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THE ETERNAL NATION

SICHOS IN ENGLISH



SHABBOS PARSHAS VA'YIKRA; 5TH DAY OF NISSAN 5750

1. This week's *Haftora* begins with the declaration, "I have created this people for Myself; they shall relate My praise," a statement that expresses the unique nature of the Jewish people. Each Jew — man, woman, and child — at every time and in every circumstance, is a member of G-d's nation, created by G-d for a distinct purpose, namely, to "relate My praise."

The verse communicates two fundamental concepts: a) the Jewish people is a unique nation; b) they are charged with a special service, "relating G-d's praise." Significantly, the *Mechilta* focuses on only the first clause of the verse. This omission implies that the Jewish people are G-d's people independent of their service of G-d. This inference, however, is problematic, for the entire purpose of the Jewish people's existence is to serve G-d, as the Mishna states, "I was only created to serve My Creator." Moreover, the verse continues, "they shall relate My praise." This declaration is a definitive statement, leaving no room for doubt.

The connection between the Jewish people and G-d is described with the metaphor of a king and his people.

This concept is expressed in our prayers on Rosh HaShana and similarly, in the narratives of the exodus from Egypt and the giving of the Torah. In Chassidic thought, it is explained that the relationship between a king and his people represents the deepest and most essential bond possible. Our Sages declare, "There is no king without a people," implying that a king's very existence as king is dependent on the people. Conversely, a people are a people only when they have a king. This implies that over and above the relationship established through the commands given by the king to his people, there must be a fundamental connection between them. Thus, the *Midrash* states, "Accept My sovereignty (i.e., establish this fundamental bond) and afterwards, I will issue decrees upon you."

The verse from the *Haftora* clearly states that G-d created the Jewish people as His nation. At the giving of the Torah, when the Jewish people accepted G-d's sovereignty, they made an eternal statement of their identity. Since then, whoever is born a Jew or converted according to *halacha* is part of G-d's people, an integral element of that nation, who — because "there is no king without a people" — brings about G-d's kingship. Every Jew,

regardless of his level of observance, is still a fundamental part of our people, as our Sages declared, "A Jew, even though he may sin, is still a Jew."

There are two seemingly opposite aspects in the relationship between a king and his people: On one hand, a king is on an incomparably higher level than the people. Indeed, the concept of a king is only appropriate to describe a ruler over common people and not over advisors and officers. This indicates separation and distance from a king. On the other hand, a king and the people must share a fundamental commonality. For example, a king must rule over other human beings; a person who owns many animals is not considered a king.

Each Jew shares a commonality with G-d, not only with regard to the Jewish soul, which is a part of G-d, but also with regard to the Jew as he exists in this world, a soul in a body. Indeed, the ten soul-powers of a Jew reflects the ten *sfiros*. Even his physical body was created to reflect the letters of G-d's name.

This concept is suggested in the *Tanya*, which describes the Jewish soul as "an actual part of G-d." The expression "part of G-d" is a quote from the book of *Iyov*, and the word "actual" is the addition of the Alter

Rebbe. The Hebrew word for actual, “*mamash*,” is also related to the word “*mishush*,” meaning touch. This implies that the essential G-dliness of the soul becomes invested in the Jewish people’s body to the extent that it can be perceived in even his physical activities. Even his seemingly mundane activities are expressions of his fundamental G-dly life-energy.

This applies even to a Jew who is not observant. The Rambam writes that every Jew (even one who protests to the contrary) desires to be part of the Jewish people, fulfill *mitzvos*, and separate himself from sin. If he does not do so, it is only because his evil inclination forces him to act otherwise. He truly desires to fulfill G-d’s will and it is only an external factor that holds him back from doing so.

This essential desire has been revealed by the many Jews throughout the centuries — even those who were not observant — who actually sacrificed their lives to sanctify G-d’s name. When it comes to the performance of Torah and *mitzvos*, it is possible though that “the spirit of folly” can prevent a Jew from realizing that through every sin, he becomes separated from G-d. He may remain unaware of how he is separating himself from his own essential will. However, were this to be explained to him so that he would understand, he would be willing to sacrifice himself for every aspect of Torah and *mitzvos*. Thus, the Jewish people as a nation, despite their differences, are a single, indivisible entity united by their essential commitment to G-dliness.

The existence of such a nation “relates G-d’s praise.” Independent of any service that a Jew performs, the very fact of his existence is an expression of G-d’s praise. This is expressed in the eternal existence of the Jewish people. Despite the fact that the Jewish people are “one lamb among seventy wolves” and have faced the most severe forms of persecution, they have endured throughout the course of

history, while nations greater and more powerful have disappeared. G-d has invested a dimension of eternity within the Jewish people; their continued existence is, therefore, an open expression of Divinity.

In every generation (not only in the time of the exodus or while the *Beis HaMikdash* was standing, times when G-dliness was openly revealed), even while the Jewish people are in exile they are G-d’s nation, and the very fact that they exist “relates His praise.”

Despite the fact that the Jewish people are “one lamb among seventy wolves” and have faced the most severe forms of persecution, they have endured throughout the course of history, while nations greater and more powerful have disappeared.

In particular, this applies today, only a generation after the awesome Holocaust, which threatened to utterly annihilate our people. The fact that our people were able to endure that terrible period and continue, giving birth to a new generation and maintaining the existence of the Jewish people (regardless of their spiritual level), reveals G-d’s presence within our world. Each Jew is a living miracle who expresses, by virtue of his very existence, the praise of G-d.

Furthermore, each Jew is an heir to the entire spiritual heritage of our

people. There is a golden chain extending back to the forefathers Avrohom, Yitzchok, and Yaakov. Every Jew in the present generation is a representative of the entire collective body of our people as they have existed throughout the course of history.

The essential nature of every being seeks expression. Since G-d has invested an essential aspect of His Being within the Jewish people, “no Jew can — or desires to — separate himself from G-d.” This essential desire will ultimately seek to express itself in a Jew’s behavior and bring him to “relate G-d’s praise” through the service of Torah and *mitzvos*.

The above concepts are also reflected in this week’s Torah portion, Parshas VaYikra (for there is a thematic connection between the beginning of the *Haftora* and the beginning of the Torah reading). Our Sages explain that the opening verse of the portion, “And He called to Moshe,” reflects the dearness with which G-d relates to the Jewish people. This dearness is of an essential nature, expressed by the use of the pronoun “He” instead of any of the names for G-d, referring to the essential quality of G-d, which transcends the concept of a name.

Similarly, the command, “A man who will offer a sacrifice from you...” reflects the uniqueness of the Jewish people. The Hebrew word for “man,” *adam*, is related to the word *edameh*, “I will resemble,” and thus refers to the verse, “I will resemble the One above,” i.e., man is representative of G-d, as it were.

2. The awareness of the uniqueness of each Jew must effect the manner in which we relate to him. When one encounters a Jew who, for whatever reason, does not (at present) observe Torah and *mitzvos*, one should relate to him as an integral part of the nation created by G-d to relate His praise.

Surely, this applies to the Jewish people in the present generation, who as explained above, are each living miracles, examples of how, despite the

Holocaust perpetrated in the previous generation, the Divine quality of eternity imparted to the Jewish people allows them to survive. Furthermore, to a large extent, they are not responsible for their lack of observance. They are like “children captured by the gentiles,” who were never given an opportunity to learn about their Jewish heritage in a complete manner.

We must seek to reach out to these individuals and motivate them to increased Torah observance. Since, as explained above, they were created “to relate G-d’s praise” and they have an essential desire to fulfill Torah and *mitzvos*, efforts should be made to bring this desire into expression. We must explain, in a pleasant and comfortable manner, the importance and dearness of Torah and *mitzvos* and how they will intensify one’s connection with G-d.

Of course, the opposite path should not be taken: A person cannot remain involved with his concerns alone (even when they are in the realm of holiness), isolating himself so that other Jews (whom he feels are on a lower level than he is) should not disturb his service.

This is the direct opposite of the commandment, “Love your fellowman as yourself,” and the opposite of the concept of mutual responsibility. When a person appreciates that he has the potential to bring another Jew closer to G-d, he must realize the immensity of this responsibility and make every effort to use this opportunity to the fullest extent possible.

The Jewish people are a single unified entity. Our Rabbis explain that the word *Yisroel* is an acronym for the Hebrew words meaning, “There are 600,000 (the number of Jewish souls) letters in the Torah.” A blemish in a single letter of a Torah scroll disqualifies the entire scroll, including even the Ten Commandments. Similarly, the status of every single member of our people has an effect on

The appreciation of G-d as King of the world is dependent on His people, the Jewish people, and an attack against them, Heaven forbid, is an attack against Him.

the people as a whole. Thus, one’s efforts on behalf of one’s fellow Jews are also integrally related to one’s own welfare.

From the above, we can appreciate the importance of speaking positively about every Jew and the detrimental effects of speaking critically. The Jewish people are G-d’s nation. Therefore, whoever has true fear of G-d will also fear to criticize the nation who are His children and subjects. Criticizing or speaking unfavorably about any portion of the Jewish people is like making such statements against G-d Himself. Zechariah the Prophet relates that a person who strikes a Jew is like one who strikes G-d in the eye. Since “a king cannot exist without a people,” the appreciation of G-d as King of the world is dependent on His people, the Jewish people, and an attack against them, Heaven forbid, is an attack

against Him.

This certainly applies when these statements are made in public and publicized to the extent that they are picked up by the gentile press. This especially applies when the critic is an influential public figure.

If a person made such statements in public, he must repent in a manner that all who heard the negative statements hear how he regrets having made them. When Yeshayahu criticized the Jewish people — although they were deserving of such criticism — he was punished. The Bible relates this incident to us to “open the way for repentance,” so anyone who makes such statements should appreciate the need to correct his behavior...

3. Just as the Jewish people are G-d’s chosen people, Eretz Yisroel is G-d’s chosen land, a holy land given to the Jewish people as an eternal inheritance. The land of Israel was given to the entire Jewish people, those living on the land at present, and those who are presently living in the Diaspora. No one is entitled to give up any portion of Eretz Yisroel to gentiles. Maintaining possession of these lands is the only path to peace. Succumbing to the pressure to surrender them will only invite additional pressure, weakening the security of the Jewish people and exposing them to danger. Heaven forbid that the government in Eretz Yisroel should consider surrendering any portion of Eretz Yisroel G-d has granted us.

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MO'OS CHITIM

To All Anash and Temimim שי

Sholom U'vrocho!

Throughout the years, during the Rebbe's Purim Farbrengen ("Thirty days before the Chag (Pesach)"), the Rebbe would customarily remind and urge everyone concerning the importance of contributing Tzedakah for "Mo'os Chitim."

It is well known that "Kupas Rabbeinu" endeavors to continue implementing all of the holy projects and activities which the Rebbe has established. Amongst these activities is the Rebbe's practice to extend financial aid to those families in need of their various Pesach necessities.

Accordingly, we are at this time urging and requesting each and every Anash member and Tomim שיחי to **contribute generously** to "Kupas Rabbeinu," in order to enable the administration to provide for these families and thus afford them with the opportunity to celebrate Pesach with contentment and joy.

Regarding this Mitzvah it is stated: "Whoever increases (in giving) is praiseworthy."

Unfortunately, the amount of families in need of this financial assistance **is more than generally assumed**. As such, the more generous your contribution to "Kupas Rabbeinu," the greater the number of families receiving assistance will be.

And since, with regard to all Mitzvahs we are instructed to act with Simcha and zest, it is all the more pertinent with regard to the aforementioned, as it is of paramount importance that the funds be received and distributed as soon as possible.

In the merit of Tzedakah which hastens the Geula, may we merit the true Geula Shlaimah, with the revelation of Melech HaMashiach - The Rebbe Nasi Doreinu, immediately, Mamash.

Chag HaPesach Kosher V'Sameach

Vaad Kupas Rabbeinu

P.S. 1) The traditional "**Magvis Yud Shevat, Purim**" can also be sent at this time, as well as all other Magvios.

2) All funds should be sent to the following address only; Donations are tax deductible

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THE REBBE ASKS, AND WE DO

FROM A SPEECH GIVEN AT A "YOM SH'KULO MOSHIACH" (FREE TRANSLATION)
BY RABBI SHOLOM DOVBER KALMANSON

When you examine what the Rebbe said about the imminent arrival of Moshiach, and you know that this was said as prophecy, and we compare it to what was said in our history about Moshiach – we realize what a great chiddush it is.

The first one who wanted to talk about the Geula was Yaakov Avinu. He wanted to reveal a prophecy about Geula, but the time wasn't right and the Divine Presence departed from him. When the Gemara describes the encounter of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi and Moshiach, it says that in response to R' Yehoshua's question: When are you coming? Moshiach answered, "Today – if you listen to His voice."

The Rambam, who lived hundreds of years after the Gemara, dealt with the halachic requirements of preparing for Moshiach's coming. He explains precisely how to know who and what Moshiach is.

Many years later, when the Baal Shem Tov approached Moshiach in his Heavenly chamber, Moshiach did not say, "today," as he had said to R' Yehoshua, but "when your wellsprings spread outward." This is because the Messianic Era had approached even closer and it was time to get ready for it.

One of the *keitzim* (dates by which Moshiach was said to come) was the year 1948. When they asked the Rebbe Rayatz why Moshiach did not come that year, he said that

Hashem had given the Jewish people a "candy," with the establishment of the State of Israel, and they were satisfied with that. In other words, we were still not ready for Moshiach, which is why a "candy" was good enough for us, like a child who is distracted from what he really wants when given a candy.

At that time, the Rebbe Rayatz spoke constantly about "immediately to t'shuva, immediately to Geula(!)," which was a request and a prayer that we merit the Geula.

Today, times have changed and the Rebbe told us in 5752 that he is announcing the arrival of the Geula as a prophecy, which must be fulfilled!

We all know the Rebbe Rashab's sicha about the two generations of soldiers. The first generation will be appointed to battle "the enemies who mock Hashem," i.e., they battled for emuna in Hashem. The next generation had to fight those "who mocked the footsteps of Moshiach," i.e., the bringing of the Geula. The Rebbe said that the Rebbe Rashab's words were prophetic when he said there would come a time when religious people, even great chassidim, would fight Moshiach!

We all know what the Rebbe said on the day he accepted the Chabad leadership that chassidim shouldn't think that they will be able to sit back while the Rebbe does the work. Every person must know that he

must join the battle, body and soul, and write a "bill of divorce" to all personal considerations.

Over the years, the Rebbe worked on two fronts. He worked on strengthening faith in Hashem through his first campaign, Mivtza Matza, which was to make sure that every Jew has Shmura Matza for the seider. There were fools who didn't know the Rebbe who said that it was the Lubavitcher Rebbe's plot to maintain a connection with wealthy people (give them matza and they would make contributions to our mosdos). But we know that matza is called the "food of faith," and the Rebbe saw the importance in strengthening the faith of every Jew in the Creator of the world. This would lead to strengthening the faith in the coming of Moshiach.

Before going out to war, we need to remember what the *shotrim* (officers) announce to those about to go to battle. "The man who built a house and didn't inaugurate it, should return home" – he who built a new Chabad house and is afraid that as a result of publicizing inyanei Moshiach, they'll make fun of him and it will harm his work – should go home and leave the fighting to those braver than him.

And "whoever is engaged to a woman but did not marry her" – someone who began a relationship with a certain donor, and is afraid that publicizing inyanei Moshiach

will ruin it – should go home!

A shliach must be devoted to his shlichus 24 hours a day. We must think about the Rebbe constantly, and then we are successful! Let nobody dare think that anything has changed in this regard.

The Gemara tells of a Tanna who entered a ruin to pray, and saw Eliyahu HaNavi. The Gemara enumerates three reasons why a person is not allowed to enter a ruin: 1) not to arouse suspicion; 2) because of *mazikim* (dangerous spirits); 3) because it can collapse.

When you think about this Gemara, you see these three reasons are the very same things that prevent someone from opening a Chabad house: 1) suspicion – maybe people will say the reason he's opening a Chabad house is because he wants an easy life and wants to make money.

2) *mazikin* doesn't need an explanation – they're everywhere and they constantly appear in different forms, so some people are afraid, and this is why they don't do the Rebbe's shlichus

3) danger of collapse – lest the Chabad house fail and the shliach will have to close it and return home in humiliation

The Gemara responds to all of these and says that when you enter the ruin and find Eliyahu HaNavi, i.e., when you go make a Chabad house and see the Rebbe, then there's no reason to worry because you know that the Rebbe is with his shluchim. That's how a shliach must live, with the feeling and knowledge that the Rebbe is always with him.

On one of my trips to the Moshiach Congress in London, I left the house having taken my daughter's passport by mistake, instead of my own. I discovered the error when I arrived at the airport, and naturally, they didn't want to let me fly. I didn't have time to return home to get my passport (this was a Thursday night

We must have utter bittul towards the Rebbe and realize that if this is the Rebbe's ratzon, it's definitely what we must do. And if this is the case, we are sure to be successful... The Rebbe wants us to publicize the besuras ha'Geula, fearlessly and without compromise!



and I knew that if missed this flight I wouldn't make it to the Congress). I went over to a clerk and asked to speak to the manager so I could convince him to let me fly, but he said there was nobody to talk to and no way I could fly without a passport.

While I stood there wondering what I should do, I remembered that the Rebbe had once said, in the early years of his nesius, that when someone travels on the Rebbe's shlichus and gets into difficulties, he should say he's on a mission for... (and the Rebbe said his name).

I said to the man, "There's a Rebbe in the world and his name is... and I'm traveling on a mission for him to a Moshiach Congress in order to speak about the Messiah. This Congress is taking place because the Rebbe said to publicize that the Messiah is about to come..." Wonder of wonders, within a short amount of time they had arranged a special pass to enable me to fly without a passport – something unprecedented!

This shows how much a shliach needs to go with the feeling and knowledge that he is the Rebbe's shliach and that the Rebbe is constantly with him. When you know that you are on the Rebbe's shlichus, all obstacles melt away.

The same is true for publicizing inyanei Moshiach and Geula. It has to be done fearlessly and without shame.

* * *

It says, "As in the days you left Egypt I will show you wonders." It's right before Pesach and the Torah says that when Moshe Rabbeinu brought the besuras ha'Geula, he first called for the Elders to have them join him when he went to Pharaoh. The Elders believed Moshe's prophecy and accompanied him, but by the time Moshe arrived before Pharaoh, only Aharon remained. What happened to the Elders?

Rashi says that they slipped away, one by one. Why did they leave? Apparently, although they believed Moshe, they couldn't rationally grasp that they would be able to announce the besuras ha'Geula to Pharaoh. They knew Pharaoh would reject the message, and that's why the Elders disappeared.

When the Rebbe told us the prophecy of Geula in 5751-5752, we all believed him. Unfortunately, as the years went by, many of us have slipped away, one by one. We have fears like, "in my shul it won't go over," or "it's not appropriate for my city," or "the wealthy people will stop supporting us."

But we must have utter bittul towards the Rebbe and realize that if this is the Rebbe's ratzon, it's definitely what we must do. And if this is the case, we are sure to be successful.

One thing is for sure, that all the differences of opinion among us regarding publicizing Moshiach's identity, come from not properly studying the sichos of 5751-5752. If we all sat and learned these sichos seriously, we would come to one conclusion – that the Rebbe wants us to publicize the besuras ha'Geula fearlessly and without compromise!

The Rebbe spoke about "the end of the avodas ha'birurim," and that "the only remaining avoda is to greet Moshiach Tzidkeinu," and the Rebbe even said regarding himself, "I am crazy about Moshiach." After all that, nobody can say that he's the Rebbe's chassid and he learns the Rebbe's Torah, but when it comes to inyanei Moshiach he just does what he understands. We know that one who denies even one letter of the Torah is like one who denies the entire Torah; all the more so for the inyan of Geula and Moshiach, which the Rebbe said is the focal point and sole avoda today.

In 5752, the N'shei Chabad made

Matza is called the "food of faith," and the Rebbe saw the importance in strengthening the faith of every Jew in the Creator of the world. This would lead to strengthening the faith in the coming of Moshiach.

a Melaveh Malka L'Kabbalas P'nei Moshiach Tzidkeinu. It had the Rebbe's blessings, and I was invited by the N'shei Chabad of Montreal to speak. Since I had lived in Montreal for many years, I had a good friend who lived there, a misnaged by the name of Rabbi Eisenstark, who ran the Bais Yaakov.

When I arrived in Montreal, I got an angry phone call from him. Where did I get the nerve to send his wife an invitation to the Melaveh Malka!? It's one thing if you want to make a Melaveh Malka for Moshiach, but why do you have to start up by sending my wife an invitation?"

I said: First of all, I didn't send her the invitation, and maybe it was sent by mistake. They certainly didn't want to upset you, and so, if you are upset, we apologize. Second of all, we are good friends for twenty years now, and I know you well. If we had made an event like this twenty years ago, you would say that making the event was a chutzpa! Baruch Hashem that today you're not angry that the event is taking place, but about your wife being sent an invitation! Wait another little while and this won't



upset you either...

I thought about the conversation and pictured it like a train with twenty compartments, with the Rebbe and chassidim in the first compartment, and the rest of the world in the compartments behind them. The Rebbe has been the one to lead us in our various activities and

mitvtzaim. As the years go by, everybody ends up following the Rebbe. We've seen time and again that when we proceed to the next stage, those behind us get busy doing the thing we were doing before, and they concede – late in the game, of course – that it is indeed a good thing.

This was the case when it came to reaching out to be mekarev Jews to Yiddishkeit, when at first Lubavitch was laughed at, while today you can't find a single group who doesn't do kiruv. The same is true with Russian Jewry, where today, every group sends its people there, but they all know who started it.

I've traveled a lot and I've seen various organizations with decorated vehicles with loudspeakers that spread Yiddishkeit, just like our Mitzva Tanks!

Even though the other groups are busy doing the things we were doing for years, Chabad always did it in its unique way, with its special brand of chassidic fervor. It reminds me of the joke of two tailors who were having a hard time making a living. One of

them got really depressed while his friend was more upbeat.

The sad one asked his friend, "Why are you happy when we can't make a living?"

His friend answered, "Moshiach will come soon and delicacies will be plentiful like dust, and it will be much easier to make a living, so that's why I'm happy."

Said his worried friend, "But you forgot that there'll be the Resurrection of the Dead, when tens of thousands of tailors will come back to life, and once again we won't make a living!"

The happy tailor chuckled and said, "Don't worry my friend! They'll all come to us because we'll be the only ones who know the latest styles!"

The latest style is Moshiach. Today, even other groups, far from Chabad, arrange workshops and lectures on the topic of Geula and Moshiach. We must remember that we are on the Rebbe's shlichus and we must not hesitate to announce the message: *Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu V'Rabbeinu Melech HaMoshiach L'olam Va'ed!*



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THEY TOOK PLEASURE IN HIS FEAST

BY RABBI SHALOM DOVER HA'LEVI WOLPO



Do you realize that at this table decisions are made to dismantle settlements? Do you realize that in this room it was decided to release 400 terrorists for one man? Do you realize that this hero who twirls the gragger is the #1 opponent of the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach?

“Commotion in the Prime Minister’s Office” – that was the headline in the newspapers the day after Purim. Underneath it was a picture of prominent Lubavitcher chassidim sitting around a large table.

When I was shown the article, I breathed a sigh of relief. It’s been months and years that we’ve been shouting before the rabbanei Chabad and the askanim to go out in open war against Sharon, who is responsible for the massacre of our people. I figured we had finally gotten through to them. Certainly, this Chabad delegation had gone to Sharon to remind him of what the Rebbe’s position is on shleimus ha’Aretz; to confront him with the fact that he is openly rebelling against Melech HaMoshiach; and to arouse his conscience for the bloodshed for

which he is personally responsible.

Thumbs up for the askanei Chabad who managed to get into his office, apparently disguised as Abu Elah and his pals (who have easy access to Sharon), and make a commotion. They probably yelled, “We protest!” and “Ad masai?!” and “Better there shouldn’t be a Jewish government in the Holy Land!” etc.

But when I began to read the fine print, my heart sank. Oy vei! This was not about a confrontation at all but the “traditional Purim farbrengen,” where they pranced and capered about the golden calf.

I looked at the Chabad news services, certain they would have protested this abomination, only to see this shocking headline, “True Simchas Purim in the Prime Minister’s

Office.” Not merely “Simcha,” but “True Simcha!” The pictures showed the joyous occasion with the Prime Minister gleefully twirling his gragger and the group of bachurim T’mimim and married men, Soldiers of the House of Dovid, dancing around.

I felt like crying out: Hey, chevra! Do you realize that at this table the decisions are made to dismantle settlements? Maybe you heard that in this room, they decided to release 400 terrorists for one man? Do you realize that this hero twirling his gragger is the #1 opponent of the Rebbe MH”M?

And what about large families – do you realize that this is where the ministers with the fat paychecks and pensions decided to starve Jewish children? Didn’t you hear that in the room where you are dancing, they fight against mosdos Torah in Eretz Yisroel?

And the main thing: How much time elapsed since the last attack (and as I write this, another attack just took place in Ashdod with another ten dead and many injured). Did you so quickly forget who is responsible for the Jewish blood that flows in our streets (as the Rebbe explains in his sichos)? Why didn’t you bring along

some of the wounded with you to dance along with the one who brought the tragedy upon them? Why didn't you take along a group of widows and orphans to rejoice along with you?

Afterwards, when I asked one of the fortunate men who had the privilege of entering the Prime Minister's office about this, he said in righteous indignation, "What? Is Sharon not Jewish? Does he not deserve to hear the Megilla? Since when do we examine the tzitzis of those with whom we do mitvzaim?"

Yes, I answered him, he deserves to hear the Megilla, but if you meant it sincerely and "for the sake of Heaven," why didn't you visit Shimon Peres, too? What about Tommy Lapid – is he not Jewish? And isn't Yossi Sarid obligated to hear the Megilla?

And what's the connection between reading the Megilla for him and fawning on him with hugs and pats on the back? What's with all the happy pictures and all the poses?

* * *

One of the journalists who reported the event ended his article as follows, "The employees at the Prime Minister's office said they don't remember the Prime Minister in such a happy mood before." He forgot to add that the guests never looked so happy before either.

What can I do, when little old me can't be a participant in their joy? And not because I don't *fargin* them their shared pleasure, but because, in my humble opinion, if a group of chassidim managed to get into the P.M.'s office, they could have used the opportunity to make a real tumult and to speak with Sharon about truly important matters.

They could have banged on the table with their fists and yelled, "Listen up, Mr. Sharon! We are talking to you on behalf of the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach! You should know that you are to blame for the

Jewish blood that is spilled on our streets. Get it into your head that your announcements about a Palestinian state and withdrawing from our land put millions of Jews into terrible danger. You've got to realize that every terrorist attack that took place or will take place, chas v'shalom, is because you opened up the country to them."

I know that the chassid who would begin to talk like this would faint from emotion and pain before he could even finish what he's saying. But that's why a large group went, so that if one fainted the next one could pick up where he left off, concluding with, "Mr. Sharon, your actions until now have constituted a rebellion against Melech HaMoshiach, and your end will be like that of all our oppressors, whose names are remembered in infamy."

* * *

Where did our self-respect go? Many of the men in that delegation are old enough to remember 5742, when the Rebbe pleaded with the Defense Minister at that time to end the war in Lebanon and wipe out all the terrorists, and Sharon disdained the Rebbe's importuning and spit in his face, r"l. Surely, they remember what the Rebbe said on 3 Tammuz 5742 – that the present Prime Minister can speak solely on behalf of the Arabs and not on behalf of Jews! And then these Lubavitchers disregard what the Rebbe said?

In addition to which, the Prime Minister's actions lately have put him beyond the pale. He adamantly opposes all the security experts and insists on endangering the lives of millions of Jews! He intends on uprooting thousands of Jews from their homes by shutting off their water and electricity, and sending thousands of soldiers in to evict their brothers from their homeland!

Sharon trembles before the leper sitting in the Muktaah who sends

So tell me, why didn't you yell bloody murder? Why didn't you cry out on behalf of Gush Katif? Why you didn't you wail on behalf of the widows and orphans? Why didn't you tear kria for the parents who are burying their children? And most importantly of all, how did you remain quiet while spending two hours in the presence of the man who collaborates with our enemies? How did you dance with a man who, with his actions and speeches, encourages terrorists to kill men, women, and children?

terrorists out to kill us, and he displays his imaginary heroism against his helpless brethren in Yesha.

So tell me, why didn't you yell bloody murder? Why didn't you cry out on behalf of Gush Katif? Why you didn't you wail on behalf of the widows and orphans? Why didn't you tear kria for the parents who are burying their children? And most importantly of all, how did you remain quiet while spending two hours in the presence of the man who collaborates with our enemies? How did you dance with a man who, with his actions and speeches, encourages terrorists to kill men, women, and children?

Last year, at the annual Purim meeting, Sharon told you, "The Rebbe wrote to me what would happen if an argument broke out between an Arab boy and a Jewish boy in Chevron – which side the Israeli government would favor. The Rebbe was so right."

And in order to prove how right the Rebbe was, immediately after that Purim, Sharon gave the order (with the help of Minister Tzachi Hanegbi) to send brave Israeli soldiers, specifically from the chareidi brigade, at two in the morning, to Hill 26 near Chevron. They had orders to evict a widow (whose husband, Nati Ozeri was murdered) and her five orphaned children, barefoot and confused, from their pathetic home on the hilltop. Then bulldozers were sent in to destroy the house and its contents.

"When an argument breaks out in the hills of Chevron between

This is what gives Sharon's government the ability to carry on. The Rebbe MH" M wages the "wars of Hashem" on one side of the barricade, and his soldiers stand and support the opposing side.

terrorists and Jews, and the terrorists murder Jews, on whose side will you be, Prime Minister of Israel, on the side of the widow and orphans or on the side of the murderers who applaud their representative in the government?"

Oy, how right the Rebbe was, that you, Mr. Sharon, can only represent Arabs and not Jews!

Fellow Lubavitchers, you know precisely what you accomplished last year, and you did it again this year!

* * *

"Employees in the Prime Minister's office said they don't remember the Prime Minister in such a happy mood before." Forgive me if I tell you why he was so happy:

Representatives of Moshiach came to him and forgave him for all his sins, for the past, the present, and for

those of the future. Now he can rejoice all the way to uprooting the settlers of the Gaza Strip, and to terrible economic decrees. He can sing all the way, as he uproots Torah and those who learn it, and be happy as they register gentiles as Jews. He can dance towards a Palestinian state led by Abu Elah and Arafat.

Most importantly, he can roll in laughter all the way until next Purim, confident that two hours of rejoicing await him, when he can say l'chaim with representatives of Moshiach, some with Yechi yarmulkes on their heads, for they won't remind him of any wrongdoing on his part.

How did Sharon's secretary put it to me? "It's not true that Mr. Sharon is fighting against the Rebbe. You are just a tiny minority in Chabad. Real Chabad chassidim support us."

This is what gives Sharon's government the ability to carry on. The Rebbe MH" M wages the "wars of Hashem" on one side of the barricade, and his soldiers stand and support the opposing side.

* * *

"Whoever didn't see the military secretary of the Prime Minister, with the epaulets of a general on his shoulders, and a Bucharian yarmulke on his head, twirling a wooden gragger, **won't understand how they celebrated Purim together with the Prime Minister.**"

Tell me the truth, *how* did they celebrate Purim in the Prime Minister's office? How?

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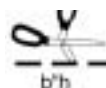


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THE MIGHTY GAON RABBI SHLOMO ZALMAN AURBACH

From Shemen Sasson Meichaveirecha

BY RABBI SHALOM DOVER HA'LEVI WOLPO
TRANSLATED BY ALEXANDER ZUSHE KOHN



The mighty *gaon* Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Aurbach was born in the holy city of Yerushalayim on the holy day of Shabbos, 23 Tammuz 5670 (July 30, 1910), to his father, the *gaon* and kabbalist Rabbi Chaim Yehuda Yehuda Leib *zatzal*, and his mother the *tzedeikes* Tzivya, peace unto her. (Rabbi Chaim Yehuda Leib, a descendant of the holy Toldos Yaakov Yosef *zatzal*, was the founder and *rosh yeshiva* of the Kabbala yeshiva *Shaar HaShamayim*, and the author of *Chacham Lev*.)

As a child, Rabbi Shlomo Zalman displayed remarkable talent. He was incredibly diligent, and was always reciting words of Torah. He learned in the Eitz Chayim yeshiva, by the *gaon* Rabbi Isser Zalman Meltzer *zatzal*, who cherished him and foresaw a great future for him. At the young age of 15, Rabbi Shlomo Zalman wrote some beautiful comments on his father's *seifer* *Chacham Lev*. In 5685 (1925-26), the *gaon* Rabbi Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld *zatzal* wrote to Rabbi Chaim Yehuda Leib: "I was happy to see in your *seifer* accurate comments from your dear and wise son, Shlomo Zalman. At the age of eighteen, he completed a work of comments on the *seifer* *Shav Shmeitsa*, and the Torah leaders praised its

brilliance.

In 5690 (1929-30), he married the daughter of the *gaon* Rabbi Aryeh Leib Ruchamkin *zatzal*, one of the Torah leaders of Yerushalayim. He continued learning day and night, and also received special training at Midrash Bnei Tzion, under the leadership of the *gaon* Rabbi Tzvi Pesach Frank

*Notwithstanding his
great brilliance in all
areas of Torah, and
his great
righteousness, he
remained humble and
unassuming.*

zatzal, in *halachos* pertaining to the land of Israel.

In 5695 (1934-35), at the young age of twenty-five, Rabbi Shlomo Zalman published his first *seifer*, *MeOrei Aish*, on the halachic questions that arose as a result of the discovery of electricity. (*Studies, Insights, and Explanations ... regarding electric light*).

The *seifer* received the approbations of the Torah leaders of the generation, including the *gaon* Rabbi Isser Zalman Meltzer. (Rabbi Isser Zalman wrote: "Your honor ... the lofty *rav and gaon* ... – among the greatest students of our yeshiva, Eitz Chaim – who excelled gloriously even as a youngster, reaching incredible heights through your swift grasp and correct logic, and now, though you are still a young man, you have increased in wisdom and great understanding, like one of the renowned great ones.") After looking at Rabbi Shlomo Zalman's *seifer*, the *gaon* Rabbi Chaim Ozer Grudinsky said enthusiastically: "A brilliant star is shining in Yerushalayim." In his approbation to the *seifer*, Rabbi Chaim Ozer wrote: "The *Rabbi and gaon* ... a new container full of ancient [teachings] ... who has come to correct conclusions on practical halacha ... May you rise in success and greatness ... The one who cherishes, honors, and wishes you well."

In 5704 (1943-44), which was *Erev Shmita*, Rabbi Shlomo Zalman published his great work *Maadanei Aretz* on the laws of *shmita*, *truma*, and *maaser*. The book received the approbations of the *gaonim*, Rabbis Yitzchak Isaac Hertzog, Tzvi Pesach

Frank, Zelig Reuven Bengis, Isser Zalman Meltzer, and others. In their approbations, the *gaonim* all praise the author's brilliance and profound understanding of even the most difficult areas of Torah. The *gaon* Rabbi Yaakov Moshe Charlap concludes his approbation with the following words: "Blessed is the One Who keeps His promise to Israel, establishing young men in every generation who immerse themselves in the love of Torah, and reveal its hidden matters ... "Your close friend, who appreciates the value of your Torah [insights] ..."

After the passing of the *gaon* Rabbi Yechiel Michel Shlezinger *zatzal* in 5707 (1947-48), Rabbi Shlomo Zalman became the *rosh yeshiva* of the Kol Torah yeshiva in Bayit Vegan, Yerushalayim, and he merited establishing thousands of disciples. He also headed Shaar HaShamayim (the Kabbala school his father founded), *Merkaz HaArtzi L'Maan Taharas HaMishpacha B'Yisrael* (The National Center For Family Purity In Israel), and *Vaad HaYeshivos*.

Rabbi Shlomo Zalman succeeded in earning the admiration of all persuasions of Torah observant Jewry throughout the world, and all regarded him as the chief halachic authority of the generation. Indeed, from every part of the world, the greatest Torah scholars flocked to his doorstep, and sent him their most urgent halachic queries. His *seifer*, *Minchas Shlomo*, practical halachic responses on the four sections of the *Shulchan Aruch* was published just a few years ago. *Shmiras Shabbos Kehilchasa*, a fundamental work on the laws of Shabbos authored by the *gaon* Rabbi Yehoshua Yeshaya Newburt *shlita*, and accepted by all factions of Torah observant Jewry, is also based mostly on the halachic rulings of Rabbi Shlomo Zalman.

Notwithstanding his great brilliance in all areas of Torah, and his great righteousness, he remained

humble and unassuming. Day and night he received Jews at his modest home, answering halachic questions and offering advice and help to Jews in difficult situations. He was quick to greet all people whom he met, emanated holiness and a spiritual aura, and kept a great distance from anything that could lead to strife and discord. Nevertheless, he was unbending in all matters involving halacha and the honor of the Torah and its scholars.

In Adar I 5755 (February 1995), Rabbi Shlomo Zalman contracted an inflammation of the lungs. A few days later, his holy heart weakened, and on the twentieth day of the same month

After receiving the gaon's letter the Rebbe expressed admiration for Rabbi Shlomo Zalman's reverence for the Alter Rebbe's rulings.

he returned his soul to his Maker. It is noteworthy that the last issue he deals with in his last *seifer* – *Shaalos Uteshuvos Minchas Shlomo* – is "the blessings one will be required to make upon welcoming Moshiach."

In his will, Rabbi Shlomo Zalman wrote: "If there will be those who will want to eulogize me, I strongly request that they be brief and refrain from praises Again I request that they not speak words of praise about me ... because also during my lifetime this caused me pain, especially the exaggerations that have been written about me of late." The *gaon zatzal* left behind an upright generation of children and grandchildren, giants in

Torah and fear of G-d, who continue his legacy of pure and holy Torah study.

TREMENDOUS ESTEEM FOR THE REBBE FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE NESIUS

Rabbi Shlomo Zalman's noble lineage – on his father's side he was a descendant of the Baal Shem Tov's great disciple, the *Toldos Yaakov Yosef*, and on his mother's side he was a descendant of one of the Tzemach Tzedek's great oral scribes – was undoubtedly a factor in his very close relationship with the chassidic Torah leaders of our generation, and in his admiration for the Rebbe.

Rabbi Shlomo Zalman's first correspondence with the Rebbe, I found in a letter he sent the Rebbe in 5722 (1962), together with his booklet *Hatzaa L'Tikunei Nashim B'Inyanei Nida*. With permission from the Agudas Chassidei Chabad library, I photographed the letter. It says as follows:

"The seventeenth of Adar, 5722 (February 21, 1962). I have sent my booklet to the master and *Admur shlita*. I would greatly rejoice in hearing your holy opinion on this stringent matter I know that you are extremely busy with **matters pertaining to the entire Jewish people** ... the main issue, in my humble opinion, is in *siman* 2, and with regard to the master, your ancestor, the Rav *zal*. It should be immediately noticeable to Your Grand Holiness that I speak of the Rav *zal* with fear and trepidation. Indeed, I regard him as one of the ancient ones I also entreat the *Admur* to look at *siman* 4 I would thus greatly rejoice in hearing your opinion, the opinion of Torah, on this matter. **I very much request that in your prayers you mention me for good health, nachas from my family and disciples, and [goodness] in all spiritual and physical/material matters.** My [full] name is Shlomo Zalman, son of my



Rabbi Shlomo Zalman as a young man

father and teacher Rabbi Chaim Yehuda Leib Aurbach, and my mother and teacher, *Tzivya*, peace unto her.”

Shaarei Chesed, Yerushalayim.”

I heard from the *gaon*’s grandson, that it is common knowledge among the members of his family that after receiving the *gaon*’s letter the Rebbe expressed admiration for Rabbi Shlomo Zalman’s reverence for the Alter Rebbe’s rulings.

THE YEARS OF A KING AND LEADER

Rabbi Shlomo Zalman’s great admiration for the Rebbe is also evident in a letter dated 5 Nissan 5732 (March 20, 1972):

“To His Grand Greatness, the majestic and honorable *Admur* of Lubavitch – whose name, Menachem Mendel Schneerson, is greater than the [title] *Rabban* – may your well-being always increase. Though it is not

customary among us for lesser ones to send greetings to greater ones, I nevertheless join the masses in public prayer and blessing for one who is needed by the masses – blessing that G-d may ‘*add days onto the days of the king*,’ for the days of a king and leader are not merely the years of an individual, but ‘the years of all generations.’ May you reach the age of strength in blessing and joy, for [G-d’s] kindness prevails upon those who fear Him. May G-d’s desire to enhance the greatness and glory of the Torah throughout the entire world be carried out successfully through you, and may you quickly merit to gaze upon the pleasantness of G-d through the new light that [that will shine] on Tzion, and through the coming of our righteous Moshiach.”

I heard from those who were close to the *gaon* that after sending out this letter, he enthusiastically repeated the

interpretation he had included on the verse “*May You add days to the days of the king, may his years be like all generations*” – i.e., that the days of the Rebbe, who is a king over Israel, are not his individual years, but the years of the entire generation.

At a family *Sheva Brachos* in 5752 (1991-92), I presented Rabbi Shlomo Zalman with my *seifer*, *Yechi HaMelech*. When I handed him the *seifer*, I said, “Who are the *kings*? The sages [are the kings]!” Rabbi Shlomo Zalman lifted his eyes from the *seifer*, and focused them sharply on me. “No,” he said. “Not just [in the sense] that the sages are the kings – [here it means] **king literally!**”

“THE WONDROUS AND UNIQUE ADMUR”

On the ninth of Nissan 5737 (March 28, 1977), Rabbi Shlomo Zalman sent his blessing to the Rebbe in honor of the Rebbe’s seventieth birthday:

“I, the small one, join tens of thousands of Jews in thanking G-d, and in rejoicing over the wondrous and unique *Admur*, the Rebbe of Lubavitch *shlita*, reaching the age of seventy-five. He is a tower of light for this generation, radiating and spreading luminous rays of truth and faith into the hearts of Jews everywhere, and imbuing them with the light of G-d’s Torah, and the glow of its commandments. With gratitude for the [Rebbe’s] past [activities], I join everyone in prayer and blessing that G-d should not remove his kindness from us, and G-d should lengthen [the Rebbe’s] days and the years of his reign, until ‘there will arise a *Kohen* to [inquire of] the *Urim* and the *Tumim*’ speedily in our days – *amen!*”

In a Torah essay sent for inclusion in a special compilation published in honor of the Rebbe’s birthday that year, Rabbi Shlomo Zalman opens with the following words: “I hereby join in printing words of Torah in this compilation dedicated to the great

honor of the *Admur*, the Rebbe of Lubavitch *shlita*, who is **wondrous and unique in our generation in Torah and piety**. Indeed, ‘there is no honor other than Torah.’” He also sent Torah insights for inclusion in the *seifer*, *Kavod Chachamim*, published in 5742 (1981/82) in honor of the Rebbe’s eightieth birthday.

ADMIRATION FOR THE REBBE’S EFFORTS TO BRING JEWS BACK TO TORAH

On 11 Nissan, 5739 (April 8, 1979), Rabbi Shlomo Zalman sent a letter to the *gaon* and chassid Rabbi Nachum Trebnik o.b.m., the Rabbi of Kfar Chabad at the time:

“Greetings. Since I am unable to fulfill your request of joining the *farbrengen* taking place today in Kfar Chabad in honor of the birthday of the

honorable and holy *Admur* of Lubavitch *shlita*, I wish to express here my participation through a blessing and a prayer that G-d should lengthen the days of his reign in goodness and sweetness and G-d’s kindness should prevail upon him as on all those who fear Him, so that the power invested in his mighty actions and activities – to which their can be no comparison in terms of their effects at bringing the hearts of the Jewish people closer to our Father in Heaven – should grow stronger. May his eyes quickly behold, together with all of us, that G-d has chosen His people and His inheritance, with the coming of the righteous Redeemer – *amen sela!* Thus speaks Shlomo Zalman Aurbach.”

When the Rebbe launched his campaign to have every Jewish child purchase a letter in a special Torah

scroll, Rabbi Shlomo Zalman purchased letters in the Torah scroll for his grandchildren.

The *gaon* always had high regard for the opinions and rulings the Rebbe voiced on matters concerning the Jewish masses. Thus, for example, when it came to the “Who is a Jew” issue, he joined the *gaonim*, Rabbis Yechezkiel Abramski *zatzal*, and Yosef Sholom Elyashiv *shlita* in issuing a proclamation, “an outcry from the holy city of Yerushalayim,” concerning the obligation to amend the law so that non-halachic conversions would not be recognized. Similarly, in the beginning of Menachem Av 5746 (August 1986), he stated his opinion that “the only solution to the “Who is a Jew” problem, is [to correct the law to say] ‘halachic conversions.’”

(To be continued.)

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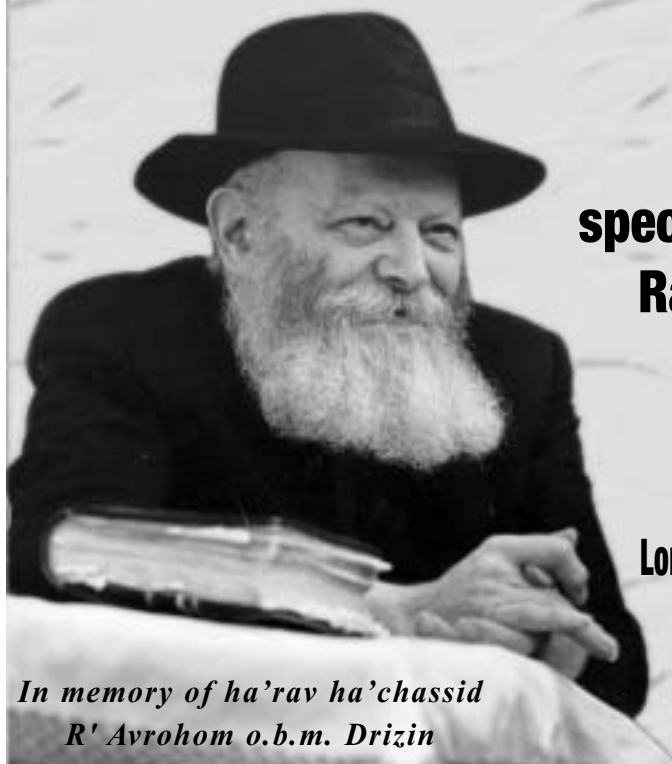
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BREAKING THE ICE IN CALGARY

BY CHANIE NUSSBAUM

*Mrs. Rochel Leah Matusof and her husband Menachem are currently on shlichus in Calgary, which is in Alberta, Canada. In the winter, the temperatures drop to forty degrees below freezing! When they first arrived in Calgary, Leah waited eagerly for Moshiach to come, just to get out of there! Today, fifteen years later, she and her husband run programs throughout Alberta, and they have five couples to help them. Together with their seven children they light up and warm up frozen Alberta with the light of Yiddishkeit and chassidus, and with the light of Geula. * An interview with a shlucha who tells us about her work, the challenges and the successes.*

She's such a warm woman, and she has a chassidic fire burning in her full-force, yet she's in a place that's freezing most of the year, in Calgary, Alberta. The Matusofs have been on shlichus in Calgary, in northwestern Canada for fifteen years, an arrangement only the Rebbe could have made.

The cold is on two levels, physical and spiritual. In the early years of their shlichus, when opposition to public menora lightings was matched by the coldness of the local Jews, the Matusofs didn't throw up their hands in defeat. Rabbi Matusof's fingers froze when he put up the first menora, since it was minus 26

degrees outside!

He tried to find his car keys in order to warm up a little, but couldn't find them. The few mekuravim he had succeeded in attracting realized right away that his fingers had frozen. He simply didn't know that in Calgary you must wear gloves, otherwise your fingers freeze within minutes!

Despite the spiritual and physical challenges, the Matusofs have kept moving forward. The results speak for themselves: today, the public menora lighting takes place in a municipal building (where it's warm!) and is broadcast on the local Israeli television station so people can watch it at home, too. In addition, you can watch their menora lighting via the Internet, and there's no greater *pirsumei nissa* (publicizing of the miracle) than that.

* * *

The Matusofs arrived in Calgary fifteen years ago, in Kislev, with two children. It was frigid, especially for them, since they had previously lived in Nachalat Har Chabad and then in sunny California, where they were on shlichus for two years after they were married.

Both of them were born to a life of shlichus. Rabbi Matusof was born in Morocco, and his father, Rabbi



Shlomo Matusof, is a veteran shliach. Rochel moved to Eretz Yisroel from Russia when she was seven. Her father is the chazan, Rabbi Berel Zaltzman, from New Jersey, who enjoyed a special relationship with the Rebbe.

After two years of shlichus in Los Angeles, the idea of shlichus in Calgary came up. The change from California to Calgary was rather stark. People asked them: Who are you going to be mekarev – polar bears? But this didn't deter them from making the move.

Mrs. Matusof: "I remember when my

brother-in-law called to ask how we were doing, and I said, "Moshiach must come immediately because I can't take it here another day!"

And today?

(laughing) "I still want Moshiach to come immediately, but we've gotten used to living here, and we are raising our seven children here."

How did you get to Calgary?

"The shliach Rabbi Yitzchok Wineberg of Vancouver (an hour away from Calgary), wanted to open a Chabad house in Alberta for some time, but it didn't work out until he found us. It was Divine providence, for it was precisely when we were ready to leave California. When we asked whether to go to Calgary, the Rebbe's answer came immediately: "blessing and success." When we

informed the Rebbe that we had undertaken the shlichus, the answer was, "in a good and successful time." We needed that bracha since the challenge was great and the difficulties were enormous. It's a large area, and it's distant and unfamiliar, but it's open to anybody with initiative."

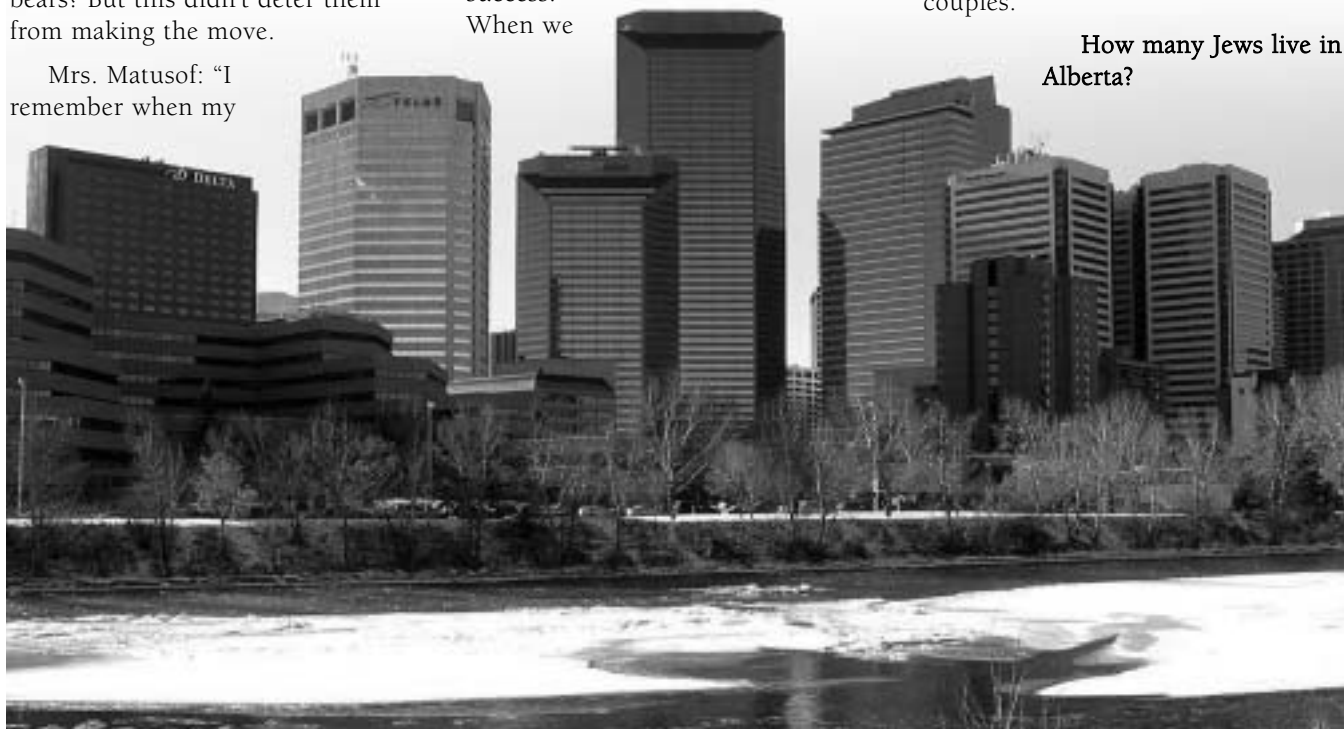


Alberta is a province of Canada, and when the shluchim first headed out, they didn't know where to establish their headquarters, whether in Calgary or Edmonton. They ultimately decided on Calgary, while their shlichus reaches out to other cities in the area. Rabbi Matusof travels to visit these

other cities.

Their work paid off and expanded to the point that they brought out five additional shluchim couples.

How many Jews live in Alberta?



Ice floating on the river that divides Calgary

"About 15,000 Jews live in Alberta, most of them in two central cities – 8000 in Edmonton and about 7-8000 in Calgary. There are also some Jews in the surrounding towns."

Describe the Jews of Alberta for us.

"The Jewish population is made up of Canadians who arrived here after World War II. There are a few Israelis and Russians, too. It's far from any other Jewish center – a four-hour flight to Montreal or Toronto. It's extremely cold, far away, and cut off (seemingly) from the rest of the world. This is why, after World War II, many Nazis fled here. They hoped this would be a refuge for them where they could hide."

Mrs. Matusof talked about the anti-Semitism in the area:

"There are many neo-Nazis here. A few years ago, there was a teacher in one of the schools here, who taught his students that the Holocaust never happened. Although this created a furor, anti-Semitism is a reality here. It's also the reason for the opposition to the public menorah lighting on Chanuka, from the Jews as well."

So how do you handle it?

"Our job is to arouse Jewish pride. After we arrived here, Jews learned that there's no need to fear and they can be proud to be Jewish. The best proof for this is, after 12 years we decided to broadcast the menorah lighting on the Internet too, not just on television (which was approved miraculously). We see this as a tremendous bracha, and we have the privilege of seeing Judaism being publicized proudly here."

"I can tell you that the public menorah lighting is an incomparable pirsumei nissa. We have heard of Jewish weddings that took place as a result of watching it on television or on the Internet. Jews simply began

discovering their Jewishness, thanks to Jewish pride."

* * *

When Judaism is taught and displayed proudly, neshamos are ignited and approach the great flame of the Rebbe MH"m.

"This was the case with a couple that was learning at the local university who came for Purim to the Matusof home. They loved it and they stayed (the girl had lots of questions about emuna, etc.). The boy needed an operation and had to be in the hospital over Pesach. We

"The man's answer surprised him. He said, 'The Rebbe always answers me and promises me lots of good things, and now I'm asking myself: Am I doing enough to deserve this?'"

made sure he had shmura matza while he was in the hospital, and he became more and more interested in Judaism.

"They were planning to marry that summer with a Conservative rabbi, but Hashem helped and they ended up marrying properly. This was the first wedding we made in Calgary in which the Rebbe's letter was read. After their wedding, they left Calgary. She attended Machon Chana in New York and he attended Hadar Hatorah. She began covering her hair and he grew a beard. Today

they are a chassidic couple, and he is the principal of a school in a large community in the U.S."

There's a charming Russian family that lives in Calgary who also began taking an interest in Yiddishkeit. "At first the father had many questions, but suddenly he changed his tone to the point that he said, 'At least once a year you have to go to the Rebbe MH"m to feel warm!'"

"One time he wrote to the Rebbe and put the letter in a volume of *Igros Kodesh*. My husband translated it for him, and when he saw the man crying, he was shaken and he asked, 'Is something wrong?'"

"The man's answer surprised him. He said, 'The Rebbe always answers me and promises me lots of good things, and now I'm asking myself: Am I doing enough to deserve this?'"

"This is a person who never saw the Rebbe, yet he speaks like a born-and-bred chassid!"

"Today they are helping us with the shlichus, upon receiving answers to do so from the Rebbe via the *Igros Kodesh*, and they get our fullest support."

Mrs. Matusof has many other stories about neshamos, like the story about the Israeli woman who emigrated to Calgary with her two children. She began taking an interest in Yiddishkeit shortly after 3 Tammuz.

"She left Eretz Yisroel because of a family crisis and she married a gentile here, r"l. When she got to know us, she often came to classes at the Chabad house. Her husband even considered converting. Whenever she wrote to the Rebbe, she got a clear answer."

"One time, she came to consult with me about her husband. She wanted to write to the Rebbe and ask whether she had a future with him. She wrote her letter and put it into a volume of *Igros Kodesh*, but to



The former Prime Minister of Canada with Rabbi Matusof



The mayor at this year's Chanuka party, with Rabbi Matusof



At the menora lighting event

her surprise, she did not get an answer. At the top of the page she had opened to, it said: 'The blessing of G-d is great and G-d has the solutions.' We didn't know what to make of it.

"The next day, when she returned home from work, she called us in tears. She had found a note from her husband that said he had decided to leave her, and he left with all they owned. He left behind all the Jewish items his wife had bought for him, and she never saw him again. That's when we all understood that this was indeed, a great blessing from G-d, because he left without getting involved in any legalities and without problems. He had even arranged an official writ of divorce

THE WEATHER HELPS THE SHLUCHIM

"It's winter now (Teives at the time of the interview), and the coldest month of the year in most countries, especially in Alberta, which is on the same latitudinal line as Siberia. At the peak of winter, the temperature can be minus 40 degrees!

"A few days before Chanuka in one of our first years here, it was especially cold. This worried us, since how would *pirsumei nissa* look in this cold, but we didn't let our gloomy thoughts *cool* our spirits. Some people cynically said, 'Nu, call New York for a miracle!'

"The miracle actually happened and when Chanuka arrived the temperature suddenly went up ten degrees above zero, which made a great *kiddush Hashem*. Even the mayor expressed his amazement about the drastic change in the weather, which is so unusual at that time of year."

ahead of time.

"The story doesn't end there. The guy had left her but at her age (nearly 50) it was hard to find a Jewish husband. She began keeping Shabbos, and not only was she not fired from her job but she got a bonus of \$2000. This enabled her to buy skirts and modest clothing.

"She wrote to the Rebbe again and described her circumstances. The answer was: 'to increase participation in the Torah classes.' We had an ongoing class on Tuesdays, but it wasn't a good time slot for her, and my husband suggested that she attend a different class which is given weekly by an Orthodox rabbi at the Bais Yaakov shul. She did so, and after attending two times she met her present husband, who, like her, had begun getting more religious and attending shiurim. Baruch Hashem, they

"Our job is to arouse Jewish pride. After we arrived here, Jews learned that there's no need to fear and they can be proud to be Jewish."

married and are living happily together!"

Can you describe your work?

"Most of our work is done with young people, who are the future of Judaism here. Last year we opened a Jewish school for limudei kodesh, which has eight students, our children and the children of some mekuravim. They learn English

subjects through home schooling, which is legal in the U.S. and Canada.

"I also opened a Sunday School for children who attend public school all week. We have a huge Chabad house, which has a youth club, a kitchen, computer room, a shul, offices, and a children's playroom. We recently opened a library, which has Jewish books in Hebrew, English, and Russian.

"On Shabbos we have minyanim for all the t'fillos, which is quite a miracle. When we arrived here, we davened in the Orthodox minyan since we didn't have a single mekurav to join us. Today we get 60-70 men every Shabbos. During the week, we have ongoing classes attended by 30-40 people.

"In the summer we do even more since tourists come here from around the world to see the famous Rocky Mountains, which are an hour away from Calgary. It is a stunning mountain range, which attracts many Jews too. We have a Gan Israel camp, which is attended by 60-70 children.

"We work a lot with Russian Jews. We've made many brissin and holiday parties, etc., and we are in constant touch with Russian speaking people. Since I speak Russian, they feel comfortable in our home."

Can you describe a typical day for us?

"During the day I work at the Chabad house with my husband. Aside from that, I organize events for an Erev Yom Tov or Yom Tov event, a kiddush on Shabbos, a yahrtzeit, etc. On holidays like Pesach, Chanuka, and Purim, the work is even greater.

"In the evenings I give classes for women. I am also involved with the local mikva, together with other women from the Jewish community.

MOSHE RABBEINU IS CHAI V'KAYAM

"It was Yud Shevat after 3 Tammuz. My husband gives a class once a week to a group of scientists and professors. Some of these fellows are what you would call "hard nuts to crack."

"One of the men is very wealthy and he constantly keeps tabs on what is going in the world of Lubavitch through the papers. He had a question about an article in a newspaper about the Rebbe, which spoke about the Rebbe in terms of a histalkus and why did we refer to the Rebbe in the present tense?

"My husband elaborated on the idea of Moshe Rabbeinu and his being the first redeemer and the final redeemer, and that Moshe Rabbeinu is chai v'kayam.

"The man responded, 'I don't believe what you're saying, but I respect people like you whose faith is so strong. Thank G-d we have people like you among us.'

"At the end of the shiur, the treasurer of our Chabad house (in whose office the shiur took place) spoke with the man about the financial state of the Chabad house, which wasn't that great, to say the least. The man took out a check and gave it to my husband. My husband didn't even look at it, thinking it was for \$18 or \$36 at the most. On his way home he took a look at it and called me in amazement, 'Rochel! You'll never guess how big a check it is. It's for \$1000!'

"This showed us that when you talk about Moshiach truthfully and simply, it's accepted!"



The Chabad house library



I am also a mother and teacher, and in the afternoon I help my children with their schoolwork.”

You’ve mentioned how isolated Calgary is from other Jewish centers. How do you manage to be mechanech your children?

“Chinuch is a tough issue here, but you get used to it like you get used to the cold or to the lack of kosher products. My oldest son is in the yeshiva in Toronto, a four-hour flight from here. My oldest daughter was in Toronto for a year and now she’s home and she learns here. She helps teach in our school, does mivtzaim, and does Shabbos programs with the children. Our

second daughter, our third child, went to Montreal for a short time to get to know other chassidishe girls like herself. Now she’s back home and learning with her older sister.

“When they leave home it’s hard for us and for them. We teach the little ones here.”

What do you do about kosher food?

“The main problems are meat and dairy products, which we import, frozen, from Montreal. When we use it up, we make do with what we have until we replenish our stock with food from Montreal or Toronto. There is a kosher food store here, but we still have a problem with

meat and dairy products.”

What about a mikva?

“When we came here, we thought going to the mikva would entail flying to Vancouver, an hour’s flight away, but there is actually a local mikva. My husband undertook supervising the mikva’s kashrus. Over the years, the community built another mikva but my husband never relinquished the supervision to anybody else.”

How do you handle all the difficulties?

“When you’re involved in the work of shlichus this is what keeps you going, along with the kochos that the Rebbe gives you, and the nachas from the children, because without all this, it would be very hard!”

Tell us about your plans for the future.

“Our main and most important plan is to bring about the hisgalus of the Rebbe Moshiach Tzidkeinu. That’s why we were sent here, and to accomplish this we plan on expanding our work among the youth.

“We also plan on adding more classes at the Chabad house, and on widely publicizing the library, which is so important in a place like this. We can help Jewish students throughout Alberta.”

* * *

Rabbi Aryeh and Rivky Dreilich opened a Chabad house in Edmonton, and in addition to the five couples the Matusofs brought out thus far, they hope to bring out even more couples.

When I ask Rochel if she has a message for other shluchos, she says, “Who am I to tell my fellow shluchos anything? We all do our work and try, to the best of our abilities, to do what our meshaleiach wants of us.”

AN IMPORTANT TRIP

BY NOSSON AVROHOM

I heard the following story from R' Shlomo Avrohom, who lives in Yishuv Bareket:

The year 5752 was the year we finished our studies in yeshiva and went as a K'vutza to 770. Every Friday we would go to Harlem and put on t'fillin with quite a few Jews, among them many Israelis.

One of the men with whom we regularly put on t'fillin, was an Israeli by the name of Ilan. He was a very talented guy who owned a number of businesses. He and some partners ran textile stores in the U.S. as well as restaurants in Eretz Yisroel.

If often happened that when we would arrive, he would be in the middle of a meeting with other businessmen or involved in a nerve-racking business call. Nevertheless, he always stopped what he was doing for a few minutes in order to put on t'fillin.

Then one day all his interest in t'fillin disappeared. Instead of being happy to see us, as he always used to be, we had to spend time convincing him to put on t'fillin.

After a few weeks of this, we decided to confront him and ask him what had happened to change his attitude. We hesitantly broached the subject and to our surprise he didn't deny anything. He told us that he had met a gentile Mexican girl and they had decided to marry.

At first we were stunned by this terrible news. Then we tried to explain to him how serious a step this was, but all attempts to get through to him failed. Ilan repeated that this was his decision and he had no intention of changing it. He said that they had begun preparing for the wedding and that the invitations were already printed.

We felt terrible about this neshama going lost. We couldn't believe that this was the end of someone who had been so proud of his traditions.

A week went by and the next time we went to him we tried our luck in convincing him to leave her. When we saw that he was determined to go through with his plans, we asked him for his mother's name so we could ask the Rebbe for a bracha for him.

Upon our return to Crown Heights,

We felt terrible about this neshama going lost. We couldn't believe that this was the end of someone who had been so proud of his traditions.

we wrote everything down and prepared to hand it in to the Rebbe, but due to the Erev Shabbos rush, we forgot about it. The same weird thing happened throughout the week. A week went by and it was Friday again, and once again we found ourselves at Ilan's door. But how disappointed we were to see a sign on the door which said: 'Sorry, the office will be closed for a few weeks.' None of the people in the building knew when he would return.

Three weeks passed and we didn't visit his office. And then one day, as we went from one business to the next on the street opposite Ilan's office, we were surprised to meet him right there on the street. He looked pleased as a

peacock and our hearts sank as we figured it had to do with his marriage to the gentile woman.

As soon as he noticed us he came over quickly and asked to step into his office because he wanted to tell us something.

"I'll tell you an amazing thing," he began. "Since that Friday when you asked me for my mother's name so you could mention my name to the Rebbe, I began to feel really guilty. I managed to stifle my conscience, and only two weeks before our wedding we decided that each of us would take a trip to a different part of the world.

"I decided to go to South Africa. At first I enjoyed the trip and felt relaxed from the daily pressures of work. But as the vacation neared its end, I began to feel strong pangs of conscience. Thoughts of how the Jewish people had suffered over the years came to mind, as well as the family Shabbos meals with my grandfather in which he told of his Holocaust experiences. I also remembered your warnings about how this marriage would be a blight on my family.

"These thoughts gave me no rest. One night I couldn't take it any more and I went out for a walk. I sat on a bench and pleaded with G-d to help me.

"G-d indeed helped me, just a day later. I met an Israeli woman and after a few days I decided that I would drop my gentile fiancée."

We couldn't get over his story, and we told him that in Chabad our tradition is that even if a person thought of writing to the Rebbe but didn't end up doing so, the Rebbe "receives" it and does what needs to be done.

A few days later Ilan went to meet the Rebbe. He was very moved by the encounter and he made some serious religious commitments.

Ilan eventually married a Jewish woman, an Israeli, thus saving himself from the scourge of assimilation.

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IGNITING THE SPARKS

BY SHNEUR ZALMAN LEVIN
TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY, TZFAS

A talented young man decided one day to form a unique boys choir. The group is called The Sparks, and its director, R. Danny Finkelman, explains why: "To ignite the spark in the heart of every Jew." This is the story of the founding of this choir, along with the story of R. Danny's life and the amazing miracle from the Rebbe MH"M. Presented in honor of the group's inaugural record, now available in select music stores.

The orchestra plays the opening notes as the magical sound of R. Avi Piamenta's flute begins the song's introduction. As the electric guitar follows in delightful accompaniment to R. Avi's flute, the listener suddenly hears the sounds of young voices in a blissful variety of melodic tones, creating a harmonious symphony together with the orchestra.

Dozens of boys fill the studio, singing with true chassidic excitement. The first song expresses their longing for the days of Moshiach. The group's director and conductor, R. Danny Finkelman, constantly instructs them that they must "sing from the heart."

When the orchestra stops, the audience breaks into enthusiastic applause. The Sparks first recording is on its way. "This marks the closing of a circle for me," says R. Danny Finkelman, a pleasant young man from the Chabad community of Tzfas, with much emotion.

"I was always drawn to music, but I never had access to such tremendous potential as this group possesses in the spreading of Yiddishkeit and bringing Jews closer to their Father in Heaven."

SEVERED CHASSIDIC ROOTS

It was during the outbreak of the Bolshevik Revolution. The difficult

situation for the Jews of the Soviet Union continued to worsen, enveloped by a growing wave of anti-Semitism. Rabbi Lieberman, one of the rabbanim of Kiev, was walking through the city's deserted streets. Everything was quiet and desolate. When the revolution began, residents fled to their homes and shut themselves in seclusion until the fury had subsided.

A shadowy figure with dark and evil eyes followed the rabbi's footsteps, waiting for the first opportunity to murder him in cold blood. The rabbi had long since been known as a courageous fighter against the cruel regime. He was accustomed to speak out harshly against the Communist government, a fact that deeply angered the



Finkelman in his pre-t'shuva days
as a businessman

members of the Soviet secret police.

That night, Rabbi Lieberman was stabbed to death. His family soon received word of what had happened, although the government had not provided information regarding the circumstances of the incident. However, the rabbi's son, who was blessed with a sharp mind, understood immediately that his father had been murdered because he had incited many of his community members against the authorities.

That very day, the son joined the Communist Party. He feared that he would suffer the same punishment as his father, and thus he decided that he appear outwardly as a loyal Communist. Slowly, the son began fulfilling fewer and fewer mitzvos, until he broke the yoke of Torah completely.

The son eventually made his way to Eretz Yisroel, where he married off his daughter to a young Russian named Finkelman, and they eventually gave him a grandson – Danny.

It seemed that the family dynasty had been totally wiped out, but as things turned out, Danny would return to his roots and close the wondrous circle.

HYSTERIA AND STIFLING FEAR

“We lived in Eretz Yisroel for the first eleven years of my life,” R. Danny recalled. “Then one day, my father, a professor in medicine by profession, received a job offer in New York, which he immediately accepted. We packed our suitcases and soon found ourselves in a nice apartment on a noisy New York street.”

“Life was tranquil for the next two years. I learned English and began to appreciate America and its lifestyle. Then, suddenly, my peaceful life underwent a serious disruption.”

“One glorious spring morning in



New York, I woke up at a relatively early hour. I tried to open my eyes, but to no avail. It is difficult to

infection. The doctor explained that the infection would cause damage whenever my eyes were exposed to the rays of the sun.”

“From that day on, I wore special sunglasses to protect my eyes from the damaging rays of the sun, but even this did not help much. Every morning, I would struggle with considerable effort to open my eyes. After prying them open, I was forced to apply various ointments to ease the intense pain. During the day, I had to wear the sunglasses so I could see where I was going, but my vision was blurred.”



Danny conducting the boys' choir in the studio during a recording session

describe the frightful feeling when you discover that you can't open your eyes. Despite my continued efforts, they were sealed shut.”

“Fear gripped my heart. I lay there as if in a nightmare. It was only when my mother came in to wake me up that she realized that something strange had happened to my eyes.”

“I was rushed immediately to an expert ophthalmologist. After a lengthy and exhausting series of tests, he determined that I was suffering a very serious and rare eye

“My life, which until then had been peaceful and tranquil, had become unbearable. When I was sitting in my class at public school, I couldn't see the teacher's face. I had to clean out my eyes constantly, and the pain forced me to keep them closed every few minutes.”

“My parents felt totally helpless. The best doctors in the field had examined me. All of them said that they had never encountered an infection of this type, and they did not know how to treat it. At the advice of one of our friends, we went

to leading admurim and rabbanim to request their brachos, but the difficult situation continued and even got worse.”

“One day, we heard about a professor who was a world-renowned expert in ophthalmology and served on the staff of Yerushalayim’s Hadassah Ein Kerem Hospital. When we met him, he said that a new ointment had recently been manufactured to deal specifically with this type of eye infection. However, even this ointment did not help.”

“My condition continued without improvement for five years. The situation then worsened to the point that the doctors said that all signs indicated that I was on the verge of blindness, r”l.”

“Then, our relatives in Eretz Yisroel, the Meidanchiks of Kfar Chabad, heard about the situation. Since they were chassidim of the Lubavitcher Rebbe MH”M, they suggested that we ask the Rebbe for his bracha. However, my parents, who had given up on such brachos, rejected the idea out of hand.”

“WHEN I GROW UP, I’LL BE A CHASSID”

“As Divine providence would have it, we found ourselves one day in the Rebbe’s beis midrash. This was in 5749, during a farbrengen on Shabbos Mevarchim. I remember myself as a young boy, looking with wonderment at the throngs of chassidim who packed into the large beis midrash.”

“I looked with much excitement into the Rebbe MH”M’s holy face. Even though I didn’t understand a word he was saying, I felt a personal





Danny Finkelman, wearing dark sunglasses due to eye infection, at Sunday dollars with the Rebbe MH"™M

connection to the Rebbe. I remember saying to myself, 'When I grow up, I'll join the ranks of the chassidim...'"

"During the farbrengen, I sat directly in front of the Rebbe, and I raised my cup of mashkeh in his direction. The Rebbe nodded his head and said, 'Lchaim.'"

"The following day, we arrived for Sunday dollars. I waited together with my father in the hot sun. In spite of the tremendous difficulty this posed due to my eye infection, I remained patient because I wanted to speak with the Rebbe."

"After a long and tiring wait, we were standing in front of the Rebbe. My father spoke first. 'Rebbe,' he said, 'I want a bracha for much success in New York.' The Rebbe gave him a bracha, and then I turned to the Rebbe and said in Russian, 'Rebbe, bless me that my eyes won't hurt me and that I will be a talmid chacham,' and then I concluded in Yiddish, 'Zai gezunt un zai matzliach' [Be healthy and successful]."

"The Rebbe gave me a piercing look, and said, 'Amen,' blessing me with success in all that I will do."

"We departed from the Rebbe with no additional hopes or expectations. We had been blessed by dozens of Admurim and rabbanim without success. Until that moment, we were unaware of the holiness and miraculous work of the Rebbe, and so we didn't pin much hope on his bracha."

"A week had passed since that momentous encounter, and I had almost forgotten the whole thing. Then one morning, I woke up and opened my eyes normally. At first, I was concerned that this was a preliminary stage of blindness. However, as the days passed, I realized that the infection had completely disappeared."

"The doctors stood in stunned disbelief in the face of the miracle that had happened. They could not contain their astonishment over the disappearing infection, and my

parents hastened to tell them that the miracle was all due to the bracha of the Lubavitcher Rebbe MH"™M."

Young Danny's life, which had experienced much suffering, began to return to normal. The difficult moments of the past were soon forgotten, and he was once again a happy boy. His parents, who wanted to make him happy with a purpose to lessen the adverse aftereffects of the infection, registered him with the famed Miami Boys' Choir.

"I had always been drawn to music," R. Danny recalled. "When I was a boy, I used to sing on various occasions. Now that the Miami Boys' Choir registration had opened, I felt a personal obligation to join up."

About 130 boys from all over the United States registered every year with the Miami Boys' Choir. Only a dozen among them were chosen. Danny, with his unusually uplifting voice, was among the chosen few who comprised the choir for the next three years.

"Entering the choir was very difficult and complex," R. Danny said. "Every boy who was accepted to the choir had to sing and dance simultaneously. We also passed a series of intense practice sessions. I remember well my three years as a member of the choir. They were truly among the happiest days of my life."

"Around this same time, I entered religious high school. After completing my high school studies, I enrolled in the New York Film Academy for the purpose of receiving training in film direction. Just before beginning my new academic program, I traveled to Kiev, Ukraine, on behalf of a leading Jewish humanitarian organization to engage in relief activities to help the Jewish community deal with the harsh financial conditions that prevailed at that time."

"After completing my mission to Kiev, I returned to New York. I was then in my early twenties, and while I

wore a black kippa, I was still very far from a religious lifestyle. Since I had not studied any religious texts in my youth and had no Jewish foundation to serve as a basis, I stopped observing even the most basic mitzvos and customs that I remembered from my father's home. I opened a Jewish art business together with a close friend, where we marketed various quality art works that were connected to Judaism and Jewish themes. Eventually, we also dealt with art works that pertained to Chabad."

"Once we came to Crown Heights to sell one of our more successful paintings – the famous picture with all the Rebbeim walking along a street with the Rebbetzins looking down from the windows of the houses. We met a couple of bachurim, who politely suggested that we come with them to the Lubavitch World Headquarters at 770 Eastern Parkway, which was located nearby."

"We, in turn, politely declined, but they wouldn't relent. Much of the credit goes to one of them, HaTamim Mendy Crombie, who spent considerable time urging us to come into 770, even if just for a moment."

"After continuous and repeated efforts, we agreed to go in. We took a peek and we caught the bug. I remember how I looked in wonder at the farbrengen table, where I merited to see the Rebbe a decade earlier. All the special visions that I had experienced came back to me at once."

"I began to accustom myself with regular visits to 770, participating in chassidic farbrengens, listening to Torah classes on a vast array of subjects, and slowly but surely, I changed my way of life."

LIKKUTEI TORAH AT THE POOLSIDE

"During this time that I was working in the art business, I had earned a considerable amount of money, and I had acquired a luxurious

AN INNOVATION IN THE WORLD OF BOYS CHOIRS

R. Avi Piamenta: I am well acquainted with R. Danny Finkelman, and I can say that he is a talented and most promising force who has taken boys choirs to a newer and higher level. Among the chassidic music productions presently on the market, the album "Chanoch L'Naar" is among the very best: original compositions, successful adaptations, and excellent musicians. This album possesses simplicity, complexity, and high quality – a big hit that inspired me very much.

Personally, I immensely enjoyed performing on this album. I also want to give special mention to Yitzchak Shemtov, a new and talented addition to the technical field of sound production, who brings today's chassidic music to a higher and more professional level.

villa with a large swimming pool."

"I remember that I was sitting one day at the poolside, dangling my legs in the cool water. Everything was pleasant and carefree. The future looked rosy and promising, and the calm wind that caressed my face added to the peaceful atmosphere. Still, I felt troubled and uncertain. 'Why I am here?' I asked myself. I had no answer."

"In a frenzy, I ran to my room, and grabbed a copy of *Likkutei Torah* from one of the shelves. I sat by the poolside, and began to learn. I didn't understand a word of what was written, but the feeling of uncertainty that was plaguing me disappeared."

"Then one day, I decided to take action. This was about two years ago. I packed my bags and traveled to Eretz Yisroel. Upon my arrival at Lod Airport, I immediately rushed to Tzfas to study in the Chabad yeshiva there."

"The bachurim there greeted me warmly and cheerfully. This truly captured my heart. I was enraptured by the all-encompassing feeling of ahavas Yisroel that reigned there."

"Several months had passed since my arrival at the yeshiva, and I had slowly accustomed myself to its difficult living conditions – a small, cramped room for four bachurim – and adapted to the Chabad lifestyle."

"What brought me to progress so well along the path of strengthening

my life as a Jew was the famous saying of the Rebbe Maharash – '*L'Chatchilla Aribber*.' This was the motto that led me through the entire process in completely changing my way of life and leaping over all stumbling blocks that I encountered along the way."

A SURPRISING DREAM

As mentioned earlier, R. Danny, adapted well to his yeshiva environment, demonstrating great diligence in his Torah studies, day and night. He soon decided to look for a shidduch, as he was definitely of marriageable age. Yet, he had doubts whether his search would prove successful.

Then one night, R. Danny had a most surprising dream that reassured him in everything connected with his search for his life's partner.

"This was two years ago on Zayin Adar," R. Danny recalled. "I had just come back from a farbrengen with HaRav Yitzchak Landa. I was slightly tipsy, my head was spinning, and I fell asleep immediately. I dreamt that I saw the majestic image of the Rebbe in a shul, writing something on a sheet of paper. I ran to the paper to see what was written – '*Lo maspek avoda, tzarich gam t'filla amitit*' (avoda is not enough, one needs true davening as well)."

"I didn't understand what the Rebbe had meant, when he suddenly turned to me and said, 'Daniel, G-d

will bless you. You have nothing to worry about. In another year, you'll be married.' Then he disappeared."

"I awoke from my dream very excited and agitated, and I ran to the rosh yeshiva, HaRav Yosef Yitzchak Wilschanski, to tell him about it. Just a few months later, seven months after my arrival in Tzfas(!), I met my future wife."

* * *

Why did you decide to form the choir?

A few months after my wedding, I noticed that children in the community were roaming the streets idle during the late afternoon hours. Such a lack of positive activity among Anash children concerned me greatly, so I decided to start afternoon courses in drama and acting.

I gathered together several qualified boys, and we made a special production entitled "Tzachi and The Time Machine." Many of the shluchim in Eretz Yisroel remember the performance well when it was presented to thousands of children throughout the country at Lag B'Omer rallies.

After completing the round of

performances, I began to take note of the musical talent among Anash children, so I decided to form a unique boys' choir that would shatter the accepted norms in chassidic circles. Thus I created The Sparks.

Why did you call them The Sparks?

"Sparks" is a word that expresses a variety of different concepts. First of all, there is the concept in chassidus of the 288 sparks that fell at *Shvira* *HaKeilim*. Similarly, there is the spark that exists within every Jew.

The purpose of the choir is to ignite the spark in the heart of every Jew, regardless of who he or she may be, chareidi or not, and to bring each of them a little closer to their Father in Heaven.

* * *

R. Danny Finkelman is presently working on his newest production. The group's inaugural album is now available in select music stores. The next album, "Chanoch L'Naar," includes a selection of ten songs, composed jointly by R. Danny and another talented young musician named Shmulik Nakar, plus a song composed by one of the boys.

R. Danny Finkelman: In the process of producing the album, I decided to give the boys a challenge. I asked each of them to compose a song, and the best submission would appear in the next album. One of the boys, Shimon Sinvani, made an excellent composition, which will be heard on the upcoming disc.

What makes The Sparks unique as opposed to other boys choirs?

The chassidic music world today has an abundance of boys choirs, yet they're all missing something. There are standard modes of chassidic music that never seem to change. When you listen to a chassidic song, you can hear once or twice, maybe a little more, but after a few times, it's enough. The purpose of the choir is to instill a new style of chassidic music and to open the heart of all those who hear it.

What is the style of your compositions?

As I mentioned before, this is a new style, which has not been accepted until now. We're talking about music produced by a variety of instruments that are unfamiliar to most in this region, e.g., electric guitars, harmonicas, flutes, etc.

The words and p'sukim that we chose for the songs express a yearning desire for the Redemption. The title song of the new album is based on the opening words of *Shaar HaYichud V'HaEmuna* in the *Tanya*.

The first song, "*Hayinu Smeichim*", is a joyous rendition that expresses the great joy at the coming of Moshiach. Similarly, the final song is another joyous composition, based on a Chabad niggun.

G-d willing, we will soon begin a series of performances for both the chareidi and the general public. As mentioned previously, the purpose of the choir is to bring song and dance to a level never known before, and to ignite the spark in the heart of every Jew.

"THE SONGS ARE CONSTANTLY PLAYING IN MY HEAD"

Sparks' choir member **Amor Ben-Yeshayahu:** When we moved to Tzfas from Eilat, the change was literally as sharp as from east to west. As we became closer to Yiddishkeit, it marked a transition between two differing lifestyles, and this proved especially difficult. I started a new school, and the difference was very strange for me. Entering the choir was a big help in bringing me into the fold. When my fellow classmates saw that I joined the Sparks, they looked at me differently...

I can say without question that Danny changed my life. I'm unable to sleep at night; the songs are constantly playing in my head. The recordings and rehearsals are part of this tremendous experience for me.

We would record again and again until Danny said that he felt that we were really singing from the heart, and as water reflecting the face...



PAVING THE WAY FOR MOSHIACH

BY NOSSON AVROHOM

Every Friday afternoon, hundreds of T'mimim descend upon the N.Y. Metropolitan area and go on mivtzaim. There is barely a street, neighborhood, or even a dead-end in Manhattan that is not visited by bachurim who offer t'fillin and a weekly brochure.

Tamim Yossi Davush sets up a t'fillin stand at the 42nd Street subway station in Manhattan every Friday. Dozens of Jews put t'fillin on there every week, get a brochure, and some of them write to the Rebbe and receive advice through the *Igros Kodesh*.

"Last year, a few weeks before Pesach," says Yossi, "an Israeli came over to me and said he was in big trouble. After he told me his story, I told him that he can write to the Rebbe, and I explained how to do it.

"After making a positive resolution, he wrote a letter about his problem and put it into a volume of *Igros Kodesh*. The answer was in volume 18, p. 330:

As the holiday of Pesach, Time of our Freedom, approaches for all Jews for good, I send you my blessing for true freedom, freedom in material matters and spiritual matters, from all things that distract you from serving G-d with joy and gladness of heart, and to continue with this freedom and joy throughout the entire year.

"The answer amazed him, and I saw that he was in a turmoil of emotions. While we were talking, a man came over to the t'fillin stand

who identified himself as a Jew and began to interrogate me about the work we were doing at the station. I was taken aback by his questions, but I answered him patiently.

"Along came another three Jews, from Russia. Two of them expressed disgust over their Jewishness, and said they planned on converting.



One of them said that Islam interested him, while the other one favored Christianity.

"At first I thought this was a joke of some kind, and they were making fun of me to see how I would react, but after a few minutes I could see they were serious. I began to explain to them what a terrible thing it would be for themselves and their families if they converted.

"The man who had cross-examined me about what I was doing there, stood off to the side and listened silently to the discussion I

was having with the Russian Jews. Suddenly he told the man who wanted to become a Moslem that Christianity was the best religion.

"I was shocked and realized immediately that he was a missionary. I began to attack him for trying to persuade Jews to abandon their religion. He lost his cool and began yelling.

"Things were heating up when something astonishing happened. The Jewish spark that lay dormant began to wake up and the two Russian Jews, who had just moments before discussed conversion, pushed the missionary away and yelled at him. When he saw that everybody was against him, he left.

"The three Jews said that after what they had witnessed, they realized the tragedy in conversion and they wouldn't do it. They stayed a bit longer and listened to me discuss the plague of assimilation. They were open to what I had to say at this point and I seemed to make an impression on them.

"I saw this as Divine providence, that the presence of the missionary is what helped these Jews open their eyes and see what a mistake they were about to make. After all the excitement, I sat down to relax a little and to gather my strength to continue my work. Volume 18 of the *Igros Kodesh* was on the table and I casually picked it up and opened it. This is what I read on page 331:

How wondrous are the words of the great teacher, the Rambam, at the end of his work, Mishneh Torah (Hilchos Melachim, end of chapter 11), regarding Yeschu and Mohammed – that "it is only to pave the way for Melech HaMoshiach and to fix the entire world to serve Hashem as one..."

I sat there frozen in place for a while, as I felt how the Rebbe knows and watches what is going on.

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OSLO WILL ONLY BE AN APPETIZER

BY SHAI GEFEN

MADRID AND ASHDOD

The two recent attacks, one in Madrid and one in Ashdod, are connected. If Intelligence and the Secret Service still don't have the relevant data, they should read about it here.

Islamic terror is nourished by a display of weakness, and both Madrid and Ashdod are proof. For three and a half years, the Arabs were unable to attack us by leaving Gaza for areas within the Green Line. Attacks originated from Yehuda and Shomron. Now, for the first time, according to reports, the attacks originated from within the Gaza Strip, shortly after the Prime Minister spoke about giving Gaza back to our enemies.

The Chief of Staff's view, which was strongly attacked by Sharon and his supporters, about the close connection between talking about withdrawing and increased attacks, has proved itself.

The question is who will pay the price? Why do we allow the P.M. to remain for one second longer in office? It's time to send him off to his ranch where he can do some stocktaking and think about how a lauded general became a collaborator of the Arab enemy.

Those loyal to Eretz Yisroel and those who care deeply about the security of the Jewish people: the time has come to wake up!

THE MONASTERY OF SILENCE

For some reason, Sharon's wild plan is greeted with silence. Those loyal to Eretz Yisroel remain silent.

Sharon has every intention of carrying out his dangerous political ideas, and the dangers have only just begun. What has been going on here the last three years as a result of the Oslo, Chevron, and Wye Accords will only be a sampling, may Heaven protect us, and we sit quietly; allowing people to continue supporting Sharon.

Worse than his plan is our silence. Whoever tries to say that there is nothing that can be done about the P.M., and that this is a heavenly decree, is mistaken. We *can* change things. In the past, we saw that protests could ruin political plans and postpone them. If we really thought this entailed danger to the lives of five million Jews in Eretz Yisroel, as the Rebbe constantly warned us, we wouldn't sit quietly.

"Don't think you'll escape in the king's palace, from all the Jews, for if you will be silent at this time, relief and salvation will stand by the Jews from some other place, and you and your father's house will perish, and who knows whether it was for a time like this that you attained royalty." What Mordechai said to Esther definitely applies to our times.

The following is a quote from an article that Minister Uzi Landau wrote in connection with the terrible plan

that Sharon is pushing in Washington, despite the opposition:

"The unilateral withdrawal plan is more dangerous to the country than the Oslo plan, and it is harmful to Israel's political and security positions. What is even worse is that this plan is the capitulation of the State of Israel to Palestinian terror after three years of war. This is how the Palestinians understand it. To them, the I.D.F. is running away, and this is a great victory for terrorism.

"They publicly announce their plans for stepped-up terror "which will exploit the great success." This is a momentous time for the State of Israel and a test for the Likud leadership. This is not a time for monastic stoicism, nor is it a time for vacillation or hesitation, for doubletalk and political considerations.

"This is the time for principles, for clear thinking, for courage – for leadership! Who from among those elected to Likud, whether minister or Knesset member, who refrains from strongly opposing the withdrawal plan, and who hesitates to demand a discussion and decision on the part of the government before Sharon goes to Washington – takes the heavy responsibility for his personal contribution towards the impending tragedy?"

Mr. Landau is right. So hasn't the time come to break Sharon's government and to establish an Opposition from within so that he



doesn't continue with his insane plans? And why are you, Mr. Landau, still a part of Sharon's government?

Each of us must know that we do not have the privilege of remaining silent. The Prime Minister, for personal reasons, is ready to sell us for a bowl of lentils. As said earlier, the Oslo Accords will only be an "appetizer" for what is to come if and when they withdraw from the Gaza Strip.

Unlike the Oslo architects who maintained that they tried their approach in order bring us peace, in this case, the results are known in advance! After three years, the Sharon government has been responsible for 900 violent deaths and thousands of wounded. We had better not even begin to imagine what lies in store for us if Sharon continues betraying his electorate. The time has come to wake up and shout. Even in totalitarian countries, when the people rise up it's impossible to ignore them. We will not be able to say our hands did not spill this blood if we continue to maintain our silence.

YASHAR KO'ACH

We commend the Chabad houses in Yesha that organize visits of rabbanim and shluchim to Gush Katif, which Sharon wants to destroy. These visits give support and hope to those living there.

We must fulfill the Rebbe's horaa to support those living in Yesha, who bravely live in "border cities," and daily fulfill the p'sak of Shulchan Aruch, siman 329, not to give in to our enemies, but to stand strongly against those who want to conquer our land. The time has come to copy this initiative and to strengthen the yishuvim in Gush Katif; to help shliach, Rabbi Kirzenschaft in his work; to support him physically, financially, and morally.

Anash are asked to visit and perhaps to make a huge gathering of Anash there, in order to proudly express what the Rebbe says about our

land and to strengthen the settlers. We have a role to play and we, as the legions of the king, must lead the way!

WHAT DOES THE REBBE SAY ABOUT ATTEMPTS TO SILENCE THE CHIEF OF STAFF?

Chief of Staff, Bogy Yaalon expressed his opinion against the dangerous proposed withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, which constitutes a prize for terrorism. Sharon responded by shutting up the general who dared to say the truth. What nerve! Threatening to fire the Chief of Staff, and yelling at him when he did precisely what he's supposed to do, adds insult to injury. Sharon wants to hide the truth from us!

The Rebbe expressed his views on attempts in the past to silence the Chief of Staff. In a sicha of 14 Iyar 5738, the Rebbe said:

As was said a number of times, this affects the security of three and a half million Jews in Eretz Yisroel, as the Chief of Staff (who is an expert in military matters – on behalf of the entire army) announced, that if they return land they will be unable to defend the entire country.

And even those who opposed this announcement, their opposition was not because it is incorrect – everybody concedes that he is the expert in these matters, and that he said the truth from a security perspective – but they're debating whether he had permission to say what he said, or whether he should have kept quiet.

We're talking about the defense of three and a half million Jews, yet Jews debate whether, according to protocol, there was permission to say what was said, or whether he should have kept quiet and taken the responsibility of defending the borders on himself! There was never such a thing before, not only among the Jewish people but even among goyim!

As was said, everybody concedes that he is the expert, and that he said the truth as it is. Yet they still keep

This is not a question of prohibited or permitted, or impurity and purity – it's a question of literal danger to life, which is the opinion of all the military and security experts, without exception. Even the general who said otherwise, immediately added that giving away land will indeed increase the danger to life, but there are considerations (to find favor in the eyes of the goy, etc.) for which we need to put Jews in danger (as was the case in recent months) – the main thing being to try this approach.

debating: one says it's a political matter and another says it's a security issue; one says a minister ought to say it while another says a general ought to say it, or the Chief of the Staff, etc.

Despite the fact that he already said it publicly, they are still debating it for months now. And this is not because someone else decided that *he* is the expert in security matters, because this opinion is that of all the security experts. There wasn't a single person who said, from a security standpoint, that it's permissible to give up land.

In exchange for wanting to fool themselves and others that this is the proper path to peace, at least as a preparation for peace, and at least not to increase the danger, *r"l*, they saw that what the experts said about security months and years ago came true – that any indication of fear or hesitation intensifies the pressure.

However, “the guardian of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps,” but Hashem also wants them to do things in a natural manner, at least with the pinky, as He showed us in our holy Torah, “the Torah of truth.” When we hear that the gentiles want to come “regarding matters of hay and straw” – when it's a place by which it will be possible “that it will be easy for them to conquer it” – “go out against them with weapons and desecrate the Shabbos.” Then there's the guarantee that the pressure will dissipate, as they have seen happen in a number of areas where they stood strong.

This is not a question of prohibited or permitted, or impurity and purity – it's a question of literal danger to life, which is the opinion of all the military and security experts, without exception. Even the general who said otherwise, immediately added that giving away land will indeed increase the danger to life, but there are considerations (to find favor in the eyes of the goy, etc.) for which we need to put Jews in danger (as was the case in recent months) – the main thing being to try this approach.

They have tried this approach a number of times already. After every previous war they tried it, and each time it ended with Jewish sacrifices.

As was said, when it comes to action, we must do according to what the security experts say. All of them agree that he is the expert and that he said the truth; the sole debate here is whether he had permission to say it, and whether he should have said it now or he should have waited and said it differently. (Unfortunately), none of this discussion diminishes the danger to life.

All the more so when we openly see how after three wars and the victories that ensued – that after each

So the traitor will go free, while a man who is loyal to Israel, who never gave secrets to the enemy, who committed no crime, is rotting in jail in Ashkelon.

victory they conceded and immediately retreated, and this caused the next war! So too now, for the meanwhile we see it regarding weapons, and *r"l* – they are readying themselves for more.

It's shocking to see how every word of the Rebbe from over twenty years ago, is relevant now.

THE NUCLEAR SPY VS. FEDERMAN

They are planning to release the man called the Nuclear Spy, Mordechai Vanunu. Vanunu is a man who converted to Christianity and endangered the lives of the Jews living in Israel by giving away classified information pertaining to Israel's

nuclear program.

Vanunu had worked in the Dimona nuclear plant in the Negev for several years, then left the country and gave sensitive photographs and information to the London Sunday Times, which published it in October of 1986. Before the story was published, Israeli agents captured Vanunu and brought him back to Israel where he was convicted on charges of espionage and treason.

Although he has more information that he has promised to publicize, the Knesset Law Committee met to discuss whether he should be released, now that he has served 18 years in jail, into administrative detention, in order to prevent further damage. The decision was not to do this, but to release him with merely some restrictions. As Defense Minister Mofaz put it, “Vanunu is a traitor but even traitors have rights.”

So the traitor will go free, while a man who is loyal to Israel, who never gave secrets to the enemy, who committed no crime, is rotting in jail in Ashkelon. Noam Federman's sole crime is that he lives in Chevron with his wife and seven children and fights for what he believes in. He is the **only** Israeli in administrative detention. Hezbollah terrorists in our country are not placed in administrative detention, not to mention the Nuclear Spy, but Noam Federman endangers our nation's security!

Federman has served five out of six months of administrative detention and his wife fears that when the six months are up, they'll sentence him to an additional six months. We must support Federman and “not stand by your brother's blood.”

DISMANTLING SETTLEMENTS HAS THE LAW OF CHILUL SHABBOS

Last week it was publicized that non-Parliamentarian members of the Right are planning a campaign to call upon I.D.F. soldiers to refuse to dismantle settlements. They plan on

using what those on the Left, such as Amos Oz and Moshe Negbi, said in the past about splitting the nation and the army and blowing up bridges in order to prevent the transfer of Arabs.

Surprisingly, the speaker for the Yesha Council, Yehoshua Mur Yosef, quickly disassociated himself from the plan, saying that "conscientious objection" will tear society apart and cripple the army. "Those on the Right who justify conscientious objection will have to deal with objectors from the Left," he said.

This statement raises some serious questions about how they plan on preventing the dangers they are about to face. Why is it that only the Left can support those who refuse orders and enjoy moral support, while the Right cannot say they will defy orders to evict people from their homes, which even according to the Left (at least when those being evicted are Arabs) is an illegal order.

It's true that if hundreds and thousands of soldiers refuse to carry out an order, it can cause grievous

harm to the army, harm which will cost in lives. But the Oslo Accords cost us thousands of lives. Sharon's plan to withdraw from Gaza, which will turn the Gaza Strip into a giant munitions factory will exact a terrible price in our blood, r"l. And we haven't yet spoken about the encouragement to terrorism that will be the result of a withdrawal, which will also cost us in much blood.

Under such terrible circumstances, when the Israeli government wants to evict Jews and endanger our lives, if we don't use ultimatums, why should the government be afraid of doing what it wants when it knows that it will be obeyed?

When Rabin wanted to dismantle Tel Romeida, it was only a p'sak halacha about disobeying orders that changed Rabin's mind. The Left, which uses the weapon of conscientious objection, has been successful.

What did those on the Right say, after all? That they will follow the guidance of Amos Oz, an ardent Leftist, who said that expelling people from their homes is illegal, and that he

is willing to bomb bridges for it. If people from the Yesha Council think they can wage a "pareve" battle, and be the nice guys – we know what will happen. They're better off not fighting to begin with. But if the government knows that tens of thousands of soldiers will promise not to transgress a law of the Torah and will refuse to evict their brethren, then we have a chance of stopping this madness.

Honorable mention to Rabbi Dovid Meir Drukman, one of the rabbanim of the "Pikuach Nefesh" organization, who clearly told the media that he'd rather sit in jail than carry out an immoral order that opposes halacha.

Rabbanim ought to put out a p'sak halacha which says that helping transfer Jews from their homes opposes Torah and morality, and orders to do so must be disobeyed. Carrying out an order to evict Jews is just like carrying out an order to desecrate the Shabbos or to eat something forbidden. Let's hope that the Yesha Council quickly adopts this as their p'sak, because our lives are at stake.

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