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# CLOSE TO G-D

SICHOS IN ENGLISH



## SHABBOS PARSHAS ACHAREI-K'DOSHIM; 10<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF IYAR, 5750

1. The present Shabbos is connected with three Torah portions: Acharei and K'doshim which this Shabbos are joined together as a single portion and are read in the morning, and Emor, which is read in the Mincha service. Since everything that happens is controlled by Divine Providence – and surely this applies to the public Torah readings – we can assume that there is a common factor shared by these three portions, each one contributing a dimension lacking in the other.

This common factor centers on the expression of the interrelation of the holiness of G-d's Name (the mitzvah of sanctifying G-d's Name) and the holiness of the Jewish people.

This concept is communicated in Parshas Acharei which begins with a reference to the death of Aharon's sons as they "drew close to G-d." In his commentary on the verse, "I will be sanctified by those near to Me," Rashi explains: Moshe told Aharon: "I knew that the Sanctuary would be consecrated by the death of those close to G-d." The portion continues on a similar theme mentioning the service of the High Priest in the Sanctuary and in the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur,

the holiest day of the year.

Similarly, as implied by its name, Parshas K'doshim reflects the concept of the sanctification of G-d's Name. Within this portion there are several commandments urging the Jews to sanctify themselves including the conclusion of the portion which states, "And you shall be holy because I am holy." On this verse, our Sages commented:

The Holy One, blessed be He, told Israel: "I am sanctified because of you as it is written, 'Israel, through whom I will be praised,' and you will be sanctified because of Me... If you sanctify yourselves, I will consider it as if you sanctified Me."

In the same vein, Parshas Emor includes the verse, "And I will be sanctified among the children of Israel," from which our Sages derived the commandment to sanctify G-d's Name. A similar concept can be interpreted from the name of the portion which can be interpreted to mean "grant praise and distinction" as in the verses: "You have granted praise and distinction to G-d today... and G-d has granted praise and distinction to you." This is the function of the Jewish people, to render praise to G-d's Name by revealing Divine unity throughout

the world.

To explain these concepts in greater depth: The death of Aharon's sons mentioned in the beginning of the portion is problematic. From a simple understanding of the Torah's narrative, it appears that their death came as a punishment for a sin. Nevertheless, this is difficult to understand: They were on a very high spiritual level as obvious from the fact they were the individuals "close to G-d," with whom G-d chose to consecrate the Sanctuary. Indeed, after they passed away Moshe told Aharon: "I thought that either me or you would be chosen to consecrate the Sanctuary. Now, I see that their level surpasses ours." Moshe surely did not make this statement as an expression of humility,[245] but rather, as a true appreciation of their spiritual level.

The Or HaChayim attempts to resolve this difficulty, explaining that the death of Aharon's sons came because of their tremendous attachment to G-d:

They came close to a great light of holy love and died because of it. This is the mystic secret of [G-d's] kiss through which the righteous died.... Although they appreciated that they would die they did not hold back from

coming close to this sweet [bond] of love... to the extent that their souls departed.

Thus, their sin (chet, the Hebrew for sin also means, "lack") consisted of not restraining their attachment to G-d, consciously allowing themselves to reach the point where their souls departed from their bodies. This is considered undesirable because together with the great yearning and love which a Jew feels for G-d (ratzo), he must also dedicate himself to fulfilling G-d's will in this world by transforming this world into a dwelling for Him.[246]

Thus, the death of Aharon's sons can be compared to a sacrifice for they gave up their lives to cling to G-d. In this manner, they sanctified G-d's name and consecrated the sanctuary.

In this context, we can understand a positive interpretation of the verse, "And they brought close to G-d a strange fire concerning which they were not commanded." The love of Aharon's sons for G-d was "a strange fire," i.e., it was out of the ordinary, "concerning which they were not commanded," i.e., beyond the limits that could be commanded of the Jewish people. Indeed, this was the first example of a Jew giving up his life because of love for G-d (Kiddush Hashem).

This unbounded expression of love for G-d gave the Jewish people the potential to sanctify G-d's Name – through life within this world – in all the generations that followed. For this

reason, this passage was chosen to introduce the portion describing the Yom Kippur service. The sanctification of G-d's Name by Aharon's sons

***From a simple understanding of the Torah's narrative, it appears that their death came as a punishment for a sin. Nevertheless, this is difficult to understand: They were on a very high spiritual level as obvious from the fact they were the individuals "close to G-d," with whom G-d chose to consecrate the Sanctuary.***

generated the potential for Aharon and the subsequent High Priests to carry out the service of Yom Kippur.[247]

On this basis, we can understand

the connection between Parshas Acharei and the portions that follow: Parshas K'doshim contains the commandment to sanctify ourselves, a service which can be carried out because of the influence of the service of Aharon's sons. Afterwards, Parshas Emor expresses the commandment to sanctify G-d's Name and bring out His oneness throughout the world.

The three portions can, thus, be understood to express three different phases of this service of sanctification: a) sanctifying G-d's Name through service within the realm of holiness; b) sanctifying G-d's Name by separating oneself from negative influences in the world; c) sanctifying oneself through using the material elements of the world for the sake of holiness.

2. The three services explained above can be understood in greater depth through the explanation of the first Mishna of the third chapter of Pirkei Avos:[248]

"Reflect on three things, and you will not come to sin: Know from where you came, and to where you are going, and before whom you are destined to give an accounting. 'From where you came' – from a putrid drop, 'And to where you are going'..."

This Mishna is divided into three sections, each one serving as a directive to one of the three types of Jews: the righteous, the beinonim, and the wicked (and also, the parallels to these levels in the spiritual worlds: the realms of Bria, Yetzira, and Asiya). Also, it can be understood to reflect

245. Moshe was "the most humble man on the face of the earth." This humility, however, did not reflect a negative self-image which prevented him from appreciating his positive qualities. On the contrary, although he knew his positive qualities – and therefore, was obligated to protect his honor, the honor of the Torah – he remained humble.

246. On this basis, we can understand our Sages' statement, "Against your will, you live." The individual desire of a Jew's soul is

to cling to G-d completely, beyond the limitations of the body. Living within the body is "against your will," contrary to this desire, because of the soul's commitment to fulfill G-d's will.

247. This is alluded to in the name of the portion, Acharei, which means "after." Aharon's sons' death generated the potential for service that follow "afterwards."

Based on this concept, we can understand why, in most communities, the passage is referred to as Acharei and not, Acharei

Mos, ("After the death of"). Mentioning the death of Aharon's sons would place an emphasis on the fault of their service, that in their case, their desire to cling to G-d was not complimented by the commitment to carry out the service of G-d within this world.

248. The study of Pirkei Avos prepares us for the giving of the Torah on the holiday of Shavuot. This concept receives particular emphasis this Shabbos when the third chapter of Pirkei Avos is studied. Our Sages

the three different services of sanctification, one service where holiness shines in open revelation, one service where one is involved in mundane affairs where there is a potential that they be used either for good or for other purposes, and one service in which one confronts the forces of evil as they are revealed. The opening clause: “Reflect on three things and you will not come to sin” relates to the service of a righteous person, whose soul shines in open revelation and thus, his service is focused primarily in the sphere of holiness. His yetzer ha’ra no longer influences him. Nevertheless, in order to allow a Jew to serve G-d by choice, the possibility of sin – or descent – is not totally negated and it is through his own service that he comes to the level where he “will not come to sin.” Not only will he not commit a sin, he will be far removed from any approach to sin.[249]

This is accomplished through looking at “three things,” i.e., since his soul shines in open revelation and he is occupied with holy matters, his perception focuses on only “three things”: his soul, “a part of G-d from above,” the world into which his soul descended where he must carry out his service; and G-d, the source of his soul and the Creator of the world into which he was sent. The comprehension of these three things will impress upon him how, even as his soul exists within the world, it is “a part of G-d from above,” and still connected with its G-dly source. This awareness will allow him to continue a life of holiness and prevent him from descending to a level which is not appropriate to him.

The second clause, “Know from where you came, and to where you are going...” refers to a beinoni, and in spiritual terms, to the world of Yetzira which is “half good and half evil.” In contrast to the world of Bria (which parallels the service of the righteous described above), in Yetzira, G-dliness is not openly perceived and one appreciates the world as an independent entity. Nevertheless, the world is not seen as contrary to G-dliness.

This is reflected in the service of the beinoni who has both an active yetzer tov (“good inclination”) and yetzer ha’ra (“evil inclination”). Unlike the righteous who is totally involved in the realm of holiness, such an individual appreciates the secular nature of the world and thus, is sensitive to the lures of the yetzer ha’ra. He, nevertheless, overcomes this challenge, and, on the level of thought, speech, and deed, serves G-d in a complete manner.[250]

A person on this level needs more particular instruction than the perception of the three things mentioned above to carry out his spiritual service. Since the secular aspects of this world affect his consciousness, he must be instructed in a more particular manner.

Thus, the Mishna emphasizes the importance of knowing, “from where you came,” i.e., the essential G-dly source of the soul, and “to where you are going,” the goal of his service in this world.

The last clause, “‘From where you came’ – from a putrid drop,...” refers to the world of Asiya, which is dominated by evil (and in personal terms, a wicked person).[251] For such a

person to transform his behavior and avoid sin, it is necessary to consider all the factors and details mentioned by the Mishna: the undesirable aspects of worldliness, “a putrid drop,” “a place of worms and maggots,” and the awareness of whom one is serving, “the King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He.”

To relate these concepts to the three levels of holiness described above: Parshas Acharei relates to the sanctification of G-d through the service of the righteous which centers on “drawing close to G-d,” above the level of the world. Parshas K’doshim reflects the service of Beinonim who exists within the context of this world and separate themselves from undesirable influences. Parshas Emor which relates the mitzvah of Kiddush Hashem shows how the Jews can express holiness through positive acts within the world.

3. The service of holiness described above is related to the counting of the Omer as emphasized by the prayer recited after fulfilling this mitzvah in which we ask G-d to “purify and sanctify us in Your sublime holiness.” This holiness is increased from day to day as emphasized by the manner in which the Omer is counted. Rather than say, “Today is the second day...,” “Today is the third day...” and the like. We say, “Today is two days of the Omer,” “Today is three days...,” indicating that each day includes within it the service of all the previous days and then, contributes a further dimension of growth itself.

Though the counting of the Omer spans three months – Nissan, Iyar, and Sivan; in particular, it is connected with the present month Iyar because

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associate the giving of the Torah with the number three, relating how it was given in “the third month, to a threefold nation, by the third of Amram’s children.” Similarly, this chapter begins, “Reflect on three things.”

249. This concept is alluded to by the word the Mishna uses for sin, aveira. This word is related to the word ha’aveira which has the meaning, “transfer,” transferring one’s soul and lowering from a high level of holiness to one beneath it.

250. The reason for this descent is to allow a Jew to reveal the higher quality which is expressed by the service of iskafia, subordinating one’s natural tendencies.

251. The possibility for such a descent is intended to allow a Jew to reveal the quality

every day of the month is associated with this mitzvah. Though Nissan is important for it represents the birth of our people and Sivan is distinguished as the month of the giving of the Torah, the fact that every day of Iyar is associated with the mitzvah of counting the Omer gives it special significance.

The name Iyar serves as an acronym for the names Avrohom, Yitzchok, Yaakov, and Rochel[252], the four figures who comprise “G-d’s chariot.” Just as a chariot is totally nullified to the will of its driver, the Patriarchs were totally given over to G-d’s will, and therefore, “all their limbs were holy and separated from matters of this world.” Their service – as transferred to us through the medium of Rochel – generates the potential for us to live in a holy manner in this world, even if doing so requires self-sacrifice, and in this way transform the world into a dwelling for G-d.[253]

The holiness of the Jewish people (that is brought about through the service of the Patriarchs) has its ultimate source in G-d’s holiness as alluded to in the verse, “Be holy, for (i.e., because) I am holy.” This concept is also alluded to in the name Iyar since, it also serves as an acronym for the words, “Ani Hashem rofecha,” (I, G-d, am your healer).[254]

This refers to Jews in this world – for only here is there the possibility of sickness – and yet they are assured that they will be healed by G-d, Himself. This refers to the level of Kesser, which is identified with His essential holiness.

G-d’s “healing” the Jews indicates that this holiness will be expressed in physical terms; their bodies as well as their souls will be holy.

The service of holiness described above is further enhanced by the influence of the present day, the tenth of Iyar for, as our Sages state, “the tenth shall be holy.”

4. The above is further enhanced by the fact that we are in the midst of the days of preparation for Lag

### *The love of Aharon’s sons for G-d was “a strange fire,” the first example of a Jew giving up his life because of love for G-d (kiddush Hashem).*

B’Omer, the day of celebration associated with Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai.[255] Rabbi Shimon personified the service of holiness and drawing close to G-d as he stated, “Throughout all my days, I was connected in this world with one bond with the Holy One, blessed be He... In it, I was united.” This potential is granted to every Jew, to live within this world in a holy manner.

For this reason, Lag B’Omer is

commemorated with gatherings and parades, stressing the theme of the unity of the Jewish people and thus, sanctifying G-d’s Name within the world.

These parades and gatherings, as does any entity associated with holiness, require preparation. Therefore, every day of the week that remains before Lag B’Omer: Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Shabbos, should be used to prepare for these gatherings.

Since these gatherings are intended for the purpose of education, they must follow the principle, “Educate a child according to his way;” i.e., the above concepts should be presented in a manner to which even children of a very young age can relate by using flags and banners and the like. This will inspire the children and leave a lasting impression upon them.

Since this is “a year of miracles,” when we are lifted above the limitations of nature, these parades and gatherings must surpass those of the previous years, both in the numbers of the participants and the quality of the program. Each person should do whatever he can to make these gatherings a success, participating in the parades himself and influencing others to join him. This will lead to a great Kiddush Hashem and lead to the ultimate Kiddush Hashem which will come when G-d will “sanctify His great Name... and take [Israel] from among the gentiles... and bring her to her land,” in the ultimate redemption. May it be in the immediate future.

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*of is’hapcha, the transformation of darkness into light.*

252. The service of the other Matriarchs is included in the service of their husbands.

253. There are two aspects to the conception of our world as G-d’s dwelling. On one hand, this description indicates that just as a person’s dwelling is subordinate to his being,

*so, too, this world is nullified to G-dliness. Conversely, just as “a pleasant dwelling expands a person’s thinking processes,” our service in this world brings about an increase in G-dly light, as it were.*

254. The preceding words of this verse, “all the sickness which I visited upon Egypt, I will not visit upon you,” indicates the manner of

*G-d’s healing. A doctor cures a patient who becomes sick; G-d prevents sickness from occurring.*

255. Though often the yahrtzeits of tzaddikim are commemorated by fasts, Rabbi Shimon’s yahrtzeit should be commemorated with celebration as explained in several Kabbalistic texts.

# MOSHIACH IN OUR EVERYDAY LIVES

HA'RAV HA'GAON R. AHARON YAAKOV SCHWEI,  
MARA D'ASRA AND MEMBER OF THE BEIS DIN OF CROWN HEIGHTS

TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY



*The Rebbe established the overall objective: to prepare the world to greet Moshiach. It is incumbent upon us to internalize this message and feeling in our day-to-day lives, from Torah and mitzvos down to common mundane activities.*

We find ourselves shortly after the auspicious day of Chaf-Ches Nissan, the day that the Rebbe placed upon us the responsibility to do everything in our ability to bring our righteous Moshiach in actual deed. Each of us must contemplate what we must do in order to bring the Redemption.

Chassidus explains that when a person decides to improve himself and his way of life, it's not enough to make a general resolution that he intends to change for the better. He must make more specific decisions regarding which areas he plans to work on himself, etc.

Similarly, we find in our discussion:

In general, the Rebbe established in the sicha from Shabbos Parshas

Chayei Sara 5752 that the current objective of the shluchim is to prepare themselves and the entire world to greet our righteous Moshiach.

However, in a more specific sense, this point must be instilled into every aspect of a person's life. As the Rebbe states clearly in the aforementioned sicha, "Every detail



in the shlichus of spreading Torah and Yiddishkeit, and the spreading of the wellsprings outward, must be instilled with this point: how will this bring us to greet Moshiach Tzidkeinu?”

This not only pertains to matters directly related to shlichus, but also in the personal everyday life of each and every one of us. As the Rebbe says, “All aspects of avoda (in all the days of your life, on every day itself – in every detail of every hour of the day) must be instilled with ‘bringing the days of Moshiach.’”

For example, when someone goes to immerse himself in the mikveh, along with all the great spiritual levels that accompany this, he should have the additional *kavana* that his going to the mikveh is a preparation for going to greet Moshiach Tzidkeinu.

In a similar vein, when he stops to daven, he must have the special intention that he is davening in order to request the immediate revelation of Melech HaMoshiach.

In connection with all the other mitzvos, he also must have the

*For example, when someone goes to immerse himself in the mikveh, along with all the great spiritual levels that accompany this, he should have the additional kavana that his going to the mikveh is a preparation for going to greet Moshiach Tzidkeinu.*

intention when he is fulfilling them that the objective is to hasten the Redemption and the hisgalus of Melech HaMoshiach.

Thus, even when he is engaged in a mundane activity – e.g., eating

– the objective of this eating is that he can serve G-d and greet Moshiach Tzidkeinu. As the Rebbe says in the sicha from Shabbos Parshas VaYeira 5752, “All matters and all activities are to be instilled with Moshiach and the Redemption, even including his eating and drinking, since he is longing for the festive meal of the *Leviyanan*, the *Shor HaBar*, and the fragrant wine – to the point that even after his meal, he is still hungry for the festive meal of the *Leviyanan*, the *Shor HaBar*, and the fragrant wine. Thus, he claims to G-d that he is truly unable to fulfill the mitzva of ‘And you will eat, and you will be satisfied, and you will bless’ until G-d will seat us at His table for the seuda of the Future to Come.”

The point is that in order to implement the words of this sicha, we must instill the subject of Moshiach into every detail of our lives, and this is a surefire recipe to bring change, in the Rebbe’s words, so that we will live *Moshiach’dik*.

May it be G-d’s will that we will merit the revelation of the Rebbe MH”M, immediately, mamash, now!

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# MOSHIACH MUST REMAIN ON THE AGENDA!

HA'RAV HA'GAON R. YESHAYAHU HERTZEL,  
CHIEF RABBI OF NATZRAT ILLIT

TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY



*Chaf-Ches Nissan is not just one day out of the year, rather, it is every day of the year!*

*Every day that we do not see the Rebbe with our own eyes is “Chaf-Ches Nissan.” The Rebbe’s cry remains suspended in time and space, calling out to each and every one of us: “Tut altz vahs ir kent” to bring the Redemption, mamash, now!*

The Rebbe brings in one of his sichos that the Mittlerer Rebbe would wish upon himself that when two chassidim meet one another, they will speak about “yichuda ilaa” and “yichuda tataa.”

It seems to me that in our

present situation after Chaf-Ches Nissan, the day in 5751 that the Rebbe gave us the job of bringing the Redemption, the Rebbe would wish upon himself along the same lines – that when chassidim meet they will speak about the true and





complete Redemption, as it is in our power to greet Moshiach Tzidkeinu, immediately, mamash.

As long as the Redemption is not actually here, every moment is critical, both materially and spiritually. The suffering and pain is not just ours, as “the Sh’china is in exile.” Even the Rebbe himself suffers the afflictions of the exile in anticipation of being seen by us with our very eyes. Thus, it is understood how much the Rebbe wants for his chassidim to be involved in bringing Moshiach and not to let the issue depart from the agenda.

I once heard a saying that if someone would announce that Moshiach is absolutely coming tomorrow morning at a certain hour, all people throughout the world would naturally be excited and overjoyed – all but one, the Rebbe MH”M. He would say, “How can it be that Jews will have to suffer for another few hours in Galus?”

The Rebbe’s entire existence is Moshiach. It was said about the Mittlerer Rebbe that if they would cut his finger, he would bleed chassidus. Similarly, we find with the Rebbe – his very flesh and blood is Moshiach. This is not only because he is Moshiach (as is brought in sichos that the leader of the generation is the Moshiach of the generation, etc.), but also since his actions, his teachings, his avoda, and the very purpose of his soul’s descent into this world is Moshiach.

\* \* \*

Moshiach is a matter of general and worldwide importance. It pertains to the entire Jewish people, as every Jew says (or at least thinks), “I believe in the coming of Moshiach...I will wait for him every day that he should come.” Today, we see clearly that everyone, regardless of community or affiliation, is crying out for Moshiach. Once there

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was a time that this was a sign of who a Lubavitcher was, but now, it has turned into everyone’s rightful property (as is known to be the case with many of the Rebbe’s mitzva campaigns). We can also see this in the growing list of s’farim, songs, etc., on the subject of Moshiach.

We find a commentary of the Pesach Hagada on the statement “Our Rabbis, the time has come for the morning Shma”: The Sages were already on the level of the Redemption. They enjoyed the lofty plateaus of the Exodus from Egypt, going out from all boundaries and limitations. Their students, however, were not holding on such a level. Therefore, they came with a claim, “Our Rabbis, the time has come for

the Shma” – the unity of G-d must be revealed in the world; “of the morning” – as the light of day. In other words, the students cried: We also need Moshiach!

Similarly, we find in today’s world situation – the entire world is calling for the revelation of Melech HaMoshiach.

However, in addition to all this, we Lubavitcher chassidim possess the main thing. We merited to draw from the source. We heard the holy and G-dly words of the leader of the generation. We heard the announcement of the Redemption from his very mouth. We were so commanded, and thus, we must stand seven times more in our involvement in the only remaining avoda. The idea of the Redemption and the coming of Moshiach is not some additional aspect in our avodas Hashem; it is a part of us. It is an inner and spiritual matter, an essential matter in our connection to the Rebbe. We must be involved in this constantly in a manner of “it shall not depart.”

\* \* \*

In our situation, we must clarify this point further:

The avoda to bring the Redemption obligates a burgeoning sense of cooperation among all chassidim. We must not permit side issues to distract us from this primary objective. We must not be dragged into battles over power, prestige, money, honor, and any other form of nonsense that regrettably eats away at any good portion acquired en route to bringing Moshiach.

There’s an example brought about someone who was angry with the cantor in his synagogue. When the cantor called out “Yaaleh V’Yavo,” this fellow called out behind him, “Lo yaaleh v’lo yavo!” (He shouldn’t ascend and he shouldn’t come!)

There's a saying that goes: Whoever doesn't do, doesn't err. It stands to reason that from all the genuine desire to do activities to bring the Redemption, certain mistakes will be made. Therefore, it is important to seek advice about these activities and "salvation [will come] from the advice of the many." However, this certainly must not be used as an excuse for inaction on such a vital issue.

Since this is the only remaining avoda today (as the Rebbe stated on Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sara 5752), we must make every effort to tie all

activities and everything we do with the Redemption, particularly in strengthening our studies in the subject of Moshiach and the Redemption.

The recent commemoration of Chaf-Ches Nissan comes as a reminder and an additional source of strength from the Rebbe to each of us in his holy words: "*Ich gib dahs iber tzu yedern fun aich*" (I give this over to each one of you) – to bring the Redemption.

\* \* \*

In conclusion, Chaf-Ches Nissan

is not just one day out of the year, rather, it is every day of the year! Every day that we do not see the Rebbe with our own eyes is "Chaf-Ches Nissan." The Rebbe's cry remains suspended in time and space, calling out to each and every one of us: "*Tut altz vahs ir kent*" to bring the Redemption, mamash, now! And all this must be as the Rebbe concluded the sicha: with joy and gladness of heart.

May it be G-d's will that the Redemption will already be here in actual deed, mamash, and he will redeem us!

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# THE GAON AND TZADDIK RABBI SHMUEL ALEXANDER UNSDORFER ZATZAL

*From Shemen Sasson Meichaveirecha*

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



Rabbi Unsrdorfer was born in the month of Sivan 5680 (May-June, 1920), in the city of Pressburg to his father, the *gaon* and *tzaddik* Rabbi Shlomo Zalman *zatzal*, who taught Torah and preached to the people of the city. (Rabbi Shlomo Zalman died *al kiddush Hashem* on Rosh Chodesh Mar-Cheshvan 5705 (October 18, 1944), may G-d avenge his blood). In his youth, he studied under the *gaon* Rabbi Akiva Sofer *zatzal* of Pressburg, and by the Nietra *rav*, Rabbi Shmuel Dovid HaLevi Ungar *zatzal* (son-in-law of the Klausenberger Rebbe *zatzal*). Afterwards, he traveled to Belze, where he studied Torah in the shadow of the *Admur* Rabbi Aharon *zatzal*.

In 5699 (1938-39), he escaped Eastern Europe and settled in Manchester, England. During World War II he served as *rosh mesivta* of the Yeshiva in the city of Staines, near London, and he merited to establish many G-d fearing Torah disciples there. In 5709 (1948-49), the Klausenberger Rebbe asked him to move to Montreal to serve as *rosh yeshiva* of *Reishis Chochma*, a yeshiva the latter had established for a group of bachurim whom he had helped rescue from the Holocaust, and who had later moved to Canada. In Mar-Cheshvan 5746 (October-November, 1985), Rabbi Unsrdorfer ascended to the Holy Land, where he became the head

of a rabbinical court and a *rosh kollel* for the *Divrei Chaim, Sanz* congregation in Petach Tikva, and where he taught Torah to the masses.

Rabbi Unsrdorfer was a brilliant scholar<sup>1</sup> in both the revealed and esoteric dimensions of Torah, and was known to pray with exceptional

*“The Admur of  
Lubavitch is the  
kohen who stands and  
serves before G-d,  
and offers himself as  
a sacrifice for the  
Jewish people.”*

devotion, like one of the Early Chassidim. Notwithstanding all that, Rabbi Unsrdorfer was a down-to-earth person who welcomed all people with a pleasant demeanor, and with humility. He was accepted by all the Torah leaders and *Admurim*, and they regarded him as one of the lofty ones of the generation.

## DRAWN TO CHASSIDUS

When Rabbi Unsrdorfer was in Manchester in 5699 (1938-39), he learned chassidus with the chassidim Rabbis Avrohom Sender Nemtzov o.b.m., and Yerachmiel Binyominson o.b.m., *rav* of Zlubin. In *Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayatz* there is a letter that the Rebbe Rayatz sent to Otvotsk on the twelfth of Sivan 5699 (May 30, 1939), to a number of young yeshiva men, refugees of Vienna, who were then residing in England. One of these young men was “Shmuel Alexander Unsrdorfer.” In the letter, the Rebbe Rayatz responds to their question regarding the chassidus study period, detailing for them what they should learn during the weekdays, and what they should learn on Shabbos.

Rabbi Unsrdorfer’s closeness to Chabad chassidus continued on, with even greater strength, in the seventh generation of Chabad.

## THEY DO NOT EVEN UNDERSTAND THE REBBE’S MUNDANE TALK

In 5752 (1991-92), I had the great merit of becoming close to the *gaon shlita*, and I discussed with him many issues relating to Torah and Divine service. Together with my friend, Rabbi

Dovid Nachshon, I also spent many, long hours with him. He told us about his outstanding faith in every holy word of the Rebbe, and about his absolute trust that we would imminently merit the rebuilding of the Holy Temple and the true and complete Redemption.



The *gaon* expressed his deep pain about the fact that certain people “who do not even comprehend the Rebbe’s mundane talk” have the nerve to criticize the Rebbe, especially when everyone sees clearly that he is always right — not only in his prophetic predictions, but also in his understanding of the appropriate response to each and every situation: where all others are in doubt, the Rebbe is certain, analyzing every situation with extraordinary clarity through the eyes of Torah. This, Rabbi Unsorfer attributed to the Rebbe’s holiness and selfless dedication to Torah and chassidus.

### THE REBBE’S EVERY WORD IS TORAH

On the twelfth of Shvat 5751 (January 27, 1991), in the midst of the Gulf War, Rabbi Unsorfer had a brief audience with the Rebbe on the “dollars” line. The Rebbe told him to publicize that the Rebbe is instructing everyone to continue with their plans to fly to Israel, and not to be intimidated, and that those already in Israel, are prohibited [by Torah law] from leaving at this time, for it is the “land . . . that the eyes of G-d your L-rd are upon, from the beginning of the year to years end.” The *gaon* told me that he was deeply impressed by the extraordinary clarity and faith with which the Rebbe spoke these words — this, at a time when most people were terribly frightened by what might happen in the Holy Land.

At the *Siyum HaRambam* of 5752, Rabbi Unsorfer reiterated the way he

felt about the Rebbe’s words to him: “On a recent Motzaei Shabbos, as I was leaving the *beis midrash*, people with gas masks in their hands were asking me, ‘What’s going to be?’ I answered out of faith, that surly no harm will befall the Holy Nation in the Holy Land. When they asked me if this is what it says in the Torah, I replied that if the Lubavitcher Rebbe said there will be no need for gas masks, then it is as though it is written explicitly in the Torah . . . the Rebbe’s every word is Torah.”

In his approbation to my *seifer Yechi HaMelech HaMoshiach*, the *gaon* wrote as follows: “Who among us can possibly fathom the ultimate depth of that great person and holy dear one, the *Admur* of Lubavitch *shlita*, who devotes himself with self-sacrifice all his days for the sake of the holiness of the Jewish people, never diverting his attention, and who publicly sanctifies the Name of G-d to bring light into the darkness of those souls trapped in the vanities of this world, in the spirit of the verse, “*From the trash heaps he lifts the destitute.*”

### THE KOHEN WHO STANDS AND SERVES G-D AND OFFERS HIMSELF AS A SACRIFICE FOR THE JEWISH PEOPLE

At a *Siyum HaRambam* in Montreal, in 5744 (1983-84), Rabbi Unsorfer said the following: “It is a mitzva to listen to the words of sages. Only a sage and *tzaddik* like the *Admur shlita* is the

one who shall instruct us, not only in Divine service, but also in Torah study patterns . . . because the two cannot be separated . . . **The *Admur* of Lubavitch is the *kohen* who stands and serves before G-d, and offers himself as a sacrifice for the Jewish people.** Therefore, his Torah is the true Torah . . . It is a great merit for all of us to listen to the voice of the *tzaddik*, and whoever has not yet

joined [in the daily study of Rambam] should do so now for the second cycle. By doing this we will also express our gratitude and praise to the Creator of the universe for having given us the *tzaddikim* of the generation, and [we will express] our prayers that G-d should lengthen the days and years of the *tzaddik*, and keep the *tzaddikim* of the generation among us until the revelation of the light of Melech HaMoshiach’s countenance, speedily in our days — *amen!*

### MORE OF HIS WORDS AT VARIOUS CHABAD EVENTS

“It is written in the *seifer Tiferes Shlomo* that the Chozeh of Lublin designated one hour a day, for sixteen years, to pray that G-d prolong the days of the great *tzaddik* Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev. Let us utilize this holy moment to request of the Holy One, blessed be He, that he lengthen the days and years of the Rebbe — that he should be healthy and strong as ‘a cedar in the Lebanon.’ ‘*They will still be fruitful in old age, vigorous and fresh they will be*’ through long days and good years, with the salvation of the Jewish people.” (11 Nissan celebration, 5751 / March 26, 1991)

\* \* \*

“*The tzaddik will flourish like a date palm, like a cedar in the Lebanon he will grow tall, planted in the House of G-d.*” We ask G-d that there should be fulfilled in that *tzaddik* and holy person

who always cleaves to G-d the verse, 'In the *courtyards* of our L-rd they will flourish' — i.e., that he should be healthy in the literal sense, here in the [physical] world, which is "the courtyard of our L-rd." And we ask G-d, 'Od *yenuvun beseiva*' [They will be fruitful in old age], which is related to '*niv sefasayim*,'<sup>2</sup> [speech of the lips] — i.e., let us merit to once again hear our Rebbe's holy words. "Vigorous and fresh they will be." [And as the *perek* concludes], "To declare that G-d is just, my Rock in Whom there is no wrong" — i.e., so that everyone should know that G-d conducts the world, and that the holy path of the Baal Shem Tov, which our holy Rebbe carries on with majesty and might, is eternal." (11 Nissan, 5752 / April 14, 1992)

\* \* \*

"From the time that the Rebbe *shlita* fell ill, not a day passes in which I do not recite T'hillim [for his recovery], and have in mind during the *Shmoneh Esrei* that he should be healed. Every person is obligated to do this, for the Sages have said that during prayer, one is required to have in mind the Torah scholar, the *tzaddik* of the generation, the Torah giant of the generation, who carries the entire People on his shoulders all his days, yet remains completely humble before every person, near and far, and whose holy mind is always focused on them . . . the *tzaddik* who sits in his room far outside the land of Israel, yet draws down abundance upon the entire Jewish people." (Siyum *HaRambam*, Elul, 5752 / September, 1992)

\* \* \*

"When I attended a *farbrengen* in honor of 19 Kislev 5748 (December 10, 1987), the Rebbe turned to me and asked, "How's the Klausenberger Rebbe?" I told the Rebbe that he is not well, and is unable to speak. The Rebbe responded, "One must

**demand of a Rebbe that he should speak!**" I thus see myself as an emissary of all Chabad chassidim, and all the tens of thousands of Jews throughout the world who are longing to hear the words of the Rebbe's holy mouth — to request and demand: **Rebbe, say sichos!**<sup>3</sup> **Say holy Maamarim!**<sup>4</sup>

"Master of the universe! Send an immediate and complete recovery to the Rebbe *shlita*, leader of the generation, who carries on his shoulders the burden of the entire nation as a whole, and as individuals, with a wondrous leadership, the likes of which has never been seen before. Let our eyes behold that the *tzaddik* who is the "foundation of the world" flourishes like a date palm, and grows tall like a cedar in the Lebanon. For there are none "to relate that G-d is straight" — i.e., to straighten the Jewish people and prepare their hearts for the true and complete Redemption — like the holy *Admur shlita*." (11 Nissan 5753 / April 2, 1993)

"I heard from the Klausenberger Rebbe . . . that he was once in Poland by the *Admur* of Ostrovtza, and he heard how the *Admur* responded to someone who came to him with the name of a sick person while he was leaning Torah: [The *Admur* said]: 'I hereby donate the merit that I have in Heaven on account of my present Torah study as a complete recovery for this sick person.' Similarly, I say that [we should have the Rebbe in mind] not only when we recite T'hillim, but also during the time that we

designate for Torah study. One should say: 'Master of the universe! If my Torah study is accepted in Heaven, I hereby donate it as a merit for the swift and complete recovery of his honor and holiness, our master, guide and teacher Menachem Mendel ben<sup>5</sup> Chana.' The prayers of the masses have an effect [in Heaven]. Let us all pray that G-d should send his holy angels to heal the Rebbe *shlita*. (11 Nissan 5754 / March 23, 1994)

## TORAH STUDY IN PURITY AND HOLINESS

The *gaon* wrote to me that he heard from a very wealthy and respected man who used to be a community leader in Montreal, that one night, when he was traveling by train from Paris to Brussels, there was a young man on the train who was stood outside the compartment the entire night — throughout the entire trip — studying from a small *Gemara*. This rich man had no idea who the young man was, but every so often, he invited him to come sit down in his compartment, where there was an empty place. But the young man politely refused, explaining that he did not wish to sit in a compartment in which there were women. When the train arrived in Brussels, the wealthy man saw that there was a contingent of people waiting for this young man at the train station. When he asked them who the young man is, they told him that he is

the son-in-law of the Lubavitcher Rebbe. (Compare with a similar story in the chapter on the *gaon* Rabbi Elchonon Hilprin of London.)

### NOTES:

1. *Gaon*
2. *Isaiah* 57:19
3. *Torah thoughts at a public address.*
4. *Chassidic discourses.*
5. *Son of.*



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# 17 PLUS 11

BY R. KAMINKER

A long line of people waited at the entrance to 770, on Eastern Parkway in New York. It was Sunday, and the line of people waiting for dollars from the Rebbe was so long that from the entrance to 770 it was hard to see the end of the line.

It was Av 5747 and typical of a New York summer, it was hot and humid, but nobody thought of leaving the line for their air conditioned home. Mrs. Perachya Elbaz of Nahariya was among the women waiting in line, nervously anticipating meeting the Rebbe. This was her first time here.

It would take a while until her turn, and she used the time to say T'hillim and to review her request to the Rebbe in her mind: A bracha for children after 17 barren years!

She looked around at the women and wondered what burdens they had come with to the Rebbe. She knew there were women who wanted to marry, women who needed money, mothers of sick children as well as sick mothers. They all came to ask the Rebbe for a bracha or just to receive a dollar from his holy hand. Now, she was here too, after years of treatments and dashed hopes.

She stood there, facing the Rebbe. His face shone and his eyes saw through to her soul. Her heart skipped a beat and she remained speechless. She was hypnotized by the

Rebbe's gaze, and as though in a dream, she found herself standing outside with a dollar in her hand.

Emotional and disappointed, happy but confused, she looked for a familiar face. She had so wanted to make her request for she knew that only the Rebbe could help her. But fear had silenced her, and before she could get hold of herself and digest the awesomeness of the encounter, she was moved along and the line continued and continued.

Her hosts, residents of Crown Heights, who deeply felt her pain, gave her a tip for the following

Sunday. Another nerve-wracking week of waiting went by, and Sunday found Mrs. Perachya Elbaz in line again. She thought of the 17 years of emptiness, 17 years of anticipation, 17 years of disappointments. The time had come for a child.

She reviewed the instructions she had been given. She wouldn't reach out for the dollar but would immediately begin to speak. She repeated it to herself again and again: Be sure not to take the dollar until you get a bracha.

Once again, she faced the Rebbe. She trembled and felt paralyzed, but she would try, she would ask!

Before she could say anything, the Rebbe held out two dollars to her, looked at the second dollar, and smiled and said: "This is for the children."

"But Rebbe," she got up her courage to speak, "I don't have any children!"

"This is for the children," repeated the Rebbe. "Give it to the children in Eretz Yisroel."

"Rebbe, I don't have children!" Tears of frustration welled up in her eyes and she said, "I am married for 17 years and we don't have children!"

The Rebbe's soothing voice promised her, "You will have children."

"When, Rebbe?"

"Soon."

Grasping the two dollars,



and with an explicit promise from the Rebbe and lots of hope, Perachya left quite excitedly.

\* \* \*

Sunday, Av 5747. 770 was full of men waiting to get a dollar from the Rebbe. Yossi Elbaz was in line, too. Rabbi Yisroel Butman, shliach in Nahariya, had sent him to the Rebbe for a bracha. He knew that only the Rebbe could help him.

The variety of types in line caught his attention. There were shluchim in their black sirtuks as well as military personnel in uniform. Chassidim with beards alongside nonobservant Jews – there were even gentiles. They were all there for they had all come to ask the Rebbe for a bracha.

The line moved faster than anticipated and Yossi knew that this time he wouldn't give in. In another few seconds, he would be standing in front of the Rebbe, and this time, unlike the previous week, he wouldn't reach out for the dollar. He had something important to ask for after 17 years without any children.

Hordes of people had gotten their dollars and brachos already and the Rebbe didn't even look tired. His gaze took everyone in, wordlessly comforting and relating in a fatherly manner to each individual, no matter who they were.

The Rebbe. He was facing the Rebbe once again and he lowered his gaze. He held out his hand and his throat was dry. He couldn't say a word, but he didn't need to. The Rebbe held out an extra dollar and

***“I am married for 17 years and we don't have children!”***

***The Rebbe's soothing voice promised her,***

***“You will have children.”***

***“When, Rebbe?”***

***“Soon.”***



said with a smile, “This is for the children.”

Yossi was dumbfounded. “Children?” he cried out.

“This is for the children,” repeated the Rebbe. “Give it to the children in Eretz Yisroel.”

“But Rebbe,” he nearly cried, “I am married for 17 years and we don't

have children!”

“You will have children.”

“When, Rebbe?” The Rebbe had promised children and he couldn't wait.

“Soon,” said the Rebbe.

When Perachya and her husband met at the end of the day and compared notes, they were even more overwhelmed. With two extra dollars and explicit promises, they returned to Nahariya in great anticipation.

\* \* \*

“When the Rebbe promised it would happen soon, I thought it would be the following month,” says Mrs. Elbaz. “One month went by and then many months, then a year. In times of despair, our shluchim, Rabbi Yisroel Butman and his wife, Shifra, encouraged us. We would have children, for the Rebbe had promised!

“After **another eleven years**, I was expecting twins. The pregnancy was complicated and I had toxemia. I lost one of the babies. Six months ago, I gave birth to our daughter.

I cannot describe the suffering we experienced all these years, but it's even harder to describe the tremendous joy we feel after **28 years** of waiting for a child.”

\* \* \*

Let us wish the Elbaz couple much nachas from their daughter and may they soon see the complete fulfillment of the Rebbe's bracha that they will have children, in the plural.

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# THE CHASSID WHO INSPIRED MOSHIACH & SCIENCE RESEARCH

BY PROF. SHIMON SILMAN, RYAL INSTITUTE AND TOURO COLLEGE

## Part 1

*On the 13th of Iyar (May 4) this year we observe the 52nd yahrtzeit of Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib Schneerson, the youngest brother of the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach. Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib was the chassid whose life and work inspired Moshiach and science research and the establishment of the RYAL Research Institute on Moshiach and the Sciences. In honor of his yahrtzeit we present this series of articles discussing his life and work, emphasizing those aspects which continue to inspire and influence Jewish scientists to this very day.*

There is a letter written by the Previous Lubavitcher Rebbe to Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib in response to a letter that Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib had written regarding a position he was offered in the Department of Theoretical Physics of the University of Liverpool, England. (It has been reported that he went to England to do research in physics at the urging of Ben-Gurion, who wanted him to

develop a program in nuclear technology for Israel.) In his letter, dated 17 Kislev 5708 (1947), the Previous Rebbe gave the following *shlichus* (mission) to Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib in connection with this position: “What interests me is to bring, with Hashem’s help, the beauty of *Shem* (Torah and Mitzvos) into the tents of *Yefes* (the universities) – to show the Jewish

youth who pride themselves in, and long for, secular knowledge that it is nothing compared to the deep wisdom of the Torah.” The Rebbe continued to suggest that Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib meet with the great scientists and language specialists there and work on translating the works of Chabad chassidus into English, beginning with the Tanya. The Rebbe further suggested translating “the history of the *Baalei-Shem*, the Kabbalists until Rabbi Adam (Baal Shem), Rabbi Adam himself, the Baal Shem Tov and his students, Rabbi Dovber of Mezritch (The Maggid) and his students, their published works, stories that they told and stories about them....”

It was not until 5710 (1950) that Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib was actually able to go to England and a short two years later, on 13 Iyar, 5712 (1952) he passed away. But the fact that the Previous Rebbe gave him this mission means that he was the man for the job. What were the qualities that he possessed that made him suited to all this, especially to the awesome task of showing the Jewish youth that the sciences are nothing compared to

the deep wisdom of the Torah? To begin with, consider the titles with which the Previous Rebbe addresses him in the letter just quoted: “*Vosik* and *chassid*, a G-d-fearing man, a man of exceptionally high ability....” From his early childhood, Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib exhibited brilliance and diligence in his learning and this was his trademark throughout his life.

### A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib was born on 16 Sivan, 5669 (1909) in Nikolayev, Russia. That same year the family moved to Yekatrinslav where his father, *Kvod K’dushas* Rabbi Levi Yitzchok assumed the position of Rabbi. At the age of three, a visitor to the home of Rabbi Levi Yitzchok was amazed to see little Leibel (as Yisroel Aryeh Leib was called) looking into a book with great concentration. Leibel did not take his eyes off the book the whole time the guest was there. Rabbi Levi Yitzchok, noticing the guest’s amazement went over to Leibel, who had been looking into a book of the Mishneh, and asked him what he was learning. Leibel



***When he received Melech HaMoshiach’s book HaYom Yom he started to dance with joy and excitement saying, “My brother sent me his first book!” He remarked that it’s too bad that people don’t see the depth hidden in it.***

immediately gave a clear explanation of the Mishneh that he had been learning. Rabbi Levi Yitzchok once said of him that he had “the Tzemach Tzedek’s head.”

His diligence is as legendary as his brilliance. Once, during “the nine days”, he sat through the night learning a *masechta* of Gemara to make a *siyum*. His mother, Rebbetzin Chana, wanted to show a visiting chassid (Rabbi Simcha Gorodetzky) the extent of Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib’s diligence. She entered her son’s room and called his name, “Leibel!” He was so engrossed in his learning that he did not hear her. So she called his name again, “Leibel!” He still didn’t hear her. She then went over to him and pulled on his sleeve and again called “Leibel!” But Leibel was oblivious to the presence of anyone in the room. Rebbetzin Chana then turned to the chassid and smiling with pride, she said, “Do you see the diligence of my son Leibel?!”

In the summer of 5684 (1924) Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib arrived in Petersburg, where he was a member of the household of the Previous

Rebbe, who cherished him and showed him special attention. The Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach and Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib were both present at the *farbrengen* of 19 Kislev, 5687 (1926). The Previous Rebbe said to them, “It’s too bad that my father [the *Rashab*, who was the Rebbe before him] didn’t see you.”

Once Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib approached the Previous Rebbe with a question on a matter of chassidus. The Rebbe said he couldn’t explain this matter to him. Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib was heartbroken and cried all night. The next day he came to the Rebbe for an entirely different reason and was surprised to hear the Rebbe explain to him the matter which he had asked the night before. Afterwards the Rebbe explained that since Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib had been heartbroken, he was a *kli*, a proper receptacle, for what the Rebbe had to tell him.

Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib was also very popular among the chassidim who would approach him with difficult questions in nighle and chassidus and engage in lively discussions. At this time he began studying mathematics in the academies in Petersburg where he organized a branch of *Tiferes Bachurim* which held daily Torah classes for the Jewish youth and strengthened their observance of mitzvos. His main occupation, however, was the study of Torah which he continued to do with great diligence. He would spend long hours in the Previous Rebbe’s library delving into the depths of the *s’farim* at hand. One night he was seen in the library leaning on a *shtender*, holding a cigarette and lost in deep thought. When the chassidim came back the next morning they found him standing in exactly the same position that he was in when they left the night before – still holding the cigarette

and still lost in thought.

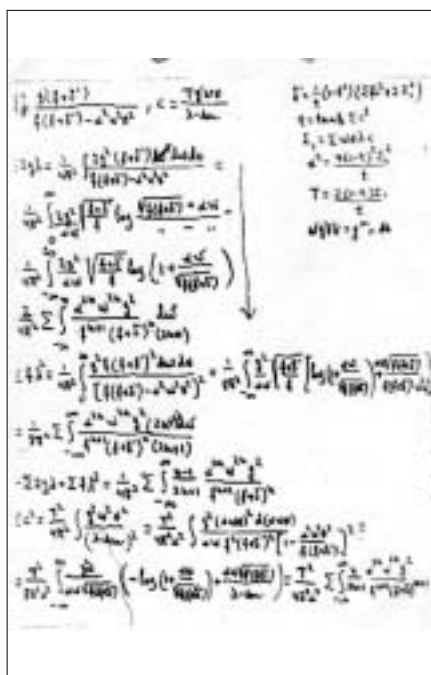
During the years that the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach and the Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka were in Berlin, Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib was there also. They would receive letters from their father Rabbi Levi Yitzchok addressed to both of them together. For example, a letter dated 9 Adar II, 5692 (1932), a few days before Purim, is addressed to “My dear, cherished and beloved sons, may they live long and good lives.” He writes that he is sending the letter “to fulfill the sending of gifts for Purim, each man to his friend (which means, in the Kabbalistic sense, from a father to his sons...).” Since he couldn’t send them gifts of food, in accordance with the Mitzva, he says that he is sending them a spiritual gift – a booklet he wrote with Kabbalistic explanations on the Megilla. He writes that he is sending the booklet “to both of you together – the older one and the younger one together” and continues to explain that the essential concept of Purim is the equality of everyone – the great ones and the small ones.

It is assumed that it was at this time that Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib wrote his most famous paper in mathematics, “The Location of Eigenvalues and Eigenvectors of Complex Matrices,” a topic which has applications to Quantum Mechanics. (Later in this series we will discuss this paper and the story of its publication.)

In 1933, the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach and Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka moved to Paris, when the Nazis *yimach shmam* came to power. Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib was trying to go to Israel but needed certain papers from the German government. He came to his brother for help. The Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach was ready to go back to Germany to get the papers but Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka protested

that it would be extremely dangerous for him to go and insisted that she go instead. She went and succeeded in getting the documents that Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib needed and he went to Israel.

While in Israel, Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib got married. The wedding brought joy not only to those present, but also to his parents, Rabbi Levi Yitzchok and Rebbetzin Chana thousands of miles away in the remote Russian city of Chi’illi where Rabbi Levi Yitzchok



R. Yisroel Aryeh Leib mathematical manuscript

had been exiled by the Russian government. As Rebbetzin Chana recalls in her memoirs: “One day the Rav [Rabbi Levi Yitzchok] went to the post office and I stayed home to do the housework and prepare lunch (which had to be prepared *yesh me’ayin* – from nothing!). The Rav came home, his face beaming with joy and he said, ‘We have a Mazel Tov!’ He showed me a letter which had just arrived...informing us of news...from Israel – that our son

Leibel had gotten married. This good news was a double *simcha* – it was the first report we had received telling us that he was alive and it was the happy news of the wedding. It was a ray of light which penetrated the darkness of our exile and a sign of encouragement and hope for the future.”

Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib and his wife lived in Tel Aviv where he continued his mathematical research while working in a bookstore and the public library. She worked as a nurse. Here too he would spend long nights learning chassidus. Frequently, he would learn with his *chavrusa*, Rabbi Nachum Goldschmid (author of the well known *shiurim* in Tanya) who was his childhood friend from Yekatrinislav. Rabbi Goldschmid’s son, who was a little boy at the time, later related the manner in which his father and Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib would learn. In the morning, they would sit down together at the table, facing each other, each leaning his head on his hand. They would not talk but rather just sit there “thinking to each other.” They would sit that way for hours and hours. When the little boy would return later in the afternoon he would find them sitting there in the exact same position just “thinking to each other.”

Another close friend of Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib was the chassid, Rabbi Moshe Gurary. His son, Rabbi Nosson Gurary, who knew Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib, described him as “very serious. His external mannerisms, his manner of speech and the appearance of his face were very similar” to those of the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach.

Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib became known for a special style of learning chassidus. He would start with a concept in chassidus and explain it

in successive stages, each time using less of the technical terminology of chassidus and more of common everyday speech. On one occasion he remarked that there was a certain concept that he did not yet fully understand as he could not yet explain it entirely in everyday speech.

After the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach came to America there ensued a regular correspondence between the two brothers. The Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach would send him the most recent publications of chassidus and Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib would bring them to the other chassidim. When he received Melech HaMoshiach's book *HaYom Yom* he started to dance with joy and excitement saying, "My brother sent me his first book!" He remarked that it's too bad that people don't see the depth hidden in it.

We have talked extensively about Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib's genius and diligence, his love of chassidus and his work in mathematics, because of their relevance to Moshiach and science research. But

we should mention one more thing for which he was famous. On Simchas Torah he was known to dance all night with great exuberance and show tremendous outpouring of *Ahavas Yisroel* – which in itself is a basic element in bringing the Geula, as Melech HaMoshiach says in many sichos.

### “THE LIVING SHALL TAKE IT TO HEART”

As we mentioned earlier, in 1950 Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib accepted a position in the Department of Theoretical Physics at the University of Liverpool, England. Two years later, on 13 Iyar, 5712 (1952), he passed away after suffering a heart attack. He is buried in Tzfas, Israel.

At the completion of the Shiva (7 day period of mourning) for Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib, his brother, the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach, said a short but very deep sicha about comforting the mourners and its connection to the final redemption by Moshiach – the ultimate comfort of the Jewish people. We present a free translation of the sicha:

“The creation of the universe was

a progressive descent from above to below with the intention that it be followed by successive ascents from below to above. Since this is the Divine intention – it must actually happen that way since nothing can stand in His way. This is especially so since G-d's plan for the creation precedes the creation itself, and at that point there is obviously no evil in existence.

“Thus it must be that one's free will affects only the details but does not affect the creation as a whole, which is in constant ascent since that is the intention of the Creator.

“On a deeper level it must be that the intention of the Creator that there be constant ascent is also fulfilled by each individual. After all, why should there be any difference? Man's free will merely sets the pace of the ascent, (similar to what Chazal say, “If they merit, the redemption will happen faster. If not, it will happen according to schedule.”) It also determines the manner of the ascent – whether it be by initially leaving room for evil and then completely defeating it or whether it be a steady ascent with no retreat at all.

“From the time that the creative descent was complete – at the end of the six days of creation – the successive ascents began. [at the beginning of the first Shabbos] This can be perceived, however, only by the souls in Gan Eden and by tzaddikim in this world as Chazal say: “Tzaddikim have no rest – neither in this world nor in the next” for they are in a continuous state of ascent

“Although there are many changes throughout the 6,000 years of history – ascents and descents, the Scriptures say that “a tzaddik will fall and arise seven times.” The fall is only for the purpose of the ascent which follows it. The fall and the descent are necessary



The tziyun of R. Yisroel Aryeh Leib

prerequisites for this ascent since any transition between a lower level and a higher level requires that there be *bittul*, a nullification – in between. The same applies to the creative descent: between one level of existence and another there must be nothingness.

“This explains the statement of the Baal Shem Tov that although he could have ascended to heaven in a storm of fire like Eliyahu HaNavi did, he wanted to fulfill the verse that says “unto the earth you shall return.” He meant that the lowest descent, returning to the earth, is a preparation for a level which is higher than ascending to heaven in a storm. Since the descent is a necessary preparation for the ascent to a higher level, it is really not a

descent at all but rather part of the ascent.

“This applies also to one who passes away and to the mourners. For the one who passed away, the passing is a return to the earth in preparation for a higher ascent. For the mourners – may they have good life – the mourning which is *katnus ha'mochin* (a diminished mental state) will also be followed by an ascent to a higher level.

“This is also the inner content of the expression used to comfort the mourners – the mourner is included among those who mourn for the destruction of *Yerushalayim*. The level of Moshiach and the Third Beis HaMikdash is much higher than the level before the destruction. Thus

the Midrash says that Moshiach was born at the moment following the moment of the destruction. This means that immediately following the lowest descent – but no earlier – the Geula began.

“But one must work very hard to be on such a level that at the time of the fall and the descent he can actually feel – not just believe or understand – that it is only a necessary preparation for an ascent to a very high level. This must also be the intention of those who comfort the mourners, because only in this way is it possible to be truly comforted – among all those who mourn for *Tzion* and *Yerushalayim*.”

(To be continued.)

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**GOLDSTEIN**  
**FULL PAGE**

# WITH ONE VOICE

BY SHAI GEFEN  
TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY, TZFAS

*The Chabad Kol Yisroel Band is a brand new phenomenon that has succeeded in capturing the Chabad community. Primarily, the band stands out with the special character of its members, each with his own exciting story. Shai Gefen met with the band's members, and heard the wondrous life story behind each of them. A band that comprises a summary of the story of this generation – the generation of the Redemption.*

During the past year, the Chabad Kol Yisroel Band has made its mark. If it might seem that we're talking about just another new group trying to break through the Chabad market, in truth, this is something else entirely. First of all, each of the band members has his own exciting life story about the establishment of his connection to the great light of the Rebbe MH"M. Secondly, and most important, there is the tremendous pleasure that the band members derive from bringing their fellow Jews to such great joy and dancing.

It turns out that when the band members see this as a form of shlichus, the resulting joy is on an entirely different level, and anyone who has participated at a wedding featuring the Kol Yisroel Band knows this quite well.

\* \* \*

All the band members are residents of Tzfas, and some of them are alumni of Yeshivas Chassidei Chabad – Tzfas, justifiably referred to by many as “the blast furnace of shlichus and hiskashrus.” Clearly the band wields considerable influence.

Bandleader R. Shimon Bitton formed the band's current membership. He runs a local recording studio, where the band conducts its rehearsals, memorizes the melodies, learns the notes, and is even working on a new CD of Chabad niggunim.

In an interview with *Beis Moshiach*, R. Shimon reveals how he put this group together and what its stated objectives are.

**There is no lack of bands out there, even amongst Anash. What specifically sets you apart from all others?**

The Kol Yisroel Band has a very special make-up, including three baalei t'shuvah and one who was born and raised in a Lubavitcher home. All are Lubavitcher chassidim. Our uniqueness stems from the fact that we play only Chabad niggunim, and this serves as our basis.

Two or three years ago, we were all playing a variety of arrangements before a wide range of audiences, primarily those in the national religious and settler communities. Afterwards, I decided that we had to bring in chassidic music with greater force, and to form a band that would not be limited to Chabad audiences only. We came to the conclusion that



we needed to take to older Chabad melodies and turn them into something with universal appeal, making them into an integral part of the music at weddings and any other joyous occasion. I think that through this new style we have produced, we are en route to achieving our goals, b'ezras Hashem.

**How did you start performing?**

As I mentioned before, I previously appeared with a number of outfits. We first joined a group called Sihara. The music was modern but with inspiring lyrics. In this format, we performed at the annual Klezmer Music Festival in Tzfas, and got some media publicity. Word soon got around, and people began to ask that we appear at weddings. At first, we played primarily for the religious crowd, including numerous performances throughout Yesha.

***We must use our tools to produce a purely Chabad wedding with purely Chabad music, and turn the Chabad melodies into something with universal appeal.***

Then, two years ago, we decided to perform strictly Chabad, and have done so ever since.

**Why?**

We decided that as a group of

Lubavitcher chassidim, we must use our tools to produce a purely Chabad wedding with purely Chabad music, and turn the Chabad melodies into something popular.

In fact, over the past three years, we have done much in this area. When we perform at weddings, the overwhelmingly majority of the songs are Chabad niggunim. At the beginning, these accounted for only 30% of our requests, but today, 90% of what the crowd asks for is Chabad niggunim. A large percentage of our audiences request Chabad niggunim only. The Kol Yisroel Band has succeeded in showing a Chabad wedding as the most joyous of all weddings.

**How did you really succeed in turning these Chabad melodies into big hits at weddings?**

In my opinion, and in the opinion



of the other band members, Chabad niggunim are the most beautiful, special, and joyous of all melodies. If we do this in a professional and attractive manner, the wedding turns into the greatest of all happy occasions. There can be no question that true joy comes through Chabad melodies. We have tried to present Chabad niggunim in a variety of beautiful compositions, without *ch"v* changing the melody itself. However, we turn it into a richer and more interesting song from a musical standpoint.

\* \* \*

The names of the band members are largely unknown. Outwardly, they appear as born and bred Lubavitcher chassidim. Yet, each one's personal life story truly reflects the enormous revolution of this generation as brought about by the Rebbe MH" M, the generation of the Redemption.

Bandleader R. Shimon Bitton plays piano and synthesizer. Award-winning klezmer artist R. **Chaim Kumer** leads the wind section on clarinet, saxophone, and flute. R. **Tal Gonen** runs the brass section on trumpet and trombone, and R. **Eitan Elbar**, a veteran drummer with thirty years' experience, plays percussion. Finally, there is string instrumentalist R. **Danny Tiberin**, who is now returning to his Jewish roots, and considers himself a fervent chassid of the Rebbe MH" M. The band's newest member, R. Danny is deemed to be one of the finest violinists in Eretz Yisroel (in the world, according to his colleagues). Some thirty years ago, he played in a rock band, and today, he is coming back to Yiddishkeit, putting on t'fillin regularly each day.

When Danny Tiberin plays the Alter Rebbe's niggun, he feels each time as if he's playing it for the very first time, with tears streaming down his face, a chassidic farbrengen en route to the chuppa.

**You spoke about the**

**transformation that you are making with your unique brand of performances. How do you see all this from your vantage point?**

R. **Shimon Bitton**: There are weddings for Lubavitcher baalei t'shuva that make a tremendous kiddush Hashem. You see totally non-religious people standing in tears, deeply moved, who have suddenly been introduced to a completely different style – a chassidic style. We ignite their hearts, and then we see the feedback. There is no doubt that when we play Chabad niggunim with true heartfelt chassidic enthusiasm, the melody undergoes a significant transformation.

Once when we played at the annual Klezmer Music Festival in Tzfas, a woman entered my music center on Jerusalem Street the following day, and asked for a compact disc of the band. She said that she had attended the performance the previous night. "If I do t'shuva, it's all in the merit of your band," she said.

There was a young drummer named Yoni Madar, who actually became a baal t'shuva in the merit of the band. Today, he heads a Torah observant household in B'nei Brak. Many artists and musicians have recently inquired about our band and its unique background, as embodied by the special and enthralling personal stories of its members.

**How have you managed to become so popular recently, when you consider the geographic factors of being so far from the country's central region?**

Our publicity is done through word of mouth, through those who have seen us perform at weddings, and who are most impressed by what they saw. Tzfas is a city that caters to many artists, musicians, and other people who love the artistic nature that Tzfas inspires.

Regarding the geographic part to your question, the distance does not present a problem. From our point of view, the lengthy traveling to weddings and other functions turns the entire evening into an unforgettable experience. We utilize the travel time to learn together. Each trip is a spiritual experience that only intensifies the joy of our performance afterwards.

**Beside your performances, are you involved in other musical productions?**

In practice, we have a studio where we conduct our band rehearsals. We are presently concluding the recording of a Chabad niggunim CD. This new disc will include a collection of joyous Chabad melodies, some very familiar, others less familiar. The songs were prepared with a fast-paced band tempo, so listeners can get an impression of what they can hear at one of our performances.

**Why did you choose the name Kol Yisroel [All of Israel]?**

First of all, "All of Israel has a portion in the World to Come." Secondly, our initial plans were to appear before different Jewish communities. In fact, we see that our band has succeeded in uniting different communities and bringing a greater awakening to t'shuva. The name definitely fits the band's very nature and content.

**Each band member has his own interesting story of how he came closer to Yiddishkeit. How did you come to find the great illumination of the Rebbe MH" M?**

I was born into a home that was literally cut off from Yiddishkeit. My parents were very simple people. They made Kiddush on Friday night, and then afterwards went to watch television.

After completing my military service, I began to play in nightclubs.



Tal Gonen

In truth, I had already been playing the piano since the age of fourteen. Afterwards, I moved to Tiberius, where I worked as a musical accompanist to a wedding vocalist. This also marked my first spiritual reawakening, one that would bring a change to our entire family.

The jolt that brought me on the road to t'shuva occurred on Tisha B'Av. At the time, I still had no idea what a fast day was. I was walking along the main walkway of Tiberius and I bought an ice cream. I started eating when suddenly someone approached me and began to scream, "How can you possibly eat ice cream on Tisha B'Av?" I don't know what happened to me, but I immediately took the ice cream and threw it away. I simply couldn't eat it. From that moment, my road back to Judaism had begun.

At this same time, my family also began to make strides along the road back to Judaism. My brother wanted to marry a gentile *r'l*, but my father would not agree to this under any circumstances. Amazingly, the woman began to take a serious interest in learning about Judaism. She and my brother traveled to a seminar, and came back as full-fledged chareidim.

In the meantime, she underwent a halachically kosher conversion, and today, they live in Yerushalayim. My sister and brother-in-law began studying kabbala and Jewish mysticism, and by Divine providence, they were acquainted with Chabadnikim who directed them along the path of Chabad chassidus. Today, they are Lubavitcher chassidim in every sense of the word. My other sister has also come closer to Chabad, and thus, my entire family had been transformed. My parents also have become much stronger in their Judaism – "And the hearts of the fathers will turn back through their sons."

As for me, I went to learn in Yeshivas Chassidei Chabad – Tzfas in 5748. I went on kvutza the following year, and have been a Chabadnik ever since.

#### **When was your first meeting with the Rebbe?**

When I came to the Rebbe, I saw – as everyone says – a totally holy man. It is truly impossible to describe the feeling of awe and respect. This was during the year of mourning for the Rebbetzin, and everyone davened then in the Rebbe's house.

I remember an interesting story from that time: I had written to the Rebbe about a particular matter, but I was not privileged to receive an answer. The next day when I came to daven, the Rebbe saw me, and on his way to his shtender, he came virtually face-to-face with me and then made a strong motion with his hand towards me. This represented a clear answer for me to all the questions that I had.

Another interesting story: On Chanukah, I passed by the Rebbe with a friend for Sunday dollars. I wasn't wearing a kippa under my hat, which made me feel uncomfortable. My friend said to me, "Who could possibly know what you have under

your hat?" When my turn came to pass, the Rebbe looked at my head, and would not lower his gaze until I left his sight.

In general, my year on kvutza was a very special year for me. At the time, I was still a relatively new baal t'shuva, and I shared a room together with the mashpia, R. Zalman Notik, who put my thinking in proper order.

#### **Did you continue with your music after getting married?**

The truth is that I didn't want to continue playing music at all. I was certain that my tikkun would come from stopping with music altogether. Yet, my friends told me that the Rebbe wants baalei t'shuva to continue working in their previous professions. This point clicked within me. Since then, I have devoted myself to music and have done everything possible to attain the maximum in the field. Once I asked the Rebbe if I should open a music business. I had studied music and I wanted to open a learning institution together with my music store. I received a bracha of "Azkir *al HaTzion*." After completing my studies in the Tzfas kollel, I began to devote myself to music with greater intensity, and this started the process toward the formation of a Chabad band *al taharas ha'kodesh*, with the objective of spreading greater light and joy.

\* \* \*

Band member R. **Eitan Elbar**, who has been drumming since the age of thirteen, is also a Lubavitcher chassid living in Tzfas. A thirty-year veteran in percussion, he also has a unique story that fits in well with the special nature of this band.

#### **How did your journey to Chabad begin?**

I am a native Israeli, born and raised in Red Haifa. I learned in the Tchernichovsky Public School in the Carmel, and since the age of thirteen,

I've been on the drums. My childhood was normal, and I received the best education available. I served on a flotilla in the Israeli Navy.

I became acquainted with Chabad about eight years ago, when I was in Miami. My first encounter was quite interesting. At the time, I was living with someone whose father was a Conservative rabbi on Long Island. After she left the apartment, she also left behind all her books, and I studied them. This was the first step towards my Jewish re-awakening. The solitude I felt in America brought me to Chabad, and there were chassidim in Miami who helped bring me closer to my roots.

Once I was asked to help prepare a local Jew for ritual burial. I came to the *tahara*, and saw a dead person for the first time in my life. For me, this represented a unique way of learning up close the saying of our Sages, "Remind him the day of death." I saw the death certificate of the deceased, and he was my age. I immediately began to think about myself – "What will be with me? Already half my life – I was thirty-five – had passed. Where am I holding?"

I was acquainted at the time with the shliach in Aventura, HaRav Kasriel Brusowankin, and he was a source of tremendous encouragement to me. He spoke about the eternity of the Jewish soul and all the relevant chassidic concepts. This also encouraged me greatly, and I decided to learn more chassidus. I began to keep Shabbos, and put on t'fillin at work.

Some time later, I decided to travel to New York and learn in yeshiva. With the help of HaRav Dovid Kudan in Hallandale, I found a place in Yeshiva Hadar Hatorah on Eastern Parkway, headed by HaRav Yaakov Goldberg, and from there, the path to the Rebbe MH"M was very short indeed. The years that I learned in Hadar Hatorah were the best years

of my life. It can be said that while there, I found peace for my tired and wounded soul. I decided that I would emigrate back to Eretz Yisroel and get married. Today, I work as a shochet, and in the evenings, I close my day with the musical work of the band.

**You've been a drummer for many years now. What's different about the platform where you sit today?**

It's true that I've been playing music my whole life. I have accompanied some of the best singers in Eretz Yisroel, such as Arik Lavi and Arik Sinai. But I must say that all these functions where I performed were very sad for me. Today, I feel that I have reached the pinnacle of my profession. All of the experience that I have collected in my lifetime has reached its fullest expression in our chassidic band. I see people who are extremely detached from Torah and mitzvos, coming to participate in Chabad functions, especially those with Moshiach flags. They stand watching with excitement, and are easily drawn into the inner chassidic circle.

Especially today, when we seemingly can't see the Rebbe – I personally have never had the privilege of physically seeing the Rebbe – we still see that those who now develop a *hiskashrus* with the Rebbe have an easier time connecting with the essence, not just based upon revelations. This is something internal that is not easy to explain.

\* \* \*

The story of trumpeter R. **Tal Gonen** and his connection to Chabad began in the Far East. "I was born in Kiryat Tivon. After my military service, I studied in the Technion in Haifa, and then entered the working world. I was accompanied at the beginning of my trek towards observant Judaism by the shliach HaRav Menasheh Althaus and HaRav Gidi Sharon.

"I first encountered Chabad in the Far East, when I was traveling around the world. I was constantly searching for the true meaning of life.

"In 5745, I spent the Pesach seider nights in Nepal. I didn't even know that Pesach was coming. When I descended from off the cliff, I was told about the communal seider, where I met many of my friends. The seider gave me a truly special feeling. Afterwards, I flew to Thailand, where I met the shliach, HaRav Nechemia Wilhelm, who helped me very much.

"When I returned to Eretz Yisroel, I continued to inquire about Judaism. The truth is that until then, I lacked nothing. I had traveled to many places throughout the world. I was a diving instructor, a deputy engineer with a leading corporation, and I was making a good living. At my age, I had achieved what most people don't reach until they hit fifty. I understood that I had it all, yet the question started to peck away at me, 'Now what?'

"After my trip, my connection to the Rebbe and Chabad took off. I now understood that Moshe is true and his Torah is true. I knew that there was nothing else – that was clear. Now all that I needed was a little more direction along the way.

"During this period, my mother suffered a heart attack, and I decided to go to the Chabad House and make a good resolution. I thought about starting to put on t'fillin. When I left my mother in the hospital, I said to myself that if she recovers, I would start putting on t'fillin. So I found myself coming on my motorcycle to the Chabad House in Kiryat Tivon to learn about what it means to be a Jew. I was an absolute ignoramus. I met with Rabbi Althaus, and he suggested that I accept upon myself something in Yiddishkeit, and so I decided that I would put on t'fillin every day.



**Shimon Bitton**

“Two months later, I was already in the Chabad yeshiva in Tzfas. When I was accepted to the yeshiva, I slept on a plain mattress for three months – there was simply no place for me. Nevertheless, I wanted so much to be in yeshiva that I was prepared to sacrifice everything to do so. I got up every morning gladly to learn Torah. Rabbi Althaus also learned *Tanya* with me, and I remained in close contact with Rabbi Gidi. After my very first *Tanya* class, I took all my philosophy books and threw them in the garbage. I felt that *Tanya* had it all, and the philosophers had merely taken everything from us.”

**What happened after you entered the yeshiva?**

Music was one of my hobbies, and I would spend much time playing the trumpet and other wind instruments. When I got to yeshiva, I stopped everything. On Shabbos, I was the guest of R. Avi Piamenta at his home in Kfar Chabad. I spoke with him, and he told me that I must not give up my music. He suggested that I learn a Chabad niggun every day...

As a result, I requested

permission from the yeshiva administration to bring my trumpet. I started playing again during the evening, and thus, I began learning Chabad niggunim.

**From there, it must have been a short trip to the band.**

Pretty much. After I got married, I started working with various bands. Once I did a little basic homework, I joined the Kol Yisroel Band. From the point of view of Chabad niggunim, this is the top.

When I attended my first chassidic wedding, I was an invited guest in the early stages on the road back to Judaism. Among the band members at this wedding was a non-religious trumpeter, who played the Alter Rebbe’s niggun on the way to the chuppa. I sat there in tears. The melody spoke to the depths of my soul.

Playing trumpet is something that comes from the soul’s very being. The trumpet is a wind instrument, and “one who exhales, exhales from within him.” This connects the niggun to the soul. I feel that music is part of my shlichus. I appear often at the Ascent Institute of Tzfas before various groups. In general, every niggun brings Moshiach with great song and joy.

\* \* \*

Violinist **Danny Tiberin** is a Chabadnik “in training,” i.e., in the midst of coming closer to his Jewish roots. He considers himself to be an enthusiastic chassid of the Rebbe. His connection to Chabad began when he worked together with the Piamenta Brothers. His colleagues in the band testify that he is one of the most expert string instrumentalists in the field today.

**How did you come to Chabad music?**

I returned last year from the United States, where I worked with

Yossi Piamenta; I also worked in Eretz Yisroel with his brother, Avi. With their help and guidance, I began to specialize in Chabad music. I have a strong connection with Avi Piamenta, who instilled me with much spirituality. I love this music because it is very special, sensitive, and moving. I play all types of music, but Chabad music touches my heart anew every time.

**Tell us about yourself.**

I was born in Yerushalayim, and afterwards, we moved to Beersheva. After my military service, I began playing with famous artists in Eretz Yisroel and in the United States, where I was first introduced to Chabad. I performed at a number of Chabad functions in S. Francisco. When the mekubal HaRav Yitzchak Ginsburgh came to Los Angeles, I played at his lectures. To a certain extent, I had become the regional Chabad fiddler.

I see myself as a chassid of the Rebbe. I have spent much time in 770. A year ago, I returned to Eretz Yisroel, and I have been in the band ever since. Shimon Bitton and the band are automatically bringing me back to my past, when I first began my connection with Chabad.

\* \* \*

R. **Chaim Kumer** is the “odd man” in the band – he was born and raised in a Chabad home. “I started playing clarinet when I was learning in the Chabad yeshiva in Kiryat Gat,” he recalled. He also managed to surprise people with his musical skills when he won first prize in the national klezmer competition. With eight years of professional experience under his belt, he sees the new band as the fulfillment of his dreams, literally and figuratively.

**How do you look upon your involvement in music?**

After the klezmer competition

where I finished in first place, I resolved, *bli neider*, that I would only use my music in matters of holiness. Since then, I have kept my commitment. Quite often, people call to invite me to various events, and I explain to them that they have to organize a Torah lecture on simcha, chassidus, or Moshiach. Every performance turns into a Chabad evening. Thank G-d, I have never failed to honor my promise, and G-d willing, I never will.

**I understand that you are a classroom instructor during the daytime. How do the two vocations go together?**

Yes, I teach first grade in the Ohr Menachem Chabad Talmud Torah in Tzfas, and I divide my time between education and music during my evening hours. I got into music because this is what I love.

In connection with education, I have a very interesting and amazing story with the Rebbe MH"M. When I was in Nashville, Tennessee – Music City, U.S.A., I wanted to make a high-quality klezmer recording. The night before we closed the deal, I saw the Rebbe in a dream. He was standing under the Tzfas yeshiva, and I asked him for a bracha in music.

The Rebbe looked at me straight in the eyes and said, "Your music is a craft with the fingers." I understood that the Rebbe is telling me that my music is merely external in nature.

Afterwards, I asked for a bracha for singing. The Rebbe then began to play "Keili Ata" on the piano, and I joined him by singing. As the niggun concluded, the Rebbe looked at me and said, "Nu, so you know how to sing..."

From the Rebbe's tone of voice, I understood that he meant to say that singing is not my strong point... As this amazing dream continued, the Rebbe and I went out for a walk and we conversed. The Rebbe gave me

some constructive criticism that I understood only years later.

I then saw myself walking with the Rebbe into 770, where I saw two friends of mine – one insulting the other. The Rebbe looked at me in the eyes for a third time and told me that I must influence others in matters of fear of Heaven, proper conduct, love for one's fellow Jew, and the development of good middos. And then the dream ended.

Upon my return to Eretz Yisroel, I was immediately offered a job in the field of education. I felt that I had received a bracha and a spiritual boost from the Rebbe to be involved in these areas – education and music. By the way, each Friday night, I hold a Kabbalas Shabbos minyan for about 120 boys with much joyous singing, in accordance with the instructions of the Rebbe from Shabbos Parshas B'Shalach 5752. This special minyan has proven to be an excellent method to combine my work in education together with my work in the band.

**Chabad education and Chabad music?**

Exactly. At first, we played in a variety of places, but we eventually decided that we wanted to play only Chabad music in the most authentic and heartfelt way possible, without any side nonsense. Our objective is to perform original Chabad music with our special brand of musical arrangement and give the wider audience the feeling and electricity that we received from our days in yeshiva.

I can testify to the amazing results. At first, people were unaccustomed to weddings with only Chabad melodies. Today, however, we see that's what most people want. Guests come up to us after a wedding performance and say that they never heard Chabad music played that way before. The band has influence, in Chabad and out, as this is definitely



**Eitan Elbar**

part of our shlichus as chassidim. We play Chabad niggunim with the utmost precision and stringency. Dance with a full heart, and you will feel how everything works out in the end for the best.

**How do you see the band as an interesting innovation?**

This band is not only unique because of its interesting personalities, but also in its content. We learn together regularly. Traveling to our performances turns into a group Torah session on chassidus, halacha, etc. The simcha generated is something completely different. We generally make every effort on the day of a wedding performance to give it our all – both spiritually and physically.

\* \* \*

We encourage all our readers, in Eretz Yisroel and throughout the world, to come to Tzfas for a wedding or bar mitzva where these outstanding Chabad musicians may be performing, and see for themselves what stands behind these chassidim, who traveled such a long and winding road leading to the door of pure and holy music.

# WAKE UP YIDDEN FROM THE ZIONIST FANTASY

BY RABBI SHALOM DOVER WOLPO

Thursday night, Erev Shabbos Parshas Shmini, I was taking a walk at 2:30 a.m. on the road that encircles the religious area of Kiryat Gat, with not a soul in sight. Suddenly, a black car drove up and stopped near me. I nervously peered at the occupants and saw two men with knitted yarmulkes. One of them, with a beard, asked me, "Excuse me, where is the chareidi area?"

I wondered why these strangers were asking me this at this hour of the night. Maybe the yarmulkes and beard were a disguise. Then I noticed a bundle of folded advertisements on a back seat and a pail of glue.

I asked them, "Are you from Gush Katif?"

"Yes," they said, "and we are looking for a place to hang up these signs against the withdrawal."

I was happy to meet these mesirus-nefesh Jews and offered my help. They made room for me in the car and we drove to the Kirya where I showed them where they should hang up their signs.

Before continuing with my walk, I asked them to give me a sign so I could hang it in the Chabad shul. They gave me an attractively designed sign which I tilted towards the streetlight and saw that it was an invitation to participate in a march which would take place in the Gaza

Strip on Yom HaAtzmaut, marking 56 years of the State of Israel. It had a picture of a similar parade (with men and women, no separation) with the blue and white Israeli flag, of course.

I asked them in surprise, "You want to hang this up in *this* neighborhood?!" I could see that they were clueless as to my intentions.

*I wondered why these strangers were asking me this at this hour of the night. Maybe the yarmulkes and beard were a disguise. Then I noticed a bundle of folded advertisements on a back seat and a pail of glue.*

"Listen, you're on your way to other areas and it's three in the morning and not a time for debates. But if you'll take my advice you won't dare hang up these signs here."

"But why?" they wondered. "It's against the withdrawal!"

"Because the first person to show

up in a few hours for the mikva will see the sign and rip it down. Anyway, all the chareidim who see it will automatically lose any sympathy they had for you. So because I respect you and don't want you to be humiliated, I suggest that you not hang up signs in this neighborhood."

"Okay," they said, "but what about hanging up this one?" and they showed me a second sign with the word "AGAINST" standing out in the center. I couldn't read more of it in the dark, and I realized it was directed at Likud, telling them to vote against the withdrawal from Gush Katif.

"Fine, you can hang that up," I said. Friday morning, a few hours later, I went to daven Shacharis and saw the sign hanging near the mikva. How disappointed I was when I read, "We love you Sharon!" which was followed by the insistence on their voting against the unilateral withdrawal plan.

I realize that they were advised to proclaim their love for Sharon (since they were addressing Likud functionaries), but in my humble opinion they are making a big mistake.

When the man from Likud sees the announcement that says that even the settlers love Sharon, he understands this to mean that they believe that everything Sharon does is for the sake of Heaven and for the good of the

country. So why shouldn't Likud rely on Sharon and his plans?

If it's because of ahavas Yisroel, they shouldn't be addressing only Sharon. But if this is some special sort of love for him, how can they publicly declare their love for an evildoer like Sharon? He personally destroyed Yamit and all the settlements in that area. He caused hundreds of deaths in Lebanon (by leaving terrorists alive). He is the reason why 1000 Jews have been killed in this Intifada war, and why tens of thousands have been injured and maimed. He has fought against mosdos Torah and forced economic hardship on large families, widows, orphans, handicapped, and the aged. **And he is the one who is about to exile thousands of Jews from their homes and replace them with terrorists** knowing that this will lead to more bloodshed of our people!

Another thing, the sign opposes a unilateral withdrawal, and if it was a political agreement, then what? Then it would be okay?

Where does this love for Sharon come from? It comes from his being (to those of Mafdal, B'nei Akiva, Hesder yeshivos) the official representative of "G-d's Kingdom," which is how they view the State of Israel.

They don't understand that as long as they continue to support Zionism with its national anthem and its Independence Day, they will be unable to vanquish the klipa which is sustained by their belief in it.

When Sharon shuts off their water and electricity, it will be in the name of the "Blue and White." When thousands of soldiers show up to throw them forcibly out of their homes, it will be to the tune of "HaTikva." When the bulldozers raze their homes, shuls, and yeshivos, it will express "Independence." So why do our dear brothers hang on to these signs that belong to the Zionist klipa?

\* \* \*

While we all work towards the same goal of abolishing this heinous withdrawal plan, we must protect our achdus and search for ways to unite us, but we must remember what the Rebbe wrote to Rabbi Zevin in 5729, that the reason for korbanos in Eretz Yisroel is a result of the proclamation that the "Medina" is the "Is'chalta D'Geula." If we don't address this now, then when?

It's the beginning of Iyar and the atmosphere of "Independence Day" can be felt already (this year it comes out on 6 Iyar). They will recite Hallel (with or without a bracha) in the settlers' shuls. The *Mi sh'Beirach reishis tzmichas geulaseinu* will be declared with great feeling.

Maybe the time has come for a cheshbon ha'nefesh. Why don't the rabbanim of Yesha meet before this "holiday" and think a bit about whether this is really the beginning of the Geula which we have waited for, for over 1900 years. What do they mean by *reishis tzmichas geulaseinu* if not the Israeli government and the one who leads it (whom they call "Moshiach ben Yosef")? How much longer can they lie to their people and have them blindly believe in the "holy government and its holy representatives" (as was said to me by the rosh yeshivas Shavei Chevron) while watching Jews being expelled from their homes by Jews in this Holy Land? This expulsion is supported by the Defense, Treasury and Education Ministers! (And let us not forget how this Medina made apostates of millions of Jews, from 1948 till the present time.)

Where's the courageous leader of the "knitted yarmulkes" who will fulfill the Torah injunction, "do not fear any man," who will announce:

Rabbosai, it's time to wake up from this fantasy. This year we are changing the holiday customs:

\*We will not participate in any celebrations of "Yom HaAtzmaut" (at the heart of which sits a ticking time-bomb of self-destruction, "for the glory of the State of Israel.")

\* None of us will wave the Israeli flag (which expresses capitulation, flight, and uprooting)

\* No Hallel will be recited (as we are still the servants of Bush, Blair, and our very own Tommy Lapid)

\* No "HaTikva" (*lihiyos am megurash mei'artzeinu*, "to be a nation expelled from our land, Eretz Tziyon V'Yerushalayim")

Perhaps the leaders in Yesha will cancel the parade too and replace it with a Yom Iyun in all the yishuvim, which will address their relationship with the Medina, "*tachlis cheshchas galuseinu*" (the ultimate darkness of our exile). They can conclude with the well known song:

*B'shilton ha'kofrim ein anu maaminim, ein anu maaminim,*

*U'b'chukoseihem ein anu mischashvim, ein anu mischashvim ...*

(We do not believe in the government of heretics, and we ignore their laws – usually sung by the religious opposition to the State.)

New signs can be printed which say, "We despise you, Sharon! Enough funerals, enough Kassam missiles and mortars! Ad masai will Jewish blood be allowed to be spilled? Vote against expulsion, against flight, capitulation, and terror."

As far as a flag, don't worry. We have a yellow flag that says "Moshiach" on it, and a yarmulke too (with "Yechi" on it). Independence? With Hashem's help, we will achieve it very soon with the revelation of the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach. An anthem? "Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu V'Rabbeinu, Melech HaMoshiach L'lam Va'ed."



# BROTHERS SITTING TOGETHER

BY SHAI GEFEN



Yoram Sharabi

*A farbrengen took place recently at the Mittlerer Rebbe's shul in the Avrohom Avinu neighborhood in the holy city of Chevron. Shai Gefen was there and he shares some shlichus stories he heard there.*

## SOULS I HAVE MADE

R' Yoram Sharabi, Chabad activist in Chevron, is well known to the residents of Kiryat Arba and Chevron. He does a lot of work with the children of Tzivos Hashem as well as with the soldiers. R' Yoram drives everywhere and has been saved, more than once, from terrorist fire.

If you know R' Yoram, you know that his trademarks are simcha and warmth. Doors open for him and hearts melt.

R' Yoram Sharabi relates:

Three years ago, I was asked to travel to Australia in order to fundraise for Chabad of Chevron. I didn't want to do it, but I was under a great deal of pressure. I told them no, and said I didn't want to leave Eretz Yisroel. After non-stop pressure, I decided to ask my wife. She said no, too.

This was shortly after I had taken bachurim on mivtzaim on Purim 5760 to the Tarkumaya Junction, where we were ambushed. I didn't feel well and some time later my entire body began to go through painful cramping, and for a long time I suffered back pain and couldn't sleep. This is why traveling seemed altogether out of the question.

Yet the Rebbe thought otherwise. After some more pestering, I asked my wife again, and she surprisingly, agreed to the trip. Then I decided to ask the Rebbe about it. The answer I opened to amazed me. It was in volume 18 of the *Igros Kodesh*, page 204:

**...surely told you about the far-reaching work, which is done with self-sacrifice by Anash in far-flung corners, in spreading Torah and fear of Heaven – in villages and towns in Morocco, in Eretz Yisroel, in Australia,**

**and in countries near and far. This work demands the greatest assistance, at least through monetary means.**

The answer was clear. The Rebbe mentioned Australia explicitly and made reference to the need for money. The Rebbe also connected it with spreading Yiddishkeit to the furthest places... The Rebbe had given me a shlichus and it was only after I got back that I realized what the Rebbe wanted me to do in Australia.

After an answer like that, all my doubts departed. I arranged for a ticket to Australia and the flight was scheduled for early Sunday morning. The day before, Shabbos, I came down with a bad flu. I had a fever and felt so awful that I was ready to cancel the ticket and pay the fine, but my wife insisted that with an answer like that from the Rebbe, I had to go.

Shabbos morning, when I felt especially awful, I asked the Rebbe what to do, and opened the *Igros Kodesh*. The answer was clear. The Rebbe wrote that there's a far-off country in which Jews are assimilated, and you don't want to go on shlichus to bring them back to their Father in heaven?

My wife also asked the Rebbe, and the answer she got was: Just like the

Rebbe, my father-in-law, went with self-sacrifice, that is precisely how one should carry out his shlichus.

After answers like these, it was clear to me that I would be traveling, no matter what. From the Rebbe's answers, I understood that this trip was for far more than fundraising for the Chabad house. I suddenly felt much better and I got up like a new man.

I flew to Australia Sunday morning, with scheduled stops. I stayed in Sydney for a few days and raised money for the Chabad house in Chevron. Of course, in addition to that, I spoke enthusiastically about the besuras ha'Geula and the inyan of proclaiming "Yechi." Then I went to Melbourne, where I stayed with a relative, who arranged everything for me in a superlative manner.

When I left shul Friday night along with my host, I met an Israeli girl. She also realized that I am Israeli.

"Where is there a Chabad house," she asked me in Ivrit.

I said, "You can come along with us to the place I'm staying at. There's a Chabad house and good food, and whatever you need."

She agreed to join us. Throughout the meal, we spoke about Elokus and chassidus, and told stories of the Baal Shem Tov and the Rebbe MH"M. She was from a kibbutz, and she had no idea what we wanted of her. She suddenly spoke up and said she had a "little question." What was the question? Why doesn't Judaism allow us to marry gentiles?

I realized this was no idle question and I explained to her at length about the inyan of a pure neshama that comes down to this world, etc. She told us that she was about to marry a gentile, and that she wanted to forget about her Jewishness. Naturally, I told her what a serious mistake that would be.

I invited her to come again to the

home where I was staying, and she came to the Purim festivities. She was so moved by it that she said she never knew that the Jewish religion was so wonderful. "I thought that the religious are primitive people, etc." Being a kibbutz girl, it was no wonder that she thought so.

She came many more times to my hosts and was drawn to Judaism – to the point that she began to be afraid that she would become religious herself!

After I returned to Eretz Yisroel, I did not stay in touch with her and I had no idea what had become of her. Some time after I had forgotten all about her, I got a phone call. It was this girl, who was calling to tell me that she had decided to leave her gentile boyfriend. She was on her way to Eretz Yisroel and she promised not to consider marrying gentiles.

After she returned to Eretz Yisroel, she kept up the connection with me even though she stayed on her kibbutz. She continued to take an interest in Judaism.

I understood why the Rebbe had mentioned the idea of spreading the wellsprings to Australia, and asked that Jews in far-off lands be rescued.

\* \* \*

But that was not the end of the amazing shlichus.

During my stay in Australia, I went with my relatives to a giant nature preserve in the south of Australia. School children from all over Australia go there on trips. It's like a camp for the kids, and my relatives take care of the catering.

I decided that this was a suitable place to arrange a program for Jewish children. I asked which children were Jewish, and after I got a large group together, I made rallies with them and we said brachos, the Shma, etc. I did this every day of our stay there. We instilled a feeling for Yiddishkeit in children from families that were devoid of anything Jewish.

Dozens of children were exposed, for the first time in their lives, to Torah and Yiddishkeit. The children enjoyed learning about Judaism, Moshiach, and



The farbrengen in the Mittlerer Rebbe's shul in the Avrohom Avinu neighborhood  
On the right: Rabbi Yossi Nachshon and Rabbi Victor Attia  
On the left: Rabbi Danny Cohen

the Rebbe. Although we didn't see immediate results, we are confident that our work with the children will have long-lasting influence.

\* \* \*

My shlichus in Australia wasn't finished. On my way back home I stopped off in Greece, where I spent a day at a local hotel. I wanted to daven Mincha but I didn't know which direction Yerushalayim was. With my poor English I asked someone and he told me. When I started walking away, he suddenly said to me, "I know why you asked me that. It's because you want to pray."

After I recovered from my surprise, I asked him, "How do you know that I want to pray?" He smiled and said, "I

have a Jewish sister."

"And you?"

"I'm a gentile!"

He said his father is a gentile and his mother is Jewish. I exclaimed, "So you're Jewish!" but he insisted that he was a gentile.

I explained to him that he had no choice in the matter and that he was a Jew. He told me he was waiting for his girlfriend to come and that she was Jewish. I decided that I just had to put t'fillin on with him for the first time in his life and to make him a bar mitzva.

It was nearly sunset and I began to beg him to come up with me to my room to put on t'fillin. He was in a rush, but I told him that I had a nice

## RUNNING OUT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SEDER

Shliach in Chevron Rabbi Danny Cohen told the following story:

Before my wife and I came on shlichus to Chevron, we were on shlichus for a year in Chicago. It's a completely different sort of shlichus, and the Jews there are very far from Torah and mitzvos. We worked mainly in the downtown area. On one side of the street there were several churches and on the other side there were many bars and discos.

Our work in Chicago was with non-observant Jews, some of whom were intermarried. We worked for shliach Rabbi Meir Ben-Chiyoun.

One of the couples who regularly came to the Chabad house was a middle-aged gentile woman married to a Jew. Interestingly, she was the one who was very interested in Judaism (her father was Jewish and her mother had undergone a Reform conversion, thus the woman had thought she was Jewish), which is why she went to the Chabad house regularly, and she attended the weekly *Tanya* class. She started going on Shabbos, too. Her

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*We got up to  
"Shulchan Aruch" her  
husband got up, put  
on his coat, and left.  
We didn't know what  
to do. His wife looked  
at me sadly and said,  
"We lost him."*

husband wasn't at all excited by this, and he reluctantly accompanied her to the davening and to Shabbos meals. I managed to befriend him even though he was an intensely private person.

The following story took place two years ago. We invited them and a few dozen other mekuravim, to the Pesach seider. The woman asked many questions. We explained the customs and songs, and explained the Hagada according to chassidus and the Rebbe's sichos.

As we got up to "Shulchan Aruch"

present for him and he had to come. He finally agreed to come up with me. When I showed him the t'fillin, he nearly fainted. He told me that before she died, his mother showed him her father's t'fillin.

When he said the brachos of the Shma, he cried. I never heard such a Shma Yisroel before. When he took off the t'fillin he said, "I think you're right. I feel that I am a Jew."

I took a picture of him wearing t'fillin and he asked me to send him a copy of the picture.

\* \* \*

The shlichus to Australia had accomplished far more than I had ever imagined.

her husband got up, put on his coat, and left. We didn't know what to do. His wife looked at me sadly and said, "We lost him."

Another woman who was present (who is a story unto herself; she was married to a gentile and is now married to a Lubavitcher) looked at me and said, "What do you mean we lost him? You're a shliach of the Rebbe MH"!"

When she said this, I felt that I was getting kochos from the Rebbe and that the man would return to the seider. I went out into the cold Chicago night and began to chase after him. If you are familiar with Chicago, you know that it's still freezing and windy at that time of year. There I was, in the middle of the seider, running after a Jew on the streets of Chicago, in order to persuade him to come back.

I managed to catch up with him at the beginning of the strip of bars. I said, "Yaakov! (using his Jewish name). What happened?"

That began a discussion in the middle of the street. "You're reading the Hagada for two hours now, and you explain how G-d saved us and

does miracles, and how we must thank G-d for the miracles. But we just heard how dozens of Jews were murdered and maimed at the Park Hotel in Netanya while they sat at the seider! Rabbi, how can we thank G-d while Jews are killed?"

His question stopped me cold. I saw before me a Jew who was far from Judaism, but he cared deeply about what was going on in Eretz Yisroel and asked a very serious question. There was a tense moment as I asked the Rebbe to give me the right words with which to respond to him.

"Yaakov, you're right," I heard

### "EIN SOF" AT A MILITARY BASE IN CHEVRON

Shliach Rabbi Victor Attia relates:

A few years ago, I went on mitzvaim with my Daled minim to soldiers at one of the bases in the Chevron area. I got to the military base near Beit Hadasa and I went from soldier to soldier, asking them to say the bracha. When I was done, I remembered that I had overlooked one soldier. The guard let me in. I asked the soldier to say the bracha and he looked at me in disdain and said, "No way!"

I didn't know what to do. I don't like arguing, but I felt that I had to say a few words to him. If it helped, fine; and if not, I would go on my way. I told him, "You are in the army and you know there are orders and commands. The word 'mitzva' is from the root that means connection, for mitzvos are how we connect with G-d."

This reservist, who was an educated man, said, "I believe there's a Creator, a Higher Power, but I don't see how shaking some plants or tying straps of leather around your arm, connects you to G-d."

I liked his question and decided to take a chassidic concept and to bring it down to the level of the mekabel and

myself saying, "You're not the first one to ask this question. Moshe Rabbeinu was the first one to ask G-d, 'why are you causing harm to this people?' We need the Geula and we must cry out and demand of Hashem to put an end to the suffering of Jews."

I continued talking and explained that our connection with G-d is beyond reason. In order to convince him to come back with me I said, "Now we're up to the meal, which is beyond debates and opinions. Everybody can participate, and G-d willing, we'll try to answer all your questions." I gave him a hug and we

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commands..."*

maybe get him to do a mitzva.

I asked him, "What is closer to the number of one million, one or a hundred?"

"One hundred, of course," he said.

I asked, "And what is closer to infinity, the number one or the number one hundred?"

He began to explain to me that to infinity, the number one and the number one hundred are the same, because even to a million you would have to add infinite numbers to reach

went back to the seider together.

\* \* \*

Even after we moved from Chicago to Chevron, we kept in touch with this couple. The woman converted before Rosh HaShana of this year, and they remarried with a chuppa and kiddushin. Yaakov even wore a sirtuk at his wedding, even though he is not yet religious.

Before 19 Kislev, I got a phone call from them in which they said they'd like to have the seider this year with us in Chevron. I was so moved by this! I felt that a circle had been closed.

infinity.

I explained how Hashem is Ein Sof, Infinite, and that He put us in the world of action, and that He wants us to do mitzvos with physical objects. For G-d, the deepest and most subtle thoughts as well as the most coarse, physical entities, are the same to Him, since He is infinite.

The soldier listened closely to my explanation and was taken aback by it. I was sure that although he heard the point, he would stick to his position but then came my turn to be surprised. He jumped from his post and said, "You convinced me!" He took the Daled minim and said the bracha with great feeling.

"Where did you get that deep notion from?" he asked me in amazement. I told him it's part of the teachings of chassidus.

You see how when you go on the Rebbe's shlichus, full speed ahead, that you succeed in reaching all sorts of people, and the Rebbe gives us the right words for the right man.

\* \* \*

Those present at the farbrengen in the Mittlerer Rebbe's shul, burst into the chassidic niggun, "How fortunate are we, how good is our portion, and how pleasant is our lot."

## MEDIA COVERS SHEVA MITZVOS CONVOY

At the beginning of Nissan, a peace convoy to spread awareness of the Sheva Mitzvos B'nei Noach set out. Dozens of activists from Matteh Sheva Mitzvos B'nei Noach, led by Rabbi Boaz Kali, filled a bus and private vehicles decorated with Sheva Mitzvos signs.

On their trip among Arab settlements, council leaders and leaders of communities signed on a proclamation to fulfill the Sheva Mitzvos. The convoy set out from the train station in Nahariya. In the background played a special song that was composed to the tune of "Moshiach, Moshiach," especially for the convoy.

Their first stop was the Arab village of Pekiin, where a Channel 2 news team awaited them. With a l'chaim and dancing, the "peace mission" began, covered by TV.

There was a poignant moment when a local boy showed up who said his mother was a Jew from Holland who married a Druze. The members of the convoy took the opportunity to put t'fillin on with him.

From there, the convoy went to Churfash. At the local council, Mr. Maalech Badr, head of the Churfash council, and the director of Druze and Cherkazy councils, signed the worldwide proclamation to fulfill the Sheva Mitzvos.

"When we got to the yishuv of Eraba, we felt the tension in the air. It was the eve of 'Earth Day,' which is generally observed by demonstrations and high tension, with the main demonstration taking place in Eraba and Sichnin.

"Nevertheless, the council leader Mr. Ali Easla agreed to see us. He

and his deputy took the Sheva Mitzvos proclamation and then our people distributed material among the residents. The convoy, which was armed with loudspeakers and huge signs, attracted a great deal of attention."

In Dalit el Karmel (the largest Druze community), the mayor Dr.



Achram Hasson and his deputies greeted the convoy in front of the council, where they also signed the proclamation.

Then the mayor and Rabbi Boaz Kali spoke. The group was then invited to the mayor's office where Rabbi Tuvia Bolton spoke about the

importance of observing the Sheva Mitzvos, and about the justice and peace they bring to the world. The local sheik read two poems that he composed in honor of the event. The director of the local youth sports center and the director of the education department, asked the Lubavitchers to come occasionally to lecture and teach the youth and residents about the Sheva Mitzvos.

The first day of the convoy ended with the huge event at Yad Eliyahu.

The second day was also packed with activities. The convoy left from Kfar Chabad for other Arab settlements. An unexpected police detour changed their plans. A policeman asked the group to come down to the police station in Rishon L'Tziyon. Surprisingly, the questioning had nothing to do with their trip and the security of the convoy, but about internal Chabad matters, emuna in the Rebbe as Moshiach etc.

Due to the tension engendered by Earth Day, they decided not to enter Arab villages. They pressed on with their convoy but this time, with a message about the Rambam's p'sak din that it's a mitzva (for Jews) to compel all people to fulfill the Sheva Mitzvos B'nei Noach.

The convoy spent the day in Tel Aviv and the Old City of Yerushalayim, with the song "Moshiach, Moshiach" constantly playing in Arabic and Hebrew.

Rabbi Boaz Kali plans a publicity campaign on billboards in Arab areas, calling upon them to observe the Sheva Mitzvos. Rabbi Kali takes this opportunity to urge Anash to get involved in this campaign.

# RABBI SHLOMO MAIDENCHIK A”H

Rabbi Shlomo Maidenichik was born on Yud-Alef Nissan 5684 (1924) in Minkowitz in the Ukraine. His parents were Polish chassidim and his family was punctilious about mitzva observance even during the communist revolution. Yet the children had to attend government schools.

He graduated at age 17 and then World War II began. He was not accepted at the university because he was Jewish, and so he went to Krasnadar where he registered in a school for train engineers. He worked in this field for decades, even when he moved to Eretz Yisroel, upon explicit orders from the Rebbe.

As war approached, he fled to Tashkent. He finished his studies there and became an assistant locomotive driver. While in Tashkent, he met Chabad chassidim for the first time. They were friendly to him and he discovered a new world. He became involved in chassidic life and became a Chabad chassid.

At war's end, he left Russia with a large group of chassidim, and after a period of time in Europe he arrived in Eretz Yisroel. He was one of the founders of Kfar Chabad.

At the end of 5717 (1957), he was appointed the director of the Vaad of Kfar Chabad and served in this role for 25 years. He transformed Kfar Chabad from a tiny, isolated village into the capitol of Lubavitch in Eretz Yisroel, a town visited annually by hundreds of thousands of Jews. In his role as director of the Vaad, he worked on obtaining money for the development of the Kfar and for the many mosdos established over the years.

He visited government offices that were under the far left Mapai and established personal ties with the Who's Who in the government. He

acquired numerous friends among the various governmental agencies, including the political, legal, financial, and religious. He used these connections in order to promote the interests of Chabad and mosdos Chabad.

R' Shloimke also used these connections to present, unequivocally, the Rebbe's position on various timely topics, as in days of yore. When he received instructions from the secretariat to approach someone to speak to him, to convince, to plead and to influence, he did so, and all with utter secrecy.

In 5750, after a few years' break, R' Shloimke returned to public work after the Rebbe revitalized the ranks of Aguch, and rabbanei Chabad called upon him to serve as director of Aguch. He agreed to take the position with the special encouragement of the Rebbe who wrote him to take the position, "and in a way of increasing in an incomparable manner etc. I'll mention it at the tziyun."

In the past 14 years, in his position

as director of Aguch, he was a great help to Anash and to mosdos Chabad on a wide range of issues. With his agreement and encouragement, Matteh Moshiaich of Aguch was formed which has spread the besuras ha'Geula and the identity of the goel in Eretz Yisroel. He personally participated in many events and gave short speeches, the essence of which was "Yechi."

R' Shlomo turned 80 this Yud-Alef Nissan. His last public appearance was on Purim, when he was present at the reading of the Megilla in the Prime Minister's office. The next day he fell ill, and never recovered.

On the first day of Pesach he passed away. Thousands of people attended his funeral on Motzaei the first day of yom tov.

Being a spokesman for Chabad for so many years, he will surely be a spokesman now too and will demand the Geula and the revelation of the Rebbe MH”M. It was usually difficult to remain indifferent when R' Shloimke asked for something.



# “I WOULD HAVE PREFERRED INVENTING THE LAWNMOWER”

BY MENACHEM ZIEGELBOIM

The Kalashnikov Rifle has been defined as the “invention of the century,” in a poll by the popular French newspaper *Liberacion*, which enumerated the greatest inventions of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, from aspirin to the atom bomb.

26 models of the classic

Kalashnikov are exported to 108 countries around the world. In 55 countries, it is the soldier's basic weapon. The rifle also appears in the emblem of a number of small countries that gained their independence thanks to it. In a number of countries, Egypt for example, they call boys “Kalatz” after

Kalashnikov in the hopes that the child will acquire the characteristics of the rifle – strength and reliability.

84-year-old Mikhail Kalashnikov doesn't really like to talk about the fact that revolutionaries and terrorists have adopted his rifle. “Till this day, I believe I created weapons for defense, and I think that until today, the rifle serves my country faithfully,” he said in his tiny apartment in Izbisek, Russia. “That it has spread around the world is the work of politicians.”

It's interesting that the inventor of a weapon has reservations about how it is used and wishes that it were used solely for good purposes. The reporter Natasha Muzgovia asked Kalashnikov how he feels about the fact that terrorists use his weapon. He said, “I feel very negatively about it, but it's not in my power to prevent the illegal use of the weapon I invented. There were many attempts made to use my name for improper purposes, and I always opposed this. The truth is, when I invented the rifle, I didn't anticipate this success. I was very proud of my achievement and the achievements of my assistants, but I could not imagine what it would lead to. I would have preferred inventing the lawnmower...”

Kalashnikov is a patriotic Russian citizen and has earned the highest ranking medals his country has to offer. Over the years, he has visited many countries, thanks to having invented this popular weapon, but



he chooses to speak only about the positive aspects of these visits.

“In many countries I have visited, people have better and more stable lives than the citizens of Russia. I have seen that in all countries, people are afraid of war and want to work quietly and attain personal happiness.”

A statement like this from a man who spent most of his life inventing weapons, testifies to a deeply significant revolution taking place, in no small part thanks to the change of approach in the Russian government towards conflicts between countries and continents.

### **“I WISH THAT MY WEAPONS WOULD GO TO A MUSEUM”**

Kalashnikov invented his famous rifle when he lay wounded in the hospital after the tank he commanded in WWII sustained a direct hit. “Why do we have one rifle for three soldiers, while the Germans have automatic rifles?” asked one of his wounded comrades. Kalashnikov, who up until then had invented a few useful weapons-related items as a hobby, decided to change the situation.

In 1947, after some years of effort, the assault rifle of the young captain called the AK-47, was chosen over models invented by better-known Russian inventors and became the official weapon of the Russian army. They use it till this very day.

Although Mikhail Kalashnikov goes to work every day to the weapons factory, despite his age, he says that his main hobby is gardening. When he was asked, at the end of the interview, “What do you hope for, for yourself?” he replied without hesitation, “That the weapon I invented only end up in the hands of soldiers defending their country, or to a museum.”

### **WEAPONS TRANSFORMED INTO INSTRUMENTS**

The Kalashnikov is not only a weapon but has other, positive uses. Recently, a British company developed an MP3 player which comes with a 20 gigabyte hard drive. All of this built into the magazine of an AK-47 Kalashnikov Rifle no less!

***Kalashnikov’s thoughts about his invention and the recent uses it has been put to signify how close we are to the fulfillment of the prophecy in Yeshaya, “and they will grind their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation will not raise a sword to a nation, and they will no longer study war.”***

Apparently, this specific model is preferred by guerilla fighters as well as by music lovers. It is important to point out that to use the player, it is not necessary to own a Kalashnikov rifle. Even the most peace-loving people can use it, but it also fits on an actual rifle in place of the magazine.

According to one of the owners of

the company, Andrei Koltakov, this is the contribution of ABFF to peace in the world. “We hope that from now all terrorists and those fighting will use their Kalashnikovs only to listen to music,” he said.

The player weighs 450 grams (around 1 pound) and costs \$350. The battery it comes with gives you about ten hours of playing time and is supported by MP3 and other formats.

So an invention that has been used to kill has been transformed into something positive, that enables you to listen to music, bringing joy instead of pain.

### **FULFILLMENT OF THE PROMISE**

Kalashnikov’s thoughts about his invention and the recent uses it has been put to signify how close we are to the fulfillment of the prophecy in Yeshaya, “and they will grind their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation will not raise a sword to a nation, and they will no longer study war.”

Twenty years ago, if you would have asked anybody if he believes that the day will come when the inventor of the Kalashnikov rifle will express reservations about using his revolutionary invention, and will even wish it was put into a museum, he would think you were either kidding or crazy. Well, guess what? This fantasy is now reality!

Twelve years ago, the Rebbe spoke at length on the subject of turning weapons into useful items, and how this is part of the realization of the Geula prophecy:

“One of the prophecies of the true and complete Redemption through Moshiach Tzidkeinu which pertains to the conduct of the nations of the world is, ‘and they will grind their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation




will not raise a sword to a nation, and they will no longer study war.' Lately, heads of state have been deciding and announcing the limiting and eradication of weapons,

and the increase in those things that support the economy of a nation and the world at large. Namely, the meaning of the prophecy, 'and they will grind their swords into

plowshares,' breaking weapons to make farming implements. This is a clear sign of the **beginning of the fulfillment of this prophecy** with the true and complete Geula through Moshiach Tzidkeinu."


The Rebbe went on to say an amazing thing – that the transformation of weapons into useful items is the **beginning of Melech HaMoshiach's impact on the nations**. This is a fulfillment of the verse, "and he will judge among goyim and reprove many nations, and they will grind their swords into plowshares, etc.," by Hashem putting into the hearts of the kings of the nations of the world ("the heart of kings and ministers is in the hand of Hashem") to decide and announce together about the situation of "and they will grind their swords into plowshares." (Seifer HaSichos 5752, vol. 2, p. 268)



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