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News



The international weekly heralding the coming of Mashiach
BEIS MOSHIACH

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Beis Moshich (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 Moshich, 744 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, NY 11213-3409. Periodicals postage paid at Brooklyn, NY and additional offices. Postmaster: send address changes to Beis Moshich 744 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, NY 11213-3409.

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PURIM: THE TRUE DESIRE REVEALED

SICHOS IN ENGLISH



SHABBOS PARSHAS TETZAVEH, PARSHAS ZACHOR; 13TH DAY OF ADAR, 5750

1. This year, Shabbos Zachor and the Purim festival fall in direct proximity to each other. Our Sages explain that Shabbos Zachor - which recalls the command to destroy Amalek - should always be read on the Shabbos before Purim, thus connecting the obliteration of Amalek with the obliteration of Haman, one of his descendants. Furthermore, Parshas Zachor is considered as the recollection of the command to destroy Amalek, and Purim, a commemoration of Amalek's destruction. This points out the unique significance of the present year, when one follows directly after the other.[119]

These concepts have parallels which represent fundamental concepts in our service of G-d. The Torah commands us to "Remember what Amalek did to you on the way as you left Egypt; how he encountered you on

the way..." Our Sages teach "In every generation (and more particularly, each and every day[120]), a person is obligated to see himself as if he left Egypt." The exodus from Egypt is more than a historical event. Rather, it represents a personal service in which each individual goes beyond his particular boundaries and limitations. After this service, each day, a Jew must confront Amalek.

Our Sages declare, "The Jews were commanded to fulfill three mitzvos upon their entry in to Eretz Yisroel, the appointment of a king, the destruction of Amalek, and the construction of the Beis HaMikdash." The entry to Eretz Yisroel and the construction of the Beis HaMikdash were the goals of the exodus from Egypt. Before this process can be completed, Amalek's memory must be obliterated.

Our Sages relate, "As in the days of your exodus from Egypt, I will show you wonders," implying that the Messianic redemption will resemble the

exodus from Egypt for the exodus was the source of all subsequent redemptions. The ultimate goal of that redemption will be the construction of the Beis HaMikdash, "the Sanctuary of G-d established by Your hands." Before this happens, Amalek must be destroyed.[121]

This implies that we must realize that there is constantly an opponent, Amalek, challenging us, and "There will be war between G-d and Amalek from generation to generation," i.e., at all times, we must confront this challenge.

This concept can be understood based on the explanation of the connection between Purim and the giving of the Torah. On the verse, "And the Jews carried out and accepted," our Sages commented: At the time of Purim, the Jews "carried out" what they had "accepted" on Mount Sinai. Our Sages explain that, at the giving of the Torah, G-d "held the mountain[122] over them like a barrel," telling them,

in our prayers.

121. This is alluded to by our Sages who interpret the verse, "There will be war between G-d and Amalek from generation to generation," as referring to "the generation of Moshiach."

122. In particular, our Sages used the

expression, kaffeh aleihem har which translates literally as "He forced them with a mountain." This alludes to the service of Iskafia where a person has to fight against an opposing force, the yetzer ha'ra (described by our Sages with the metaphor of a mountain). The yetzer ha'ra must be confronted and

119. The connection between the two is further emphasized on Shabbos afternoon, when the influence of Purim is already felt as obvious from the omission of the passage Tzidkoschah Tzedek from the Mincha prayers.

120. Hence, we mention it twice each day

“If you accept the Torah, it is fine. If not, this will be your burial place.” Thus, there was a question regarding the Jews’ acceptance of the Torah. Did they really desire it, or did they accept only because of the threat hanging over them?

Nevertheless, when the Jews affirmed their acceptance of the Torah during the time of Achashverosh, showing a commitment of self-sacrifice despite the darkness of exile, they resolved any questions that could have possibly existed and demonstrated that their (and also, the original) acceptance of the Torah was genuine.

G-d’s “forcing” the Jews to accept the Torah must also be interpreted in spiritual terms. It does not mean that the Jews did not want the Torah, but rather, that their desire for the Torah did not come from their own choice and initiative. The revelations of G-dliness which accompanied the giving of the Torah were so powerful that they could not help but accept it. In contrast, during Achashverosh’s time, there was no revelation from above and the Jews’ commitment of mesirus nefesh came on their own initiative, as a product of their choice. This demonstrated that even the initial commitment made at the time of the giving of the Torah was an expression of the Jews’ true will. Indeed, because this commitment expressed the Jews’ true will, even when there was no revelation from above and there was a necessity to confront an enemy, they demonstrated a total commitment to Torah.

To explain the above in terms of our individual service: There are times when the light of a person’s soul shines in revelation. Then, he does not have to confront and fight against his yetzer ha’ra. Rather, his service involves revealing the light of his soul. On such an occasion, however, it is not obvious how much his individual nature is

affected, whether or not his behavior reflects his true will. On the other hand, a person who does not feel light, who faces a conflict to the extent that it is possible for him to contemplate transgressing G-d’s will and he, nevertheless, refuses to do so and carries out G-d’s will, is obviously doing so as an expression of his true and genuine desire.

The advantage of this service, Iskafia, corresponds to the advantage baalei t’shuva possess over tzaddikim. Thus, at the time of the giving of the Torah, there was great Divine revelation and the Jews were on the level of

During the time of Achashverosh, there was great concealment. Nevertheless, the Jews’ expression of a commitment to Torah and mitzvos despite these factors showed that this was their true desire.

tzaddikim. In contrast, during the time of Achashverosh, there was great concealment. Nevertheless, the Jews’ expression of a commitment to Torah and mitzvos despite these factors showed that this was their true desire.

In this context, we can understand the eternal relevance of the conflict with Amalek. As stated above, Amalek “encountered” the Jews on their way out of Egypt. The Hebrew word korcha

translated as “encountered you” can also be rendered “cooled you off.” Amalek causes the Jews’ service of G-d to be cold, without energy or warmth, mitzvos performed out of habit.[123]

Amalek is described as “the first of the gentiles,” i.e., the beginning of the opposition to holiness. Therefore, when the Jews left Egypt - in personal terms, when a person tries to rise above his boundaries and limitations - he must confront Amalek, a conflict, which will demonstrate that his commitment to Torah represents his true will.

The advantage of the service of Iskafia is also reflected in the comparison between the remembrance of Amalek on Shabbos Zachor and the “obliteration” of Amalek on Purim itself. To explain: Some opinions relate that the two mitzvos, the remembrance and the obliteration of Amalek, refer to two different periods within Jewish history. When it is possible, Amalek must be obliterated. If that is not possible, at the very least, its wickedness should be recalled. This explanation is not entirely correct, rather, as the Rambam writes:

He commanded us to remember what Amalek did to us... so that this will arouse the desire to fight against him in our souls so that the people will hate him. When Shmuel the Prophet began to fulfill this mitzvah... first he commanded them to remember [Amalek’s] evil acts and then, he commanded them to slay them.

Thus, it is clear that the remembrance of Amalek is intended to ensure that the obliteration of him will be carried out with an active desire. We must destroy Amalek, not only because we are commanded to do so by G-d, but also because we have aroused - and in doing so, have fulfilled another mitzvah - hatred for Amalek.

There is another point, however. There is an advantage to arousing

forced to act against its natural will.

123. Amalek is numerically equivalent to safek - "doubt." Fulfilling mitzvos in

the above manner can cause one to descend from coldness to doubt.

hatred (remembering) Amalek even when one does not have the potential to destroy him. This shows that even when a person is on a lower level and does not have the potential to overcome his enemy, he is not overcome by him. On the contrary, though he does not actually engage in conflict with Amalek, inside he arouses hatred for him. This shows that the opposition to Amalek is absolute and reflects the Jews' true feelings as explained above regarding the service of Iskafia.

The ultimate goal, however, is that we should reach the obliteration of Amalek. Though there is an advantage to the service of Iskafia, that advantage involves revealing the true and inner will of the Jews. The ultimate goal, from the perspective of G-d and the world at large, however, is to obliterate Amalek entirely.

This year, when Purim follows directly after Shabbos Zachor, we combine both qualities, and immediately subsequent to the recollection of Amalek (Shabbos Zachor, Iskafia), follows the complete obliteration of Amalek (Purim). This demonstrates that even when Amalek exists, the only reason for its existence is to bring out the advantage of the service of Iskafia.

2. There is a point of connection between the above concepts and this week's Torah portion, Parshas Tetzaveh.[124] Parshas Tetzaveh begins with the command to light the Menorah. The Menorah burnt "from evening to the morning" with the intention of illuminating the darkness. Similarly, in our personal service, it refers to a situation where light does not shine within a person's soul and his service is characterized by Iskafia.

This is also alluded to by the fact that the oil used to kindle the Menorah must be "crushed for the light."

Crushing also signifies the service of Iskafia when a person must fight against his basic nature. Nevertheless, this is not the ultimate goal, but a means to reach complete service. Thus, the process of crushing produces pure oil, without any dregs at all, referring to a level of service above any connection with opposing influences.

Here also, we can see a point of connection with the Torah portion of the following week, Parshas Ki Sisa, which begins with the command to give the half-shekel. The half-shekel was intended to be "atonement for your souls," emphasizing that it was connected with service within the context of this world (Iskafia). Nevertheless, even on such a level, a Jew is able to give over his entire existence to G-d, establishing complete unity with Him.[125]

Similarly, in regard to the effect within the world, originally, the half-shekel was used for the sockets for the Sanctuary, i.e., the Sanctuary's foundation. Similarly, each year the half-shekels would be used to purchase the communal offerings whose sacrifice was the primary goal of the Sanctuary. Thus, the donation of these half-shekels is fundamentally related to the service of elevating the physical world and making it part of G-d's Sanctuary.

Nevertheless, the name of the portion, Ki Sisa, "When you shall lift up," implies that the Jews are lifted up above the material existence of the world. Even after the world has been refined and transformed into a "dwelling for G-d," the level of the Jewish people is higher and they are separated from the world. This is alluded to by the fact that the Jews are called Ivriim ("Hebrews") which, as our Sages explain, means that they are on the opposite side of the entire world. More importantly, they are called Yehudim, which alludes to the service

of mesirus nefesh, through which they establish complete unity with G-d's essence.

3. The advantage of confronting a negative force is not merely that it reveals that the Jews' service is wholehearted (coming as a result of their choice and not in reaction to a revelation from above). This service also reveals how the descent into the darkness of the material world and the service of refining this level of existence draws down the revelation of G-d's essence. G-d's essence is above both darkness and light. Therefore, it has the potential to transform darkness into light.

The transformation of darkness into light is alluded to in the name, Megillas Esther. Esther refers to the quality of concealment as our Sages declared, "What is the allusion to Esther in the Torah? 'I will surely conceal (hastir astir) My face.' " To further emphasize this quality of concealment, G-d's name is not mentioned at all in the Megilla and the Megilla begins with the verse, "And it was in the days of Achashverosh," relating that the entire story which follows is a narrative of the times of Achashverosh, a gentile king who oppressed the Jews.

Nevertheless, in the midst of this darkness and concealment, the Jews revealed their essential ability to serve G-d of their own volition, without prompting from above, and, in this manner, reaffirmed the commitment made at the time of the giving of the Torah.

The Jew's mesirus nefesh transcended the limits of intellect. This relates to the name of the holiday Purim, which means "lottery" in Persian. A lottery reveals an essential choice that reflects the level of yechida, the point in soul which is absolutely united with G-d's essence.

G-d's essence is above all names.

124. Indeed, with the exception of the leap years, Parshas Zachor is always read in conjunction with Parshas Tetzaveh.

125. This complete state of unity is alluded to in the word meaning "he shall give," which has the same meaning whether it

is read from right to left or from left to right.

Since the Megilla reveals this dimension of G-dliness, no name of G-d is mentioned. This revelation is drawn down into "the days of Achashverosh," the lowest levels of the world, revealing how even the undesirable elements of the world can be transformed into positive forces.[126]

The Megilla concludes with an expression of Jewish unity, describing how Mordechai "sought the welfare of all his people." On the level of yechida, there is no difference between one Jew and another and, hence, complete unity can be established among our people. Since the exile came about because of "unwonted hatred," separation and conflict among Jews, through this expression of unity, the reason for the exile will be nullified and this will bring about the nullification of the exile itself. We will "join one redemption to another," and proceed from the redemption of Purim to the Messianic redemption, when the concepts of peace and unity will be expressed in the most complete manner.

The high level attained through the transformation of darkness to light in the Megilla is reflected in our Sages' statement that all the other books of the prophets and sacred writings will be nullified in the Messianic age and the Megilla will never be nullified. Rather, it will remain together with the Five Books of Moshe and the halachos

of the oral law. Similarly, the holiday of Purim will never be nullified even in the Messianic age.[127] This shows how the revelation which brings about the transformation of darkness into light will be significant even in the Messianic age.

The above is also connected with the unique fact that, this year, Purim is celebrated on a Sunday. In contrast to the other festivals, work is permitted on Purim. Nevertheless, Chassidic thought describes this in a positive context. The other festivals relate to very high levels of G-dliness which cannot be revealed within the material context of the world. Hence, there is a cessation of work which reflects an elevation of the world. In contrast, the revelation of Purim is associated with G-d's essence which transcends all concepts of limitation. In regard to this level, the sublime level of Chochma and material reality are equal. Hence, it can be revealed even in an atmosphere of mundane activity.

This concept receives special emphasis on Sunday. The Torah describes Sunday as yom echad, "one day," interpreted by our Sages to mean, "the day when G-d was at One with His world." Though the entire creation had already come into being, there was no separation and the world was at one with G-d.

This concept is also reflected in the Song of the Day, recited on Sunday,

which begins, "The earth and all therein is the L-rd's." This Psalm is also recited on Rosh HaShana because it reflects G-d's sovereignty over the world. It also relates to the Messianic era when the entire world will recognize His rule.

"Deed is most essential." It is necessary to make an increase in all matters of Torah and mitzvos in keeping with the Jews' reaffirmation of the acceptance of Torah on Purim. In particular, efforts should be made to continue activities which, as does the mitzvah of mishloach manos, reflect ahavas Yisroel, the love for our fellow Jews, and achdus Yisroel, the unity of the Jewish people. Similarly, increases should be made in gifts to tz'daka, reflecting the mitzvah of matanos l'evyonim.

Also, efforts should be made to continue the celebrations of Purim in the days which follow the holiday, holding at least three farbrengens. In general, efforts should be made to increase farbrengens and other expressions of happiness connected with a mitzvah.[128]

May these celebrations lead to the fulfillment of the prophecy, "those that lie in the dust will arise and sing." We will "join one redemption to another," i.e., may Moshiach come before Purim and then, may we proceed from the Messianic redemption to the redemption of Purim.

126. This process of transformation is reflected in the conversion of many gentiles as related by the Megilla. This also represents a microcosm of the Messianic redemption when "I will transform all the nations into a perfect speech" and they will all "return to the true faith."

127. Chassidic thought explains the "nullification" of the books of the Nach and the festivals in the Messianic age with a metaphor of a candle shining in broad daylight. Though the candle shines, the sun's light is so powerful, the candle is not noticed at all.

Similarly, the great revelations of the Messianic age will overshadow the light associated with these sacred texts and these festivals. The light associated with the Megilla and Purim, in contrast, will be so powerful that even in this era of revelation, their light will be significant.

128. There are those who have complained that the stress on holding Chassidic farbrengens has become too much. In addition to the farbrengens held at a wedding, an engagement party, or the like, farbrengens are held on birthdays and other occasions. So much time is being spent on farbrengens that there is

little time left for study.

These individuals must realize that "a note descended from heaven, saying that 'a Chassidic farbrengen is more powerful than the blessings of the angel Michael.' " The unity and oneness achieved at such gatherings is extremely important and furthermore, the resolutions to proceed in the service of G-d taken during farbrengens are very effective. Accordingly, there should be an increase, not a decrease, in the frequency with which such farbrengens are held.

SIGNING THE P'SAK DIN ON MOSHIACH

BY SHLOMO ROKEACH
TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY, TZFAS

On Shabbos Parshas Mishpatim, 5752, the Rebbe MH"M spoke about the signing by rabbanim and other religious authorities of the p'sak din about the revelation of Melech HaMoshiach. Since then, HaRav Yitzchak Lipsh, Lubavitch Youth Organization Director of Tzfas, has visited the homes of Admurim, rabbanim, roshei yeshivos, and kollelim, and leading Torah giants throughout the world to encourage them to sign this historic p'sak din, which today bears nearly three hundred signatures. In a special interview with Beis Moshiach, Rabbi Lipsh provides revealing information about his meetings with the world's leading Torah figures and their reactions to this momentous effort...

I heard the following story in 770 – Beis Moshiach:

One of the *T'mimim* who learns in 770 customarily goes every Shabbos to a Sephardic shul, an hour and a half away by foot, to give over a *d'var Torah*. The shul's worshippers enjoy the weekly *sicha* very much, however, the *rav* soon began to make problems. He asked the *Tamim* not to mention anything in his *drasha* that might make a connection between Moshiach and the Rebbe *shlita*. The request was made in a most uncompromising and forceful manner...

The *Tamim* didn't know what to do, until someone made a suggestion: "Take Rabbi Lipsh with you to speak with the *rav*." When HaRav Yitzchak Lipsh, Lubavitch Youth Organization Director of Tzfas, came to the United States, he agreed to come to the *rav's* home.

One evening in the middle of the week, the *Tamim* arrived with Rabbi Lipsh at the *rav's* home. After a discussion that lasted more than two hours, the *rav* took out his pen and affixed his name to the growing list of signatures on the *p'sak din* that the Rebbe is Melech HaMoshiach...

THE REBBE TELLS ABOUT THE P'SAK DIN'S EFFECT...

For about eight years now, HaRav Yitzchak Lipsh has been involved in this most unique *shlichus* of encouraging *rabbanim* to sign the *p'sak*

din that the Rebbe is Melech HaMoshiach, but the campaign actually began more than a decade ago. The effort was pioneered by Rabbi Dovid Nachshon, who started out immediately after the Rebbe's *sicha* of the 28th of Nissan, 5751 – “Do everything in your ability.” Together with several Anash members, he decided to compose a *p’sak din* that the Rebbe is Melech HaMoshiach. It’s doubtful to say that he realized then the tremendous spiritual force that was hidden within this *p’sak din*.

With great toil and effort, he found several daring “*nachshonim*”

amongst Chabad *rabbanim* to sign the *p’sak din*, which merited the Rebbe’s surprisingly great interest. However, it was only later that everyone truly understood how much consideration the Rebbe gave to this *p’sak din* (see a review of this story in *Beis Moshiach* articles from Issue #407).

The whole idea of signing up *rabbanim* on a *p’sak din* that the Rebbe is Melech HaMoshiach, which merited an amazing answer from the Rebbe himself, didn’t just get started out of thin air. Back in 5752, the world held its breath as it marveled at the changes in world policy that were

occurring at that time. The world media reported with much excitement about the declarations made by the leaders of the two great superpowers on the sizable reductions and elimination of their nuclear weapons, thus bringing a state of peace and unity to the world. All those reporting these events saw them as most unique, but not much more than that – all but one: the Rebbe MH”M.

The Rebbe immediately announced that this was not just some unique occurrence, but a highly advanced stage that marked the beginning of our entry into the days



of Moshiach. As the Rebbe explained, this was the reason for the drastic change in the traditional way of thinking of thousands of years, which called for the full utilization of all one's strength and fortitude in order to bring harm and subjugation upon others. Now, in the days of Moshiach, the world's leaders understand that it is far preferable to utilize one's strength for more useful things.

Why has all this happened specifically at such a time? The Rebbe even provided a precise answer to this question: "This entire event has come on the heels of a *p'sak din* by several *rabbanim* that 'The time of the Redemption has arrived,' 'a king from the House of Dovid will arise, etc., it is assumed that he is Moshiach,' reaching the state of 'he is definitely Moshiach (*vadai*).'"

Those who were paying attention to the words noticed that the Rebbe made an important addition. In that first *p'sak din*, it was only written that the Rebbe is "*b'chezkas* (assumed to be) *Moshiach*," but the Rebbe added the words, "reaching the state of "he is definitely Moshiach (*vadai*)..." To put it simply, the Rebbe explains the tremendous strength of the *p'sak din* regarding the entry into the days of Moshiach, to the point of creating great worldwide changes!

"It is important to note," says HaRav Yitzchak Lipsh, "that this appears to be the only activity that the Rebbe stated explicitly has already had an effect upon the world. The Rebbe has referred to many things as a *segula* for the coming of Moshiach, yet, in connection with the *piskei din*, he says clearly that they have already made an impression."

SO IT BEGAN

"In 5753-5754," Rabbi Lipsh continued, "we made great efforts to get Knesset Members to sign the letter inviting the Rebbe to come to Eretz Yisroel as Melech HaMoshiach.

Dozens of MKs and other prominent public figures eventually signed the letter. I was told at the time by an expert in legal and parliamentary issues that if more than sixty Knesset Members would sign, it could possibly be established as civil law, even without coming to a vote.

The world media reported with much excitement about the declarations made by the leaders of the two great superpowers on the sizable reductions and elimination of their nuclear weapons, thus bringing a state of peace and unity to the world. All those reporting these events saw them as most unique, but not much more than that – all but one: the Rebbe MH”M.

Dozens of MKs and other prominent public figures eventually signed the letter. I was told at the time by an expert in legal and parliamentary issues that if more than sixty Knesset Members would sign, it could possibly be established as civil law, even without coming to a vote.

"We invested much time in the entire matter, however the story reached the Israeli media before we could get to sixty MKs. Nevertheless, we continued our work as usual, and on the night of Gimmel Tammuz 5754, MK Avraham Verdiger signed the letter..."

"Immediately after Gimmel Tammuz, I understood that from now on, the rabbinical signatures would take on a new facet. If up until now, the *rabbanim* signed as a spiritual expression to bring the Redemption into realization, as the Rebbe said, now it would take a more material form. We saw that there was much confusion among the general public, thus, it became clear that the signatures of *rabbanim* would make the idea that the Rebbe is Melech HaMoshiach far more acceptable in the eyes of the public.

"As Gimmel Tammuz 5755 approached, a new *p'sak din* was publicized with the signatures of several dozen *rabbanim*. This resulted in a new breath of life into this campaign, and the faith in publicizing the announcement of the Redemption thus continued to grow."

"Shortly before Chai Elul 5757, HaRav Gedalia Axelrod of Haifa prepared a new *p'sak din*, based on the fact that the Rebbe's promise does not remain unfulfilled. Rabbi Axelrod included the fact that the Rebbe is a prophet and the halacha that a good prophecy can not be nullified. Along with Rabbi Axelrod, HaRav Mordechai Ashkenazi of Kfar Chabad and HaRav Boruch Boaz Yurkowitz of Lod also signed the *p'sak din*. In order to widen the scope of the entire matter, Rabbi Axelrod turned to me, since I had already been involved previously, and requested that I secure additional signatures."

"Shortly thereafter, during Tishrei, I arrived in 770 with the new *p'sak din*. Naturally, the first thing I did was to approach the *mara d'asra* of Crown



Rabbi Dovid Nachshon

Heights, HaRav HaGaon R. Yehuda Kalman Marlow [of blessed memory], and asked him to sign the *p'sak din*. He responded with a request that I should first bring the *p'sak din* to HaRav HaGaon R. Yitzchak HaKohen Hendel of Montreal, who was older than him, and then afterwards, he would sign. 'Rabbi Hendel,' Rabbi Marlow told me, 'is accustomed to say *T'hillim* in the Rebbe's *minyan* on the night of Hoshana Rabba. Go to him then and ask him to sign.' Rabbi Hendel did come that night to the *minyan*, and at the conclusion of *T'hillim*, I asked him to sign. 'I usually don't write during Chol HaMoed,' Rabbi Hendel explained. 'But due to the seriousness of the matter, and since every moment that we remain in *Galus* is literally *pikuach nefesh*, I'll sign immediately!'..."

"I usually don't write during Chol HaMoed," Rabbi Hendel explained. "But due to the seriousness of the matter, and since every moment that we remain in Galus is literally pikuach nefesh, I'll sign immediately!"...

"With Rabbi Hendel's signature secured, I went back to Rabbi Marlow, who made a special request that I come up to his office. I didn't understand why, although I realized later that this was probably because he specifically wanted to sign in the offices of the *Beis Din*, thus giving special strength to the entire matter. Rabbi Marlow solemnly affixed his

YEMENITE TRADITION

HaRav Sasson Gridi, head of all *shochtim* in Yerushalayim and the *rav* of Beit Dagan, is among the signatories on the *p'sak din*. When we came to him, we discussed the subject of the Redemption, including the Rebbe's prophecy that we are now in the days of Moshiach. He was very happy and told us that he has an ancient Yemenite tradition from his forefathers in connection with the year of Moshiach's revelation. Based on the *p'sukim*, "And Yaakov awoke from his sleep, and "And the year of my salvation has come" [*sheinaso* (his sleep) and "*ushnas*" (and the year)] are comprised of the letters *Tav-Shin-Nun-Vav* (5756), the tradition states the revelation must come by 5756.

He was most happy to hear that the revelation had come as early as 5752, thus fulfilling the Yemenite tradition. So with great pleasure, he signed the *p'sak din*.

signature, requesting again that when all the signatures are arranged, Rabbi Hendel's name should appear before his."

"Later, HaRav Shlomo Zalman Levkivker of Tzfas came to the home of HaRav Dovid Chanzin of Petach Tikva [of blessed memory]. When Rabbi Chanzin saw that the *p'sak din* had already been signed by HaRav Menachem Mendel Gluckowsky, *rav* of the Chabad community of Rehovot, he also signed. Soon we had several dozen signatures. We then decided to break new ground on this project by approaching non-Lubavitcher *rabbanim*."

* * *

Weren't you worried about bringing such a letter to non-Lubavitcher rabbanim?

I see nothing to fear. Eventually, everyone will accept the sovereignty of the Rebbe – and the sooner, the better...

In any event, we're talking about people who seemingly have no connection to the matter.

You have to understand that there is no such thing as "a *rav* who has no connection to the matter." Everyone has a connection to the Rebbe in one form or another, especially *rabbanim*.

When we go out with this knowledge, we have far greater success.

Naturally, we started with *rabbanim* who are openly more connected to such matters. The pioneer in this effort was HaRav Yaakov Yosef of Be'er Sheva. We approached him first due to his warm relationship with Chabad. We told him that dozens of *rabbanim* had already signed the *p'sak*, and now we were asking him to join them. Rabbi Yosef responded that regardless of who has signed before, he's signing now...

* * *

Around this same time, HaRav Boaz Kali and HaRav Yigal Pizem came to the *rav* of Kiryat Bialik, HaRav Machluf Aminadav Krispin, and asked him to sign. Rabbi Krispin was also known for his warm friendship with Chabad. He related to the entire matter with great interest, and asked to see the relevant *sichos*. When he was convinced as to their validity, he decided to form a *beis din* of seven members to discuss the matter with the utmost seriousness and to come to a halachic decision. While he lobbied hard to create the *beis din*, in the end, it did not materialize. Nevertheless, Rabbi Krispin himself did sign the *p'sak din*.

Another leading rabbinical figure known for his warm friendship with Lubavitch was the previous Nadvorna Rebbe, of blessed memory. *T'mimim* would always come to his *shtibel* in Tzfas to give over a *sicha* of the Rebbe, and would be welcomed with open arms. Once when a *Tamim* came to give over a *sicha*, he referred to the Rebbe with the title Melech HaMoshiach. One of the shul members stood up and began to protest, but the Nadvorna Rebbe gave him a sharp look. When the person continued his protest, the rebbe stood up and ordered him to leave the shul immediately...

When the *p'sak* was brought to him before Gimmel Tammuz, he signed it without hesitation, and subsequently lost a major contributor from *misnagdic* circles as a direct result of his signature. Nevertheless, when the post-Gimmel Tammuz *p'sak din* was placed before him, he again signed without reservation.

The head of all Sanzer *yeshivos*, HaRav HaGaon Eliyahu Shmuel Schmerler, one of the world's leading halachic authorities, was also approached for his signature. "We decided at that time," Rabbi Lipsh recalled, "that it would be most appropriate not to waste the opportunity. We created a delegation that included HaRav Moshe Ashkenazi of Tel Aviv and members of the Yeshivas Chabad – Tzfas faculty, and made an appointment. During our conversation with him, we quoted portions of the *sicha* from Shabbos Parshas Mishpatim 5752, however, it turned out that he was already quite familiar with the *sicha* and knew it by heart... We discovered that in general, he was a *sichos expert*."

"He told us that he once sent the Rebbe a *seifer*, which arrived on Erev Tisha B'Av. On Motzaei Tisha B'Av, he was privileged to receive an answer from the Rebbe: 'His *seifer* was received on the eve of Melech



Rabbi Uri Lipsh



Rabbi Yitzchak Lipsh

HaMoshiach's birthday...' He was happy to sign the *p'sak din*. On another occasion, one of his relatives told me that everyone in his family – sons, sons-in-law, etc. – believes that the Rebbe is Melech HaMoshiach!"

"At this point, it already became clear to me that there was nothing to fear from approaching non-Lubavitcher *rabbanim*, as they were more than happy to sign the *p'sak*. This provided me with much encouragement to continue, and I began to look into the possibility of reaching other such *rabbanim*. In the meantime, I was hearing most encouraging stories that came about as a result of the *p'sak din*."

"For example, HaRav Yaakov Shmulevitz, the Rebbe's *shliach* in Beit She'an, was confronted with a

problem at one of the local kibbutzim where he conducted outreach activities. He distributed literature about Moshiach that mentioned that the Rebbe is Melech HaMoshiach. The kibbutz's secretary saw this and lodged a protest, and stated further that he will put a halt to all financial support that the kibbutz had provided until now. Rabbi Shmulevitz made certain to get a copy of the *p'sak din* and showed it to the secretary, who was not only immediately convinced, but even informed the *shliach* that he would authorize an increased budgetary allocation for his activities..."

"Naturally, this encouraged me to widen the scope of my *p'sak din* activities as much as possible."

"My next stop was a meeting with

SPECIFICALLY THROUGH THE PEOPLE

HaRav Yitzchak Lipsh: "Naturally, when we came to *rabbanim* and other prominent Torah scholars in order to convince them to sign the *p'sak din*, we had to be ready by knowing the subject well from a halachic point of view. However, there were instances when we approached these people with '*L'chat'chilla Aribber*,' and things worked out perfectly."

"There was a *baal t'shuva* with little in-depth knowledge of *chassidus*, who decided to go the *rav* of his city for his signature. He approached him several times, but the *rav* tried each time to avoid the matter. Once the *rav* told him, 'Who am I to sign on such a *p'sak din*?' The *chassid* replied, 'Nu, that's exactly what is required – the king must be crowned by the people – "*Ahm*" (people) comes from the word "*Omamus*" (simplicity).' The *rav* simply smiled and immediately signed."

the Pinsk-Karliner Rebbe [of blessed memory], a well known friend of Lubavitch. The rebbe strengthened this fact by telling me that he quietly spreads the teachings of *chassidus*... This rebbe was also known to be a great Torah scholar, a fact that stood to his great merit when he was chosen

for his position of leadership.”

“We started to talk about the issue that brought us to see him, and he responded that the Rebbe possesses three outstanding characteristics. First of all, ‘expert in the Torah’ – this title is seen in the Rebbe with unparalleled magnitude. He said that he has met

rabbanim and Torah scholars over the past three generations, and he has never met anyone to match the greatness of the Rebbe.”

“Secondly, ‘he will compel all Israel.’ He said that he deems this to be an expression of the Rebbe *shlita*’s sense of kinship with each and every Jew. The Rebbe always took notice of how many people put on *t’fillin*, and asked if it was possible to bring another child to the Lag B’Omer parade. We see clearly how the Rebbe relates to every child, and to ‘all Israel’ in its simplest interpretation. Third, it is impossible to ignore the thousands and thousands of miracle stories from the *Igros Kodesh*, a tremendous source of *brachos*.”

“Yet, after all this, he asked us how it is possible today, after Gimmel Tammuz, to sign on a clear *p’sak din* that the Rebbe is Melech HaMoshiach? ‘We’re not talking about a nice ‘*vort*’ or something from a chassidic *farbrenge*,’ he said. ‘This is a *p’sak din* that possesses halachic authority. How can we establish categorically that the Rebbe is Melech HaMoshiach? Maybe it’s Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai or some *tzaddik* from another generation?’”

“In response, I showed him what the Rebbe says in *Likkutei Sichos* (Parshas VaYigash, Vol. 35, p. 206, note 6). He read in great detail, and saw the halachic quotes. ‘If so,’ he told us, ‘a *p’sak din* can be issued based on the Rambam and the Talmud Yerushalmi that are quoted here.’ He said that he was willing to sign, but not that day. He explained that he had not gone to the *mikveh* that day due to injury, and he requested that we come back tomorrow.”

“The following day, he went to the *mikveh*, and we arrived, he put on his *kapote* and a *gartel*, and then signed the *p’sak din* with great emotion.”



SAVED BY A SONG

BY MENACHEM ZIEGELBOIM

All that was dear to Shaul passed before his mind's eye, and then he recalled the scene at the Purim meal, when the Baal Shem Tov asked him to sing...

PART I

Many people flocked to Mezibuzh to spend Purim in the holy presence of the Baal Shem Tov. The forest near Mezibuzh seemed to suddenly wake up from its wintry slumber. The town of Mezibuzh was hustling and bustling with people, and wagons packed with chassidim could be seen driving by.

Everybody knew that the Baal Shem Tov would celebrate the holy day with tremendous joy, and since our Sages say that the awesome day – Yom HaKippurim is K'Purim (like Purim) – the Rebbe would pray on behalf of one and all on this day.

Purim day. The joy of the festival filled everyone's hearts. The streets teemed with costumed children. Despite the revelry, all knew that this was just a prelude to the evening hours, when the Baal Shem Tov would host the Purim meal.

Many of the guests came to Mezibuzh solely to be present at the Purim meal. "If Yom Kippur is like Purim," they said, "then the meal that takes place towards evening is like the N'ila prayer." In addition, they knew that during the meal, the Rebbe was in a particularly good mood and that he dispensed brachos

generously as in the "gifts to the poor" that one gives on Purim.

PART II

People crowded around the long table. The greatest of the disciples, the Chevraya Kadisha, were eager to hear the Rebbe's holy words. The Baal Shem Tov's face shone, yet there was also a sense of deep seriousness about him.

The sun's rays streamed in through the windows of the beis midrash as the sun set. The chassidim burst into a lively tune and the Baal Shem Tov sat there with his face radiating joy.

* * *

Among the disciples of the Chevraya Kadisha was the Baal Shem Tov's beloved disciple, Rabbi Meir Margolis, the rav of Lvov, and his young son, who sat on his lap.

The child was all of eight years of age, and his father had brought him to his holy Rebbe for the first time so he could gaze upon the Baal Shem Tov's face, a segula for fear of Heaven. The child was recognized as a talented lad when he was only five, but his outstanding quality was his remarkable voice.

When he sang at the Shabbos and Yom Tov meals at home with his family, all were transfixed. The child would sit with eyes closed and pour out his heart in sweet song. It wasn't surprising then, that the Baal Shem Tov asked little Shaul'ke to sing something.

Yet R' Meir blushed and his hands trembled with emotion. At first, he thought his ears had deceived him, and he had only imagined that he heard the Baal Shem Tov request that his son sing a niggun. But when the Baal Shem Tov repeated his request, R' Meir recovered and whispered to his son:

"Shaul'ke, the Rebbe is asking you to sing something special for Purim."

Everybody looked at them expectantly. The Rebbe watched and waited with a smile playing on his holy lips. The child thought for a moment, tilted his head back, closed his eyes, and sang a new version of "Shoshanas Yaakov."

The tune started off slowly and quietly, but in the next stanza, the joy in the tune began to come forth, to penetrate the listeners' hearts, and to fill the beis midrash with its sweetness.

The pure, clear voice of the boy grew stronger. The crowd's curiosity was replaced with rapt attention. The niggun captivated them all, and overpowered them with feelings of joy and loftiness.

The Rebbe listened closely, his

eyes closed in d'veikus, and his face on fire. When the boy finished the song, and everybody was still spellbound by the impression the niggun had made on them, the Baal Shem Tov opened his eyes and looked gratefully at Shaul'ke.

PART III

The day after Purim, Rabbi Meir Margolis went to the Baal Shem Tov to say goodbye. The Rebbe greeted R' Meir and his son warmly, and in the few minutes that they had together, the Baal Shem Tov gazed at Shaul'ke with great pleasure. Even R' Meir, who was accustomed to signs

of affection from the Rebbe, was amazed by the special recognition his son was getting from the Baal Shem Tov.

Suddenly, the Rebbe's face grew serious and he sat in silent thought for some time. Then he said to R' Meir, "Perhaps you will leave your young son with me for a few days?"

R' Meir was astonished by the request, but the Baal Shem Tov went on, "Leave him here and I'll make sure he continues with his studies, as usual. After Shabbos I'll send him back home to Lvov."

R' Meir regarded the Baal Shem

Tov's request as an order. He looked at his son for a moment, as though trying to read the boy's mind. Shaul'ke immediately understood what was expected of him, and nodded his head in acquiescence.

"Yes, Rebbe!" exclaimed R' Meir happily, "my son will stay until after Shabbos. I am sure that he will absorb much holiness and purity in his stay here."

The Rebbe looked pleased.

PART IV

The days passed quickly. Shaul'ke stayed with the Baal Shem Tov for Shabbos too, and his songs at the Shabbos meals were a spiritual delight for the Rebbe and the chassidim. Early Sunday afternoon, the Baal Shem Tov abandoned his usual routine and told Alexei the wagon driver to harness his horses and prepare for a trip.

While Alexei busied himself with the horses, the Baal Shem Tov asked three of his greatest disciples to join him on the journey. The disciples were happy to comply, for to be in their Rebbe's presence on a mystery trip was a treat. They knew that on these trips it was an auspicious time for them to ask things they couldn't ask in the beis midrash.

The Rebbe left the house with Shaul'ke's hand in his. The disciples were waiting outside. Without further ado, they climbed into the wagon and the horses led them out of the town to some location unknown to all except the Baal Shem Tov.

The Rebbe sat there quietly, thinking. His brow furrowed and his disciples glanced at him somewhat worriedly.

After traveling for some time, they arrived in an unfamiliar town and Alexei relaxed the reins and allowed the horses to go on their



own. Suddenly the Baal Shem Tov looked out the window as though searching for something, and then he motioned to Alexei to stop the wagon.

The group alit from the wagon and the disciples followed the Baal Shem Tov. They walked until they were standing in front of a large building from which emitted hoarse shouting. The disciples were taken aback but the Baal Shem Tov confidently strode forward, while holding Shaul'ke's little hand in his own.

The Baal Shem Tov opened the door to a bar and they entered a completely different world. A cloud comprised of alcohol and smoke hit them in the face. The Baal Shem Tov walked in with Shaul'ke as the disciples obediently followed.

There were farmers rolling about on the floor, wallowing in filth. Others sat at tables, holding half-empty bottles of whiskey. The alcoholic vapors merged with the choking tobacco odors to make for a suffocating atmosphere.

Only a few of the locals turned to look at the newcomers, but they gazed in astonishment. Here was a distinguished looking rabbi, beard and all, and he strode over to the counter and banged it vigorously for attention.

"Quiet!" the Baal Shem Tov called out, his voice overpowering the din.

Most of the drunkards managed to direct their attention to the Baal Shem Tov who began speaking to them in their rough language.

"Hardworking farmers, listen to what I have to say! I have a little boy with me who sings beautifully. In all your life, you haven't heard as sweet a voice as his. I brought him here to cheer you up, but you must listen closely to his song."

The Baal Shem Tov's

announcement thundered in the sudden silence, and the drunks looked curiously at the Rebbe and his retinue. The Baal Shem Tov inclined towards Shaul'ke and whispered, "Please sing the 'Shoshanas Yaakov' again. Show these goyim your amazing singing abilities. Don't be afraid. Nothing bad will happen to you."

The child looked wide-eyed at the Baal Shem Tov, seemingly surprised by the request to sing a holy tune that belonged in the holy beis midrash and not in a place such as this. But the Rebbe had requested and he began to sing.

The Baal Shem Tov opened the door to a bar and they entered a completely different world. A cloud comprised of alcohol and smoke hit them in the face.

This time too, he started off quietly and slowly, then grew louder and increased the tempo. The sweet notes filled the air. The silence that followed the Baal Shem Tov's speech grew even deeper as Shaul'ke sang. From their spots on the floor, the drunkards looked at Shaul'ke in wonder. The Baal Shem Tov and his disciples concentrated once again on the incredible song.

When Shaul'ke finished his captivating performance, the crowd burst into loud applause and shouted, "Bravo! Encore!"

The Baal Shem Tov looked pleased. He looked around the room

as though searching for someone. He scanned the crowd and then approached three boys playing cards. He pulled each of them out of their seats and drew them into the center of the room.

"You heard how Shaul'ke sang so beautifully?" the Baal Shem Tov yelled in mock anger.

The three men stammered "yes" and nodded vigorously. The rest of the crowd watched and nodded along with them.

"What's your name?" the Baal Shem Tov asked one of them.

"Anton."

"And you?"

"Zu-Zur-Zuraik," stammered the second.

"And I'm Padrich," croaked the third.

The Baal Shem Tov nodded gravely and scowled at them in feigned anger.

"Listen you three," he thundered, "see this boy who sang for you? His name is Shaul'ke. You hear? Shaul'ke is his name. He's a good boy. Remember this! Don't you dare forget him. Understand?"

The three of them assented.

The Baal Shem Tov was silent. The three nodded in fright and stared at the Baal Shem Tov.

The Baal Shem Tov turned to Shaul'ke, pinched his cheek lovingly, patted his head and walked out with him. The three disciples silently followed, absolutely bewildered by what they had just witnessed.

"What did their Rebbe want from these gentiles? Why did he tell Shaul'ke to sing 'Shoshanas Yaakov' in a bar for gentiles?"

They didn't dare ask the Baal Shem Tov. He certainly knew what he was doing. Something was afoot



and time would tell what it was.

The Rebbe returned to his place on the wagon as did the others, and they traveled back to Mezibuzh.

PART V

Years passed and Shaul'ke grew up. His childish features matured and a brown beard framed his face. He had become a successful merchant who was known for his wealth and business dealings.

That year there was more rain than usual and the cold was more penetrating. Adar was approaching and people's spirits began to lift just a bit. R' Shaul had begun thinking about the upcoming Yom Tov of Purim. "It would be the right thing

to do to spend Purim at home with my family," he mused. "They're certainly hoping I'll join them for the festivities."

Shaul hurriedly wound up a number of business deals and postponed the remainder. He quickly packed and began the trip home to Lvov.

The trip took a few days. He tried to hurry despite the mud that filled the roads. He yearned to see his family once again and he left the main road for a shortcut through the forest.

His coach penetrated deeply into the forest as the horses trudged through the trees. Shaul relaxed, as businessmen do when they've

completed their business dealings successfully. "I wonder what Moshe'le is up to," he thought of his young son. "He can probably say a few words by now... And Shmerel, no doubt, has made progress and has begun learning Mishnayos in school. And Chana'le..."

He stopped in horror and looked about. "Who screamed? Where am I?" He jumped up in terror and looked all around and realized that this wasn't a dream. He had been daydreaming about his children, but here in the forest, stood three menacing characters brandishing knives. One of them called out to him to get down from the coach, as he waved his knife threateningly.

It finally sank in; Shaul was being held up by robbers. One of the three approached him and Shaul put up his hands helplessly. They made a quick search of Shaul's clothes and belongings while one of them pushed Shaul into the mud. His hands and feet were tied to the trunk of a tree, and Shaul began to realize that his end was nigh.

He looked about him in desperation but help was nowhere to be found. There was only the forest, the robbers, and himself.

One of the men came over to him and snarled, "Prepare to die."

Trembling in fright, Shaul tried to focus on his final Vidui. "These are my final moments," he thought resignedly. Images of his parents were clear in his mind's eye, as were his dear wife Sarah'le and the sweet faces of his children. His eyes filled with tears as he thought of leaving everything he cherished behind. Thoughts of the past continued to flit by: the beis midrash of his Rebbe...an eight-year-old child – himself – sitting on his father's lap...his father whispering to him to sing...

Shaul opened his eyes and faced

the grim reality. He looked at the robbers who sat around a bonfire, eating and talking amongst themselves. His mind worked furiously as he thought about how these were his final moments. A cool breeze made him shiver. The trees rustled ominously and the shriek of a forest denizen rent the air.

‘Well, I wanted to be at home to hear the Megilla and to fulfill the mitzvos of Purim, but apparently, this is not what Hashem wants. I can make my peace with that but at least I should do a little something in honor of Purim. What can I do while tied up like this? I will sing that “Shoshanas Yaakov” niggun that I sang for the Rebbe!

Shaul began to sing, and although he sang quietly, he could be heard clearly in the silence of the forest. For some reason, the robbers didn’t shout at him to be quiet. Shaul closed his eyes tightly. He didn’t want the sight of the hoodlums to disturb his concentration. His tremulous voice wove a spell and it seemed as though everything stopped to listen.

For some reason, his voice was more clear and beautiful than ever, like it was back when he was a child, but this time his hands were tied.

His voice was more clear and beautiful than ever, like it was back when he was a child, but this time his hands were tied...

He felt himself transported, and no longer thought of the forest and his untimely demise. He began singing the joyous stanza and his voice rose easily and flowed like a ship that sails confidently through the stormy waves.

Shaul finished the song slowly, in his attempt to forestall his inevitable end, and then he opened his eyes and saw the three men facing him. Their mouths were open and their hands were outstretched as though holding something invisible. They stood there like that for a long moment.

Then they roused themselves from their frozen state and hesitantly approached Shaul. Shaul was terrified as he prepared to meet his end with the blade of a knife. But the three men stood there, half a step away from him. He looked at them and beheld something strange,

though he himself didn’t know what it was.

The knife was still grasped in the hand of the one who had bound him, but the eyes of the threesome seemed softer and kinder. One of them whispered, “Is it you, Shaul’ke?”

It was as though a light turned on in Shaul’s mind. “Anton? Zuraik? Padrich?” he whispered in incredulity.

The three men trembled and they looked utterly confused. They untied the thick ropes that bound Shaul to the tree.

“Your rabbi... we haven’t forgotten him. It was thirty years ago when a boy sang that song. The rabbi said we should not harm him. His song was so sweet, we couldn’t possibly forget you, Shaul’ke.”

PART VI

That year, Shaul’s voice trembled as he uttered the words of the bracha at the end of the Megilla: “Shoshanas Yaakov – the rose of Yaakov was cheerful and glad when they jointly saw Mordechai robed in royal blue. You have been their eternal salvation, and their hope throughout the generations.”

(M. Ziegelboim – L’Saper M’Bereishis, vol. 2)

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A ROADMAP TO PEACE – A SIX-STEP PROGRAM

BY RABBI YOSEF YITZCHOK JACOBSON



*More ahavas Yisroel is demanded of us today than ever before. How do we cultivate it? A step-by-step guide. * Part 2 of 2*

(Continued from last week. Part one discussed why we become estranged from others and how to look favorably even upon those who are wrong.)

STAGE III GIVING REPROOF

After reaching the conclusion that the person who evokes our ire has positive reasons for doing what he does, as well as sincere intentions, we can then deal with his undesirable actions. This brings us to Step 3: “you shall surely reprove your friend.” If we are really affected by someone’s negative actions, we must approach him and discuss it with him, explaining gently and sensitively that his behavior is mistaken.

It’s important to emphasize here that if we approach him in a respectful manner, the way one would approach someone whom we judged favorably, we are far more likely to succeed in getting him to change his behavior.

I once spoke to a psychiatrist about the Mishna, “judge every person to the side of merit.” He told me that from a psychological perspective, judging everybody favorably is a very healthy approach to take, for two reasons:

1) If you are within a certain group, whether at a party, at work, or in your congregation and you encounter someone who upsets you, you can look at him in one of two ways: One way is: This person is evil, an egoist, and arrogant and that is why he behaves the way he does. You go home upset and uptight. His behavior and manner ruin your mood and your day. But you can choose another approach, which is to look at him positively and judge him favorably. You don’t lose anything by doing so. On the contrary, you save yourself from becoming angry, resentful, and hateful as a result of his actions. You return home with an open and free heart.

2) If you also approach him and reprove him for what he has done, you will surely have a far greater influence on him if you judge him favorably. If you approach him thinking him evil, he’ll shun you or oppose you, and obviously it will be much harder to get through to him. He will feel the need to employ defense mechanisms to reject you, rather than welcome your thoughts.

We must remember that “reproving your fellow man” means communicating with him in a way that he can understand what you are saying. We can’t just approach him and tell him that he is acting wrongly. We must understand his perspective, his philosophy on life, and choose our words accordingly.

In other words, let’s imagine a situation in which a Jew is driving a car on Shabbos. This Jew was not given a proper Jewish education and he is unaware of the severity of the prohibition of driving on Shabbos. What if we said to the driver: Listen, you are making a serious transgression of Torah law! If we lived in the time of the Temple, and there were two witnesses and they warned you, you could be stoned to death!

He would look at you like you lost your mind and would quickly drive away. We talked *at* him, not *to* him. He didn't understand us, and there's no reason for him to identify with our message to him. To him, our message was meaningless, even foolish and crazy.

"You shall reprove your fellow" means that the person we're reproving should understand what we're telling him and should internalize the message he needs to hear. That takes tremendous work and sensitivity. The Chafetz Chaim writes that he does not know if anybody in this generation really knows how to fulfill the mitzva of "you shall reprove your fellow man!"

* * *

After concluding that our negative feelings for someone are justified and not merely subjective, and we've judged him favorably, we reach step three, which is to talk to him like someone who really cares about him. But what if we did our best, and an objective person would agree that it was a job well-done, but the person continues doing what he was doing before? What do we do now? We tried everything, he listened, but he didn't change! It would seem to prove that this person is truly wicked and is irredeemable!

It is difficult to reach this stage. In *Tanya* chapter 32, the Alter Rebbe reminds us how many things have to be in place in order to reach a conclusion that we truly fulfilled the mitzva of "you shall reprove your fellow." It is no easy feat, and we must be very, very cautious before concluding that we have indeed implemented it. But if we did, the Gemara in P'sachim (113b) says, and the Alter Rebbe brings this in *Tanya* (ibid), that it is permissible to hate him (according to some opinions, it is even a mitzva).

So that's that, or so it seems. The person is incorrigible and the only thing one can do – and it's a mitzva too – is to hate him.

Chas V'shalom!

STAGE IV ONLY HATE THE EVIL

Here's the catch – we must hate, but we must know *what* to hate! We may (or must) hate the part of the

One might think this sounds completely unrealistic, for the person's bad behavior wasn't created in a vacuum! The person made a conscious decision to do what he does, and if we hate the behavior, there's no reason not to hate the person who decided to behave in this way! ...

person that produced this evil behavior, but not the entire person. What does this mean? The Alter Rebbe explains that the mitzva of ahavas Yisroel still applies to this person. He is a Jew and we must love him.

What about the fact that he deliberately does evil things even after he is reprovved and the Gemara

says we may hate him? The Alter Rebbe says there are two obligations, one of hate and one of love. Since a Jew is comprised of two parts, a G-dly soul and an animal soul, the hatred must be directed at his animal soul that caused him to sin. At the same time, we must have love for his G-dly soul, which this sinner maintains even while he sins. We must be filled with love and affection for this "sinful" Jew, because within him at the moment of his sin, resides a chelek Elokah, a manifestation of the Divine, a piece of infinity, an ocean of holiness. This is reason enough to love him, even when he transgresses the Torah. For even while he transgresses, his G-dly soul remains intact in all its holiness and purity, and not only does his G-dly soul oppose what he does, it is greatly upset by it.

Here we must learn again and again the holy words of the *Tanya* and of all of our Rebbeim – that from the perspective of our souls, we are all literally brothers. Your soul and my soul are truly one. You and I may have many differences of opinion, but if you are a Jew, I must remember that on the deepest level of reality, you and I are literally one!

The Rebbe would repeat these words of the *Tanya* at almost every farbrengen for decades! I think it was the chassidic idea most often quoted by the Rebbe. There is no escaping this truth: someone may be a "bad guy" in my book, but Hashem dwells in him!

STAGE V FEELING COMPASSION FOR HIM

One might think this sounds completely unrealistic, for the person's bad behavior wasn't created in a vacuum! The person made a conscious decision to do what he does, and if we hate the behavior, there's no reason not to hate the

person who decided to behave in this way! Yes, he has a positive side to him, but the feeling of hatred towards him overpowers the feeling of love, and the result is that we hate him!

So the Alter Rebbe adds in chapter 32 of *Tanya*, “and you should also arouse the midda of rachmanus.” In his notes on *Tanya*, the Rebbe explains that the compassion ensures that the hate does not overpower and eliminate the love.

How do we evoke compassion on his soul? We must think: We don’t live with this person, and we don’t see him 24 hours a day, and nevertheless, we can’t stand the evil in him. How much more painful it is for the G-dly soul which resides in him 24 hours a day! What a terrible exile it is in!

When we have compassion on the G-dly spark which is held captive deep within him, this compassion will lead to our love overpowering our hatred, as the Alter Rebbe concludes, “Yaakov redeems Avrohom,” compassion

redeems love.

STAGE VI WE COULD BE WORSE ...

After learning the proper way to look at a fellow Jew, we have to be extremely careful not to remain at this stage while feeling superior to others who err. The Alter Rebbe teaches us in chapter 30 of *Tanya* that “be lowly of spirit before every person” means to truly feel this way, even before the “lowest of the low.”

In other words, even if we see someone who does the wrong thing, and we go through the steps and we truly love him and have compassion on him, this is not enough. We have to consider that if we had experienced the same upbringing, environment, evil inclination, inner struggles, etc., as this person, we may have done far worse than him. There’s no reason to feel superior, because we may not be any better than him.

* * *

I’ll conclude with a beautiful vort that I heard in the name of the great chassid, R’ Zelig Feldman, a”h:

When it comes to sadness, your calculations may be correct, but the bottom line is definitely wrong. When it comes to happiness, your calculation might be wrong, but the bottom line is certainly correct.

In other words, if a person is sad, it could be that the reasons for his sadness are justified. He might have difficulties in making a living, health problems, family troubles, etc. He might have made many mistakes in his life. But the bottom line is that being sad is unjustified.

A person might be unjustified in his joy. The bottom line is: if he’s happy, that’s the way he should be.

Let’s apply this to our situation. Those who, after Gimmel Tammuz, have reasons to quarrel with others, might very well be right, but the bottom line is that machlokes is unjustifiable. As for those who live harmoniously with everybody, perhaps their reasoning is faulty, but the bottom line is they’re right!

From a speech at a Kinus Achdus for the talmidei ha’T’mimim in 770 in memory of Tamim Yosef Yitzchok Dagan, a”h.

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THE MIGHTY GAON: RABBI YECHESKEL ABRAMSKY

From Shemen Sasson Meichaveirecha

BY RABBI SHALOM DOVER WOLPO
TRANSLATED BY ALEXANDER ZUSHE KOHN



The great *gaon* Rabbi Yechezkel Abramsky was born in the city of Grodno (in Belarus) on Shabbos Parshas Tetzaveh, 6 Adar 5646 (1886). He learned in the Nevhardik yeshiva, by the “*Sabeh*,” Rabbi Yuzel, and with incredible diligence, he progressed in his Torah studies. In 5663 (1903-04), he was ordained as an halachic authority by the author of *Aruch HaShulchan*. In the year 5664 (1902-04), he began learning in the yeshiva of Telz, and he became renowned as “the genius of Mast.” In 5667 (1906-07), he switched to the Remeilis yeshiva in Vilna. On Erev Rosh Chodesh Tammuz, 5669 (June 19, 1909), he married the daughter of the *gaon* Rabbi Yisroel Yehonasan Yerushamski, the Rivdaz’s son-in-law.

In 5670 (1909-10), he spent a few months in the court of the *gaon* Rabbi Chaim HaLevi of Brisk, and he was very close to him. (Even after Rabbi Chaim fled from Brisk to Minsk during the second world war, Rabbi Abramsky would visit him often), and the two of them would delight in exchanging words of Torah.) In 5672 (1911-12), he was accepted as the rabbi and head of the rabbinical court of Smalian.

Two years later, he took up the same positions in the city of Smolovitch, and in 5683 (1922-23), he succeeded Rabbi Isser Zalman Meltzer *zatzal* as rabbi of the city of Slutsk, a great Torah center. In all these places, he dedicated himself to Torah and mitzvas, and he worked to strengthen all the Jewish communities of Russia.

In 5685 (1924-25), he published the first book of his great work *Chazon Yechezkel* (on the *Tosefta*), and in 5687 (1926-27), he worked together with the *gaon* Rabbi Shlomo Yosef Zevin as an editor of *Yagdil Torah*, a Torah periodical.

In 5688, he was chosen as the rabbi of Petach Tikva, Israel (see HaAretz newspaper, 29 Nissan 5688 (April 19, 1928): *A new rav for Petach Tikva. In a joint session Sunday night between the Vaad HaMoshava and the Vaadat HaRabanut, the rav and gaon Rabbi Yechezkel Abramsky was selected as the rabbi of Petach Tikva*), but the Russian authorities prevented him from leaving the country. On Erev Rosh Chodesh Elul 5690 (he was arrested and sentenced to ten years of jail and forced labor in a prison camp in the Ural Mountains.

Through the tremendous efforts of the *gaon* Rabbi Chaim Ozer *zatzal*, the German chancellor and Stalin agreed to the release of six communist prisoners in exchange for him. On Erev Yom Kippur 5692 (September 20, 1931), he was released, and a month later he was expelled from Russia.

In Kislev 5692 (November-December 1931), Rabbi Abramsky arrived in London. During Adar of that year, his wife and two of his sons (Shimon and Menachem) managed to leave Russia. It took another five years until the Russians released the two older sons, Moshe o.b.m., and Yaakov Dovid o.b.m. who were forced to remain there in order “to guarantee that Rabbi Abramsky will not malign the Russian authorities.” Upon arriving in London, Rabbi Abramsky was appointed as a rabbinical judge and *rav* over the *Machzikei Hadas* community. In 5695 (1934-35), he became the head of London’s rabbinical court.

In 5705 (1944-45), he published *Eretz Yisroel – Nachlat Am Yisroel*, a *seifer* explaining the eternal connection between the Jewish people and the Holy Land (as the

Land's borders are defined by Torah). "Fortunate is the man," writes Rabbi Abramsky in his *seifer*, "who takes part physically and spiritually in the development of the land. With physical labor, he reorganizes its earth, builds cities and plants vineyards, and with his spirit, he experiences that powerful experience of standing with his feet upon the ground of the Tabernacle of Israel and its Torah." In 5710 (1949-50), when he was still in London, he received the "Rav Kook prize for Torah literature."

In 5711 (1950-51), Rabbi Abramsky moved to the Holy City of Yerushalayim where he continued to write and publish his work *Chazon Yechezkel*. He was fortunate enough to publish 24 volumes of this work. (The *chareidi* settlement Chazon Yechezkel in northern Israel, near Kiryat Gat, is named for this work.) In addition, he gave *shiurim* in the Slobodka yeshiva in Bnei Brak; he was appointed as the head of Vaad HaYeshivos, and as one of the heads of Chinuch Atzmai; he was regarded as one of the most

The Rebbe listened very closely, and then said, "It's possible that for the sake of this lofty feeling alone Rabbi Abramsky's entire prison ordeal was worth it."

important Torah leaders in Israel.

He passed away in Yerushalayim during the early hours of Sunday, 24 Elul 5736 (1976) at the age of ninety. He is interred on Har HaMenuchet.

G-D'S EXALTED HAND

In 5671 (1910-11), Rabbi Abramsky was offered the position of *rosh yeshiva* of Tomchei T'mimim in the town of Lubavitch. He actually delivered a few *shiurim* in

the yeshiva, but in the end, he did not take up the position; instead, he became the head of the rabbinical court in Smalian.

After the *histalkus* of the Rebbe Rashab, Rabbi Abramsky had a very close with the Rebbe Rayatz, and worked with him in matters of public concern. He was a member of a rabbinical council to which the Rebbe Rayatz would send money to help maintain the children schools, *mikvaos*, and *rabbanim* in Russia. For these underground activities Rabbi Abramsky used the name "Yemin Hashem Romeima" [G-d's right hand is raised] – the first three words of the *pasuk* recited by people named Yechezkel at the end of the Shmoneh Esrei.

Rabbi Abramsky's son, Shimon, wrote the following to me: "When I met the late Rabbi Chaim Leiberman in New York, the secretary of the *Admur* Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak *zatzal*, he told me that the *Admur* sometimes alluded to my father with the title 'Tosefta.'" (Indeed, this reference appears in a number of places [in the Rebbe Rayatz's letters].)

IN PRISON WITH LUBAVITCHER CHASSIDIM

Rabbi Abramsky was friendly with some of the most eminent Chabad chassidim in Russia, and even "merited" to sit in jail with them for their "criminal" activities at strengthening Torah and mitzvas. The book *Behind the Iron Curtain*, by the *chassid* Rabbi Rafael Kahn o.b.m. (father of Rabbi Yoel Kahn, the Rebbe's oral scribe) describes an episode that took place in jail:

"Once, when were taking a walk in the yard, I suddenly noticed Rabbi Abramsky *shlita* behind one of the windows of the jail. He discerned me as well from among the other prisoners, and immediately asked me – with



gestures of his hands and face – “What’s your situation? What punishment do you have to endure?” With my fingers, I signaled him that I was sentenced to three years. He continued to ask me in sign language if I was going to be sent to the labor camps (he did this with wood-chopping motions) or only to exile. I signaled back that they would not be sending me to the labor camps.” The book goes on to describe the punishment the two of them received for their criminal act of communicating to each other through signals.

CONNECTION WITH THE REBBE RAYATZ WHILE IN LONDON

Not long after arriving in London, Rabbi Abramsky received a letter from the Rebbe Rayatz. Dated 21 Adar II, 5692 (March 29, 1932); it says as follows: “I received your letter of Thursday, [Parshas] P’kudei ... and I was happy to hear that you are in good health, and that, thank G-d, you obtained the permit for your family members (to leave Russia as you did). May G-d grant you success so that everything will go well, and may G-d watch over your esteemed sons, Moshe and Yaakov Dovid, who remain where they are for the moment, and may G-d help them obtain a permit soon, so that they can come to you successfully.” Further in the letter, the Rebbe writes detailed instructions about the sending of hundreds of packages of flour to Russia for [basking *matza* for] Pesach. A few weeks later, the Rebbe writes to him again: “I received your letter of Tuesday [Parshas] Shmini. I am very happy that your *Rebbetzin* and two sons are already abroad. May G-d help ... that your sons who remained there should be able to come to you soon.”

The connection between the



Rebbe Rayatz and Rabbi Abramsky was firm and consistent. (See letter of 7 Nissan 5701 (April 4, 1941): “I received a number of telegrams from my friend, the *rav* and *gaon*, Rabbi Y. *shlita* Abramsky.”) Indeed, in the Rebbe’s letters, the *gaon* is mentioned in connection with numerous issues, including:

The International Committee of *Rabbanim* for Aiding Russian Jewry. Rabbi Abramsky’s appointment as a member of the committee. (27 Menachem Av 5701 (1941).)

International public fast day: Initiated by the Rebbe Rayatz, signed by Rabbi Abramsky. (11 Elul, 5701 (1941).)

Assisting the Jews of Russia with flour for Pesach: Joint effort with Rabbi Abramsky. (12 Adar 5702 (March 1, 1942), and many other.)

In a letter dated 3 Iyar 5707 (April 23, 1947), the Rebbe Rayatz writes to Rabbi Abramsky: Your honor, my friend the *rav* and *gaon*, renowned and famous ... among the *gaonim* of Yaakov, the one of noble character, the G-d-fearing man, our teacher the *rav*, Rabbi Yechezkel *shlita* Abramsky.” The letter concerns the visit of the *gaon* and chassid, the *Rashag zatzal* to Europe

In a letter dated 15 Mar-Cheshvan 5708 (October 29, 1947), to the chassid Rabbi Benzion Shemtov who was residing in London, the Rebbe Rayatz writes: “Surely you visited the renowned *rav* and *gaon* Rabbi Yechezkel *shlita* Abramsky; please convey to him my regards and my blessing.”

On Erev Rosh HaShana 5709, the Rebbe Rayatz wrote to Rabbi Abramsky that he took pleasure in hearing from Rabbi Benzion Shemtov “about you’re dedicated work, in general, to bring merit to the public, and in particular, in the sphere of Torah study, and in drawing close the refugees of *anash* and the *T’mimim*, and helping them get settled in your country. In a letter to Rabbi Shemtov dated 29 Teives 5710 (January 18, 1950), the Rebbe Rayatz instructs him to invite Rabbi Abramsky to take part in a committee he was establishing in London to strengthen Judaism.

Rabbi Abramsky’s son Shimon wrote to me that “when Chabad chassidim, led by Rabbi Benzion Shemtov (whom I was well acquainted with), came to London from Moscow in 5708 (1947-48), my father helped them a lot, and Rabbi Shemtov was a frequent visitor at his home.”

IN THE VANGUARD OF THE BATTLE TO FIX THE “WHO IS A JEW” DECREE

Rabbi Abramsky’s friendship with Lubavitch continued into the next generation, when the Rebbe assumed leadership. The Rebbe’s activities at bringing Jews back to their Father in Heaven, were held in great esteem by him. Indeed, the *gaon*’s name appears among the signatures of *gedolei Yisroel* who issued a proclamation in support of the T’fillin Campaign. His signature also appears – together with the signatures of Rabbi Shlomo Zalman

Aurbach *zatzal*, Rabbi Yosef Sholom Elyashiv, and others – on a proclamation calling for the “Who is a Jew” law to be corrected. The proclamation states as follows:

In its present form, the Law of Return is a terrible blow to the foundation and survival of Judaism, and one that concerns the entire Jewish people throughout the entire world and throughout all generations – for “a twisted thing cannot be rectified.” A law that shamelessly recognizes non-halachic conversions, and that encourages and grants tens of thousands of non-Jews the right to ascend to our Holy Land, is liable to very quickly blur the distinctions between Jews and gentiles, G-d forbid. Not one of us can rest assured that he will not fall victim to this. Hence, all who cherish the word of G-d will neither rest nor be silent until this horrifying law will be corrected and annulled.

When Dr. Yitzchak Rafael served as the minister of defense, he once had an idea about how to solve the “Who is a Jew” problem. Towards this end, he paid a visit to Rabbi Yechezkel Abramsky *zatzal*, and shared with him his idea. The *gaon* responded: **“When it comes to these types of issues, the *Admur* of Lubavitch *shlita* must be consulted, for it is he who is battling assimilation, and it is he who is the expert – with emphasis on the ‘the’ –**

on matters of this nature.”

A few days later, Rabbi Abramsky was visited by Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner *zatzal*, before the latter’s departure to the U.S. Rabbi Abramsky requested that during his stay in the U.S. Rabbi Hutner should pay a visit to the Rebbe, and ask him his opinion on Rafael’s idea. Rabbi Hutner indeed consulted the Rebbe, and then sent Rabbi Abramsky a telegram saying, “[Rafael’s] suggestion is absolutely out of the question.” That was the end of Rafael’s idea, and the entire episode was publicized in Hatzofeh, by the *chareidi* writer, Dr. Hillel Zeidman.

YOU ARE FORTUNATE – YOU HAVE A REBBE

Regarding Rabbi Abramsky’s signing of the proclamation calling for the “Who is a Jew” law to be corrected, the *gaon* and chassid, Rabbi Shmuel Eliezer Hilprin *shlita*, told me the following:

“In 5732 (1971-72) the *gaon* Rabbi Betzalel Zulti *zatzal* initiated a public fast-day to arouse [Divine] mercy over the ‘Who is a Jew’ matter. The Rebbe sent his agreement and encouragement, and therefore, we went as a contingent of rabbis to get Rabbi Abramsky’s signature on the fast-day proclamation. The contingent included the *gaon* Yisroel Grossman *shlita*, the *gaon* Rabbi Avrohom

Harash HaKohen *shlita*, and myself. Rabbi Abramsky took the opportunity to also add his signature to the proclamation of *gedolei* Yisroel calling for the fixing of the ‘Who is a Jew’ law, and we merited to hear him describe his great esteem for the Rebbe and the Rebbe’s colossal efforts to bring Jews back to Torah.

“I recall a number of interesting things from that meeting. One of the things Rabbi Abramsky said was: ‘You are lucky – you have a Rebbe, so everything is clear to you; as for us, what are we to do?’

MODEH ANI

“He also spoke to us about the period in which he sat in jail in Russia for spreading Judaism: ‘When I would say *Modeh Ani* in jail, I would think to myself: *What is there to be thankful about over here for having had my soul returned to me? I have no physicality here and no spirituality. I can neither pray nor learn. So, exactly what am I thankful for?* [My answer was]: *I am thankful for the fact that even in this situation – in jail – I am able to feel that ‘great is your faithfulness.’* Rabbi Abramsky went on to tell us that he once expressed this feeling to some Chabad chassidim, who repeated it to the Rebbe Rayatz. The Rebbe listened very closely, and then said, ‘It’s possible that for the sake of this lofty feeling alone Rabbi Abramsky’s entire prison ordeal was worth it.’”



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PURIM SHPIEL IN ODESSA

BY PENINA ALDIN, ARAD

The year 5744 (1984) was a very difficult year for Jewish activists in Russia. Many of the finest among them had been arrested and imprisoned so that nearly all Jewish activity went underground. This is why they called it the Shnas HaShmad, alluding to the anagram for the Hebrew year 5744 (Tav Shin Mem Daled) in which the wicked sought to destroy and kill and annihilate all the Jews.

The persecutions against us intensified following the Purim Shpiel we made in Odessa. That is when the K.G.B. began making large-scale arrests. What happened at that Purim party?

Despite the confusion and fear that prevailed in those days, we decided, a group of us young Jews, to celebrate Purim properly and joyously. Included among our plans was a play written by Dovid Shechter, an activist, who is now the editor of the Russian-Israeli newspaper *Alef*, and formerly a spokesman for the *Yisroel B'aliya* party.

Dozens of young people came to see and enjoy the performance, which presented the story of the Megilla in terms of our lives in Russia. The actors were: Mordechai, who wanted to make aliya; Achashverosh, who sat in the Kremlin and ruled "from Hodu to Kush"; the wicked Haman who sat in OVIR (the emigration office) and refused to allow Mordechai the Jew to leave the country.

Esther who tries to convince Achashverosh to allow Mordechai to

leave the Soviet Union, was represented by the Jews in the Diaspora. Namely, those who exerted pressure on the Russian government so that Jews would be given exit permits.

The Jews of the Diaspora in the play were real tourists who came to



The Aldins eating in a secret sukka in Leningrad

Odessa Erev Purim. We first taught them some Russian words, and then they were able to take part in the play.

The play was outstanding but unfortunately, shortly afterwards, we

learned that among the spectators were quite a few informers who rushed to report to the K.G.B. about our party and the "propaganda" play.

Many activists were arrested and put in jail. This was after a period of relative quiet. It seemed that the K.G.B. had decided to squelch the aliya movement at all costs. The arrests took place in nearly every city. The K.G.B. caught the leaders and threw them behind lock and key. The young activists, who worked on behalf of Judaism and aliya, were terrified. Ties were broken off completely between activists in various cities throughout the Soviet Union.

We knew they tapped our phones and so we stopped using them. This really cut us off from what was going on and this news blackout was worst of all.

The only connection we had with the greater Jewish world was by listening to the Kol Yisroel radio program. With great effort we managed to record it and this is how we learned what was going on in Russia. Till this day, I don't know how they knew what was going on with us, but every day, they announced that so-and-so from that city was arrested, and his friend was caught too. They said the names of those who were arrested.

We were absolutely petrified. We had no idea what the next day would bring.

The trial of the actors in the play took place, and two of the actors were judged in a public trial that was broadcast on television. One of

them was Katan'chik (Yaakov Levin) who was arrested a week before he was going to get married. He and his friend were sentenced to three years in prison.

We were careful to use made-up names so that even if one of us was caught, he wouldn't be able to inform on the others. Till this day, there are some people who I remember only by their fabricated name.

After I married my husband Dovid, we moved to Leningrad. A few weeks before Purim, we decided that we couldn't allow Purim to pass us by uncelebrated, yet we couldn't make another Purim play with lots of participants. Despite everything, we decided to do something to celebrate the victory of the Jews over the gentiles. We recorded a play and prepared slides with pictures that illustrated what was going on in the story. In the days before Purim, we

went from friend to friend, from apartment to apartment, and showed our slide show and played the tape of the Purim story.

It was a great feeling, knowing we were doing something, as small as it was, in order to wipe out the descendents of Haman and to intensify the strength of Mordechai the Jew in observing Jewish holidays. "To establish for them to make the fourteenth of the month of Adar ... every single year..."

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WITH JOY AND GOODNESS OF HEART

*Snippets, memories, and stories of the Rebbe Rayatz, told by the chassid, R' Shneur Zalman Gurary, a"h, who was appointed by the Rebbe MH" M to run Agudas Chassidei Chabad HaOlamis. * Presented in honor of 9 Adar, the day the Rebbe Rayatz arrived in the United States and declared "America is no different."*

WHY DIDN'T YOU COME?

When the Rebbe Rayatz first came to 770, my father-in-law, the Kapishnitzer Rebbe, R' Avrohom Yehoshua Heschel, zt"l, would often visit him. I would accompany my father-in-law.

At a later point, my father-in-law stopped his frequent visits. After a long break, my father-in-law resumed visiting the Rebbe Rayatz. The Rebbe said to him: "Because Hashem punished me so that I cannot go to you, therefore you don't come to me?!"

A FATHER'S TEARS

One of the distinguished chassidim had a son in Eretz Yisroel who was dangerously ill and then was healed in a miraculous fashion. The man didn't know about his son being sick or that he had been miraculously healed.

When he found out what had happened he had a yechidus with the

Rebbe Rayatz and asked: "How could he not have known about his son's condition when the Rebbe knew all about it?"

The Rebbe answered: "How would it have helped if you knew? If you knew you would have come to me, and I knew about it anyway!"

Afterwards I heard from the Rebbe's daughters that the Rebbe was not pleased by the fact that the father wasn't informed about his son. He said: "He should have been told 'because a father's tears can help.'"

YOU'LL GIVE IN ANY CASE

A very wealthy man lost his money. This was before World War II and the Rebbe Rayatz was staying in Otvotsk and wanted to buy a building for the yeshiva there. The Rebbe evaluated the wealthy men, stating how much each one should contribute towards buying the building.

The Rebbe assessed the man who

had lost his money for a sizable donation. The man had a yechidus with the Rebbe in which he said that in his present financial state he could not make such a large donation.

The Rebbe said: "You'll have to give in any case. My job is to make sure that it should be with joy and goodness of heart."

BETWEEN ROSH HA'SHANA AND YOM KIPPUR

One Yom Kippur I was on the bottom floor of the building in which the Rebbe Rayatz and his son-in-law, R' M.M. Horenstein (may Hashem avenge his blood), stayed on the top floor. In the middle of the night, R' M.M. came down and told me that he had heard from his father-in-law that the difference between Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur is that on Rosh HaShana you have to exert the body, whereas on Yom Kippur the opposite is true..

KABBALAS OL OF BACHURIM

The first time the Rebbe Rayatz went to Warsaw, he farbrenged. A large number of people came, and it was very warm. Seltzer was given out, but the bachurim who were standing there did not get any.

The wealthy R' Menachem Mendel Rothstein was there and he asked the Rebbe Rayatz why the bachurim weren't given anything to drink. The Rebbe answered: "Everything is for the sake of the bachurim, but their inyan is kabbalas ol."

MEMORIES OF THE WEDDING

I had the privilege of attending the wedding of R' M.M. Horenstein and the daughter of the Rebbe Rayatz, Rebbetzin Shaina. The wedding took place in Landvarov, a small city situated between Warsaw and Vilna. Many people attended the wedding and all of them were hosted at the local guesthouse.

My brother, R' Herschel Gurary, a"n, came to the wedding very late and there was no room in the guesthouse for him. He slept on a bench.

R' Moshe Gittelis, who learned in Lubavitch and then switched to learning in the Mirrer Yeshiva, was there. I once brought him to the Rebbe Rayatz, who spoke to him about the importance of learning

*The Rebbe said:
"You'll have to give in
any case. My job is to
make sure that it
should be with joy
and goodness of
heart."*

chassidus. But R' Moshe maintained that in our times the study of Musar is important and accomplishes the same thing as chassidus.

Yet, when R' Moshe saw my brother sleeping on a bench, he exclaimed: "We don't have bittul like

that. Such bittul can only be a result of the study of chassidus."

* * *

During the meal, the bachurim stood with kabbalas ol and did not eat. Seeing this, the Rebbe Rayatz went down to the bachurim and gave each bachur l'chaim. R' Alter Simchovitz explained that giving them l'chaim was a way of thanking them for their kabbalas ol.

BEING SELECTIVE

At one of the Rebbe Rayatz's 12 Tammuz farbrengens that took place in Riga, one of the elder chassidim asked many questions. The Rebbe said to him: "Jews are standing here and collecting words, so one shouldn't talk a lot."

HELPING THE NOVARDOK YESHIVA

There was a terrible famine during the time the Rebbe Rayatz was in Rostov (this was after the Bolshevik Revolution, and after World War I). At night, the Rebbe's daughters would take food packages to the Novorodok yeshiva in Rostov. These packages the Rebbe sent contained bread and salted fish.

CHOLENT ON SHABBOS

When the Rebbe Rayatz went to the wedding described earlier, he went for Shavuos and took me along at his expense. The Rebbe's shamash at that time was R' Berel Grossbaum.

One Shabbos, R' Berel spent a long time davening, and in the meanwhile, the lunch meal was served by the family. They did not serve the cholent.

Towards evening, R' Berel served the Rebbe a cup of tea. The Rebbe asked him why there wasn't any cholent earlier that day. R' Berel thought the Rebbe wanted cholent and said there was still cholent left over...



Rabbi Shneur Zalman Gurary standing (center of photograph) as the Rebbe Rayatz entered the Dinner for the Central Yeshiva Tomchei T'mimim

MORE TIME

Once, when I was in charge of letting people in for yechidus, a bachur by the name of Efraim (I forgot his last name) came and wanted a yechidus. The Rebbe Rayatz said he should come the next day.

I asked the Rebbe why the bachur couldn't have yechidus that day when he was a special bachur. The Rebbe answered: "On the contrary, it's because he's such a special bachur that I must devote time to him, and I don't have enough time for him today."

AN APPOINTMENT OF THE REBBE MAHARASH AND ADVICE FROM THE REBBE RASHAB

I heard this story from an eyewitness:

My uncle, R' Shmuel Gurary, once participated in a meeting of all the large companies that supplied merchandise for the Czarist government. My uncle supplied wood for the railway tracks. At this meeting, they wanted to push him out of the lucrative business. They wanted to bid over this valuable concession, thus grabbing the business away from him.

Hearing about this, my uncle went to the meeting and yelled, "The Rebbe Maharash appointed me as contractor and these lowlifes want to throw me out? No way!"

My uncle didn't know what to do, if he should make a lower offer to the government he could lose all his money, and if he suggested a higher price, his competitors might make a lower offer. He sent a telegram to the Rebbe Rashab and asked him what to do.

The Rebbe Rashab said he should offer that they pay him ten percent less than what his competitors offered. My uncle did so and was

successful, and the government ordered merchandise from him.

THE REBBE MADE ME RICH, SO HOW CAN I REFUSE HIM?

In the final years in Lubavitch, before they moved to Rostov, the financial situation was terrible. The yeshiva had no money at all and the

The two neshamos were sent back down, with the neshama of the rich man in the body of a wagon driver, and the neshama of the wagon driver in the body of a rich man. Now they would see whether they would do the same avoda that they did in their previous incarnation...

entire responsibility for sustaining the yeshiva was the Rebbe Rashab's.

The Rebbe Rashab sent Rabbi Shemaryahu Gurary (Rashag), who was then a bachur in the yeshiva, to my uncle, R' Shmuel Gurary, to ask him for a donation of 100,000 rubles for the yeshiva. This was a huge sum in those days.

My uncle was in Odessa at the time, in his office. When he heard the Rebbe's request, he exclaimed, "One hundred thousand rubles? *Patur*,

patur (exempt)...” and didn't want to give the money.

Rashag returned to the hotel and went to sleep. Towards morning, my uncle's wagon-driver went to the hotel and told Rashag that my uncle wanted him to come back. Rashag went with the wagon-driver to my uncle and when he entered the room, he saw my uncle sitting with a *Likkutei Torah* and crying.

My uncle said, "Gevald! How could I have refused the Rebbe's request? The Rebbe is the one who made me wealthy, so how could I refuse him?" He then handed over 100,000 rubles.

YEARS OF TRUTH

At one of the Rebbe Rayatz's *farbrengens* in Otvotsk, one of the old men began singing "Yedid Nefesh" and the crowd laughed. The Rebbe said: Don't laugh. These are the years of truth [i.e., the years of old age].

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A COMMONER AND THE KING

When the Rebbe Rayatz was in Warsaw, he stayed in the apartment of a family named Yezshik. R' Leibel Raskin served as the Rebbe's aide at the time. He once brought the Rebbe a cup of tea with milk. Some time later, he went to the Rebbe again and noticed that the tea had remained untouched.

R' Leibel asked the Rebbe: "Rebbe, the tea is cold. Why didn't you drink it?"

The Rebbe answered: "And what about *iskafia*?"

R' Leibel said: "Iskafia is just for ordinary people, not for someone who has become king."

Said the Rebbe: "He [an ordinary person] *must* [do *iskafia*], but he [the king] *wants to*."



ANOTHER REBBE COULD NOT...

When the Rebbe Rayatz was in the resort town of Drozgenik, he was mekarev a very gifted bachur from Vilna who studied at university. He was the uncle of Dr. Abba Seligson, who later became the doctor for the Rebbe's household. The Rebbe devoted a great deal of time to this bachur. The Rebbe wanted him to join Tiferes Bachurim and to open a branch of the yeshiva at the university he attended.

The Rebbe told him many stories. I learned with him a few hours a day, and he would tell me the stories the Rebbe told him. Here's one of the stories I heard from him (although I heard the story directly from the Rebbe when he was in Rostov, I heard the end of the story only from the bachur):

One of the chassidim of the Rebbe Maharash would think chassidus for hours at a time, and he would daven at length while meditating. He was always deep in thought. He once went to Lubavitch, to the Rebbe Rashab, and he took a fur coat since it was bitter cold at the time. When he arrived in Lubavitch, he learned that the Rebbe Rashab had left to

Menton in France (a health resort), and he followed the Rebbe there.

It was warm in Menton, but being someone preoccupied with his thoughts, he continued to wear his fur coat. The passersby laughed at him, but he didn't know why they laughed.

He remained there for a number of weeks.

Once, the Rebbe Rashab and the Rebbe Rayatz were walking together and they came across this chassid who was davening. The davening was lengthy and sung with a niggun. The Rebbe Rashab tarried for some time to listen to the chassid's davening. Then the Rebbe Rashab said to the Rebbe Rayatz about the davening that you could see that he had physically lost the Rebbe [referring to the Rebbe Maharash] some years before, but the spiritual image of the Rebbe was right before him!

* * *

I heard another story from him. A chassid asked the Alter Rebbe about the wording that is brought in a number of places, "*neshamos ha'to'os*" (erring souls), because how could there be an error on the level of the neshama? It's possible for there to be

an error on the level of nefesh and ruach, but not on the level of neshama!

The Alter Rebbe answered with a story. There was a wealthy and G-d-fearing man who once entered the city on Erev Shabbos. His wagon driver tried to put the horses in the stable but had a hard time doing so. The wealthy man immediately got down from the wagon to help the wagon driver and to fulfill the mitzva of "you shall surely help him."

The wealthy man was wearing silk garments, and while helping with the horses, his clothing tore. His hands became dirty, too.

Afterwards they went to the bathhouse and the wagon driver took along all the homeless wayfarers on his account. Although he didn't have the money to pay for a full service bath for all of them, for these wandering hobos it was a lifesaver.

They went to shul for Kabbalas Shabbos and the wealthy man sat on the eastern wall, while the wagon driver sat on the western side, together with the poor. After the davening, the wagon driver took all the poor men with him to where he was lodging, for the meal. It wasn't a lavish feast but for the poor, it was plenty. After the meal, the wagon driver had them sleep on straw bedding that he had.

When the wagon driver and the wealthy man eventually came to the World of Truth, all their good deeds were presented before the Heavenly court – that the wealthy man had helped the wagon driver get the wagon into the stable and tore his clothes and dirtied his hands in the process, and how the wagon driver had helped the poor by paying for the bathhouse, with a meal, and sleeping accommodations. They wanted to give them both a place in Gan Eden.

In the end though, they said that

each one had undertaken work that was unsuitable. The rich man should have been involved in hosting guests and the wagon driver should have helped other wagon drivers. When each one did what the other one was supposed to do, it was possible that it wasn't done in truth.

The two neshamos were sent back down, with the neshama of the rich man in the body of a wagon driver, and the neshama of the wagon driver in the body of a rich man. Now they would see whether they would do the same avoda that they did in their previous incarnation, but this time it would be done in truth because it would be the appropriate avoda for each one.

This is what is meant, said the Alter Rebbe, by "erring neshamos." They do an elevated avoda but it might still be in error since the avoda is appropriate for a different neshama.

Along the same lines, when the Rebbe Rayatz was in Drozgenik, the chassid R' Yehuda Eber asked the following of the Rebbe Rayatz: In the Gemara (Bava Metzia 30b) it says that R' Yishmoel ben R' Yosi returned the lost animal of someone else and it was considered going beyond the letter of the law, and isn't this "erring neshamos," but I don't remember the Rebbe's answer.

HE EXTENDED HIS HAND AND HEALED HIM

When the Rebbe Rayatz was in Warsaw in 5689 (1929), there was an old man who had learned chassidus with the Admur Shneur Zalman of Kopust, who was ill. This man conducted himself a bit Rebbe-like, and the Rebbe Rayatz went to visit him.

The man told the Rebbe Rayatz that if they knew the kavanos of the inyan told about in Tractate Brachos, "He extended his hand and healed

him," they could heal him. The Rebbe Rayatz replied that everything is included in the simple meaning.

The old man said: There's a difference between opening a door with a key and with a "vitreh" (a lock-pick) [RZG: apparently what he meant was that with a key, it's easy to open a door, and everybody can do this; opening a door with a vitreh is something only an expert can do].

THE IMPORTANCE OF TWO ZLOTYS

When the Rebbe Rayatz was in Poland, I was in charge of bringing the Rebbe his mail. One of the letters was from a chassid named Shmuel Liss, and he wrote that he was sending two zlotys for maamud [RSG: this was a paltry sum, worth about thirty cents today].

When I entered the Rebbe's room, he asked me where the two zlotys were. At first, I didn't understand why the Rebbe was interested in such a nominal sum. Afterwards I learned that Shmuel Liss had written that he was ready to open a yeshiva and to be a teacher, and even though he had no money, he was ready to *essen teg* (to eat at a different household each day). So when he sent the two zlotys

for maamud, even though he didn't have a penny to spare, the Rebbe considered this highly significant.

RESPECT FOR THE REBBE'S FAMILY

The Rebbe Rayatz once sent his son-in-law, Rashag, on a mission for the public welfare. Some of Anash looked askance at this.

The Rebbe called for R' Shmuel Levitin and told him a story about the Tzemach Tzedek so that he could repeat it to the chassidim.

The Tzemach Tzedek once sent his grandsons, the Raza and the Rebbe Rashab, in their youth, accompanied by his aide, to the chassid R' Hillel of Paritch, so R' Hillel could bless them. R' Hillel blessed them, and then accompanied them home. From this, we see that we need to act respectfully towards the Rebbe's family.

AS EXPLAINED IN MY NOTE

The Rebbe Rayatz would send pidyonos to the gravesite of his mother, Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah, with R' Shmuel Levitin. Each time, he would write all the details on the pa"n, and R' Shmuel would read it at

"LUBAVITCH DOESN'T GIVE IN"

This is a copy of an airmail letter which the Rebbe Rayatz wrote to R' Shneur Zalman Gurary. In the first part of the letter, the Rebbe gives instructions regarding the printing of *HaTamim*. In the second part of the letter, the Rebbe refers to R' Gurary's answer to a religious askan in Poland about a communal matter. R' Gurary had written to the Rebbe in detail about what he had said to that askan, but the Rebbe wasn't pleased with what he had said. The Rebbe sent him a letter signed by his secretary at the time (who was the Rebbe MH"M). The address on the airmail was apparently written by Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka, a"h.

The following few lines are from the second part of the letter:

You should not mix into these things, and if you had understanding, you should have answered that Lubavitch doesn't bend a knee to the snap of the finger of flattery, and does not fear the raised fist of intimidation. Such a tone may not be used to speak to Lubavitch and about Lubavitch.



the gravesite.

It once happened that the Rebbe didn't want R' Shmuel to read the details, and he sent the pa"n with names but without details. He wrote that he was making his requests, "as it is written in my note."

NOT IN THE CHICKEN'S PRESENCE

When the Rebbe Rayatz was in Poland, I brought him a chicken for Kaparos. The Rebbe did the Kaparos ritual and then told me to take the chicken out of the room.

They asked the Rebbe why he had sent me and the chicken out of the room, and he said: "When the

chicken is here, we don't mention 'shochet,' 'sh'chita,' and the like."

I COULD DO HIM A FAVOR

When the chassid R' Michoel Dvorkin passed away on Erev Shavuos, the Rebbe MH"m was involved in the funeral and burial. They did not tell the Rebbe Rayatz about R' Michoel's passing.

At the Yom Tov meal that night, the Rebbe Rayatz noticed that R' Michoel was not sitting in his usual seat, and he inquired about him. When they told the Rebbe that he had passed away, the Rebbe said: "It's a pity that they didn't tell me about his passing. I could have done him a

favor."

TRAVELING DURING THE THREE WEEKS

When the Rebbe Rayatz was about to travel to Eretz Yisroel, it was almost the Three Weeks. The Rebbe left the city before the 17th of Tammuz so that the trip began before the Three Weeks. I accompanied the Rebbe on his trip out of the city.

YASHER KO'ACH TO THE CHAZAN

R' Shlomo Palmer of Chicago was once chazan on Yom Tov for Musaf in the Rebbe Rayatz's minyan. After the davening, the Rebbe told him, "yasher ko'ach."

The Rebbe noted that even though saying yasher ko'ach didn't really apply here, but just like we say yasher ko'ach to the Kohanim after Birkas Kohanim, we can also say yasher ko'ach to the chazan who said, "Yevarechecha" in the davening.

A HEAVENLY SHLICHUS

Once, The Rebbe Rayatz davened from the amud on the yahrtzeit of his mother, in a year that it fell out on Shabbos. Suddenly, after the recitation of Kaddish, the Rebbe turned around and said: "I have a mission from Heaven for Klal Yisroel – that before the saying of T'hillim, they should say 'Lam'natzeiach Yaancha.' So too, on every Shabbos and Yom Tov, when we don't say, 'Lam'natzeiach Yaancha' in the davening, they should say it before saying T'hillim.

(These tidbits are part of a collection of stories first published in Yiddish in the *Algemeiner Journal*. The remaining stories already appeared as part of *Beis Moshiach's* retrospective on the life of this venerable chassid, following his passing on Rosh HaShana of this year, in issue 435.)

THE LAST SHLICHUS

BY REUVEN BERRY

Purim represents the self-sacrifice for learning Torah in public, as Mordechai did when faced with the decree of Haman. Purim also represents bringing G-dliness down into the lowest parts of this physical world. This is why the *Book of Esther* will never be nullified, even in the days of Moshiach. Similarly we see this by the Rebbe, who is both the Moshe and Mordechai of our generation. A month ago we celebrated the day on which the Rebbe began his leadership of Lubavitch and of the whole Jewish people. On that day the Rebbe set up as his goal for our generation to bring Moshiach in actual deed. This vision of the Rebbe's continued throughout the years of his leadership, culminating with its greatest expression on Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sarah 5752.

At that famous *farbrengen*, the Rebbe introduced an innovation into the *shlichus* of all *shluchim*: to prepare every Jew to greet our righteous Moshiach in actual deed by explaining the concept of Moshiach to every Jew. In the words of the Rebbe:

“Every *shliach* must prepare himself and prepare all Jews in his place and city, etc., to greet our righteous Moshiach. This should be done by explaining the concept of Moshiach, as explained in the Written Torah and the Oral Torah, in a *readily acceptable* way, to everyone according to his intellect and understanding. This includes especially by learning matters of Moshiach and Redemption, and specifically in a manner of Wisdom, Understanding, and Knowledge. And since this is the

Divine service of the time, it is understood that this applies to every Jew without any exception whatsoever.”

The Rebbe made this the main *shlichus* of our time. In another *sicha*, the Rebbe said that the easiest and quickest way to affect the revelation and arrival of Moshiach in actual deed is by adding in the learning of matters of Moshiach and Redemption. This is best done with at least ten Jews in public, the Rebbe added, which adds more enthusiasm and joy, and increases the longing for the coming of Moshiach.

THIS SHLICHUS APPLIES NOW MORE THAN EVER

Every talk of the Rebbe applies to all times. What Torah sources can be brought to support the contention that we should stop doing something the Rebbe asked us to do? What proofs can be raised to claim that Gimmel Tammuz negates the Rebbe's stated desires? Still, the question arises: Is Mivtza Moshiach, as the Rebbe put it, in spite of all we've experienced, “the Divine service of the time”? Does it “apply to every Jew without any exception whatsoever” and should we still consider this as our main *shlichus* and put our main effort in this area?

The answer is quite simple. Since this activity is meant to prepare all Jews to greet our righteous Moshiach, and since we Jews are still in *Galus*, this activity applies now as much as it applied when the Rebbe spoke these words more than twelve years ago. In fact, these words are even more appropriate today, since the closer we

come to the arrival of Moshiach the greater are our tribulations and the more preparation we need to actually greet him. Since now we are closer to the arrival of Moshiach than in 5752, we should be increasing our efforts to learn, teach, and disseminate information about the coming Redemption. And we must do so in accordance with the Rebbe's instructions on how to do so.

CLASSES IN MATTERS OF MOSHIACH AND REDEMPTION

The perfect way to actualize the Rebbe's directive is to make public classes in matters of Moshiach and Redemption. And to give these classes in the way the Rebbe instructed above, which is to:

“Explain the concept of Moshiach, as explained in the Written Torah and the Oral Torah, in a *readily acceptable* way, to everyone according to his intellect and understanding, which includes especially by learning matters of Moshiach and Redemption, and specifically in a manner of Wisdom, Understanding, and Knowledge.”

In other words, it is fitting that the classes focus on those passages of the Written Torah and their commentaries describing or hinting to the days of Moshiach. Likewise, the classes could include parts of the Oral Torah that deal with the concept of Moshiach, such as parts of the Talmud Sanhedrin and the end of Sota and K'subos. Finally, this should be done specifically in a manner of Wisdom, Understanding, and Knowledge—that is, that these sources be explained by

the teachings of chassidus from our Rebbeim which often make Scripture much more understandable.

THE PROBLEM

However, the question arises: Why did we witness a compliance with the Rebbe's instruction to teach about Moshiach and Redemption only immediately after the Rebbe's *sicha* of Parshas Chayei Sarah 5752? Can we honestly say that we have managed to maintain the same unbridled enthusiasm for this final shlichus?

The reason for this is both simple and understandable. As the Rebbe said:

"In every time [period] there is a unique service of G-d that is exceedingly relevant to that time [period], and the main seductions and opposition of the Evil Inclination are to prevent this service of G-d. Therefore, the tests that are in one generation are different than the tests of other generations..."

In fact, it is the Evil Inclination's intrusion into our fulfillment of the Rebbe's directive-the *shlichus* of our time that creates and fuels the opposition to learning about Moshiach. This confusion and our response to it is the sole reason for our inactivity to fulfill the Rebbe's instruction. This opposition, whether experienced or only perceived, creates pressure on us to hold off from fulfilling the Rebbe's directive. We instead engage in conscious or unconscious self-censorship regarding these concepts. If we perceive that teaching about Moshiach creates opposition, why not teach about Moshiach in a non-controversial way? Why can't those who feel such pressure give classes about Moshiach in a way that deflects the pressure?

In the case of shlichus, is it possible that this pressure is the result of an inappropriate sensitivity to the concept of Moshiach on the part of supporters? When it comes to *t'fillin*, *Shabbos*, and *kashrus*, many supporters

are eager to fund the *shluchim* and their efforts. In fact, they view Lubavitch as the foremost outreach organization dedicated to bringing alienated Jews back to Torah and *mitzvos*. But when it comes to supporting an agenda about Moshiach, some become nervous and refuse to support anything related to it. We must come to realize that it's all the same positive agenda: Torah outreach with the goal of bringing Moshiach, the ultimate goal of Creation. A chassid, a *shliach*, has to do what the Rebbe instructs him to do, no matter what.

"In every era there is a unique service of G-d that is exceedingly relevant to that time, and the main seductions and opposition of the Evil Inclination are to prevent this service of G-d."

And it's not enough to offer classes on Moshiach and Redemption mechanically but with a true *simcha* and enthusiasm. The Rebbe's emphasis on *simcha* is important not only to hasten Moshiach's arrival but also that we may become excited about and then live with Moshiach as a preparation to actually greet him. We must learn Torah with delight, enthusiasm, and joy and we must teach with delight, enthusiasm, and joy as well. For when a student sees that his teacher teaches in such a way, he learns the subject matter in this

same way. We must demonstrate that the Torah concept of Moshiach is right and beautiful and that our Rebbe's directives are correct and appropriate to the situation that we find ourselves in today. Only fulfilling our mission with the delight, enthusiasm, and joy that the Rebbe's requires will bring the Redeemer speedily:

"Each and every one will begin to occupy himself with enthusiasm...in the idea of bringing the Redemption and the coming of our righteous Moshiach one moment earlier."

WHEN THERE'S A WILL...

The solution to overcome this problem is for those who understand the need for these classes to support and fund them. As of yet, no organization or fund exists to help all *shluchim* do this final *mitvza* in the way the Rebbe requires. To this end, we have established a funding organization called The National Moshiach Network. Its aim is to support *shluchim* to create classes on Moshiach and Redemption in the spirit mentioned above. Those of you who appreciate the need for this fund can send your checks to: The National Moshiach Network, 912 Montgomery Street, Brooklyn, NY 11213. You can contact us at moshiachnetwork@juno.com or at the above address. The success of this fund depends on your support.

The Rebbe said that the essence of every Jew is to bring the days of Moshiach. The Rebbe and his *shlichus* are the essence of every *chassid*. So let's actualize the Rebbe's last main *shlichus* in *Galus*. Just as Mordechai did, with self-sacrifice, let's gather Jews in public to learn Torah on Moshiach and Redemption and thereby bring G-dliness down into the lowest parts of this physical world.

May it be Hashem's will that in the merit of this effort and in the merit of the efforts of so many sincere Jews throughout the years of *Galus* to bring Moshiach, we will greet our righteous Moshiach in actual deed, *now!*

IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE HOW HOLY YOUR OBJECTIVE IS

BY SHAI GEFEN

AD MASAI?

Have you noticed? News of Jews being murdered doesn't make the headlines in the U.S. anymore, and even in Israel they get an hour or two of attention and then there's silence. Protesting depends on us. We just can't be quiet. Who, if not for us, should be battling the government for placing us in mortal danger?

The Rebbe's soldiers must publicize the Rebbe's views on shleimus ha'Aretz. At a time when the parties on the Right and the Left are collaborators in despicable decisions that affect our lives, we must speak up! We, who were raised on the Rebbe's teachings, know why these atrocities are taking place, and it's definitely not because the Partition Fence isn't finished. The massacres are happening because our leaders continue to talk about destroying Jewish settlements, instead of eradicating terrorists and taking full control of the land.

The world thinks we are crazy for not reacting and wiping out our enemies. Congressman Gerald Nadler said, "In any other country of the world, if they were attacked as Israel has been attacked, they would have long since bombed the areas run by the P.A. If this happened in the U.S., you would have seen B-52's bombing the areas the terrorists live in."

And what do we do? We keep quiet, and worse. After an attack, we announce how much more we are ready to concede. Those of us who are familiar with what the Rebbe has to

say on this subject are not surprised. The Rebbe said it all decades ago. When you start with concessions, you end up cold to the danger to human lives. "Just **talking** about concessions leads to **actual murder**," warned the Rebbe on countless occasions.

WE MUST PROTEST

Rabbanei Chabad in Eretz Yisroel are to be commended for visiting settlements in Gush Katif, while the government threatens to destroy these settlements. We Chabad chassidim must stand in the frontlines of this battle. Chabad Rabbanim and askanim must get all of Anash involved because it affects our lives. This is about danger to life, and as the Rebbe said in a sicha, he was taught that when Jews are in danger, you don't take anything into consideration; you just save them.

This is what the Rebbe said about the obligation of everybody to protest:

Perhaps we don't see the purpose in protests, and so what use is there in another protest and more talking? In fact, since it is not effective, this is "pointless talk," ch"v, since the goal won't be met in any case, and especially when we could be saying words of Torah and inspiring words of fear of Heaven and the like. Why should we (seemingly) waste our time?

The answer is that there is a mitzva in the Torah of "you shall surely rebuke." Whether the rebuke will be successful is up to Hashem, but the rebuking must take place. Our Sages add: Even if it seems as though

nothing was accomplished, and it might be the case that it doesn't just look like that but it really didn't help at all, nevertheless, our Sages say: "even 100 times," and the halacha is meant literally. Even though we already spoke 99 times and the situation remained the same, we are told, "even 100 times!"

Especially, if you examine the matter, you will understand that without the 99 times that you rebuked and yelled until now, the situation would be far worse! In actual fact, it has turned out that in retrospect, regarding a number of issues, although at the time it didn't look as though anything was accomplished, after some time it became apparent that they took what was said into account.

The same thing is true for "Peace Accords," those agreements that, r"l, people celebrate and make sure that others take part in the rejoicing, and as for those who don't want to rejoice – they are compelled (since they are dependent on their money) to act as though they are rejoicing. If this wasn't a time of joy (Motzai Shabbos at a Melaveh Malka) they would have to declare a fast for the entire world for the thing called, "the Peace Accords," which is actually just the opposite, and there are no signs of peace ...

Giving away land is problematic from a halachic standpoint and from a practical, danger to life standpoint.

The halachic problem: As we said a number of times, it makes no



difference where the border is – in the Diaspora or in Eretz Yisroel. It makes no difference whether this is about a settlement of Jews in Eretz Yisroel or outside it; the same din applies all over. When there is a “city on the border” – in such a case, if they allow them to enter, even someone who wants “hay and straw,” and then he’ll leave, i.e., he doesn’t want to conquer the city, for he just wants “hay and straw” and then he’ll go back where he came from – the *Shulchan Aruch* paskens that if they allow him to enter a Jewish settlement on the border and to take hay and straw, the Torah says this is dangerous, “for the land [and in the Diaspora – the settlement] will be opened before them!”

You can’t play around with a halacha in *Shulchan Aruch* and make drashos or say that in order to get more money for yeshivos – you’ll say the opposite of the p’sak din. It won’t help! The *Shulchan Aruch* doesn’t change because you want money, even thousands of liros or a million liros, it makes no difference how holy your objective is! Since “this Torah will not be exchanged,” this halacha supersedes all! We don’t take Shabbos or anything into account. We certainly don’t take imagined honor or money – even if the money goes to holy purposes – into account. This is all from the halachic perspective.

The practical problem: When you give away land, it endangers lives, and you need to consult with an expert about this.

By way of introduction: The things that Israel got were words and signed documents. Just as they signed on documents before, in the future they will continue to sign more and more documents. They agree that what they all have in common is that each one is different. Sometimes, a document contains details that contradict what was written in previous documents.

All this proves what the talking is worth, even when they sign.

(Sicha Motzaei Shabbos BaMidbar 5739)

SHAME

The trial at the Hague began. Israel, apparently scared by the debate, decided to take down some of the Fence and move the lines. They think this is what will save them at the trial. At first, the Israeli government itself opposed the Fence. Then it decided it likes it, and suddenly, in order to please the international court, it changed the blueprint of the fence, thus further abasing itself.

This all demonstrates to us the source of the rot from whence issue the decisions of our government. Everything is done under pressure in order to do patchwork on problems. Our security is dispensed with as they make one resolution or another.

Decide! If you maintain that the Fence will be our salvation, they why are you willing to take some of it down? And if you don’t think the Fence is vital, why did you build it?

“IT DOES PERTAIN TO US!”

Over two decades ago, a certain Rosh Yeshiva in Eretz Yisroel maintained that the halacha in *Shulchan Aruch*, siman 329 “doesn’t pertain to us.” Based on this, he decided to support the Camp David agreement between Begin and Sadat.

Today we all see how “it does pertain to us” and to our lives. Sad to say, there are still people among us today who maintain what the Rosh Yeshiva said back then. How absurd this is when the halacha hasn’t been more relevant! When the halacha describes “gentiles besieging cities in Israel,” we know exactly what this is talking about. And our enemies today aren’t coming about “hay and straw,” but to kill us! And not only do they target Jews in Yesha, but Jews all over

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Eretz Yisroel. This halacha in *Shulchan Aruch*, as the Admur of Erloi said at the recent meeting of rabbanim at his home, was said with ruach ha'kodesh about our times.

Maybe 20-30 years ago, it still wasn't clear, and we can exonerate those who thought otherwise, but today, the Torah's position is perfectly clear. All other attempts failed, yet they still haven't tried to follow the *Shulchan Aruch's* guidelines.

Just one year ago, the Americans followed the approach of the *Shulchan Aruch* in order to protect its security. Those who try to adopt the policy of "it doesn't pertain to us," and take budgets and other monetary matters into consideration, deny G-d and His Torah.

We Chabad chassidim must proudly and fearlessly present the Rebbe's views, which are based on *Shulchan Aruch*, to the world. The eternal truth of Torah will prevail!

FROM THE SOURCE

Here is a description of last week's meeting between Sharon and his entire security staff, about a possible withdrawal from the entire Gaza Strip. The author is Ben Kaspi, a veteran left-leaning journalist from Maariv:

"On the table before Sharon is the consideration of removing the IDF from the entire area, including the Philadelphia Corridor (the demarcation line between Gaza and the Egyptian border), as well as the three northernmost settlements, and including the transit camps in Refiach.

"As of today, the status of this proposal remains unclear. Much like the national situation. Sharon, sitting across from a battery of top security leaders, dropped the bombshell: 'What happens if we don't control the transit camps and we leave Philadelphia?' Sharon seems to relish this idea. The generals squirm

uncomfortably in their chairs. Amos Galeid seems about to explode. Avi Dichter spreads out his fingers in resignation. Mofaz, after getting his breathing under control, responds that in such an event, the entire Gaza would become one large port of entry for the 'Karin A' and the likes.

"This meeting, on the Tuesday before last, was described by a number of the participants as an historic summit. Others argue to the contrary, namely that Sharon had already decided long before the meeting, not after. He wasn't looking for a national defense stamp of approval, he just wanted to ease the

Those who try to adopt the policy of "it doesn't pertain to us," and take budgets and other monetary matters into consideration, deny G-d and His Torah.

pressure, to give the military folks the feeling that they were actually consulted. It was an opportunity to pull off another PR coup and move on.

"Most of the generals sitting opposite the Prime Minister felt they were just being used. They understood that what they have to say would never be read by anyone. The dice were already cast. Now, the only thing left was damage control, from their point of view. Sort of like a group therapy meeting, designed to treat post-traumatic shock, gently picking up the pieces after the bomb has already exploded. From the

perspective of the generals – Sharon is doing to them in Gaza what Barak did in Lebanon. They all seemed to be experiencing a slight sensation of *deja' vu*."

Do we need to add anything to this frightening scenario from the journalistic elites of the left?

IT SHALL NOT SUCCEED

While we are on the subject of decisions being made against the better judgment of the security experts, let's not forget the prisoner exchange. Freeing four hundred terrorists for one questionable individual (it is not clear if it was an actual kidnapping or he was playing along with the enemy) is a travesty. It is one of the most painful events in our history, and it displayed to the whole world how we go about making decisions.

Despite the strong opposition of the military and national security leadership, the PM decided to make the dubious deal, which raised many questions about what his true motives were.

What is important to us is that the Rebbe screamed about a similar - though far less severe - exchange, that it is contrary to halacha and even rational human intellect. Today we see it all, and in open and revealed manner. Directly following the exchange, the secretary general of the Hezbollah announced plans to abduct more Jews. Even the original deal turns out to have gone awry, when it was discovered that one of the returned corpses was the wrong body. The other side, instead of offering to correct the mistake, insists on having three more terrorists released.

This only goes to show how low we can sink when we agree to sign so-called treaties, which are only an exercise in self-abasement. Such a questionable deal mirrors the chaos of the general political situation unfolding before our very eyes.

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THE AVOS HOST THE KINUS TALMIDIM HA'SHLUCHIM

The ancient stones of the Holy city of Chevron resonated with the sound of "Napoleon's March" as over forty Talmidim HaShluchim got off the bus in the Avrohom Avinu neighborhood of the City of our Fathers. They gathered from all the many Yeshivos in Eretz Yisroel to join the Kinus Talmidim HaShluchim. The Kinus, arranged by the Talmidim HaShluchim of Yeshivas Toras Emes – Yerushalayim, was an amazing success. It started with all the Shluchim learning a Sicha together and was followed by an uplifting Seder Niggunim in the M'aras HaMachpella. "The Niggunim were so powerful, it almost brought me to tears," says the Shliach of Chevron, R' Danny Kohen, "There is no doubt in my mind that the Avos came to join in." After which the Shluchim davened Maariv in the Maara. After Lecha Dodi all the Shluchim came together and sang Yechi and danced with true joy. Then they went back to the Hotel Beiter where they were staying. There they had a Seudas Shabbos filled with Niggunim, Sichos and a special atmosphere of Achdus. This was followed by a Farbrengen with R' Kohen and R' M. M. Wilhelm, Shliach of "Eged" that lasted until the early hours.

Shabbos morning the Shluchim returned to the Maara for chassidus and Shacharis after which they sat to Farbreng. It started at the hotel and continued in the house of the famous Boruch Marzel in the Tel Rumeida neighborhood. On the way to Tel Rumeida, R' Kohen showed the Shluchim the holy sites of Chevron. These included, the "Schneersohn House" were the Rebbetzin Menucha Rochel, daughter of the Mitteler Rebbe and

"Savta of Chevron," lived. From there they visited Beis Hadassah and the Chevron Museum opened especially for the Shluchim, and finally the Chabad Kollel by the Tziyun of Menucha Rochel, which held on Monday a huge Hachnasas Seifer Torah attended by over 1500. At the Farbrengen with Boruch Marzel, he thanked the Shluchim for coming. "You don't know how much of an impact you make on the community of Chevron by just being here," he said. After the very

At the Farbrengen with Boruch Marzel, he thanked the Shluchim for coming. "You don't know how much of an impact you make on the community of Chevron by just being here," he said.

special Farbrengen, the Shluchim braved the snow (yes, in Israel!) and went to Kever Yishai V'Rus to daven Mincha. There they danced Yechi with special feeling, knowing that they were at the Kever of Moshiach's ancestor Yishai the father of Dovid Malka Moshicha!

In a true spirit of returning to our roots, the Shluchim then held a Seder Niggunim and learned a Maamer in Beis Romano. A building purchased by the Rebbe Rashab over 100 years ago. It was home to

the original Yeshivas Toras Emes and the first Talmidim HaShluchim in history, these were the students sent from Lubavitch by the Rebbe Rashab to learn in the holy city. Needless to say, the feeling was extraordinary.

After Shabbos a beautiful Melaveh Malka was laid out. The honored guests at the banquet were, the Shliach of Kiryat Arba – Chevron R' Victor Attia and the "father of the Jewish Settlement in Chevron" R' Moshe Levinger. R' Attia spoke about the miracles of the Rebbe he experienced on Shlichus. R' Levinger spoke about the holiness of Chevron and the amazing Yechidus he had with the Rebbe. The Melaveh Malka continued into a Farbrengen that lasted until the morning.

Sunday, after chassidus and Shacharis in the Menucha Rochel Shul, purchased by the Mitteler Rebbe, the Shluchim boarded a bus for Kever Rochel Imeinu. There they davened Mincha and recited the Rebbe's Kapitel as well as others. From there they went to the Kosel HaMaaravi, despite the rain the Shluchim danced and sang. Many of the onlookers could not help but join in. such was the joy. From there, the different groups of shluchim returned to their respective Yeshivos with a new Chayus and spirit in fulfilling the Rebbe's Shlichus of preparing the world for the coming of Moshiach – Now!!

A special thank you goes to HaT'mimim HaShluchim: Yossi Bryski, Tanchum Matosuf, Sender Geisinsky, Menachem Porter, and R' Kohen for arranging the Kinus HaTalmidim HaShluchim and making it a big success!