say it in a confrontational manner.

They brought me to *farbreng* for *Anash* somewhere and they warned me not to say certain things, not to be to extreme... In other words, to be diplomatic. I decided to say what I believe. After the *farbrengen*, a Jew who is not considered a Meshichist came over to me and said: You made a



RABBI AMRAM MUELL
Senior lecturer at Ascent
in Tzfas

**“WE DON’T RELY ON OUR
INTELLECT BUT ON WHAT
THE REBBE SAID, AND
WHEN PEOPLE ‘GET IT’
THEY ARE COMPLETELY
‘TURNED ON.’”**

As a senior lecturer for Ascent and other places where people aren't yet observant, how do you convey the message of *Kabbalas P'nei Moshiach Tzidkeinu*?

I lecture to a broad array of people on Mysticism and Kabbala in many different places. Today, the best way to attract people to lectures on Judaism is through

revolution here tonight!

There was lots of feedback because you need to know how to speak, with words that come from the heart, and then, as a matter of course, they enter the heart. They all love the Rebbe, and all of them are waiting for the Rebbe to come and take us out of *Galus*. When you break the ice and sit together, you see how there are hardly any differences of opinion, and we can all get along.

The Rebbe said we should come up with a plan to bring Moshiach. What do you think needs to be done?

For some time now, I've said that we should get all Chabad organizations together with the *rabbanim* in order to come up with a plan. This way we

Mysticism and Kabbala. Jews are ready to listen to talks about spirituality, especially about Moshiach and *Geula*, and I raise Moshiach awareness in my talks.

I speak about the sixth millennium and I often refer to the Rebbe's *sicha* about the 600th year of Noah, when the deep split open, etc., and the Zohar that says that this refers to both a G-dly revelation as well as a new era in technology and science that heralds the *Geula*.

The fact that there is a strong inclination towards Mysticism, Meditation, as well as self-growth and self-knowledge, helps us teach about *chassidus* and *Geula*. We go from the Baal Shem Tov to the Rebbe and quote the Rebbe about this being the generation that will greet Moshiach. We see how right the Rebbe is about how the world has become receptive to "Lights of Tohu."

How do people react to this?

Very strongly. I can't keep up with the demand. People want to

approach it in a united and organized fashion, as opposed to everybody (or just some people) doing their own thing. We all want to fulfill the *shlichus* and to be able to come to the *meshaleiach* and say, "We did your *shlichus*, now come and fulfill your promise." If we were united, we could accomplish a lot.

Unfortunately, people are entrenched in their positions, and this leads to a general lack of action.

The main thing is we should immediately merit to see the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach, and together we will sing, "*Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu V'Rabbeinu, Melech HaMoshiach L'olam Va'ed*"

hear what's going on today. If I give them a general analysis about the current situation, they realize that there's a dramatic change taking place in the world. What they don't realize is that this is what the Rebbe is pointing at – that the *Geula* is coming and that Moshiach is already impacting on the world. However, when you present it by way of Mysticism and Kabbala, they are receptive to it. The problem we have today is the bad press and stigma about religion, so that people seek Mysticism elsewhere. When they discover that Judaism deals with the soul, with spirituality, etc., and that it's not off-limits but permissible and vital, they get involved. People are really searching for something, and are ready to listen.

What sort of questions do you get?

I'm asked all sorts of questions, like why do I think the Rebbe is Moshiach, about the eternity of the Rebbe, etc. I explain it all according to the Rebbe's *sichos*. This is where our power lies – in that we



they hear what the Rebbe said, they are completely *battul* (submissive) to it and accept it matter-of-factly. It's just amazing to see this happen. People realize that the Rebbe is the focal point.

How do you handle the tough questions?

I'll repeat: with the Rebbe's *sichos*! The Rebbe said explicitly that the "straight way" is to learn and then teach *inyanei Moshiach* and *Geula*, in a way that will make each person able to accept it according to his intellect and understanding. This is what I try to do.

The secret is mastery of the material. If you know your stuff, you're in control of the conversation. You have what to offer. If a *shliach* doesn't know the *sichos* well, he has a problem. This is where the questions and doubts come from. When you don't "live" with it, then you begin to vacillate and you don't know what's right and wrong, and there's no inner peace with what the Rebbe said. However, if the *shliach* knows the material, he can handle questions with ease.

(To be continued.)

I'm asked all sorts of questions, like why do I think the Rebbe is Moshiach, about the eternality of the Rebbe, etc. I explain it all according to the Rebbe's sichos. This is where our power lies – in that we don't rely on our own intellect, but on what the Rebbe said, which is Divrei Elokim Chayim.

don't rely on our own intellect, but on what the Rebbe said, which is *Divrei Elokim Chayim*. When people

get it, they are completely turned on. You see people who never personally met the Rebbe, but when

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PROFILE OF A CHASSID: A CHASSID SPEAKS LITTLE, THINKS MORE, AND DOES EVEN MORE

COMPILED BY SHLOMO HAYITZCHAKI

*The custom of chassidim mekusharim was to have a special time to arouse the feelings of love for their teacher and Rebbe. * With these feelings of love they would picture those times that they had a yechidus or heard “divrei Elokim chayim” or were present at a farbrengen, because by doing so they were constantly connected. * A compilation of excerpts from the Rebbeim that describe a chassid.*

WHAT IS APPROPRIATE?

It's appropriate that a *chassid* learn *chassidus* every day.

It's appropriate that a *chassid* be joyous and that he act towards others with *tuv leivav* (goodness of heart).

It's appropriate for a *chassid* to properly see his own deficiencies and others' good qualities.

It's appropriate for a *chassid* to consider the smallest, simplest Jew as better than himself.

It's appropriate for a *chassid* to learn a good trait and manner of behavior from everyone.

What is appropriate for a *chassid* is: love, brotherly love, peace, and friendship.

(Seifer HaSichos summer 5700, p. 140)

WHAT IS INAPPROPRIATE?

It's inappropriate for a *chassid* not to learn *chassidus*.

It's inappropriate for a *chassid* not to be involved in the betterment of his fellow.

It's inappropriate for a *chassid* to be sad.

It's inappropriate for a *chassid* not to see his own faults.

It's inappropriate for a *chassid* to consider himself greater than the

greatest.

It's inappropriate for a *chassid* not to learn something good from someone else.

It's inappropriate for a *chassid* to cause *pirud levavos* (lit. separation of hearts, i.e., ill will) even because of “ways of *chassidus*.”

Jews in general and *chassidim* in particular, need to use the appropriate and the inappropriate to serve Hashem.

(ibid)

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A YEREI SHAMAYIM AND A CHASSID

In the olden days, *chassidim* were blessed to be *yerei Shamayim* (G-d-fearing) and *chassidim*. The source is the Tzemach Tzedek, who would bless *bar mitzva* boys to be *yerei Shamayim* and *chassidim*.

Elder *chassidim* once discussed the difference between being a *yerei Shamayim* and a *chassid*. Apparently they are one and the same thing, but since they are enumerated separately, they are obviously two separate things, and you cannot be a *chassid* without first being a *yerei Shamayim*, and the *shleimus* (ultimate perfection) of *yiras Shamayim* is when a person is a *chassid*.

(Seifer HaSichos 5705, p. 96)

LOVES HEAVEN

Generally, a *yorei Shamayim* serves G-d out of fear, which is why he is called “G-d-fearing.” A *chassid* serves Hashem out of love, for he is an *ohev Shamayim* (lover of Heaven).

(*ibid*)

ON FIRE

A *chassid* is someone who’s on fire, for he has a thirst for *Elokus*, and *Elokus* is compared to fire, as it says, “For Hashem, your G-d, is a consuming fire,” but outwardly he’s calm. This is the essence and natural state of a *chassid*.

(*Seifer HaSichos 5704 p. 158*)

ABILITY DOESN’T COUNT

The Alter Rebbe said: A thief is not someone who *can* steal, but someone who *actually* steals. A scholar is not someone who *can* learn, but someone who *does* learn.

A *chassid* is not someone who *can* be a *chassid*, but someone who actually behaves according to *darchei ha’chassidus* (the pathways of *chassidus*).

(*Toras Sholom, Seifer HaSichos p. 190*)

ORDERLY CHASSIDIM

A *chassid* must be orderly. A *chassid* who is not orderly loses his *chassidic tzura* (form). Without order, not only is one likely to err and not achieve the goal, but even what he does is “not doing,” because it’s done without enthusiasm.

A *chassid* ought to watch the elder *chassidim* and learn from them, but he must first know clearly whether, according to his standing and situation, he is already suited for it...

A *chassid* must be orderly both in his learning and in his *avoda*, for they are interdependent. When a person is orderly in his learning, he is also orderly in his *avoda*.

(*Likkutei Dibburim vol. 1, p. 140*)

FORBEARING

Chassidim relate, they asked the Alter Rebbe: What’s a *chassid*? The Alter Rebbe answered: A *chassid* is someone who overlooks his own good in order to do good for someone else. And the Alter Rebbe

WHAT IS A CHASSID?

*** A *chassid* is a fiery torch of *simcha*.**

(*Seifer HaSichos 5706, p. 6*)

*** A *chassid* is one who speaks little, thinks more, and does even more.**

(*Seifer HaSichos summer 5700 p. 135*)

*** A *chassid* is a ball of fire and a ball of *simcha*.**

(*Sicha- Shmini Atzeres 5706*)

*** A *chassid* is a warm Jew.**

(*Seifer HaSichos 5701 p. 127*)

*** The main quality that *chassidim* had was their ability to listen.**

(*Seifer HaSichos 5701, p. 113*)

*** The “ego” of a *chassid* is in *avoda*.**

(*Seifer HaSichos 5703, p. 16*)

*** The *inyan* of a *chassid* is one who lacks the sense of self.**

(*Toras Sholom Seifer HaSichos p. 187*)

*** A *chassid* is one who learns *chassidus* according to his ability, *davens* at length, and keeps up with his *shiurim*.**

(*Sicha Parshas Lech Lecha 10 Cheshvan 5711*)

added a proof to this from the Talmudic adage regarding fingernails – that a *chassid* burns them [causing himself subtle harm], a *tzaddik* buries them, and a wicked person casts them aside.

(*Likkutei Dibburim vol. 1, likut 3*)

TO LOVE THE REBBE

The custom of *chassidim mekusharim* – in every single generation – was to have a set time, whether an hour a day or once a week, or two weeks or once a month, to arouse feelings of love for their teacher and Rebbe. Simply to love the Rebbe with love felt in the heart like love “of the flesh” for a wife and children. [This was] in addition to mentioning the Rebbe in bentching in the “*horachaman hu yivarech es moreinu v’Rabbeinu*.” And when arousing feelings of love they would picture to themselves those times that they were in *yechidus*, or they heard *chassidus*, or were at a *farbrenge*n, for by doing so they were constantly connected. Of course, actual *avoda* is above all the rest, each according to his ability, whether by oneself or with others.

(*Igros Kodesh of the Rebbe Rayatz, vol. 6, p. 353*)

LIVING WITH THE REBBE

Chassidus innovated that *chassidim* have a Rebbe, and they live with that which the Rebbe says, with his every move, and with his *niggun*.

And when a *chassid* hears a thought, movement, or *niggun* from the Rebbe, at that moment he becomes *mekushar* to the Rebbe with all his *nefesh, ruach, and neshama*.

(*Likkutei Dibburim, likut 30, p. 516, 1*)

LEARNING THE REBBE’S MAAMARIM

You can sate the great yearning for *hiskashrus* only by learning the *maamarei chassidus* that the Rebbe says and writes, because seeing the Rebbe is not enough.

(*HaYom Yom 9 Adar II*)

CHASSIDIM – CHACHAMIM

Chassidim must be smart. A “*chassid shota*” (foolish *chassid*) is like a “*hadas shota*” (an imperfect myrtle twig). Indeed it’s a myrtle, and it has myrtle leaves, but it’s a “*shota*,” the

leaves aren't orderly.

(Seifer HaSichos 5705, p. 7)

NOT CLAPPING

Man, being human, must think – in all his matters and in all his actions – whether the thing is fitting or not. Something unfitting spiritually should be considered, at least, like something materially unsuitable.

It is not appropriate for a *chassid* not to learn a chapter of *Tanya* every day.

It's not appropriate for a *chassid* not to be immersed in fixing his *middos*. This is so not only with regard to not working forcefully in getting rid of bad *middos*, but it is also not appropriate for a *chassid* not to be involved in *elevating* his *middos*.

It's not appropriate for a chassid when he is not involved in the avoda of Krias Shma Al HaMita, and he sleeps with all the dust or even the mud of daily life, and dreams of false matters, which the angel of dreams bestows upon him.

It's not appropriate for a *chassid* not to be involved in the *avodas ha't'filla* – and I don't mean to clap one's hands, but to *daven* with *hiskashrus*, which is reflected in *niggunei Chabad*, the true yearning for G-dly feelings.

It's not appropriate for a *chassid* to be devoted to business, in addition to which, by being harried in business he forgets, *chalila*, the utter truth that it's the "blessing of Hashem that enriches."

It's not appropriate for a *chassid* when he is not involved in the *avoda* of *Krias Shma Al HaMita*, and he sleeps with all the dust or even the mud of daily life, and dreams of false matters, which the angel of dreams bestows upon him.

(Seifer HaSichos summer 5700 p. 144)

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WHEN MOSHIACH COMES...

Rabbi Y.Y. Jacobson related the following amazing story at a 14 Kislev *farbrengen*, which he heard from Aharon Lipskar (son of *shliach* Rabbi Mendel Lipskar of South Africa):

Around two years ago, Aharon Lipskar and another *bachur* were driving in Florida on a mission for the Aleph Institute, which helps Jewish people in jail. They were running out of gas and they needed to find a place to stay as they drove through some hick-town near Jacksonville. They found a gas station, and the owner, a big and burly guy, filled up their tank and then asked them to wait a minute.

The two *chassidim* were a bit nervous but they agreed to wait. He returned shortly and asked them to accompany him to a back room.

"I don't know why we agreed," says Aharon Lipskar, but the two went along with him and saw an old man sitting there who asked them in Yiddish, "Where are you from?"

"We're *chassidim* of the Lubavitcher Rebbe," they answered, and the man burst into tears. It took some time for him to recover and to tell them his story.

His story began before the Holocaust, when he was a newly wedded young man from a *chassidishe* home. Just as he began his new life, his entire family, including parents, brothers, sisters and wife, were murdered by the Nazis. Out of his family, which had numbered 100 people, he was the sole survivor. He was completely broken and slowly dropped

Yiddishkeit.

He arrived in the U.S. and lived in Williamsburg, but could not fathom how people could live normal lives. In particular, he could not understand how religious Jews could continue keeping Torah and *mitzvos* after the war.

He decided to get as far away from *Yiddishkeit* as he could go. At

Years passed, and one night when he couldn't sleep he turned on the TV and began flipping channels. To his surprise, he discovered a channel on which an old bearded man was speaking in Yiddish.

first, he lived in a different town in Florida, but since there was a Reform synagogue there, this wasn't estranged enough from Judaism for him. He moved to a town with nothing Jewish in it at all, married a gentile woman, and had three gentile sons, one of whom had filled their tank.

Years passed, and one night when he couldn't sleep he turned on the TV and began flipping channels. To his surprise, he discovered a channel on which an old bearded man was speaking in Yiddish.

His childhood memories kept him glued to the program, listening to the rabbi. The subtitles that scrolled across the screen indicated that this was the Lubavitcher Rebbe. He heard the Rebbe say that we are promised that G-d will gather every Jew, one by one, and nobody will be forsaken. When Moshiach comes, he will take every Jew from wherever he is and whatever level he is on.

The Rebbe's words made such an impression on him that in the morning, after not sleeping the entire night, he gathered his family and told them he was Jewish. At first, they didn't know what he was talking about since they had never seen a Jew before. He told them that one day they would come to get him...

"Now," he concluded, "when you came here, my son came to me and said, 'Dad, they came to take you.' And when you came in and I asked you where you were from and you said Lubavitch, I couldn't help but cry."

They sat together and sang Belzer *niggunim* which the man remembered from his childhood, and they returned and put *t'fillin* on with him. They kept up a connection with him via letters, etc., until about a year ago, when they heard he had passed away. Apparently this was a *neshama* that had already been gathered by Moshiach Tzidkeinu.

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THE MAN WHO BROUGHT 19 KISLEV TO MIZRACHI

BY SHNEUR ZALMAN BERGER



*When he founded the B'nei Akiva Yeshiva in Kfar HaRoeh he included a Tanya class. He himself learned Tanya every Shabbos. * In honor of Yud-Tes Kislev, Rosh HaShana L'Chassidus and the yahrtzeit of Rabbi Moshe Tzvi Neria, a"h, Beis Moshiach brings you the story behind the connection of the "father" of the "knitted yarmulkes" generation and the Rebbe MH"M and chassidus Chabad. * Part 2 of 2*

(Continued from Issue 441.)

INCLUDING HIS TALMIDIM IN CHASSIDIC EXPERIENCES

In 5700 (1940) Rav Neria started the B'nei Akiva yeshiva in Kfar HaRoeh. This was after serving as spiritual guide for seven years in the B'nei Akiva movement. He had concluded that there was no substitute for a yeshiva, which would be a spiritual fortress that would provide protection against the prevailing secular atmosphere.

Rav Harel Cohen explains the *chiddush* (novelty) in the founding of this yeshiva: "The yeshiva was founded within the B'nei Akiva movement at a time when these two concepts, "yeshiva" and "B'nei Akiva," were mutually exclusive."

When Rav Neria founded the yeshiva in Kfar HaRoeh, he worked to establish a class in Chabad *chassidus*, which was given for a long time by Rabbi Meir Blizinsky, who would travel from Ramat Gan to Kfar HaRoeh, which is near Chadera.

We don't know exactly when Rav Neria's connection with the Rebbe began, but when he started this *Tanya* class, he wrote to the Rebbe about it. We don't know what *he* wrote, but in his response (vol. 12 of *Igros Kodesh*, p. 377) the Rebbe writes:

I was pleased to read in your letter that there are regular classes on the study of *Tanya*, once a week, and the participants show great interest and understanding. Even though a class given once a week is not nearly enough, and it should be as *Chazal* say – that three days do not pass without (the light of) Torah, namely *p'nimius ha'Torah*, referred to in the holy Zohar as the soul of Torah, which in our generation is *Toras ha'chassidus*. There is nothing that stands in the way of one's will. If this is so in the Diaspora, all the more so in a land which has Hashem's eyes upon it, from the beginning of the year until the end of the year. Certainly, for one such as yourself, expanding on this point is unnecessary.

I've only come to fulfill *Chazal's* injunction: one does not urge except those who are energized, and that this is only necessary for the sake of an increase, as said previously. May it be

Hashem's will that you succeed in raising G-d-fearing students who learn Torah in purity and fulfill *mitzvos* punctiliously.

In the margin of the letter the Rebbe thanks him, **“for the good relationship and the pleasant countenance with which you greeted the members of Tzierei Agudas Chabad in Eretz Yisroel who came to visit you.”**

Rabbi Sholom Dovber Volpe explains that when the Rebbe wrote, “if this is so in the Diaspora, etc.,” to mean that if Rav Neria learned *chassidus* in Russia, all the more so should he learn and teach *chassidus* in Eretz Yisroel.

Rav Neria's connection with Chabad in general and the Rebbe in particular was extremely strong. Back in 5718 (1958), we find Rav Neria asking the Rebbe for *brachos*, “I need a great deal of *siyata d'Shmaya* (Heavenly assistance), and I request of the Rebbe *shlita* that he remember me for good and blessing.” He wrote a lot to the Rebbe, and in the private audiences that he was privileged to

have he spent many hours.

During those private audiences, they discussed topics in learning and the Rebbe encouraged him and helped him in his educational and public roles. Sometimes the conversation turned to various ideologies like “*is'chalta d'Geula*,” *tznius* within the framework of B'nei Akiva, etc.

In an interview that he once gave to Channel 7 in Eretz Yisroel, Rav Neria excitedly shared his impressions of the Rebbe. “A powerful personality such as he, the likes of which we haven't seen in the previous generations of world Jewry, a genius in *nigleh* and *nistar*, not just a Chabad leader but a great director of world Jewry; he organized and sent *chassidim* to all parts of the world, raised Judaism up and brought near those who were far. I saw him a few times and was so impressed by his personality, by his gaze that warmed the heart, his quick grasp and his phenomenal memory, and his knowledge of all subjects that is so broad as to be supernatural, and above all else – to lead such a large

congregation.”

Regarding his love for *chassidus Chabad*, Rabbi Yigal Pizem, *rosh yeshivas Chabad* in Kiryot recalls that when he learned in the *yeshiva* in Kfar HaRoeh and the *talmidim* asked Rav Neria what they could buy him as a gift for the end of the year, he said that he'd be happy if they bought him *Likkutei Torah* of the Alter Rebbe. Rav Neria also learned the daily *HaYom Yom* which the Rebbe compiled.

Rabbi Dovid Meir Druckman, *rav* of Kiryat Mochkin, says, “When I learned in Kfar HaRoeh, I saw Rav Neria learning *Likkutei Torah* on Rosh HaShana night with great enthusiasm. I remember that when we learned with him the section of Kuzari about the level of a prophet and the *d'veikus* (inner bond) of his students to him, he gave us an example: how a Chabad *chassid* enters a private audience with the Rebbe.

“I also remember that he *davened* in a Chabad *siddur* – *Nusach Ari* – and also used *t'fillin* with *Nusach Chabad*. In his old room in the *yeshiva* there were only two pictures, of the Alter Rebbe and of his teacher, Rabbi Y. M. Charlop.”

His wife, Rebbetzin Rochel Neria, also said that on Shabbos, the *Tanya* would be on his table.

The *chassidus* that he taught his students had a tremendous influence on them. Many of his students later became ardent Lubavitcher *chassidim*, and even those who did not become *chassidim* hold Chabad in high esteem. As R' Chaim Elbaz, a *mekurav* to the Chabad house in Afula says, “After Rav Neria returned from the Rebbe, he told us what the Rebbe had said to him, and spoke about him with the greatest admiration. At that time I began to get close to Chabad, and in hindsight I believe it was the feeling I had that my *rosh yeshiva* admired the Rebbe that helped me get closer to Chabad.



Underground study in his youth

THE REBBE HELPS RAV NERIA TO RAISE MONEY

In Iyar 5717, Rav Neria came to the U.S. in order to fundraise for his *yeshiva*. Apparently Rav Neria wasn't familiar with the challenge of fundraising, and the Rebbe helped him with this. "The Rebbe sent messages to people whom my husband was going to meet. The Rebbe asked them to welcome him graciously and to help him," says his wife, Rochel.

In a letter Rav Neria wrote to Rabbi Volpe, he says, "The Rebbe showed a great interest in the B'nei Akiva *yeshivos*. I left his room at three o'clock in the morning (and there were certainly other people waiting to enter), and I found out, to my surprise, that at eight in the morning Rabbi Chadakov, *a"h*, called Rabbi Nissan Telushkin, *zt"l* (who had influence on Mizrahi circles in the U.S.), and told him that the Rebbe asked him to help me with the Mizrahi leadership on behalf of the *yeshivos*."

We can read about this assistance by examining the Rebbe's letters to Rav Neria. From these letters we learn that the effort to raise money for B'nei Akiva *yeshivos* continued in later years, too. In a letter from 5 Av 5718, the Rebbe writes in the margin: "I'd be interested in knowing if you met with members of the RCA who visited Eretz Yisroel in recent months, as per my prior letter to you, and if there were any results of that meeting."

A few months later, on 11 Kislev 5719, the Rebbe wrote a long letter in which he reveals that he worked on behalf of Rav Neria's schools (Heichal Menachem 3 p. 151): "You write about the RCA and their support for the school that you run. In the past weeks I've spoken a number of times about this to the aforementioned. A few days ago a new, at least in my view, delay cropped up... Understandably, despite this I

continued in my talks.

The Rebbe also explains in his letter, why he worked on behalf of Yeshivas B'nei Akiva in Kfar HaRoeh: "I said that the complaint that I'm interested is out in the open, and I really hope that they too are interested that the greatest possible number [of students] will transfer from Leftist education to your institution..."

You must remember that in those days, the Mapai (anti-religious communist) party ruled the land and they did all they could to get as many children as possible into schools that taught heresy.

On the visit Rav Neria made in the spring of 5717, he had a long private meeting with the Rebbe. Naturally, they spoke about the B'nei Akiva movement. Rav Neria shared his concerns with the Rebbe, "I often suffer from pangs of conscience since I know that a coed youth movement, and some of the practices therein, are not in accordance with *halacha*, and are not according to the ways of the Torah."

The Rebbe responded, "As long as you are aware *az dos is an umglick, nor dos kumt rateven fun a greseren umglick* (that it's a tragedy, but it is for the purpose of saving people from a worse tragedy), you can continue doing what you are doing ... This is the *shlichus* placed upon you from Above. And even if you encounter difficulties, you must keep going and try to fulfill your *shlichus* faithfully. Today there aren't many people involved in education, and if you are successful in this, it is your obligation to continue being involved in it."

In the course of that visit, Rav Neria participated in a *farbrengen* that took place on Shavuos. He would later speak in wonder of the deep *sichos* that were said and about the holy fervor of the thousands of participants, as well as himself.



At a *hachnasas seifer Torah* upon reaching the age of 80

The *farbrengen* began after Mincha and continued until nearly midnight, at the end of which the Rebbe *bentched*, and they *davened* Maariv. When Rav Neria saw that it was after the stars had appeared, he decided that according to the *halacha* it was preferable to say the Shma and to *daven* Maariv then, and so he quietly went outside, *davened* Maariv, and went back in to the *farbrengen*. When the Rebbe saw him return, he smiled and said, "Arois *fun ein safek, un arayn in a tzveiten safek*" (out of one situation of doubt and into another).

Rav Neria told this story to R' Wolpo years later. R' Volpe explained that Rav Neria's fear was about something in *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim, siman 232, s'if 2*, and in the commentaries; but by *davening* Maariv before *bentching* he got entangled in a different problem that is explained in *Shulchan Aruch HaRav, Hilchos Birkas HaMazon, siman 188, s'if 17*.

THE REBBE ASKS RAV NERIA TO WORK ON HALACHIC MATTERS

On 24 Elul 5717 (letter #8130) the Rebbe urges Rav Neria to try and correct the problem of youth from religious youth organizations who “*daven* in mixed company, *r”l*, without a proper *mechitza*, and sometimes for ideological reasons.” The Rebbe emphasizes in his letter, “you surely remember that in our conversation we also touched on this point,” and the Rebbe says Rav Neria is greatly influential, and he asks him to let him know about his success in correcting this breach.

Apparently, Rav Neria tried to do so and reported his efforts in this to the Rebbe. In letter #8150, written on Yud-Alef Nissan 5718, the Rebbe writes again, “I received your letter ... and surely, based on what you write there, your efforts continue in all possible ways in the matter of separation [of boys and girls].”

On 11 Kislev 5719 (#6596) the Rebbe writes to Rav Neria again about this (the complete letter appears in *Heichal Menachem* vol. 3, p. 151):

Surprisingly, you don’t mention anything about the issue of separation, although I strongly hope that you continue to work on this and with the

appropriate energy, considering the importance of the matter.”

The Rebbe notes, “**Even though each of our Rebbeim, *z”l*, was an “*ohev Yisroel*” ([one who loves Jews] for they are a chain from generation to generation going back to Moshe Rabbeinu, who was an *ohev Yisroel*), and therefore, certainly our Sages didn’t want to say anything negative about the Jewish people, they still warned that there must be a separation between men and women.**

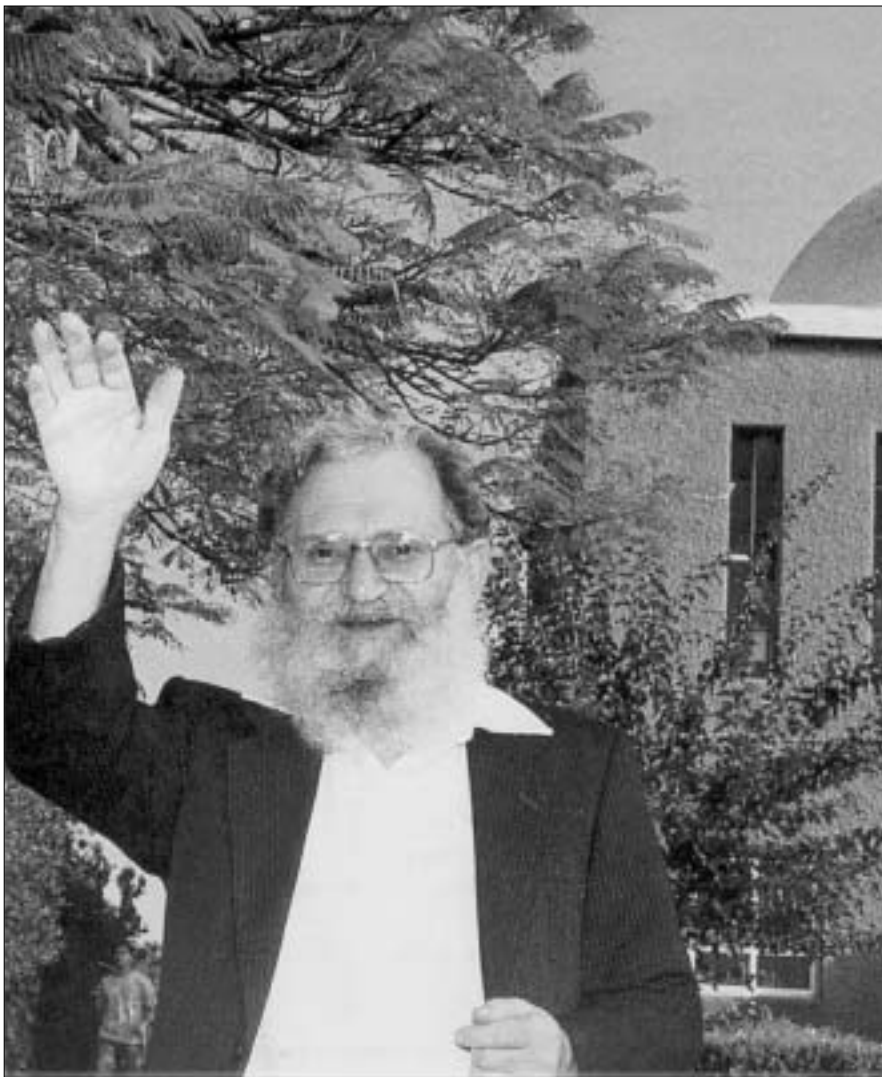
Rav Neria worked very hard to strengthen *tznius* and separation at B’nei Akiva, being influenced to do so by the requests and encouragement of the Rebbe. He also supported the publishing of the book, *K’doshim Tihiyu*, which was written by Rabbi Shmuel Katz, “to strengthen *tznius* in society and in youth movements.”

In his approbation to the book, Rav Neria explains that the mixed format of B’nei Akiva was a *bidiovad* (post facto) measure taken to save youth “whose parents’ behavior was even more compromised.” Rav Neria added in his approbation that they needed to battle with “those who want to see these emergency measures as *Echat’chilla*” (preferable behavior).

The Rebbe wrote to Rav Neria time and again about separation between boys and girls. When he got involved in the B’nei Akiva movement many years before that, Rav Neria made sure that boys and girls didn’t dance together. He did this in stages and in various ways, until he was successful. He worked on this issue for years, step-by-step, with the ongoing encouragement of the Rebbe.

THE ADVANTAGE IN KIRUV OF ACTUAL MITZVOS

On 2 Kislev 5728, Rav Neria had a private audience with the Rebbe that lasted two hours. After the *yechidus* he asked Dovid Meir Drukman, his former student who was learning in



Near his life’s work, Yeshivas B’nei Akiva in Kfar HaRoeh

770, to write down what he had discussed. R' Drukman wrote, "Before he had the meeting, I saw him standing in the "Lower Gan Eden," and saying T'hillim, preparing to enter the "Upper Gan Eden." What follows is a summary, which I wrote down as he told it to me:

"Rav Neria said that when he meets with youth who are not yet observant, he asks them to start learning Torah, in the hopes that 'the light within will return them to good.' The Rebbe pointed out that as great as Torah study is, since the youth would be doing it in order to attain yet another intellectual idea and not with *kabbalas ol*, it wouldn't be that effective in getting them to change their ways. On the other hand, doing an action *mitzva*, and on a daily basis, is what affects the corporeality of the body and through this they would eventually do all the *mitzvos*.

"Among other things, the Rebbe spoke sharply against the idea of "is'chalta d'Geula." The Rebbe: I always emphasize that the situation today is not one of is'chalta d'Geula, and in connection with this, I will quote the Rambam, which is already fluent on my lips: 'A king will arise from the house of Dovid...and will compel...and will fight...' And only when he succeeds and is victorious in all this, will the ingathering of exiles take place through him. This doesn't seem understandable, for on the one hand we say the rule, 'these and these are the words of the living G-d,' and on the other hand we say, 'Beis Shammai in the place of Beis Hillel is not a Mishna.' How will both be fulfilled? When it comes to *pilpul* and Torah study, these and these are the words of the living G-d, because everything was said by G-d. When it comes to *halacha*, then Beis Shammai in relation to Beis Hillel is not a Mishna.

"The Rambam there clearly says what the order of *Geula* will be, and the Raavad and the Kesef Mishna do

RAV NERIA'S EDUCATIONAL WORK

In 5700 (1940), Rav Moshe Tzvi Neria started the B'nei Akiva *yeshiva* in Kfar HaRoeh with thirteen *talmidim*. The *yeshiva* grew and the *talmidim* numbered in the hundreds. It became a model for the other B'nei Akiva *yeshivos* around the country with their thousands of *talmidim*.

Rav Neria ran the *yeshiva* in Kfar HaRoeh for nearly 60 years. His *talmidim* loved him and respected him for his greatness in Torah, his fine *middos*, and his devotion to his students.

Rav Neria dedicated his life to the *yeshiva* in Kfar HaRoeh, despite the fact that he worked on establishing similar *yeshivos* in other places. At his initiative and with his direction, many other *yeshivos* and institutions for girls were founded, until Merkaz Yeshivos B'nei Akiva was founded to unite all the schools. As a result of this effort, he achieved the stature of the top spiritual authority, as well as being the head of all the *yeshivos* of the B'nei Akiva movement.

The leaders of Mafdal pressured him to work with them on national leadership and offered to include him in a realistic slot on the list for the Knesset. He turned them down and preferred to focus on his educational work. His opinion on this changed in 5729 when a well-orchestrated legislative conspiracy threatened to cause severe harm to religious education in general and *yeshivos* in particular. That's when he saw the urgent need to get involved in politics in order to save the educational framework. He entered the 7th Knesset as a member and was a member of the educational and economic growth committees and served there until 5734. His speeches were listened to, and highly regarded, even by his opponents.

After he left the Knesset he went back to education full-time at his *yeshiva* and at Merkaz Yeshivos B'nei Akiva. He wasn't satisfied with *yeshiva* high schools and ulpanot but encouraged the founding of Hesder Yeshivos, Michlala for girls, and advanced Torah learning in the military. B'nei Akiva *yeshivos* are definitely his crowning achievement, and he received dozens of letters from the Rebbe about them.

not argue with him. Therefore, even if there's a proof from some Midrash or Gemara about a revealed end-time and *is'chalta d'Geula*, it's all nice but it has nothing to do with *halacha*."

In the course of the *yechidus*, the Rebbe also referred to an announcement that B'nei Akiva made which called on *yeshiva* boys to join the army, and he expressed his displeasure with this. Rav Neria said the announcement was not made by the national administration of B'nei Akiva but by a person whom he didn't even know. The Rebbe asked Rav Neria

to find a way to protest the announcement.

Then the Rebbe asked about the participation of the *talmidim* of the B'nei Akiva *yeshivos* in the special *farbrengen* that took place for them in Kfar Chabad on Yud-Tes Kislev, and asked to hear Rav Neria's impression and opinion about it.

FIGHTING FOR SHLEIMUS HA'ARETZ

Rav Neria was one of those who led the battle for *shleimus ha'Aretz* and was



Rabbi Moshe Tzvi by his father's grave

strongly opposed to giving away parts of our land to our enemies. He was one of the leading opponents to Israel's withdrawal from Sinai and the destruction of Yamit, not just with words, but with actions, too. For a number of months he lived in Yamit. He was on the scene when Yamit was destroyed, and made sure that it didn't reach the point where brothers fought one another.

During those difficult days when he lived in Yamit, a Lubavitcher told him that the *Tanya* had been printed in Yamit. When Rav Neria heard this, he was moved, and he asked for a copy.

On Motzaei Acharon shel Pesach, his son-in-law, Rabbi Mordechai Bar-Eli

with two of his children were present at *kos shel bracha*. R' Mordechai did not introduce himself, and after he received wine in his cup he continued walking. Somehow, one of the secretaries found out that this was Rav Neria's son-in-law, and he was called back. The Rebbe gave him a bottle of wine and gave him many blessings. As he continued on his way, some *chassidim* surrounded him and asked him what the Rebbe had said. That's when he realized that receiving a bottle of wine from the Rebbe was a gesture of *kiruv* (special treatment).

Rav Neria sent his published letters and books to the Rebbe and the Rebbe always warmly thanked him for them.

Rav Neria excelled in writing, and his teachings were written as hundreds of compositions, only some of which were put into his books. Being a *talmid chacham* (Torah scholar), he wrote many Torah articles: *chiddushim* (novella), *pirkei iyun* (subject analyses), and *birurei halacha* (halachic clarifications). As a leader and public figure, he was also involved in public affairs. As an educator par excellence, he expressed in his writings both his visionary as well as his practical educational ideas.

* * *

We'll conclude with a quote from a letter the Rebbe wrote to a *bachur* who moved from France to Eretz Yisroel and was undecided whether to learn or to work. (After the Rebbe encouraged him to learn, the Rebbe writes): **"Since you are in Kfar HaRoeh, you should see Rav Moshe Tzvi Neria and tell him your problem, and you can show him this letter. He will certainly elaborate and explain to you, if you need more of an explanation."**

Rav Neria learned a lot of *Tanya*, started a *Tanya shiur* in his *yeshiva*, learned *Likkutei Torah* and encouraged the *talmidim* of B'nei Akiva *yeshivos* to participate in the Yud-Tes Kislev *farbrengens*, where he himself spoke.

The last *farbrengen* of the Rebbe's that he attended was on Yud-Tes Kislev 5742, and a number of those who eulogized him said it wasn't coincidental that he passed away on Yud-Tes Kislev 5756.

Sources: from the chapter on Rav Neria in the book "Shemen Sasson Meicheirecha" vol. 3, by Rav Sholom Ber Volpe; "Shachar Oro" by his daughter Tzila Bar-Eli; an article in his memory in *HaTzofeh* by a close follower, Rav Harel Cohen; *kovtzei Heichal Menachem* edited by Rav Mordechai Menasheh Laufer, and a series of oral interviews with family members and students.

The author thanks all those who helped him, especially Rebbetzin Rochel Neria and Rav Yikhas Rozen from *Merkaz Neria* in Kiryat Malachi.

THE ANONYMOUS CALLER

Rabbi Yaakov Segal, *shliach* in Neve Monson relates:

I got a phone call one night from a man who wished to remain anonymous and asked me whether I had the *Igros Kodesh*, and I told him that I did. He asked whether he could get a *bracha* from the Rebbe through the *Igros Kodesh* with my help. Of course, I agreed.

I asked the caller for his first name and his mother's name. He told me, and said he also wanted to ask for a *bracha* for a woman whose name he gave me.

"What do you want to ask the Rebbe?" I inquired.

There was a long silence and then he said emotionally, "*Hatzlacha*. Write one word, '*hatzlacha*.'"

"You're relying on the fact that the Rebbe knows everything rather than being specific. So don't write anything then. *Think* about your requests and I'll open the *Igros Kodesh*."

He agreed and I opened one of the volumes. He immediately asked me how many letters there were on the two pages I had opened to, and I realized he was familiar with the *Igros Kodesh*. I told him there were two letters.

"Read the letter on the right side," he said and I read it to him, but couldn't explain the Rebbe's answer since I didn't know what his question was. The letter spoke about bizarre tribulations that the person



Rabbi Yaakov Segal, *shliach* in Neve Monson

who had written to the Rebbe had gone through, and the Rebbe was encouraging him and telling him not to despair for no evil descends from Above.

The Rebbe added that he was happy to hear that a woman had been suggested for him, especially since twenty years had gone by. When you go in the ways of nature, Hashem does things in a way that is above nature, and everything should end well.

The Rebbe also said he should continue meeting the woman in order to marry. The letter ended with the instruction that if his *t'fillin* and *mezuzos* hadn't been checked in the past 12 months, he should check them.

I didn't know what to say to the man. The Rebbe was talking about a *shidduch* and the man sounded like he was in his fifties. While I wondered what to say next, the man interrupted my thoughts and asked

me to read the letter again, saying, "The letter fits the situation I'm in now. Please read it again."

I read the letter a second time and then he began to emotionally recount his story.

"Up until some years ago I was married. My wife and I had three daughters who were ill with muscular dystrophy. They had severe cases, and my wife and I spent most of our time at their bedsides at various hospitals around the country. We went with them from doctor to doctor, trying various treatments. We also did tests to see whether either of us had a genetic problem, but the doctors couldn't find a cause for the disease.

"We suffered tremendously as we helplessly watched our children deteriorate. This went on for years. Each child suffered for years and then died. My wife and I were left in despair. For over ten years, we were at our daughters' bedsides. They were our entire world and everything revolved around them. Now what?

"We also had severe financial problems because we had used all our money on medical treatment and had left our jobs. We lived on the national social security allotment with a little help from the welfare department.

"Our financial woes only added to the sadness and anger in our home, which was broken even without money problems. There was also a feeling of uncertainty as to whether, if we would have more children, they would also be sick."

"Our financial woes only added to the sadness and anger in our home, which was broken even without money problems. There was also a feeling of uncertainty as to whether, if we would have more children, they would also be sick.

"We finally decided we couldn't continue living like that. After a great deal of uncertainty, we decided to divorce after twenty years of marriage. Another twenty years have passed since. Now I know what the

Rebbe means about, "tzaros shonos u'meshunos" (various and bizarre problems), and the Rebbe writes, "twenty years."

"For the last half a year I've been wondering whether to remarry. I just asked the Rebbe for a *bracha* about a woman I've met, and you see the Rebbe encourages me to speak to her about marriage. What I don't understand is why the Rebbe says I should check my *t'fillin* and *mezuzos*, when I've checked them.

"When did you check them?" I asked.

"A year and a half ago," he said.

"So the Rebbe says that if you didn't check them within the year, then you should check them again."

I asked him why he had called me, and he said, "I tried asking the Rebbe for things through the *Igros Kodesh*, and I bought a set of them in order to be able to do this, but I never get a clear answer. So I decided to ask the Rebbe through his *shluchim*, and I get clear answers that way.

"I have a list of the Israeli *shluchim*, and each time, I call a different *shliach*. This time I picked your name."

He thanked me for my help and said goodbye.

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YIDDISH: THE MOTHER TONGUE

The following is a compilation from sichos and letters about the importance of speaking in Yiddish. All the Rebbe's sichos were said in Yiddish and this is the language that our Rebbeim, the n'siim used, starting with the Baal Shem Tov.

SPECIAL QUALITY

In *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 21, p. 447, the Rebbe speaks about the special quality of Yiddish, and says:

Among the 70 languages, there are languages that have unique qualities, as we find in the Gemara, even in connection to *halacha*, as relates to both the Greek and Aramaic languages. We can say that this applies to the Yiddish language, too. The very fact that for generations – including our own generation – most of Ashkenazi Jewry, including the great Ashkenazi Torah leaders, spoke in this language (to the point that this language is called, at least in the last generation, “Yiddish,” i.e., the Jewish language) proves that this language has an advantage over other languages.

This is so, even though the reason they spoke Yiddish (and not *Lashon HaKodesh*) was in order not to use *Lashon HaKodesh* for mundane matters, which would seem to indicate that Yiddish is a mundane language (like the other 70 languages). Yet the fact that out of all the 70 languages, by Divine providence – and it is certainly

no coincidence, especially something important like Torah lectures in *yeshivos* and Torah discussions in this language, etc., etc. – it is specifically this language (Yiddish), which is the language that most Jews speak, proves that this language has an advantage over all other languages.

TO UNDERSTAND OUR REBBEIM

The Rebbe places great value on knowing Yiddish because this is the language of the Rebbeim:

There is another special quality about Yiddish in that it has a connection to the revelation of *p'nimius ha'Torah*. The Alter Rebbe says in *Igeres HaKodesh* that “the Baal Shem Tov would say *divrei Torah* in Yiddish and not in *Lashon HaKodesh*.” This was also the practice of the students of the Maggid and the Alter Rebbe and the Rebbeim who followed him, including the Rebbe, my father-in-law – they would say *chassidus* in Yiddish.

Furthermore, in order to truly understand the *divrei Torah* of our Rebbeim, it's not enough to learn them

as they are translated into *Lashon HaKodesh* by others; it is still necessary to utilize Yiddish words, as is understood from the *Igeres HaKodesh* there.

A LANGUAGE THAT WAS ELEVATED BY SPEECH

The Rebbe spoke similarly in a *sicha* of Parshas VaYeishev 5748 (edited):

Even though it is not *Lashon HaKodesh* but a foreign language, this language was elevated by the Jewish people who spoke it over the generations, even by speaking about optional [i.e. not *mitzva*] matters (“all your deeds should be for the sake of Heaven,” and “in all your ways, know Him”).

All the more so through speaking of Torah and *mitzvos*, and actually learning Torah (in *chadarim* and *yeshivos*, etc.), including and especially *p'nimius ha'Torah*. Thus, it has a special advantage and importance, and is uniquely beloved. Similar to the Targum [Aramaic], which is close to *Lashon HaKodesh*, to the point that even the Written Torah contains words in the language of Targum, and certainly this is so regarding the Oral Torah – the Babylonian Talmud and even the Jerusalem Talmud.

“THEY DIDN'T CHANGE THEIR LANGUAGE”

In that *sicha*, the Rebbe urges Americans to use Yiddish at gatherings of *Anash* (*Hisvaaduyos* 5748, vol. 2, p. 73; unedited. Note: this *sicha* was said

a few weeks after (and in connection with) the first Kinus HaShluchim):

Since we are on the topic, a strange practice that needs correcting must be noted. When “*shpitz-Chabadniks*” gather to speak amongst themselves, I am amazed to hear that the language they use is English!

These are men who were born and raised in *chassidic* homes, and they learned in *chassidic chadarim* and *yeshivos* in which they spoke and learned in Yiddish and the *rosh yeshiva* didn’t even know the language of the country.

Yet when they gather and speak amongst themselves (not when they have to speak to other Jews who don’t know Yiddish, but amongst themselves), they speak (not in Yiddish, but) in English, aside from those *chassidic* expressions and ideas that since it’s difficult to say them in English, they say them in the original language.

This practice needs correcting (not only in a way of “if you so happen to choose”), for the great quality of “they did not change their language” is known.

ONE OF THE DEFICIENCIES OF AMERICA

This topic was also mentioned in a letter of the Rebbe Rayatz (vol. 13, p. 309) where he complains about the state of Judaism in America, saying that parents don’t bequeath to their children the traditional Jewish life. Among the things he mentions is that, “they should know how to read and understand the Jewish language of *Galus*,” i.e., Yiddish.

A UNITED LANGUAGE

Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka, *a”h*, also demanded that everybody speak Yiddish. She once spoke to a household member about the great advantage in everybody speaking Yiddish. She said, “During the war, when we all fled from the Germans, there were Jews of all backgrounds.

What united everybody? The Yiddish language that we all spoke.

“Yiddish is the language that unites Jews of all walks of life.”

YIDDISH IN MAAMAREI CHASSIDUS

Even though the *maamarei chassidus* of the Rebbeim were generally written in *Lashon HaKodesh*, sometimes expressions or even entire sentences are written in Yiddish. The Rebbe Rashab once referred to this (quoted in the *Igros Kodesh* of the Rebbe Rayatz, vol. 9, p. 367):

[Regarding] the words in Yiddish

In order to truly understand the divrei Torah of our Rebbeim, it’s not enough to learn them as they are translated into Lashon HaKodesh by others; it is still necessary to utilize Yiddish words.

that are included in the *maamarim*, the purpose is to convey the *vort* through them, so that it is understood without any doubts, so they shouldn’t need any clarification.

Regarding the animal soul in general and the *yetzer ha’ra* in particular – their first approach is to confuse a person and to prevent him from fulfilling *mitzvos* or from doing something with good *middos*. The confusion is accomplished in a number of ways.

The advice *chassidus* gives for this is

to explain each topic in *chassidus* in the language that you use in daily life. This naturally weakens the strength of the animal soul in general, and the *yetzer ha’ra* in particular.

The Rebbe writes along similar lines (*Igros Kodesh*, vol. 18, p. 24):

he Rebbe my father-in-law says that deep heartfelt [matters] express themselves better in Yiddish.

Naturally, you can write to me in Yiddish, and as the Rebbe my father-in-law says that deep heartfelt [matters] express themselves better in Yiddish. And with this he explains why in *Tanya, Igeres HaKodesh*, at the end of page 163a, after the words of inspiration that the Alter Rebbe writes, he says, “*gevald, gevald*” in Yiddish.

HOW IT RELATES TO P’NIMIUS HA’TORAH

In one of his *sichos* (*Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 21, p. 448), the Rebbe reveals that aside from the fact that the Rebbeim used Yiddish, Yiddish also has a substantive advantage:

The connection that Yiddish has to *p’nimius ha’Torah* is in two ways:

1) Since the Rebbeim said *chassidus* in Yiddish, it proves that this language has (even before they used it to say *chassidus*) a special quality as compared to other languages, which makes it suitable for *chassidus*.

2) By the Rebbeim saying *chassidus* in Yiddish, they elevated the language even more than it was elevated previously.

ALL THE TIME

In another place (*Shmini* 5728, unedited) the Rebbe explains that the fact that the Rebbeim used Yiddish, elevated not only the language but also the country that spoke the language:

The Alter Rebbe in *Igeres HaKodesh* (chapter 25) says, “the compiler ... didn’t know how to write it precisely because the Baal Shem Tov, *z”l*, would say *divrei Torah* in Yiddish and not in *Lashon HaKodesh*.” This was also the

case with our Rebbeim, including the Rebbe my father-in-law, who was accustomed to speak in Yiddish even on Shabbos – unlike those who are careful to speak only *Lashon HaKodesh* on Shabbos. And he didn't just speak about ordinary subjects, but even Torah and *p'nimius ha'Torah*, which is connected with Messianic times, for "then I will transform a clear language for the nations," which refers to *Lashon HaKodesh*. However, being in *Galus* he spoke about *p'nimius ha'Torah* in Yiddish and not in *Lashon HaKodesh*.

According to the simple *chassidic* meaning, the reason for this is in order to refine the language, and not only the language but also the entire country that speaks this language, since the language of a country is [an expression of] the special quality of the country...

CHASSIDUS IN YIDDISH

The special connection that Yiddish has with *Toras ha'chassidus* is emphasized in *Tanya*, the Written Torah of *chassidus*:

The *Tanya* consists of a compilation of "answers to many questions that are asked by all of *Anash*," as the Alter Rebbe writes in his introduction to *Tanya*. From this we understand that even though the Alter Rebbe wrote the *Tanya* in *Lashon HaKodesh*, the beginning of the revelation and the saying of *Tanya*, which was "answers to many questions" that the Alter Rebbe answered "*Anash* in *yechidus*," was when the Alter Rebbe spoke in Yiddish.

(Especially the first three chapters of *Tanya*, which the Alter Rebbe said as a *maamer chassidus* (at the birth of the Tzemach Tzedek), for the Alter Rebbe would say *maamarim* in Yiddish.) ...

From all of the above we understand the great significance of the publication of a portion of the *Tanya* with a brief commentary as it was taught on the radio, in Yiddish. [Editor's note: this talk was given in connection with the publication of

Lessons in Tanya, which was originally written in Yiddish.]

In addition, they have thus fulfilled the commandment, "place it before them – to show them face" [a Talmudic adage enjoining the explanation of Torah teachings to students, as opposed to just stating facts], even to Jews who don't understand *Lashon HaKodesh*. Translating *Tanya* into Yiddish (as well as the commentary) also has a special advantage in that it is the language through which the *Tanya* was first revealed and said.

(*Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 21, p. 447-9)

CHINUCH IN YIDDISH

On Yud Shvat 5712, a group of students from Yeshivas Achei Tmimim in New Haven came to the Rebbe, and the Rebbe spoke to them. The principal, Rabbi Moshe Yitzchok

Hecht, translated what the Rebbe said into English. The Rebbe expressed his surprise that the children didn't understand Yiddish.

(*Toras Menachem* vol. 4, p. 322)

TO ACCUSTOM CHILDREN TO SPEAK IN YIDDISH

The following is a quote from a letter that the Rebbe sent on 6 Tammuz 5718 (*Igros Kodesh*, vol. 9, p. 444):

In response to your writing that you and your wife want to speak Yiddish amongst yourselves, because when there's the habit of speaking the language of the country at home you see that your son doesn't understand Yiddish, and you should certainly accustom him to understand Yiddish. May Hashem help you to raise him to Torah, *chuppa*, and good deeds with a good livelihood, with material and

WHAT, THEY DON'T LEARN IN YIDDISH?!

It was in the year 5736, when the principal of Oholei Torah in Kfar Chabad, Rabbi Ben-Tzion Vishedsky, had a *yechidus* with his seven-year-old son. A few minutes before entering the Rebbe's room, they met R' E.L. with his son. After they had their *yechidus* that night, R' E.L. said that before the Rebbe began speaking with his son, the Rebbe asked him which language he wanted to speak in, and when he answered, *Lashon HaKodesh*, the Rebbe spoke to him in *Lashon HaKodesh*.

A few minutes later when the Vishedskys had a *yechidus*, the Rebbe spoke to the child in Yiddish (without asking him which language he preferred). The Rebbe tested him on the material he was learning in school.

The boy answered in *Lashon HaKodesh*, since he couldn't speak Yiddish well. Occasionally, the Rebbe's questions to him had to be translated for him, but the Rebbe continued speaking to the boy in Yiddish and the boy responded in *Lashon HaKodesh*.

At the end of the "test," the Rebbe asked the boy (in Yiddish), "What is the color of your jacket?" It was clear that the Rebbe wanted to test the boy's knowledge of Yiddish. The boy didn't know the answer, and so his father whispered in his ear that the Rebbe wanted to know the color of his jacket. The boy answered the Rebbe in *Lashon HaKodesh*.

Then the Rebbe addressed the boy's father (for the first time in this *yechidus*) and very gravely asked, "How is it that he knows *Lashon HaKodesh* so well?" Then the Rebbe added in a surprised tone, "They don't learn in Yiddish in school?!"

spiritual expansiveness.

LEARNING IN YIDDISH

The Rebbe greatly encourages teaching in Yiddish, seeing this as extremely important:

In response to your question that until now you had classes in which the language of instruction was Yiddish and you are uncertain about the upcoming term for a number of reasons that you mention in your letter, and you ask my opinion.

Despite the reasons that you mention, it is vital that you continue teaching in Yiddish, as you have until now. At the very time when you see the “other side” fighting for every inch, and nothing is considered too trivial, for the only consideration is to win, our Torah should warrant no less than their issues. [Especially], as we are required to preserve [our distinctiveness] even to “the color of shoelaces.” All the more so with something that pertains to *chinuch*, for it is very difficult to assess ahead of time what the consequences of a little change in childhood will be and its effects throughout one’s adult life. Going on at length to one such as yourself is surely unnecessary.

(Igras Kodesh, vol. 8, p. 27)

THE BAAL SHEM TOV TAUGHT IN YIDDISH

The fact that “the Baal Shem Tov said *divrei Torah* in Yiddish and not in *Lashon HaKodesh*” demands an explanation. The *divrei Torah* of the

Baal Shem Tov were typically said before his students. There were gatherings in which simple people also participated, nevertheless, as far as saying *divrei Torah* goes, most of the Baal Shem Tov’s teachings, qualitatively, and likely in quantity too, were said to his students.

Certainly, the students of the Baal Shem Tov did not need to have the teachings translated into the spoken language (Yiddish), so why did the Baal Shem Tov say *divrei Torah* to his students in Yiddish and not in *Lashon HaKodesh*?

Indeed, the Yiddish language is not just the language of a country (of the gentiles), it is the language of the Jewish people. Of course, it is not [like] *Lashon HaKodesh*, as *Torah Ohr* explains the difference between *Lashon HaKodesh* and all other languages – that [the words of] *Lashon HaKodesh* [are] compared to “stones,” which are a Heavenly creation, “the Language of Holiness which is drawn down from the Supernal Holiness,” whereas the other 70 languages of the nations are like “bricks,” which are manmade, regarding which it says, “and the brick was to them as a stone” – “that Yisroel is scattered amongst 70 nations, and they also speak the languages of the nations amongst whom they live ... thereby elevating all the combinations of letters, etc.” Thus, it comes out that the loftiness of *Lashon HaKodesh* is not found in any other language, including the best of the nations’ languages, like Aramaic and even Yiddish.

Nevertheless the Baal Shem Tov used Yiddish to say *divrei Torah* to his students, a language spoken and understood by simple people too, ignorant people, as well as women. This practice was characteristic of the Baal Shem Tov’s role and mission in this world: to unite with every single Jew and to affect every single Jew, from the greatest to the smallest.

(Sicha Teitzei, 14 Elul 5745)

“ENGRAVED FOREVER”

The Rebbe Rayatz said (*Igras Kodesh*, vol. 4, p. 45):

My father, the Rebbe Rashab, told me: My father’s [the Rebbe Maharash] words in Yiddish that he used when saying *chassidus* need to be engraved forever.

“MAMME LASHON”

On 17 Elul 5748, the Rebbe laid the cornerstone for the expansion of 770. Shortly before that, at the end of Mincha in the Rebbe’s home, philanthropist David Chase told the Rebbe that he invited him to lay the cornerstone (something a Rebbe had never done before).

The Rebbe smiled and said that Jews makes “deals,” and if he, Mr. Chase, would speak in “*Mamme Lashon*” (the Mother Tongue, i.e., Yiddish) at the ceremony, the Rebbe would attend.

Mr. Chase did indeed say a few words in Yiddish (“Rebbe, I love you”), and the Rebbe had tremendous *nachas* from this, and he laid the cornerstone.

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A PROUD CHASSID ON THE FRONT

BY SHLOMO ROKEACH

*There are situations that a person gets involved in against their will. Chassidim know that Hashem brings us where we have to go and that we must “create an environment.” * This is the extremely impressive and inspiring story of Shai Nagar, who recently served in the Israeli army and made the Rebbe proud!*

A hot summer morning. Hundreds of soldiers stand in the huge plaza at the entrance of the base, all of them drafted into the Golani brigade, among them a Lubavitcher soldier named Shai, a Tamim drafted against his will due to an error. Shai, who grew up in a traditional home but went on to become a Lubavitcher and a Tamim in Tomchei Tmimim in Migdal HaEmek, could not understand how he had ended up at the army base.

“I looked around me and just couldn’t digest the whole scene. Just a few days earlier I was in Beis Moshiach – 770 enveloped in *chassidic* warmth, and suddenly I was thrown into another world. I kept repeating to

myself: ‘I am not here like everyone else. I am here on *shlichus*, and this is my role in the army.’”

Our first day as recruits. We were awakened at dawn and the new soldiers jumped from their beds and quickly got themselves ready to leave. The religious soldiers get 45 minutes for Shacharis. I began saying “*Korbanos*” and went on to learn the daily *shiur* of *Tanya*. I didn’t pay attention but the soldiers around me were already in the middle of *davening*. I finally began *davening*, went on to the T’hilim after *davening*, and changed to my Rabbeinu Tam *t’fillin*. The tent where we *davened* was empty by that time.

I heard the angry voice of the commander, “Nagar, why are you late?”
“I couldn’t finish...”

One day followed another and the story repeated itself each morning. I did my best to finish on time but I always finished about a quarter of an hour after everybody else. After being yelled at a number of times, I called my *mashpia* to ask him what I should do. The answer was clear: I could not skip *korbanos*, I couldn’t remove the Rashi *t’fillin* until after Shmoneh Esrei, and the Rabbeinu Tam had to be immediately following Rashi. In order to solve the time problem, he suggested that I get official permission to have more time for *davening*.

I did as he said and got permission. I was particular about *Korbanos* and Rabbeinu Tam even under pressured situations, and there were difficult times, but Hashem helped.

I won’t say it always worked out. There was even one day, during serious battles, when I couldn’t put *t’fillin* on at all. We had dug into an ambush position, and I *davened* by heart. And there was a Shabbos when we fought the entire Shabbos and I *davened* in my heart. I knew Hashem was listening.

I was strong about sticking to learning the daily *Tanya* after *davening*. When I think back, I realize this is what saved me from “drying out.” There were entire months that went by without my learning any *chassidus*, but the daily *Tanya* was always in my head.

I quickly realized that dealing with being in the army was going to be a major challenge. The army is a tough place to be; even ordinary soldiers finds it hard to deal with it. People become very edgy. For me, things were much, much harder, since on top of the usual army hardships, I also had to contend with *davening*, *kashrus*, etc.

I was often amazed at myself when I discovered what *kochos* (strengths) I had been given. For example, there were long, hard days of maneuvers and the entire company returned at night, exhausted, to the base. Within minutes, they were asleep. I also yearned to drop into bed, but I remembered that I needed to *daven* Maariv, and sometimes I had to finish *Chitas* (Chumash, T’hillim, *Tanya*).

A question that really disturbed me was: why did I have to be here

altogether and to endure these difficulties? I wrote to the Rebbe about it and opened to a clear answer (in the *Igros Kodesh*). Its message was: being in the army was to be considered solely a *shlichus* for me. I opened to many answers and the Rebbe was constantly encouraging me to stay and spread the wellsprings. This was the only thing that gave me the strength to go on.

With answers like these, I returned each time with renewed *chayus*, remembering that I was there for the purpose of a serious *shlichus*. I remembered this constantly, and *baruch Hashem*, I used every moment for the holy work I had been sent there to do.

One of the things that I noticed from the very beginning was that the best way to influence others was not with attempts at persuasion, but to simply go along with the guys. The thing that made the greatest impression was my being a *dugma chaya* (role model). Thanks to the ongoing answers I was getting from the Rebbe, and learning *chassidus*, I was careful to keep in good spirits even

during the tough times. I always had a smile for everyone.

The soldiers around me couldn’t understand where this warmth was coming from. They were encountering something unfamiliar to them, a different sort of person. Everybody’s friend, always trying to smile and help, and not getting upset during hard times – this affected them tremendously. People naturally gravitate towards something good, and when they saw that being religious means being a pleasant individual too, it made quite an impact. Over time, I discovered they were beginning to flock around me.

This is when I suddenly began to understand what a *chassid* is, and the meaning of the line, “A *chassid* creates an environment.” I frequently saw religious soldiers in other companies, some of them handling things better, some worse, but I never saw a single one of them drawing the rest of the soldiers along with them. To a certain extent, they were isolated.

I was flooded with questions. They came for advice, to ask things. At every appropriate opportunity, I was asked to say a *d’var Torah*. They insisted that I make *Kiddush* Friday night. I felt how without conscious effort an “environment” was being created. I began to understand that this was a highly unique sort of *shlichus* in which I had to be an outstanding example to others, 24 hours a day. I could only handle the enormous psychological difficulties I experienced because I realized this and I knew that I had to smile, simply because this was a main feature of my *shlichus*.

The difficulties I had to contend with were enormous. Routine things like washing hands with a towel, etc., stringencies on Pesach, and just daily stringencies that in *yeshiva* are routine were tremendously challenging in the army. Each stringency made whatever I was doing take longer, and this was at the expense of my few minutes of rest time, but I stuck with it with firm



R' Shai Nagar on a break during military maneuvers

resolve. I realized that withstanding the pressure of the army was simply a miracle, something that was possible solely due to the Rebbe's *brachos*.

I remember a religious soldier who came over to me some time after I had been drafted, and told me that he had consulted with his *rav* before being drafted. The *rav* had told him that he was strong enough to be drafted, but lately he found it very difficult to withstand the enticements around him, since everybody watched television, etc. I did my best to encourage him, and at the same time, I began to realize what is meant by the "*ko'ach* of the *meshaleiach*."

I saw how, in a most natural way, I became a veritable Chabad house. Soldiers came over to me all the time in order to consult with me about various problems. One soldier whose grandfather wasn't well asked me what he could do to improve the situation. Of course, I referred most of the soldiers to the *Igros Kodesh* I had. I always had a volume with me so I could ask the Rebbe about everything, and also so that others could use it.

I learned to use every minute of the day. I took every opportunity to influence others, to teach, or just have a pep talk with someone. There are many soldiers who really don't need to be convinced about the truth, since they come from traditional homes. They just need some life-giving *chizuk* (support) in order to go on. For soldiers like these, I always emphasized how important it is not to be embarrassed by those around you, on the contrary, to influence them!

A great time for long conversations was during watches. While on guard duty we stood there for hours and I used these opportunities to talk about Judaism. The main point I made again and again was how we must look at the world from "top-down," to realize that Torah and *mitzvos* are the true reality of the world.

I tried to make use of my time for myself too, as much as I could, and



R' Shai Nagar at a *farbrengen* with T'mimim in 770

when I was alone I reviewed *Tanya* or T'hillim by heart. Sometimes I saw miracles in this, like when I was waiting to hitch a ride and the minute I remembered that I had to "purify the air" and began reviewing *Tanya*, a car drove up.

During one of the major training exercises that we did, we got a break and the entire company sat in a huge tent and used the respite in order to marshal our strength. The guys chatted about this and that and then one of the soldiers turned to me and said, "Nagar, maybe you'll teach us something?" The other soldiers liked the idea and joined him, saying, "Yeah, teach something!"

Of course, I was thrilled to teach but I had nothing prepared, so I lectured on material that a Chabad *chassid* is always prepared with: the first chapters of *Tanya*. I taught them thoroughly and the soldiers should definite interest. In the meantime, one of the officers who was supposed to teach us something about weapons came in, but when he saw how seriously the soldiers were sitting and listening, he didn't want to interrupt. He sat quietly in a corner and listened in, too. He waited until I finished and then went on to deliver the lecture he

had come to teach.

A discovery that really amazed me was the powerful influence my *yarmulke* had. Nearly every time I walked around the camp without a hat, I got warm reactions. One soldier from Bat-Yam passed me and when he saw the "*Yechi*" on my *yarmulke* he called out, "*Yechi HaMelech!*" On a

WITH A SIRTUK AND GARTEL

One day I saw a Druze soldier walking around the base in civilian clothes. I asked him why he was wearing them and he said that it was a holiday of theirs and he had been given permission to wear civilian clothes.

I figured that if he could do it, so could I, *l'havdil!* On Yud Shvat, we organized a big gathering for all the soldiers of the section and I came wearing a *sirtuk* and *gartel*. What a commotion that made! At the end of the gathering, the guys gathered round me and emotionally hugged and kissed me.

number of occasions, soldiers saw me and began singing “*Yechi*.” I saw how a *Yechi yarmulke* brought a *chayus* to the entire base.

People saw it and began singing or stopped me and asked me about Moshiach and *Geula*. Often this developed into long talks about the Rebbe’s *malchus*, and in general, it was just great to see how it brought a *chayus* and great *simcha*.

On many occasions, it was amongst the soldiers themselves. I would pass by and they would notice my *yarmulke* and naturally begin discussing *Geula*. But, then of course, there were many times when I was “held for interrogation” and I had to explain the whole topic.

I stuck to the premise that every soldier, religious or not yet, had to know the truth. I explained to all of them that the Rebbe is Moshiach and he is *chai v’kayam*. For some of them I first had to explain what a Rebbe is and what Moshiach is before they could go further. Some of them agreed and some of them remained skeptical, but they all understood. This is another thing I saw clearly – that when you speak clearly everybody understands.

A really special thing that happened took place a month and a half after I was drafted. We were at the Bezek camp, a training camp for the Golani unit, and it was Motzaei Yom Kippur. I was walking through the camp when I heard someone call my name. I turned around and was amazed to see it was the Company Commander.

I have to explain here that at a certain point during your service, the relationship between soldiers and officers softens up, but for fresh recruits there’s a definite emphasis on keeping a distance between recruits and officers in order to create an atmosphere of strict discipline.

The Company Commander was sitting on a bench and holding a drink.

“How did the fast go?” he asked. I said it had gone fine and he held out the bottle and asked, “Want a drink?”

He told me to sit down next to him and he began talking to me, and then I realized what the reason was for the special treatment. “Tell me,” he said, “I heard that in Chabad they say the Lubavitcher Rebbe is Moshiach. Is that right?”

I went into high gear and sat there for a long time explaining the whole subject, which he appeared to enjoy immensely. From then on, we were good friends.

It’s difficult to describe to someone who was never in the army how

“Suddenly I was thrown into another world. I kept repeating to myself: ‘I am not here like everyone else. I am here on shlichus, and this is my role in the army.’”

unusual it is for the commander of a group and a recruit to become friends. He became very interested in all aspects of *Yiddishkeit*. He had been religious beforehand, but once we became friends he became much stronger and more consistent about it.

The friendship was a great benefit to me too. First of all, it gave me enormous *chizuk* to know that as a simple soldier the commander was my good friend. This helped me endure the tremendous difficulties I experienced as a recruit, for I literally felt how the Real Commander, the Rebbe MH”M, was watching over me and accompanying me every step of

the way, and if it was necessary, then even the commander of the base was enlisted to the task.

* * *

It was Tammuz and I found it hard to believe that I had been in the army for over a year. Then things became more complicated. Until then, I had been a recruit in training, but now we progressed to actual field combat duty, and time became more limited.

I was transferred to a veteran company and I was greeted with: That won’t work here. The effort required was indeed enormous, and I nearly stopped functioning in my role as *shliach*. Elul arrived and I made sure to get a *shofar*, but I didn’t go around with it and blow it for others.

It’s interesting that the one who noticed this was the second in command of the company, who asked me one day, “Nagar, it’s Elul already, why aren’t you blowing the *shofar* for everyone?”

It was at that time that I was learning in the parsha of the week about “and your camp should be holy ... Hashem your G-d in the midst of your camp,” and I thought it would be a good idea to teach the other guys these laws. Especially as they were so relevant to the safety of the soldiers, but I didn’t end up doing it.

I went home for Shabbos that week and when my mother saw me, she immediately said, “I have a letter for you from the Rebbe.” She gave me the volume of *Igros Kodesh* and as I began reading the letter, I was dumbfounded. It was in volume 15, p. 347, and this is what the Rebbe says:

“In response to your letter...in which you write that you serve in the army, and are careful to observe Torah and mitzvos, etc.

“Certainly you look favorably upon others too and influence your friends in this direction.

“About being in the army specifically, you need to do everything you can to strengthen all aspects of the

army. Naturally the soldiers are included in this, for whoever does differently is a traitor. This is all true, in far greater measure, when it comes to observing Torah and *mitzvos* within the army. Since [it says regarding] our Torah, the Torah of Life, and its *mitzvos*, “and you shall live with them” – that an increase in all this, increases life and strength in the army, and any

weakness, *ch”v*, in Torah and *mitzvos*, brings weakness and harms the safety of the company you’re in, and the army in general. However, because of the doubled and redoubled darkness of exile, there are those who err in this, since the consequences aren’t seen immediately and on the spot. There is a *kal v’chomer* (deduction a priori) here in that, since at all times and in all

places, every Jewish man and woman is commanded to keep Torah and *mitzvos*, all the more so are soldiers thus commanded, ‘your camp should be holy.’

“At the same time it is also understood that even when in the army under unusual conditions like those you write about – i.e., that they don’t help, and perhaps even more

THE REBBE’S BOOKLET THAT SAVED THE SLEEPING SOLDIERS

It was one of the first Friday nights since my return from 770. We were in an isolated outpost in the hotspot of Kfar Darom. We had finished eating and were going to sleep. We had divided the watches among ourselves, each soldier getting a time slot. I went out to do guard duty from one to three a.m.

At five in the morning, I was woken up by the sound of shots. I was immediately alert, and began to plan which direction to run in. Our outpost was surrounded on three sides by an Arab refugee camp. I decided to run north.

I stretched out my hand behind my head (where every soldier keeps his weapon) to reach for my gun, but it wasn’t there. The soldier that slept head to head with me, had taken it by mistake. If you know how it works in the army, you know that a mistake like this is completely unnatural. A few seconds later, I realized that my life had been miraculously saved. The terrorist was not outside but inside, near the entrance to our room. If I had run outside...

The terrorist’s plan was to kill everybody in the area, and afterwards to toss grenades into the bedrooms. He infiltrated during the changing of the guard, as the two soldiers on guard came down to wake up the next guards. One of them, Boruch Shnir, stood outside the room, and the other one, Sharon (may Hashem avenge their blood), was sitting in a nearby room, trying to wake up the soldier next on duty.

The terrorist shot at Shnir and killed him on the spot. He thought the others were all asleep, and was surprised by the hail of bullets that came out of the room. It was Sharon, who immediately returned fire. The terrorist aimed his gun over the doorpost and killed Sharon, too.

We were all woken up and didn’t know what was going on. Another soldier by the name of Deckel, who slept in a bed in the doorway of the room, was completely alert, and he shot and hit the terrorist in the foot.

He tried to shoot some more but the weapon jammed. The terrorist reached into his pocket to take out a grenade. Deckel knew only seconds remained, and that’s when the miracle happened. Deckel banged his rifle and it suddenly began working again. He shot at the terrorist’s head and killed him. When they removed the terrorist they found the grenade with the pin pulled partway.

In the morning we began to review the series of miracles, starting with Sharon returning fire, surprising the terrorist and preventing his advancing further, then continuing with the fact that we hadn’t all run outside even though we didn’t know that the terrorist was at the entrance to the rooms, and ending with the miracles that had happened with Deckel. We didn’t understand how Deckel was alert after being on guard until three

in the morning.

Then Deckel told us the secret. When we were on guard, I had brought Deckel the small booklet that had come out at that time: *Segula L’Shemirat HaChayalim M’HaRebbe Melech HaMoshiach (Protection for the Soldiers from the Rebbe MH”M)*. He was very excited by the booklet and was sitting on his bed and reading it until five in the morning.

He said that during the shooting he felt how the Rebbe was with him and was helping him with every single shot. He held on to that booklet, knowing that it was the Rebbe who had saved the base.

*The terrorist’s plan
was to kill everybody
in the area, and
afterwards to toss
grenades into the
bedrooms.*

than the lack of help, in the observance of Torah and *mitzvos* – since the Giver of the Torah and the Commander of the commandments commanded there to be an especial holiness in an army camp, He certainly makes it possible for everyone to fulfill this, for Hashem does not come with exaggerated demands upon His creatures.

“With blessings for good news in all that was mentioned, and with regards to your friends.”

After reading that, I returned to the base with renewed enthusiasm. I convened all the soldiers and told them about the Rebbe’s letter. I explained, “and your camp should be holy,” while emphasizing the safety it provided the soldiers. I myself did not realize how meaningful this was, until a few weeks later, just as I arrived in Crown Heights for Tishrei 5761, when war broke out.

I also told them that I was preparing to go to the Rebbe for Tishrei and they could give me *panim*. The truth is that it was just at that time that my mother brought up the idea of going, and began urging me to go. I still didn’t know whether I would be allowed to go, nevertheless I announced that I was going. Then I began working on getting permission.

The chances of getting permission to go were slim. Intelligence reports announced the outbreak of war, and the army wanted to hold on to every soldier. Later on, I discovered that 32 requests had been made for a leave of absence and only my request was

approved. I arrived for Tishrei with a bag full of *panim*.

During Tishrei, I filled my spiritual tanks in a way that’s hard to describe. I returned after having had many spiritual experiences, and with the renewed sense of having a real *shlichus*. I knew that the upcoming year was going to be much harder, both because of the actual fighting and because it was a *Shmita* year.

I returned to Eretz Yisroel and to the army, right into battle. We served in an area between Gush Katif and Kfar Darom in the Gaza Strip, a military sector which is partially built up and



R' Shai Nagar in the army

partially exposed sand dunes or thick copses of trees. It was known as a tough place to be.

I went to the Company Commander and told him that I wasn’t going inside to eat, and he was shocked, since in the army, keeping the soldiers fed is something they are very particular about.

I explained that the *Shmita* year had begun and the vegetable problem had to be resolved, and that is why I wasn’t going in. The company found it very hard to accept this, which meant I was in a battle for my very existence.

Everything suddenly became much harder. I would stay away from home, around two weeks at a time, and I had to manage. I brought pots from home and cooked for myself, but it was very hard.

I was once at a roadblock checkpoint near Gush Katif when I saw a truck with vegetables that were perfectly acceptable to use during *Shmita*. I asked the driver precisely when he passed by, and through him I got some crates of vegetables – not that this solved the problem, because many times I would return from maneuvers and discover that my box of fruits had been eaten.

We underwent extreme difficulties that year, periods of lonely ambushes, sniping, terrorist acts, missiles and mortars, thus putting upon us a tremendous workload. There were times that commanders went up to do guard duty at the base because of lack of manpower. And in the midst of all this was a soldier who needed to

daven for an hour, and who had to cook for two hours. The commanders were very angry and I didn’t know how to handle it. I often gave up on eating because of the pressure, and there were times that I cooked but was unable to eat what I had prepared.

I remember a time I cooked but hadn’t yet eaten it when I had to go directly to an ambush. When I returned I found the food had spoiled. It was also very difficult because I was supposed to be friendly with everyone, but I had no choice. I was in a battle for my existence and I tried to walk

between the raindrops. I was constantly afraid of a *chilul Hashem*, and I walked a thin line.

What kept me going was the study of *chassidus*. I remember being often in the midst of very tough situations, fighting vicious battles, etc., when a paragraph of that day's *Tanya* (or that of recent days) popped into my mind. I would simply be removed from the hard reality of life and would spend some moments thinking sweet *chassidic* thoughts. Till this day, the topics I learned at that time in *Tanya* are engraved in my mind.

A few weeks had passed since I had returned to the army. We were in an isolated outpost in the hot spot of Kfar Darom, and it was Shabbos, Chaf Cheshvan. There were 13 men left in the outpost. We made *Kiddush* and had a Shabbos meal, in the course of which I reviewed a *sicha*. The atmosphere was very special.

One of the soldiers, Boruch Shnir (may Hashem avenge his blood), continued to talk to me after the meal, and I explained to him parts of the talk entitled "all those who go out to the war of the House of Dovid." He found it very interesting and said he wanted to hear more in the morning. That night we were attacked, and by morning, he was no longer among the living.

Two days later, there was an attack on a school bus near Kfar Darom. This time, as in the earlier attacks, there were tremendous miracles, many of which were known only to those who were there, like the fact that the bus had hardly any children on board, and that despite the charge being an anti-tank mine, the damage was relatively small.

As I pointed out, there was barely any time for anyone. There was no one to talk to because we were constantly busy. We barely managed to eat – and I don't mean just me, but all the soldiers. One of the only times we could talk was Friday night. That's when we sat together and I would

review a *sicha*, and it was the spiritual charge for the entire week. I made sure to prepare a *sicha* for Friday night, even under the most pressured circumstances.

On Chanuka of that year, I brought a big *menora* to the base that I had bought the year before, and I began to organize a central *menora* lighting each night, but in the middle of Chanuka, I had to leave to man an ambush for two days. I left the second in command of the company in charge of lighting the *menora*.

I remember an ambush that we carried out. I had brought a small oil menora, which we lit each night. Those were nearly the only minutes that we could sit together, all six of us, and look at the dancing flames.

I remember an ambush that we carried out. We were located on the roof of a house of an Arab, and I had brought a small oil *menora*, which we lit each night. Those were nearly the only minutes that we could sit together, all six of us, and look at the dancing flames. It was only a few minutes because we went right back to our observation posts.

The days and weeks went by and I felt bad about hardly doing anything at all in my *shlichus*. I went home for a week's vacation for Yud Shvat and on

Motzaei Shabbos – Yud Shvat, I remembered that I was returning to the base the next day.

I said to my mother, "I really have no desire to return there." I simply felt I wasn't accomplishing anything.

"Write to the Rebbe," she said.

I sat down to write to the Rebbe and the answer was in volume 11, page 332:

"It was worthwhile despite what you write in your letter about visiting X ... If for only one soul it was worthwhile for the Rebbe Maharash, who valued every moment of his time, to travel specially from Marienbad to Paris..."

(What a connection! I was writing on Motzaei Yud Shvat and this story is the one the Rebbe brings in the *maamer* that we learn on Yud Shvat, "*Basi L'Gani*." How the Rebbe Maharash made a special trip to Paris, where he met a certain man and said one sentence, which ultimately led him back in *t'shuva*, and he merited to have religious and G-d-fearing descendents.)

"...all the more so regarding each one of us, and for a number of souls... Even though we obviously don't have the abilities and certainty that the Rebbe Maharash had on his trip, we need to pray for Hashem's help without looking at the preparedness down below, and by diminishing one's own *metzius* (ego). For then you get closer and closer to being the *shliach* of Adam HaElyon, like Him, as it were..."

The letter gave me the strength and encouragement to go on during a difficult period. I recalled that in the first letter too, the Rebbe wrote that even if you don't see immediate results, they are there, and I understood that this was the key to the *shlichus* of this year. Less talk than the year before, fewer gatherings and "noise," but a greater emphasis on a personal connection and being a *dugma chaya*, which is the most effective approach.

Towards the end of my second year of service, I got the answer to my

question. It was when I became a *chassan*, and my *mashpia* told me that after I'm married I will have to go home every day. I explained my new situation to the Commander of the Company and he looked at me in utter disbelief. I was called in for a talk with the Battalion Commander, and I told him the same thing. The BC really liked me, and he said, "Even if you don't do anything at all here, you're someone who literally energizes everyone."

Thus ended my *shlichus* that second year, and from there I was transferred to a completely different sort of *shlichus*. I represented the Golani unit at the base in Tel HaShomer, in a department whose job it was to prepare students for the draft into the I.D.F. It was much easier for me to "spread the wellsprings" in this position. We had plenty of time to talk, the other soldiers and myself, and we even organized some large *farbrengens*, all with the approval and encouragement of the command staff, *baruch Hashem*.

Wherever I went, I took a *Chitas* with me, and I was constantly stopped and questioned about it. Once again, I felt like a *shliach*, as I had felt the first year. Soldiers consulted with me and

schmoozed with me. I helped them write to the Rebbe, and it was a great feeling.

Once a group from a religious school came, and Rabbi Lapidot, a Lieutenant Colonel and one of the senior army rabbis, spoke for them. They introduced me to him and told him about me. When Rabbi Lapidot finished talking to the boys, I heard him say, "And now a religious soldier here will talk to you." I was given the microphone and I was completely unprepared.

I had no choice, so I told them I wanted to tell them about the challenges I had had as a religious soldier in the army. Then I told them about the nights that we went to sleep at four and got up at five, with *Maariv* and *shiuirim* in the middle. I explained how important it was to stand strong about observing *mitzvos* and not to cave in to pressure, and how my personal experiences proved that one soldier could influence his entire environment. I told them that they had to encourage others soldiers too, especially about not being frightened by the military bureaucracy, but to simply stand strong.


When I finished talking, R' Lapidot said, "I have been in the army 25

years, and I never heard anything like this!"

* * *

It was a very special year of *shlichus*, which actually closed out my *shlichus* in the army. And then came the day when I was discharged from the army. Suddenly I felt myself longing for those special days of *mitzaim* in the army.

I thought, so what now? That's it? There's no more *shlichus* in the army? Thoughts of the stories and hardships I had experienced those three years flashed through my mind. I thought of the big miracles I had experienced from the beginning till now, and then I realized and felt how much the Rebbe had guided me all along. Starting from the unusual order to report for army service, then the answers I got from the Rebbe and the miracles that gave me the strength to survive my adherence to Torah and *mitzvos*, from a psychological standpoint, and actually from all aspects. I saw how the Rebbe had brought me to the army, and this is what protected me all along. Then I also realized that the *shlichus* would never end. The things we learned and experienced definitely remain and continue to affect us.



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“GREAT ACTS BEGIN WITH MERE TALK”

BY SHAI GEFEN

SOURCE OF THE SICKNESS

Sharon's speech at the Hertzeliya Convention shocked Israeli loyalists. Sharon announced the dismantling of settlements and the beginning of Transfer, tens of thousands of Jews. He softened the concept of Transfer by calling it Moving. Everybody wanted to know what happened to Sharon, the Father of the Yesha settlements.

Some try to explain it by saying that he's trying to divert attention from the corruption charges against him and his sons, and that he wants to remain in power for the next few months. This answer is too simplistic, even if correct. The breakdown we have witnessed didn't happen in a vacuum, and it didn't start when Yitzchok Rabin got dragged to Oslo with the help of Beilin and Peres.

The breakdown of the Israeli "Right" didn't start with Netanyahu "Good for the Jews" giving away the holy city of Chevron to Arafat and going to Wye. The breakdown didn't even start with the political plan of the Yesha council to give autonomy to the Arabs, and not even from the announcement of Minister Livnat that she would join Sharon in supporting the unilateral uprooting of settlements.

It's all falling apart like a house of cards, and it was all anticipated long ago, on the "seventh day" after the Six Days. They err, those who think that this is an "adopted" change in thinking, as they put it. The Right and those who championed a Complete

Eretz Yisroel, now show themselves to be a bubble that has burst, a direct result of their previous behavior.

What is happening today to the Right and Likud, happened twenty years ago to Shimon Peres and other members of the Labor party. They were also loyalists of a Complete Eretz Yisroel and helped found the settlement movement, and the settlers lauded them. However, something changed, and the "something" needs to be ascertained, because knowing the illness is half the cure.

If you don't recall, you're invited to do some digging in not-so-long-ago history. The main problem we have been suffering from till this day, and which we will continue to suffer from if we don't change our mindset, is capitulation to the *goy*. This is the approach of talking about giving up land for diplomatic purposes, and thinking that these are merely tactical steps. They try to fool the *goy*, but we're only fooling ourselves.

Yitzchok Shamir, prime minister ten and a half years ago, went to the Madrid Summit, and did not understand why the Rebbe said he would topple his government for going. He only planned on holding diplomatic talks, and would never give up an inch of land. This is true as far as diplomacy goes, but every businessperson knows that when you make a firm offer, it's hard to back down on it. The most you can do is negotiate the terms of payment. This is precisely the reason why, on the seventh day after

the Six Day War, the Rebbe said that the Israelis plan on giving it all up, including Yerushalayim! Everybody snickered, but what Dayan said, even if it was said behind closed doors, led to the present situation.

The Rebbe saw exactly when the mistake began, on the seventh day after the Six Days.

After the Hertzeliya Speech, which will be remembered in infamy in Jewish history, Sharon's Advisor, Ayal Arad, was asked whether this was just about "Talks," and he answered wisely. He said, "Great acts began with mere talk."

Now, all those defenders of the leaders of the Right, who tried to ignore the Rebbe's warnings that just talk alone would lead to giving away land, and the danger to life that entails, are getting a clear answer today from Sharon and others.

In order to understand the problem and the disease that the Rebbe immediately diagnosed after the Six Day War, we will turn to a classic example that demonstrates this principle. When the Israeli government decided to establish Kiryat Arba, the leaders of the settlers, who waged a stubborn battle for the right to settle Chevron, saw this as a great victory. They proclaimed this as the "Proper Zionist Response."

Yet the Rebbe saw this as proof that their goal was to evacuate Chevron and all the Jews in it, because the government conceded on settling within Chevron. The Rebbe even wrote



to Rabbi Levinger at the time, the man who is the Father of Jewish settlement in Chevron (a year after the Six Day War) and told him they plan on clearing out Chevron. "What's wrong with Kiryat Arba?" they asked. "It says in the Torah that Kiryat Arba is Chevron!"

However, the Rebbe said that Kiryat Arba is *not* Chevron and the Rebbe explained that their ultimate goal is to uproot Jews even from Yerushalayim and from all parts of Eretz Yisroel.

This approach began back then with a seemingly small concession which had big results. They said: Let's do something for the Jews that won't bother the Arabs and the rest of the nations of the world. Let's appease everyone with one move.

The smallest concession translates into conceding on everything. When it comes to danger to life, there are no compromises. Those who don't want Jews living in the old city of Chevron don't want Jews to live in Yerushalayim, and their real intention is to give it all back!

VACILLATING

The Arabs are laughing at us. They don't accept anything we offer and continue to kill, or to attempt to kill, us mercilessly. In the government sit ministers who compete among themselves about how to give the Arabs more, and how many more Jews they can uproot from their homes in the suggested Transfer. It was not for naught that a senior P.A. official announced that the Palestinian opposition has achieved results.

We see so clearly how what the Rebbe said is being realized, how concession leads to concession, and when you start on the slippery slope of concessions you can't stop the wagon from rolling on downward, even when you see your so-called partner standing and laughing at you. The government is ready to debase itself as long as it can prove to the world that we give in.

At the Hertzeliya Convention, Sharon proved that the vacillating approach is no longer relevant. The war is one of "Whoever is for G-d – is with me!" When it comes to Eretz Yisroel and protecting the security of those who live here, there are only two options: One is to follow the guidelines of *Shulchan Aruch*, which negates all talks and negotiations with an enemy that comes to kill you; and says that going out with weapons till the enemy is destroyed is the only solution. Or else, there's the approach of the Left, an approach of unconditional concessions, the results of which are known ahead of time.

Sharon's downfall is not only his own but is also that of the people on the Right who are in the same process of falling. There's no other way of explaining how people from the Yesha council recently formulated a document which bestows autonomy on terrorists.

The same goes for the leaders of Mafdal and Ichud Leumi who promote Eretz Yisroel and the *Is'chalta D'Geula*, yet have become partners in selling Eretz Yisroel and in uprooting Jews from their homes. Whoever did not sanctify the *halacha* in *Shulchan Aruch*, *siman* 329 as the only way to protecting the lives of Jews will find himself on the slippery slope along with Sharon and the others who are leading us to the slaughter.

CAMP DAVID CRIMINALS TO JUSTICE

Whenever Sharon makes an announcement and presents his plans, there are those who act shocked, and who don't understand how he dares to speak of transferring Jews. We prefer to forget that this man cruelly evacuated many Jewish settlements, and was a partner to the greatest crime in Jewish history of uprooting settlements. Why is it surprising that he is ready to do more of the same?

After Likud lost, Sharon apologized about throwing Jews out of Sinai, and

If you remember that era, when the Rebbe spoke about that terrible agreement, you know that the walls of 770 trembled from the sound of the pain and the cries. The Rebbe once called the Camp David agreement a tzara that the Jewish people never experienced before in its history!

he promised not to make the same mistake again. Well, apparently that promise has been forgotten.

Sharon is the last of the survivors of the Camp David leadership. That was a bitter agreement that *everybody*

supported – everybody, that is, except the Rebbe, who cried out against it. If you remember that era, when the Rebbe spoke about that terrible agreement, you know that the walls of 770 trembled from the sound of the pain and the cries. The Rebbe once called the Camp David agreement a *tzara* that the Jewish people never experienced before in its history!

The Rebbe said, in a *sicha* of Parshas VaYeishev 5743:

All this comes as a result of an “inferiority complex” towards the goy, and so they trust him and want to find favor in his eyes. Even after they see the consequences of this behavior and as they all admit the serious mistake that was made with the signing of the Camp David Accords, since they can see how they returned it all in exchange for nothing. Instead of learning from their mistakes of the past and changing their ways for the future, they continue doing the same thing!

We must investigate and see who are the ones responsible for the serious mistake made with the signing of the Camp David Accords, which endangers the security of the Jewish people in order to find favor with the goy. And who are the ministers that need to be taken down for this serious error. And the main thing: who to elect so that a mistake like this is not repeated in the future.

“AND YOU WILL BECOME CRAZY FROM WHAT YOUR EYES SEE”

The initiators of the unilateral withdrawal are managing to shock us all with their stupidity. How is it that this obsession with concessions for nothing in exchange has managed to infiltrate all levels of government? This includes people who were raised on the premise of the Complete Eretz Yisroel and Both Sides of the Jordan. It's shocking to hear Sharon and his supporters say things that in the not-so-distant past were heard only from Communists and the hard Left.

“If Sharon says so, there must be something to it, some trick for an emergency situation.” There are those who try to find the key to understanding the surprising developments.

There is no logic here. This is a group of lunatics by any measure, completely devoid of any logic, whose only logic is madness. If it wasn't taking place among us, we would laugh. This isn't about any final settlement, because everybody knows that the other side has no intentions of conceding, and has announced that it will continue killing until it liberates

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all of Palestine.

RULING THE NATIONS

In an amazing display of Divine providence, a number of events took place last year that deserve our attention. While our own leaders lost all sense of conscience and responsibility for their people, and their sole interests are power or reducing external pressure, the Americans – who generally have different interests than us – are exhibiting greater patriotism for Israel.

Take for example their opposition to the unilateral solution proposed by

Olmert and Sharon, or what they're accomplishing in Iraq; or America's request that Israel eliminate Arafat. You can't blame what is going on in Israel on American pressure, which has been minimal in recent years. Israel has been given the maximum wiggle room to maneuver in the past decade, but Israel, of its own initiative, prefers to absorb more losses. They think that maybe, despite everything, the Arabs will want to negotiate with them, and therefore, they refuse to bring the war that was forced upon us to a decisive end.

Twelve years ago, the Rebbe told then Transportation Minister Moshe Katzav some very sharp things about talking to *goyim* and making concessions to them. The Rebbe said it would be better if gentiles made these concessions, and not Jews, for the latter desecrate G-d's name.

When the Rebbe said this, it seemed most surprising. Today, when we see the shocking leadership of our leaders, it's difficult not to see the truth in the Rebbe's words. The Rebbe knew what would happen; he knew what would result from the Madrid Convention.

The following are excerpts from the Rebbe's talk with Katzav, which were later edited by the Rebbe (free translation):

It makes no difference how you talk about it or explain it, because these talks and topics are in the category of an explicit prohibition of “lo sichanem” – that it is forbidden to give any part of Eretz Yisroel to gentiles! These talks will ultimately lead to giving away parts of Eretz Yisroel, and so just talking about it is a denial of G-d and His Torah and Eretz Yisroel and the holiness of Eretz Yisroel.

These talks about Autonomy are the first step towards giving away parts of Eretz Yisroel in order to establish a Palestinian state. Therefore, it makes no difference how Jews will interpret it, because the

main thing is how the *goyim* look at it. The proof is that they themselves admit that what they're doing is being done because they are intimidated by the *goyim*, and there's pressure, etc. And so afterwards, when there's more pressure, they'll be intimidated by the *goyim* again. There is no end to it. We saw in the past that when they give in to pressure it brings on more pressure.

It is not possible for a Jew who believes in Hashem and His Torah to, *ch"v*, be a partner to things like this and to sign to this. It would be better

if the government would be dissolved and there be no Jewish government. Being that the only reason they talk about these plans is because of pressure from the *goyim* (as they themselves say), if this is the case, it would be preferable if they established, *r"l*, a government of gentiles in Eretz Yisroel, and they can be the ones to decide what to do with Eretz Yisroel. At least in that case, Jews wouldn't be signing to things like this!

It makes you shiver. This *sicha* should be reviewed time and again, because it contains the basis for the

Rebbe's view of the issues and his solution. We have to see how the Rebbe prophetically saw what would be the end of the leaders who made concessions, and what slippery slope they were leading us to with their talks and actions.

Perhaps the reason the Coalition forces have come to the Middle East is to teach us how to deal with Islamic terror. Look where the Hellenizer Jews, some of whom wear *kippot* and claim allegiance to the Right, have gotten us...

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