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SETTLING THE TRANSJORDAN: ATONING FOR THE SIN OF THE SPIES

SICHOS IN ENGLISH



SHABBOS PARSHAS CHUKAS; 7TH DAY OF TAMMUZ, 5750

1. There is a unique dimension to Parshas Chukas which is not found in regard to any of the other parshiyos in the Book of BaMidbar. With the exception of the opening passage of the Book which was not conveyed until Rosh Chodesh Iyar of the second year after the exodus, the entire Book is written in sequential order.

Parshas Nasso describes events that took place on the first of Nissan, the day when the Sanctuary was erected. Parshas B'Haalos'cha also mentions commands that were given on that same day and then describes the decapment of the Jews which took place on the 20th of Iyar. The narrative of the sending of the spies described in Parshas Shlach began on the 29th of Sivan and the rebellion of Korach described in the parsha of that name took place after the 9th of Av of that year according to our tradition.

Consequently, the order of events described in Parshas Chukas surely raises questions: The portion begins with the passage of the Red Heifer which was related on the 2nd of

Nissan in the second year after the exodus. Directly, afterwards it skips to the description of events which took place at the conclusion of the Jew's forty years of wandering through the desert, the death of Miriam, the dispute at the springs of Meriva, Aharon's death, the conquest of Sichon and Og, and ultimately, the camping of the Jews on the Jordan. From a passage which was related directly after the construction of the Sanctuary, the portion skips to the events which occurred at the conclusion of the Jews' wandering through the desert.

Rashi explains that the narrative of Miriam's death is joined to the passage concerning the Red Heifer to teach that "just as the sacrifices atone, the death of the righteous atone." Thus, it can be explained that after mentioning the death of Miriam, the Torah continued with a description of the events which followed. However, since the Torah is precise in every detail, it is likely that there is a connection between all the events described in the parsha and the offering of the Red Heifer.

The above concepts can be understood in light of another problematic element in the

conclusion of the parsha which discusses the conquest of the lands of Sichon and Og. The Torah mentions that Moshe sent spies to explore the land of Yaazer. Not only did the spies carry out their mission, they actually conquered the land. Notwithstanding the positive aspect of their behavior, it raises a question: Why did they disobey the instructions that they were given?[110]

Furthermore, we find the first spies, whose sin caused the Jews to wander in the desert for forty years, transgressed because they made a similar mistake. Moshe instructed them to explore Eretz Yisroel in order to find out the easiest way of conquering it. The spies took an additional step, adding to the description of the land, their conclusion that the land couldn't be conquered. Thus, the question arises: Why did these spies who apparently[111] wanted to correct the behavior of the first spies emulate their example and add to the mission with which Moshe charged them?

There is another difficult point in regard to the Jews' settling in the lands of Sichon and Og: Why did the tribes of Reuven, Gad, and half the tribe of Menasheh desire to remain in

this land? On the surface, G-d had promised the land of Canaan – the land between the Jordan and the Mediterranean – to the Jews. The territories of Sichon and Og on the eastern bank of the Jordan were not included in that land[112] as clearly indicated by the fact that Moshe sent messengers to Sichon asking him to allow the Jews to pass through his land on their way to Eretz Yisroel. If so, why did these two and a half tribes desire to settle in these lands. Indeed, their behavior appears reminiscent of that of the spies who refused to enter Eretz Yisroel.

[The Torah relates that they explained their desire as follows: They had a lot of cattle and TransJordan was fit for cattle grazing. Nevertheless, the question remains: How could they, members of Moshe's generation, "a generation of knowledge," care more about their property than about entering Eretz Yisroel?]

The problematic aspect of this narrative is further emphasized by the fact that ultimately Moshe agreed to their request and allowed them to settle in these lands. The agreement he made with them – that they would serve as the vanguard of the Jews' armies – nullified the possibility that they would cause the entire people to lose heart and refuse to enter the land. It did not resolve the fact that these tribes themselves did not settle in Eretz Yisroel.

The above difficulties can all be resolved in light of the following explanation: Since the Jewish people were all prepared to enter Eretz Yisroel, it can be assumed that they desired to correct and atone for the sin of the spies. To correct this transgression in a complete manner, it was necessary to perform an act resembling the transgression, but of a positive nature. Hence, the spies mentioned in this portion – like the original spies – altered and added to

the mission on which Moshe sent them. However, their addition was of a positive rather than a negative nature, reflecting Moshe's true desire as Rashi comments, "they were confident in the power of Moshe's prayer to be able to fight."

A similar concept can be explained in regard to the desire of the two and a half tribes to stay in TransJordan. Their actions were motivated by a genuine love for Eretz Yisroel and a will to atone for the sins of the generation which did not wish to enter Eretz Yisroel.

To explain: When G-d promised

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How could they,
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Yisroel?***

Avrohom that his descendants would inherit Eretz Yisroel in the Bris Bein HaB'sarim, G-d mentioned the conquest of ten nations, the seven who dwelled in Eretz Yisroel and also the Keini, K'nizi and Kadmoni (identified with Moav, Amon, and Edom) an area stretching from "the river of Egypt until the great river, the Euphrates." Nevertheless, Moshe only mentioned the conquest of the seven nations who dwelled in Eretz Yisroel, the conquest of Moav, Amon, and Edom, who dwelled (at least in part) in TransJordan was forbidden, left for the Messianic age.

There was a way, however, in which the Jews were able to dwell in a portion of these lands before the Moshiach's coming. As our Torah portion relates, Sichon conquered some of the land belonging to these nations. After conquering his lands, the Jews were able to take possession of this territory as well. Indeed, our Sages use the expression that Sichon "purified"[113] these lands. Thus, these tribes' desire to settle in this territory was motivated by a commitment to dwell in all the portions of Eretz Yisroel possible.

When understood in this context, their acts also represent a correction of the behavior of the Jews who desired to remain in the desert. Just as those Jews did not want to enter Eretz Yisroel proper, these tribes did not desire to do so. However, their intent was not to reject the land, but rather to bring about its most complete settlement, extending it to the territory of the Keini, K'nizi and Kadmoni to the fullest extent possible before Moshiach's coming.[114] For these reasons, Moshe was willing to accept their proposal and allowed them to settle in these lands.

The reason why these two and a half tribes in particular desired to settle in TransJordan can be explained as follows: The tribes of Reuven and Gad possessed many sheep and therefore, sought to settle in TransJordan because it was excellent pasture land. Chassidic thought explains that pasturing sheep is a profession which requires less involvement and effort in toil and labor than agriculture and thus, affords the shepherd time for meditation and contemplation.

This also relates to the sin of the spies and the desire to correct and atone for it. The spies did not desire to enter Eretz Yisroel because they desired to remain above worldly matters. This was a mistake because G-d's intent is that the Jews involve

themselves in the refinement of the world. Thus, the efforts of the tribes of Reuven and Gad corrected this error. These tribes composed the vanguard of the Jewish armies which conquered Eretz Yisroel, thus demonstrating their appreciation of the importance and commitment to the refinement of the world. Nevertheless, after the land was settled and that task had been undertaken, they returned to TransJordan to involve themselves in service above the day to day mundane realities.

This concept also relates to the Mittlerer Rebbe's explanation of the difference between Eretz Yisroel and the land of the Keini, K'nizi and Kadmoni. The Mittlerer Rebbe associates the seven nations who lived in Eretz Yisroel with our seven emotional qualities and the Keini, K'nizi and Kadmoni with our three intellectual potentials. At present, our service consists of refining our emotional potentials. Accordingly, we were given the land of the seven nations. In the Messianic era, we will also be able to refine and develop our intellectual potentials and therefore, we will be granted the lands of these other three nations.[115]

The two points are interrelated because the service of the intellect reflects a step above the work of refining our day-to-day realities. The involvement of the tribes of Reuven and Gad[116] with this uplifted intellectual service had an effect on the entire Jewish people – for these tribes maintained their connection with the people as a whole – and gave the people the power to accomplish the task of refining the world.

[In particular, the fusion of the two services can be seen in the tribe of Menasheh who were divided because of Moshe's decision. He realized that the area in TransJordan was too large to be populated only by

the tribes of Reuven and Gad and ordered half the tribe of Menasheh to join them. Thus, in this instance, the fusion of the service of intellect, above the realities of the world, and the service of refining the world was reflected in a single tribe.]

These concepts are related to the Mishna's statements concerning the lands of Amon and Moav (which, as explained above, correspond to the lands of the Keini and the K'nizi) in regard to the laws of Shviis (the Sabbatical year):

What is the law regarding the lands of Amon and Moav in Shviis? Rabbi Tarfon decreed that they should separate "the tithe of the poor"... so that the poor people from Eretz Yisroel could derive support from them.

In the period of the Second Beis HaMikdash, these lands did not have the sanctity of Eretz Yisroel and were not required to observe its agricultural laws. Accordingly, they could sow their fields in the Sabbatical year. Although there was reason to assume that the Sages would have required the separation of the second tithe, instead, they ordered that the "tithe of the poor" be separated so that the poor, who this year would not receive their portion from the fields of Eretz Yisroel which lay fallow, could benefit from them.

This law contains a homiletic dimension which relates to the concepts described above. Our Sages stated: "One is only poor in regard to knowledge." The poor from Eretz Yisroel, i.e., the people who lacked knowledge living in the holy land could derive sustenance from the service of knowledge carried out in the lands of the Keini and K'nizi. Based on the above, we can also understand the connection between the events mentioned at the conclusion of Parshas Chukas with the portion of the Red Heifer mentioned at the outset. The portion

of the Red Heifer was related after the construction of the Sanctuary when the Jews were on a high spiritual level (having atoned for the sin of Golden Calf as Rashi mentions). It was not until the end of the forty year period after the conquest and settlement of the land of Sichon[117] which atoned for the sins of the spies, that the Jews were able to reach a similar spiritual rung.

An added dimension to the above is contributed by the name Chukas. Chok can also mean "engraved" as the letters of the Ten Commandments were engraved into the stone. Thus, the letters are part of the stone itself which cannot be separated from it. Similarly, after the forty years of the desert, the Jews became totally united with Eretz Yisroel until the most appropriate metaphor to describe their connection was Chukas, "engraved letters."

This was reflected in the desire of the tribes to settle in all the lands promised Avrohom in the Bris bein HaB'sarim.[118] Though the conquest of those lands could not be completed – because of the Divine command, "Do not disturb Moav," – that command also had a positive dimension. Through it, the potential was granted for the birth of Ruth, "the mother of royalty," the ancestor of King David and thus, the Moshiach, who will complete the conquest of Eretz Yisroel. May it be in the immediate future.

2. The above concepts are given greater emphasis by the fact that Parshas Chukas is read in the month of Tammuz, the month associated with the Previous Rebbe's redemption on Yud-Beis-Yud-Gimmel Tammuz. All redemptions are related to the ultimate Messianic redemption. In particular, this applies to the Previous Rebbe's redemption for he is a Nasi and, as Rashi explains, "the Nasi includes the entire people." This point was emphasized by the

Previous Rebbe himself who wrote:[119]

It was not myself alone that the Holy One, blessed be He, redeemed on Yud-Beis Tammuz, but also those who love the Torah and observe its commands, and so to all those who merely bear the name “Jew.”

Thus, the redemption of the Nasi of the last generation of exile and the first generation of redemption prepares for and hastens the coming of the ultimate Messianic redemption. Indeed, it is many years since the Previous Rebbe declared, “Immediately to T’shuva; immediately to redemption.” We have surely completed the task of “polishing the buttons” and are ready to “stand prepared to greet Moshiach.” This is connected to Parshas Chukas which relates how the Jews were prepared to enter Eretz Yisroel and indeed, as explained above, anxious for the full and ultimate conquest of the land.[120]

This will be intensified by the Jews’ commitment to maintaining possession of Eretz Yisroel, declaring that this is a land which G-d has given to us. Indeed, the gentiles emphasize this themselves referring to the land as Israel, identifying the land with the true nature of a Jew, the dimension which “strove with man and god and was victorious.”

In light of the above, efforts should be made to spread the celebration of Yud-Beis-Yud-Gimmel Tammuz in every place throughout the world. These efforts will augment the campaign to establish public sessions of Torah study[121] mentioned previously. May the resolutions for activities in connection with Yud-Beis Tammuz hasten the coming of the Messianic redemption with which it is related.[122]

3. It is customary to also mention a concept from the chapter of Pirkei Avos learned this Shabbos (Ch. 5).

This chapter includes several listings in groupings of ten, groupings of seven, and groupings of four. There are many other numbers that have a unique Torah significance. For example, the Torah describes the Jews as being “11 days from Chorev.” There are 12 tribes and 13 Attributes of Mercy. Similarly, there are many numbers from 1 to 600,000 which have significance. Nevertheless, as explained on another occasion (See Biurim to Pirkei Avos, p. 121), the three numbers repeated in this chapter share a common quality.

The redemption of the Nasi of the last generation of exile and the first generation of redemption prepares for and hastens the coming of the ultimate Messianic redemption.

On the surface, the question might be raised: Of what purpose is the mention of the number in these teachings? It can, however, be explained that the mention of the number insures that all the particulars mentioned in the teaching will be remembered.

This teaches us an important concept. Not only is a general principle important, every particular, even those which appear minute are of significance. To allow for all the particulars to be recalled, the Mishna mentions a number at the outset.

There is a connection to the latter concept to the teaching studied as an introduction to each chapter in Pirkei Avos:

All Israel have a portion in the World to Come as it is written: “And your nation are all righteous...”

In regard to the righteous, the Talmud teaches, “The righteous hold their money dearer than their bodies” and are precise even concerning matters worth less than a penny, i.e., they endeavor to use each particular element of existence, even if it is of seemingly minimal worth, for a holy purpose. This is reflected in a halachic concept which explains that, at times, an article which is not large enough to be considered significant is given halachic importance because it is used for a mitzvah.

There is a reflection of this concept in each of our lives. We must try to relate the mission of transforming the world into a dwelling for G-d to every aspect of our existence. If a person has a chance to perform a task associated with a mitzvah, be it great or small, he should be happy to fulfill it. We are speaking about carrying out G-d’s will which transcends all definitions of great or small, high or low. If anything, since “G-d desire that He have a dwelling in the lower worlds,” involvement in services that are low, including also those low in importance, are necessary to fulfill that desire.

Our Sages declared: “This world is like a marriage feast. One should grab and eat, grab and drink;” i.e., this is a world in which G-d’s marriage to the Jews is being celebrated. There is no time to sit and take stock. Rather, one should grab every opportunity to perform a mitzvah available.

Here, we see a connection to Parshas Chukas which reflects a commitment above reason and understanding. Though rationally, one might have reasons to think that

there are other things which are more important, one must act above his intellect and devote himself to G-d's service, involving himself in activities, which his intellect might judge as too petty. Indeed, the feeling that one needs to judge the relative importance of different services stems from one's yetzer ha'ra which dresses up in a silk kapote and tries to sway a person away from doing what he has to.

A person should tell his yetzer ha'ra: Take off your silk kapote! I know where you come from. You come from Sodom. For in Sodom, they were known to steal less than a penny's worth.

We see a reflection of this concept in Jewish law as well. When a person who is thirsty drinks water, even if he drinks less than a penny's worth, he recites the blessing, sh'ha'kol niheya bid'varo, proclaiming how the entire world was brought into existence through G-d's speech.

The above should not be taken as a charge to become involved merely with things of no consequence. The intent is that one should be involved in whatever service Divine Providence presents one. If it turns out to be very important, to quote next week's chapter of Pirkei Avos, a matter which is worth "a million golden dinars, precious stones, and pearls,"[123] one should definitely remain involved. Nevertheless, one should show a similar commitment even the service is "less than a penny's worth."

A commitment to service of this nature should not lead to pride or inflated self-esteem. On the contrary, these emotions are the very opposite of the establishment of a dwelling for G-d in this world. In regard to a proud person, G-d states, "He and I cannot dwell in the world." To Chassidim, however, this point need not be stressed, because it is self-understood.

May we each fulfill the mission which G-d grants us in the midst of affluence and may this lead to ultimate Messianic redemption. May it be in the immediate future.

NOTES:

110. Indeed, we find that when an agent changes the nature of the mission on which he was sent, the entire mission is nullified and he is no longer considered an agent of the one who sent him.

111. Note Rashi who explains that these spies stated: "We will not be like the first ones."

112. See the boundaries of Eretz Yisroel described in Parshas Masei.

113. The expression "purified" implies a

A person should tell his yetzer ha'ra: Take off your silk kapote! I know where you come from. You come from Sodom. For in Sodom, they were known to steal less than a penny's worth.

change not in the physical state of an entity, but in its spiritual makeup. These lands were always ready to be acquired by the Jews, they merely had to be spiritually prepared for this elevation. Note also the connection established by our Sages at the conclusion of the tractate of Sota between the concept of purity and the Messianic redemption.

Purity leads to chasteness. Chasteness leads to holiness... and the spirit of holiness leads to the resurrection of the dead which will be accomplished by Eliyahu, the prophet, may he come speedily in our days and redeem us.

114. Indeed, their acts helped prepare these lands for the Messianic conquest.

115. These concepts are reflected in the Menorah which has seven branches, representing the union of the seven emotional qualities. It was made from a single piece of

gold whose Hebrew name contains three letters, Zayin Hei Veis, representing the all-encompassing union of the intellect.

116. The connection of the tribe of Gad to the service of the intellect is reflected in their connection to the manna which the Torah describes as being "like the seed of Gad." Indeed, because of that connection, they favored the manna and partook of it more than the other tribes. (For that reason, they had many sheep in contrast to the other tribes who slaughtered their sheep for food.)

Our Sages explain that eating bread contributes to one's intellectual capacity. Similarly, eating manna, the "bread from heaven," grants one knowledge of G-d.

117. The conquest of the land of Sichon also reflected an aspect of transformation. Sichon who was paid by the kings of Canaan to prevent the Jews' conquest of Eretz Yisroel allowed them to further that conquest, giving them the potential to take possession of a portion of the territory of Moav.

118. The Bris bein HaB'sarim itself is an expression of oneness, establishing complete unity, as explained by Rashi in his commentary and in Likkutei Torah in greater detail.

119. Trans. Note – The above quote is taken from the letter sent by the Previous Rebbe to commemorate the first anniversary of Yud-Beis-Yud-Gimmel Tammuz. Recently, the letter and the accompanying maamer, Asara Sh'Yoshvim, were published in English.

120. In this context, the spreading of Chassidus to which the Previous Rebbe was dedicated and which was intensified after the redemption of Yud-Beis Tammuz can be compared to the service of intellect that characterizes the lands of the Keini, K'nizi and the Kadmoni.

121. This is also related to Yud-Beis Tammuz as emphasized by the Previous Rebbe, in the maamer, "Asara Sh'Yoshvim," which focuses on the theme of public Torah study.

122. This is also related to Parshas Chukas for Moshiach will bring the tenth Red Heifer, the ultimate observance of the mitzvah around which this portion revolves.

123. On the surface, this expression is problematic. Although Rabbi Yossi ben Kisma did not choose this option, the very fact that he spoke in such a manner is hardly reflective of "the students of Avrohom." Indeed, it resembles Bilam's manner of speaking, "If Balak would give me his palace full of gold and silver..."

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YOUR OPINION ABOUT MOSHE?!

BY RABBI YOSEF YITZCHAK WILSCHANSKI
ROSH YESHIVAS CHASSIDEI CHABAD-LUBAVITCH, TZFAS

TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY



Quite often over the past several years, we have encountered different situations about which we have not heard anything specific from the Rebbe. Since it is clear to us that there is nothing that is not alluded to in the Rebbe's teachings, chassidim try with the utmost precision to understand the words of the Rebbe so they will know how they should react in certain situations. When can a chassid say with absolute certainty that this is what the Rebbe wants?

Every time a new issue comes to the forefront, chassidim try to determine: If we could hear the Rebbe MH"M's holy opinion on this matter, what would he say?

Since as a rule people's opinions differ, it is clear that even when we want to know "What does the Rebbe say?" there are differences of opinion. In general, a person's understanding of the Rebbe's approach is at least in part subjective. Accordingly, the

conclusion he draws regarding a given issue is usually equally subjective.

However, all this proves correct only in connection with those subjects where the Rebbe did not express a clear opinion. Thus, in our limited intellect, we try to extrapolate what the Rebbe would say on a certain matter.

But when we're talking about matters where the Rebbe stated a

clear opinion, then even the greatest Torah giants cannot "understand" more than what is explicitly written on the subject. To a much larger extent, it is impossible to say *r"l* that the Rebbe said one thing and meant something else, or to put it in milder terms: Yes, the Rebbe said these things, but he was referring to the spiritual side of the matter...

This approach claims that "G-d departed the world," and the Rebbe's words deal with things on the more spiritual planes, whereas in connection with material matters, we decide... This is based upon totally false premises, exposed as such from the very outset of the Jewish people's history as a nation.

We just learned about this erroneous way of thinking in Parshas B'Haalos'cha. This occurred specifically with Jews of an especially high spiritual state, perhaps in order to show us that when we're talking about the leader of the generation, no one at any level can accurately express an opinion about him and say that he "understands" Moshe Rabbeinu.

In a sicha on Parshas Shlach (*Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 18), the Rebbe explains that the error of Miriam and

Aharon, the siblings of Moshe Rabbeinu, was their naïve belief that while Moshe was a pure and holy tzaddik, they too were capable of understanding something...

Miriam and Aharon reasoned that Moshe Rabbeinu, despite his lofty righteousness, was found far more in the supernal worlds, somewhere in the spirituality of the matter. He separated from his wife and was not so involved in exactly what's happening with the people. True, Moshe can command the Jewish people and tell them what to do, but when he leaves his wife, this shows that there are times that he must be put in his place.

What did Miriam and Aharon do when they had such a thought? Miriam should have approached Moshe, as a sister, and asked him about the matter privately. Instead, she decided that there was a problem, and immediately went to consult with Aharon.

G-d punished them for this, saying to them, "Mouth to mouth I have spoken with him, etc., why were you not afraid to speak against My servant Moshe?" The very fact that they spoke about him was their sin. Therefore, it is written, "on the matter of the report," i.e., there was no *evil* report *ch*"v. However, in relation to Moshe, the essence of the report, the discussion, and trying to "understand" Moshe, was improper.

Subsequently, this "report" led to the report of the spies. Since Moshe appointed them, they also thought that they had been given a mandate to "understand" Moshe's words. They didn't understand, though, that when we talk about Moshe, no one can be considered as "one who understands."

The question cries out, "Why were you not afraid?" Didn't you realize that we're talking about someone who makes no personal considerations, as "mouth to mouth I have spoken with him," i.e., his

entire existence is nullified to the Sh'china? How could it even enter your mind to speak about My servant Moshe? Moshe is My servant; he has no separate existence. How dare you bring your own opinions regarding a person whose very essence is an expression of G-d's Supernal Will?

WHO "UNDERSTANDS" THE REBBE?

It seems as if we have come full circle in our own generation, and such opinions are being reiterated. Yes, it's true that the Rebbe spoke about, approved, and even encouraged the constant involvement

*Moshe is My servant;
he has no separate
existence. How dare
you bring your own
opinions regarding a
person whose very
essence is an
expression of G-d's
Supernal Will?*

in publicizing the announcement of the Redemption and the Redeemer. However, after all, the Rebbe spoke in the lower spheres and alluded to the higher spheres... Everything remains correct and valid, but only in the more spiritual worlds, where Moshe understands the language far better than others. But regarding what's acceptable and what's not acceptable, we know all that, for Moshe has left that to our discretion.

Particularly when we consider the fact that the Rebbe placed the shlichus upon us, it is clear that we must decide when to publicize and

when not to publicize, in which activities to be involved, and when the world is ready and when it is not...

There were periods when the Rebbe spoke constantly about the frightful decree of "Who is a Jew," and then at a certain stage, the Rebbe stopped talking about it. Some claimed that the reason for this was because several *askanim* asked the Rebbe to stop speaking on the issue due to its interference with their business affairs. And so, the Rebbe stopped. Similarly, they conclude, the same applies in connection with the Moshiach Campaign: At the moment that it interferes with our business affairs, the issue must go into deep-freeze!

Without getting into details regarding what exactly happened on the issue of "Who is a Jew," we must understand that we're not arguing about whether this claim is correct or not. There is an essential question of principle: How do we perceive the Moshe Rabbeinu of the generation? Are we talking about just another pure and holy "*gutter Yid*" or is Moshe really a man of G-d from whose throat the Sh'china speaks, and who stands between us and G-d?

The Rebbe once said: How can a person, who possesses "created intellect," possibly think that he is capable of understanding the knowledge of the Rebbe, which is "Divine intellect"?

We're talking about two different types of material, two different forms of existence, totally incomparable to one another. How can a limited, physical human being believe for a moment that he can "understand" the Rebbe's wisdom?

This is similar to someone saying, "If I would have created the world, I would have added this here and left out that there..." Anyone hearing such a statement would guffaw, for how could a finite person know what G-d

wants in His Creation?

The same applies with regard to the claim of “understanding” the words of Moshe. There can be no comparison whatsoever between the knowledge of a limited human being and the knowledge of Moshe, man of G-d.

R. Hillel Paritcher once said that in relation to the Rebbe, he (R. Hillel) and the cat are one and the same. This isn't just some saying uttered by a *shpitz* Chabadnik after a few stiff l'chaims; this is a simple thought process that must be implanted in the mind of anyone who considers himself a Lubavitcher chassid. The Rebbe is Divine intellect, whereas I am created intellect – how can you compare the two? Would it cross my mind to consider dictating to the Divine intellect?

WHAT CAN WE UNDERSTAND FROM THE KNOWLEDGE OF MOSHE?

Just as this applies to those “materialistic” people who try to turn the Rebbe's words into something solely “spiritual,” so too, in relation to the so-called chassidishe “experts” who have revealed the Rebbe's opinion on a variety of subjects the Rebbe never addressed directly.

These are chassidim who accept the Rebbe's words with total devotion and bittul, and act accordingly, but regarding an issue the Rebbe never addressed, even the biggest and most loyal chassid sometimes express a personal opinion, indicating that he truly considers himself a “maven” on the subject. He understands what Moshe wants now. He will decide how Moshe wants us to act, and he believes that he is the only one who can determine what Moshe says in this situation.

This is someone who has a very strong connection to the Rebbe, and the whole argument is over what the Rebbe said and what he meant.

However, as long as the involvement in the Rebbe's words does not begin with a totally objective point of view, devoid of any selfish motives, it is impossible to determine categorically what Moshe has to say on the subject.

As long as someone has not checked to see if he is really doing only what Moshe wants, he is biased towards his own self, and the results are not necessarily (or to be more specific, **necessarily not**) in accordance with the Supernal Will, the Divine intellect, the intellect of Moshe. After all, people have their own metzius; everyone has an ego that naturally influences his way of thinking.

This doesn't mean that we have to forget our sense of self and become totally self-nullified. Having bittul is indeed a noble aspiration, however, if we have yet to attain such a level, it would be appropriate for us to know how to determine what stands behind our thoughts regarding the words of Moshe.

A person must be aware of the facts. It may be true that his intentions are good and proper; he actually wants only what is good for Moshe, and to fulfill his words. But by the same token he must also realize that since he has yet to reach the level of utter self-nullification, he still is subjective.

Therefore, as long as he doesn't quote explicitly what Moshe says, as long as we're talking about a framework of what **he** thinks regarding Moshe's words, he can never firmly establish anything on that basis. A “created intellect” can never speak about “My servant Moshe,” a “Divine intellect,” and thus establish exactly what he would say now.

THE ERROR OF THE STUDENTS OF RABBI AKIVA

What are we really referring to

here?

Quite often over the past several years, we have encountered different situations about which we have not heard anything specific from the Rebbe. Since it is clear to us that there is nothing that is not alluded to in the Torah, therefore, in relation to those matters of primary concern in our generation, there is nothing that is not alluded to in the Rebbe's teachings. As a result, chassidim try with the utmost precision to understand the words of the Rebbe so they will know how they should react in certain situations.

In such a case, certain chassidim occasionally succeed in understanding, according to their intellect, what the Rebbe's position is on a given issue. They are so certain about the rightness of their path that they even relate to their personal conclusions as “Torah from Sinai.” At times, this causes them to look upon someone who has a different opinion on the matter as a heretic who rejects the Torah and Moshe His servant. It doesn't take long for him to have utter contempt and disgust for this “heretic” and his views...

This is precisely the mistake the students of Rabbi Akiva made. They were also very closely connected to their master and teacher, heart and soul, cleaving to him and his holy instructions. Their mistake was how they perceived their own understanding of Rabbi Akiva's teachings. They didn't understand that Rabbi Akiva's teachings and approach couldn't be established on the basis of their personal understanding. Thus, it was impossible to draw the conclusion that you don't get disgusted from someone who reasons differently. An ironclad rule among Rabbi Akiva's students, trained in his teachings of “And you shall love your neighbor as yourself – this is a great principle of the Torah,” was that their conduct must stem specifically from ahavas

Yisroel. Thus, out of their love for their fellow student, they made certain that he would also properly understand Rabbi Akiva's words. So when he didn't understand, it hurt, it was annoying, and it even reached the point that they couldn't have respect for him...

This mistake, which led to the conduct of "they did not have respect for one another," caused the terrible plague for which we mourn to this very day.

It is important to emphasize that since the problem with Rabbi Akiva's students was that they did not have respect for one another, it is understood that the different way to interpret their master's teachings was not the real problem. Chassidus explains that the differing opinions stemmed from the differences in the root of their souls. It is totally legitimate for one student not to accept the opinion of another. However, in spite of this fact, he must respect him. He can take issue with his **opinion**, but he must respect **him** – after all, they were all students of Rabbi Akiva.

Even in our generation, we must make the clear distinction between those issues the Rebbe discussed in a direct manner and those where the Rebbe's opinion is based upon our limited knowledge, with our limited intellect. It is perfectly reasonable to try and draw out some degree of understanding of our present-day situation from the words of the Rebbe. However, we must always remember that in the final analysis, we're not talking about the Rebbe's teachings as the Rebbe knows them, but as we understand them. If someone wants to differ with our interpretation, we can try to convince him that ours is the correct one, but it is impossible and even forbidden to relate to this person as one who rejects the Rebbe's words.

If Rabbi Akiva's students were obligated to give respect to those with

differing opinions on matters that were clearly and explicitly stated, then surely, we have the exact same obligation in connection with those issues that the Rebbe did not address directly.

Such conduct is demanded from each and every one of us. Each person must know that he must fulfill this demand towards his colleague, just as his colleague must do in regard to him. The fact that they do not share the same opinion is neither reason nor justification for a break

As long as the involvement in the Rebbe's words does not begin with a totally objective point of view, devoid of any selfish motives, it is impossible to determine categorically what Moshe has to say on the subject.

between them. It is forbidden for him to disgrace or hate his fellow, and vice versa, rather, they must act with mutual respect for one another.

TO KNOW THE DIRECTION

No one is completely clean of any personal considerations, so the direction and purpose must remain engraved before our eyes. When a person knows where he stands and what his aspirations are, this brings a clear change to his personal conduct.

We can see an example of this

from the study of chassidus: There are times when we will sit and learn whole maamarim that discuss lofty spiritual plateaus that seemingly have no relevance to us. A chassid might ask himself: What does all this mean to me? What connection does a person in the physical world have to these supernal levels? They are only pertinent to tzaddikim? The point here is that we should know how things ought to be. When we know what's on the horizon, we will also know where our place is, and thus, we will know on which path we should be marching and how to progress along that path.

Similarly, we find in our discussion: The true goal and objective is hiskashrus out of a sense of total self-nullification, without any personal considerations whatsoever. We must walk along this road, and even if we have yet to reach the climax – the ultimate state of bittul – nevertheless, we are still looking and are headed in the right direction.

THE HISKASHRUS OF OUR GENERATION – KABBALAS HA'MALCHUS

If self-nullification towards the Moshe of the generation is the central point of every generation, then this matter takes ever greater and stronger meaning in our generation.

From the very moment the Rebbe MH"M accepted the leadership of Chabad-Lubavitch, he began to instill hiskashrus to the leader of the generation as a primary introduction to a Jew's service to G-d. In fact, this matter has taken hold in our generation with such tremendous intensity; it stands above and beyond all comparison to anything that had been done on the subject throughout the annals of Jewish history!

It's enough to take a glance at the Rebbe's sichos during the early years of the leadership or remember farbrengens with leading mashpiim in

order to understand the lofty levels of hiskashrus demanded from the seventh generation, to the point of complete self-sacrifice on all matters, total self-nullification, and devotion to the Rebbe's shlichus.

In recent years, the Rebbe himself added a new dimension: "Kabbalas HaMalchus" (acceptance of the sovereignty).

When "Kabbalas HaMalchus" is brought into the picture, something unique develops. We have been connected to the Rebbe out of love, each one at his level, as children or as servants, with the knowledge that this is how it should be. Then, we add "Kabbalas HaMalchus," i.e., when everyone accepts the Rebbe's sovereignty, completely nullified to him, as a people to its king. It is clear to all how much this adds to our hiskashrus to the Rebbe. Every Jew, regardless of stature, the greatest intellectual or the simplest layman, accepts upon himself the Rebbe's sovereignty out of a sense of total bittul.

NOT ONLY "MEKUSHAR," BUT "HIS SHLIACH...IS LITERALLY LIKE HIM"

There is another point that emphasizes the avoda of bittul to the *nasi* specifically in our generation: a person's shliach is likened to himself.

It is known that "a person's shliach...is like him" is said in reference to every Jew. The Rebbe emphasizes that the essential fact that the soul

enters the body gives a Jew the strength to be the messenger of G-d.

In addition, as the Rebbe noted in sichos during the International Shluchim Conferences, there is also the shlichus after the soul is already within the body, the shlichus that pertains to our relationship with the leader of the generation, which strengthens the general connection that had already existed between the shliach and the m'shaleiach.

If such matters apply in every generation, then certainly, it must apply with even greater fortitude in our generation. When all of us in this generation received a specific task to bring Moshiach Tzidkeinu in actual deed, we possess the strength to act in a manner of "literally like him" at every level, and in every sense of the word. This is a living shlichus, twenty-four hours a day, in our Torah and mitzvos, our eating and drinking, our sleeping and other physical needs – everything is instilled with one central point: How does this help us to greet Moshiach?

In other words, the "literally like him" aspect exists at every moment of the day, and provides the strength to act through self-nullification to the *nasi*. There was never such a firm connection between the people of a generation and its leader. This special connection is an innovation unique to our generation.

EVEN THE CHILDREN

According to halacha, a child cannot be a shliach because "children

do not possess knowledge." The Rebbe explains in a famous sicha (*Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 33, Parshas Shlach) that they don't have the aspect of "literally like him," like the m'shaleiach, and therefore, they can't represent him. There were those who asked if this halacha applied in relation to the children of shluchim. The truth is that the Rebbe once made some allusion to the fact that since they assist their parents on their shlichus, the status of shliach applies to them as well.

However, in connection with our discussion, the question does not even apply, for if the problem is being "literally like him," i.e., on a level with the m'shaleiach, the greatest and the smallest are equal, with no preference for one over the other. How can this be? The Rebbe gives us the power and strength to be shluchim, and therefore, the same Rebbe who gives strength to the great, gives also to the small. Thus, we find that hiskashrus to the Rebbe exists from the moment the soul enters the body. Furthermore, this connection exists within every Jew, great and small, and there is no need for any additional action to create it.

The connection already exists, and we must be aware of that fact and act accordingly. We must make it even firmer and stronger as we carry out with complete *bittul* the orders of the *nasi*, the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach.

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THE HOLY ADMUR: RABBI YISROEL ALTER ZATZAL OF GER (GUR)

From Shemen Sasson Meichaveirecha

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



Reb Yisroel Alter was born on 24 Tishrei 5655 (October 24, 1894) to his father, the holy *Admur* Reb Avrohom Mordechai of Ger *zatzal*, author of *Imrei Emes*. As a little child, young Yisroel – who was named after the Baal Shem Tov – displayed exceptional qualities: he was very sharp, understood things in great depth, and possessed an astounding memory. He conducted himself in purity and holiness, and practically lived in the tents of Torah. His grandfather, the holy S'fas Emes' *zatzal*, was extremely fond of him. After his marriage in 5670 (1909-1910), Reb Yisroel continued his studies and Divine service, hardly sleeping, and toiling in Torah day and night.

Through open miracles, Reb Yisroel was saved from the Nazis *yimach shmam*, and in Iyar 5700 (May-June, 1940), he arrived in the Holy Land together with his father the *Admur*. His wife, however, as well as his son and daughter, perished in the Holocaust. After arriving in Jerusalem, he again dedicated himself to the study of Torah. His daily study routine began everyday at two, or three in the morning. He would sit in the study hall, learning Torah and serving G-d in purity, and

chassidim, young and old, would gather round him and drink in his words of wisdom.

After the passing, on Shavuot 5708 (June 13, 1948) of his great father, Reb Yisroel assumed the mantle of leadership, and began to lead the Gerrer chassidic community in a big way. With great self-sacrifice, he rebuilt the Gerrer movement and the world of Torah and chassidism in the land of Israel. He became renowned for his very sharp mind, but at the same time, he was known as a compassionate leader, who gave personal attention to individual chassidim. He worked very hard to establish a generation of young chassidim who would be as devoted to Torah and holiness as those who had perished in the Holocaust.

Reb Yisroel wielded great influence in all matters pertaining to the public in the Holy Land. He was one of the heads of the Moetzes G'dolei HaTorah, and at their conferences, his was the decisive opinion. But he also kept a watchful eye over the affairs of individual chassidim and Jews, and thousands of Jews from all backgrounds flocked to his home for his advice, blessing, and so on.

In 5731 (1970-71), he fell ill and underwent surgery. Subsequently, there were some changes in his routine, but despite his great weakness, he roused himself like a lion and continued leading his flock, and tending to the needs of the Jewish people. On the second day of Adar 5737 (February 20, 1977), he departed this world at the age of 83, after a period of great suffering. Tens of thousands of Jews come to pray at the *tzaddik's* grave, located in a cave on Har HaZeisim [the Mount of Olives]. After his passing, his *seifer*, *Beis Yisroel*, a collection of Torah insights he expounded on Shabbos and Yom Tov and transcribed in his own holy handwriting, became one of the most celebrated works on the weekly Torah portion, and it became the title by which Reb Yisroel is referred to.

THE CHIDDUSHEI HA'RIM AND THE TZEMACH TZEDEK

The relationship between the Chabad Rebbeim and the *Admurei* Ger goes back to the days of the Tzemach Tzedek, as the Rebbe relates in his *sicha* of Parshas Tetzaveh, 5737, right after the passing of the *Beis Yisroel*:

“It is known that a tight connection existed between the Rebbe the Tzemach Tzedek, and the rav and tzaddik of Kotzk, (who were both named, and called, ‘Menachem Mendel’). This connection was facilitated by messengers who traveled from the one to the other, and by other means. In subsequent generations, this tight connection was maintained by the Kotzker’s disciples, among them the *Admurim of Ger*.” (See more of *sicha* in chapter on Reb Simcha Bunim Alter *zatzal*.)

Gerrer chassidim relate that the Kotzker once [referred to this connection] with the expression: “Menachem Mendel with a *g’zeira shava*.”^{2 3} In the *seifer, Meir Einei HaGoleh*, vol. 2, p. 473, it is related that after the Kotzker’s passing, his disciple, the Chiddushei HaRim,⁴ wanted to travel to Lubavitch to bask in the light of the Tzemach Tzedek, but his disciples held him back, and crowned him as their Rebbe. The *seifer* adds (on p. 612) that a woman needing a blessing for children then came to the Chiddushei HaRim, and he sent her to the Tzemach Tzedek. The Tzemach Tzedek told her he is certain that the Chiddushei HaRim has the power to help her, and that she should convey this to him in the Tzemach Tzedek’s name. The woman did as the Tzemach Tzedek instructed her, and she was blessed with a child. (See also *Admurei Gur*, p. 27.)

In the *seifer Likkutei Sippurim*, by the gaon and chassid Rabbi Mordechai HaKohen Perlov o.b.m., p. 138, it is related that “Once, when the holy and famous rav and gaon, Rabbi Yitzchak Meir *zatzal* of Ger,⁵ came out of his room, and saw some of the young men sitting and learning in the outer room, he said, “On the verse, ‘You have made him but slightly less than the L-rd’ the Gemara (*Nedarim* 38a) says: **Fifty gates of understanding were created in the world, and all except the fiftieth gate**

were given to Moshe, as it says, ‘You have made him but slightly less than the L-rd.’” Reb Yitzchak Meir then said that it says in *s’farim* that [the fiftieth gate was withheld from Moshe] only during his lifetime, but at the time of his passing, he received also the fiftieth gate. Reb Yitzchak Meir then said that Reb Mendeleh Lubavitcher is now holding by this level. Afterwards, it became known that the tzaddik had uttered these words at the very time of the Tzemach Tzedek’s passing. (The accuracy of this story is questionable, since the Chiddushei HaRim passed away on 23 Adar 5626 (March? 1867) whereas the Tzemach Tzedek’s *histalkus* took place three weeks later, on 13 Nissan.



Apparently, the point is that the Chiddushei HaRim made this comment close to the time of the Tzemach Tzedek’s *histalkus*.)

S’FAS EMES’ COMMENT ABOUT LIKKUTEI TORAH

In a later generation, the Rebbe Rayatz shared a unique relationship with the S’fas Emes *zatzal*, whom he visited in 5661 (1900-1901). The Rebbe Rayatz writes⁶ about this in a letter to Rabbi Yaakov Berlin of Brisk:

“You write that you *daven* in a *shtibel* of Gerrer chassidim. Surely, there are [Gerrer] chassidim who are connected to their master and teacher (the rav and tzaddik, Reb Mordechai

Avrohom) *shlita*, and surely they have regular occasions when they gather together – like by *Shalosh Seudos*, and the like. [Take advantage of these occasions to] inspire them to establish a regular learning session in the *seifer S’fas Emes*, by the holy *Admur* of Ger *zatzal*, which contains very many ideas from *Likkutei Torah* and *Tanya*. As the holy *Admur* himself’ told me when I visited him in Ger in 5661: ‘One word of the holy *Likkutei Amarim* and *Likkutei Torah* shines and flashes – it sets the heart ablaze.’ **Through [Tanya and Likkutei Torah], he rejuvenated his thirsty soul.**”⁸

In *Seifer HaZikaron*, by Rabbi Chaim Shaul Brook *zatzal*,⁹ it is related that when the Rebbe Rayatz (he was 21 years old at the time) put forth his hand to shake hands with the S’fas Emes, “the S’fas Emes took the hand of the Rebbe Rayatz and said, ‘Ah! A holy hand!’”¹⁰

CONNECTION WITH THE IMREI EMES ZATZAL

After leaving Russia, the Rebbe Rayatz maintained his connection to the House of Ger on various issues of public concern. During the first period of his arrival in Poland, the Rebbe Rayatz initiated a conference of *Admurim* to discuss the founding of Vaad Ezra LiYehudei Russya [Committee for Aid to Jews of Russia]. On the eighth day Chanuka, the Gerrer Rebbe, [i.e., the Imrei Emes], responded to the invitation he received to join the conference¹¹: “His Honor . . . the rav and tzaddik, son of holy ones, etc., [our teacher¹²] Yosef Yitzchak *shlita*. I just received your letter, and I hereby appoint my son-in-law, Rabbi Yitzchak Meir [Ha]Kohen Levin to represent me at the meeting on behalf of our Jewish brothers in Russia.

The Imrei Emes sent his son, the Beis Yisroel, to represent him at the wedding of Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach on 14 Kislev 5689 (November 27, 1928).



The Imrei Emes Reb Avraham Mordechai.
On his right is his son, the Beis Yisroel

THE REBBE RAYATZ'S ACTIVITIES TO RESCUE THE GERRER REBBE

When WWII began, the Rebbe Rayatz was very active in trying to rescue the Imrei Emes from the Nazis, *yimach shmam*. During Shvat 5700 (January-February, 1940), when the Rebbe Rayatz was in Riga, where his own life was still in danger, he sent a telegram to Agudas Chassidei Chabad of America, under the direction of Rabbi Yisroel Jacobson o.b.m., which stated: **"The Admur of Ger needs a visa to a neutral country; surely you will do**

everything in your power to enable him to leave Warsaw."

Agudas Chassidei Chabad turned to Senator Sol Blum in Washington for assistance. The senator also received a telegram from the Rebbe Rayatz's son-in-law, the Reshag, in Riga. The telegram said: **"With regard to the Gerrer Rebbe, the only way . . . is to obtain an Italian visa for him."** Senator Blum then asked the Italian consul in Washington to arrange a passage visa for the Gerrer Rebbe. In a letter dated March 25, 1940, the Italian consul notifies Senator Blum that the

documents for the Gerrer Rebbe and his family have been arranged. In Iyar 5700 (May-June, 1940), with G-d's help, the Gerrer Rebbe arrived, by way of Italy, at the port of Haifa. (The abovementioned documents are preserved in the archives of Senator Blum, which are housed in a library in New York.)

The Torah journal, *Toras Eretz Yisroel*, describes the Rebbe Rayatz's role in the rescue of the Gerrer Rebbe: "Much of the credit must be attributed to the *Admur* of Lubavitch *shlita*, who, from the day he left Poland, did not cease his activities to rescue the *Admur* of Ger *shlita*. He contacted New York by phone and urged his followers not to spare any effort to rescue this great person."

NOTES:

- 1 So called after his great work of Torah insights.
- 2 When two verses in the Torah share a similar word, it creates a "bridge" which allows them to "share" their halachic properties.
- 3 (See also *Shmuos Vesipurim* by the chasid Rabbi Refael Kahn o.b.m. vol. 2, p. 82, section 107.)
- 4 Reb Yitzchak Meir, called *Chiddushei HaRim* for his seifer of this name.
- 5 I.e., the *Chiddushei HaRim*.
- 6 11 Kislev, 5684 (November 19, 1923) Letter # 156.
- 7 I.e., the *S'fas Emes*.
- 8 (See also Letter # 160, *ibid.*)
- 9 P. 106.
- 10 "A *heilikeh henteleh*."
- 11 *Igeres* 708, end of Month of Kislev.
- 12 The initial "mem" appears here in original, and presumably stands for "Moreinu" [our teacher].



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THE REBBE'S SUMMER REVOLUTION

*As with many other things, the Rebbe was the first to take advantage of the summer break from school in order to promote Jewish education, and not only among Lubavitcher children. Hundreds of thousands of children have spent summers at Chabad summer camps, and have gotten a taste of Yiddishkeit and chassidus. * Yisroel Friedman takes us back to the early days when Jewish summer camps were a novelty.*

In all previous generations, Jewish children were constantly under the positive influence of the educational framework, for they were in school year-round. Children almost never came in contact with the street, and consequently they did not experience conflicts and confusion with regard to their Torah-true education.

However, times changed. The vacation period was extended, particularly during the summer. Children found themselves with lots of time on their hands and were

exposed to the vagaries of the street. This caused a great deal of damage to the work that their teachers put into them the rest of the year.

Something had to be done about the summer vacation from school. A number of ideas were proposed, but the most practical suggestion was that yeshivos should organize special summer programs in the form of summer camps. These camps, according to the plan, would offer the children all sorts of physical activities while providing the children with a

24-hour-a-day environment *al taharas ha'kodesh*, with time devoted to Torah study and davening.

This is how the first summer camps in the U.S. came to be. They served students in yeshivos and religious schools. These camps filled a need but it was a far cry from the demands of the times. On the one hand, camps like these were sorely lacking for children who attended public school, and on the other hand, even the programs that were made for religious children served more as "cities of refuge" from the negative influences of the street. They did not take advantage of the opportunity to fully invest in the positive development of the children during the summer months.

Chabad camps were different. They ushered in a complete **youth movement** through which the Rebbe has made a revolution in the field of chinuch as a whole.

A Chabad camp not only opened its doors to **every** Jewish child, no matter whether they attended a yeshiva or public school, it not only served as a barrier to block the secular world from intruding in the children's lives, but it served as a new **educational** tool. This proved itself to



The Rebbe visiting Camp Emuna in 5717

be a powerful tool, whose impact on many areas was even **greater** than the yeshiva. In fact, chinuch in camp is what strengthened and influenced the chinuch of the entire year.

It's not that it was either a camp or a yeshiva, but a completely different entity, which was more than the sum of its parts, as the Rebbe put it, "a camp on the outside and a yeshiva on the inside." The fact that while in camp there were no outside influences like secular studies, an undesirable environment or the influence of parents and home, gave camp additional educational power.

The camp experience succeeded in influencing its campers to conduct

themselves properly, "with chassidic light and warmth" to the point of making them into true chassidim. This happened because the children spent many weeks in the "Rebbe's domain," as the Rebbe put it in one of his talks:

"Gan Yisroel was founded so that children are not in the domain of their parents but in the Rebbe's domain. In a number of ways the success is greater than that within the walls of yeshiva, since within the walls of yeshiva, after school the children go home, while in Gan Yisroel he spends weeks without interruption in the Rebbe's domain."

On one of the Rebbe's visits to

camp Gan Yisroel, the Rebbe said that although he doesn't leave New York, he still traveled to camp because camp is part of headquarters at 770!

In camp, the children spend the entire day in a chassidic atmosphere, so that camp becomes **"the anvil upon which chassidim are founded,"** as the Rebbe put it, and its influence is tremendous.

The impact of camp left a deep impression in the hearts of children who attended yeshivos and from chassidic homes no less than in the hearts of children who attended public school. All of them went home having been spiritually uplifted, and with much positive baggage whose

fruits were harvested all year round.

This “youth movement” of the summer camps continued to grow, until it became universal, i.e., there are summer camps around the world in which hundreds and thousands of children are educated with “chassidic light and warmth.” Camp became a proven method “to conquer children and youth, and through them, to conquer the hearts of their parents and families.”

The Rebbe, as Nasi to all members of the generation, was concerned not only for the chinuch of boys but of girls as well. This is why he founded Camp Emuna for girls. It was 5713 (1953) and Rabbi J.J. Hecht a”h had a private audience with the Rebbe in which the conversation focused on the need for camps. There was a need for camps for girls in particular since there were a number of camps for boys at that time. After some discussion, it was decided to first open a camp for girls, and the Rebbe gave his blessings for the success of the new mosad.

Camp Emuna opened that year. Property was purchased in the Catskill Mountains, in Greenfield Park. It was called Emuna because the Rebbe said, “emuna is the foundation for everything.”

In 5716 (1956), at the initiative of Merkaz L’inyanei Chinuch, it was decided that a camp along these lines would be started for boys. This was Camp Gan Yisroel. After the idea was proposed, Rabbi Moshe Lazar and Rabbi Yosef Weinbaum, who were bachurim in Tomchei T’mimim-770, had a private audience with the Rebbe.

The Rebbe gave his approval to the idea and blessed them with great success. He then took out a checkbook and wrote them a check for \$3000 and gave it to them as his participation in the project.

Shortly thereafter, they had another private audience in which the

Rebbe said that since they were still young bachurim, they needed to include an older person who could dedicate his time to the camp and be responsible for the financial end of things. A number of candidates for the job were suggested and Rabbi Kehos Weiss was chosen.

Rabbi Weiss was already married, and he agreed to take on the job. The Rebbe said they should establish a special committee for the camp. The members of the committee were Rabbi Chadakov, Rabbi Shlomo Aharon Kazarnovsky, Rabbi J.J. Hecht, and the lawyer Isaac Strol.

On one of the Rebbe’s visits to camp Gan Yisroel, the Rebbe said that although he doesn’t leave New York, he still traveled to camp because camp is part of headquarters at 770!

After the committee was formed, the Rebbe asked that all the members come see him together. This time, they received detailed instructions regarding everything having to do with organizing and running the camp. Among other things, the Rebbe said that it didn’t pay to buy property the first time, that they should find a suitable place to rent, and he blessed them with great success and yashar ko’ach for all their efforts.

The organizers had a number of private meetings with the Rebbe in which they received instructions and guidance both in writing and orally,

regarding every single detail. This was accompanied by many brachos for outstanding success.

As soon as they received the Rebbe’s approval, the organizers went to the Catskills to look for a suitable place for a camp, but they didn’t find what they were looking for. It was only at the last minute, a few weeks before camp was to open, that they managed (through Rabbi J.J. Hecht) to rent a suitable place in Ellenville that had been used the previous year by a camp named “Israel.”

After receiving a report about the place, the Rebbe gave his consent and instructed them to immediately make the necessary renovations so that all would be ready in time.

Once they found a location, the organizers asked the Rebbe to pick a name for the camp. A number of names were suggested, including *Machane Nafesh*, but the Rebbe said it should be called **Machane Gan Yisroel**.

A few days later, at the Shavuos farbrengen of 5716, the Rebbe publicly referred to camp Gan Yisroel and said, “Since it says in the Zohar that there are *GaN* (numerically equivalent to 53) sidras in the Torah, and each Jew has a letter in the Torah, the camp was named Gan Yisroel.”

The Rebbe gave the organizers many blessings, whether in private meetings or in public, during the course of farbrengens. At the Shavuos farbrengen the Rebbe said, “May Hashem make it successful materially and spiritually, with success that is beyond the natural order, with more success every year.”

The Rebbe suggested that parents send their children to camp Gan Yisroel and Emuna, and even publicly announced that he advised this to everybody so it would be good for them both materially and spiritually.

“Everything is by Divine providence. All those who have heard of the camp Gan Yisroel, should send



The Rebbe visiting Camp Gan Yisroel in 5716

their children to this camp. And they should also try to influence their acquaintances to send their children to camp too. This will give the children success materially and spiritually, as well as to the parents, materially and spiritually. There are certainly other camps where they learn *al taharas ha'kodesh*, and it's materially good there too, but the ones I know about are camps Gan Yisroel (for boys) and Emuna (for girls). Therefore, I advise parents who want their children to have a materially and spiritually successful summer, and through the summer will come success in the future, to send their children to these camps."

The year Gan Yisroel was founded, nearly one hundred children registered, with many of them coming from public schools – children who had no Jewish chinuch at home – and it enjoyed great success.

We can see how important the Rebbe regarded camp by the personal interest he took in it, in all details, and especially by the fact that he made three historic visits there. As we know, every moment of the Rebbe's

time is extremely precious, and despite this, the Rebbe allotted nearly a full day to each visit, including the long trips there and back. (It is said that the Rebbe once said in the winter that he was still working on making up for the time he lost on the day he went to camp!)

* * *

The Rebbe was interested not only in camps in the U.S. but in Eretz Yisroel too, and that is how separate camps for boys and girls were started in Eretz Yisroel. At that time, the *Reshet Oholei Yosef Yitzchok* was expanding and the Rebbe wanted the children to receive a chassidic chinuch during their summer vacation too.

The Rebbe gave many instructions regarding these camps. One of the most important things to the Rebbe was that the camp be in Kfar Chabad. In those years there were a number of Chabad institutions that were empty in the summer. These served as camp headquarters during summer vacation.

The camp was set up in tents that were set up on a piece of land that belonged to Bais Rivka, which was

run by Rabbi Shmuel Cheifer. They also used Bais Rivka's dining room. The girls' elementary school in Kfar Chabad had small buildings where the camp's secretaries worked.

Rabbi Itche Gansburg describes those days:

"After finding a place for the camp, we began planning the program. Since I am Russian-born, I had never been to camp. I didn't know what children did in camp and what they would enjoy, so we consulted with the Ministry of Education which has a special camp department, and they sent us two supervisors to give us a brief course on camp programming.

"The first rule we learned was that we needed a theme, for this enabled the children to absorb a message that they would remember. We decided that our theme would be Shlomo HaMelech and the Queen of Sheba.

"Our imagination worked overtime, and baruch Hashem, we worked out a terrific program. We included plays and color war, in which we divided the kids into two teams, one representing Shlomo HaMelech and one representing the Queen of Sheba, at the end of which all the nations acknowledge Shlomo's wisdom and began to recognize the Creator of the world and the One who runs it.

"In order to get the kids involved, we hid papers yellowed with age that were burned around the edges with 'ancient writing' on them. On the first day of camp, we took the children to the empty field of Kfar Chabad where papers were hidden under a rock. One of the girls who was in on the secret 'happened' to sit on the rock. A counselor warned her about snakes that might be under the rock, and naturally, she picked up the rock and 'discovered' the papers.

"The children were excited by the discovery and grew even more excited when we brought a 'professor' from

Tel Aviv University, supposedly a big expert in archaeology, who told the children that these were ancient writings from the time of Shlomo HaMelech that told of the historic meeting between him and the Queen of Sheba.

“When the astonished children asked the professor what he thought the papers were worth, he mentioned a number in the five figures. His ploy was so successful that one of the elders of the Kfar came over to me the next day, and asked to see the writings from the time of Shlomo HaMelech that were worth \$40,000.

“Over 200 children were registered for the first trip of camp. We divided them into bunks, with each bunk getting a large tent. We gave out special camp hats and began activities.

“Some of the counselors were Lubavitcher girls, but we didn’t have enough Lubavitcher girls to run the camp, so we had to take non-Lubavitchers too. Things got sticky because some of these girls came from groups that were opposed to Chabad, but we had no choice.

“Our approach was always to increase the light, and this was true with the counselors as well. We didn’t debate with them, and didn’t deal with their questions. We simply showed them the light in Toras Ha’chassidus and this was more effective than any debates we might have had.

“The following years, we had pre-camp training for the counselors in the course of which we emphasized the Nasi, under whom we were working. We explained at length what a Rebbe is, what our connection to the Rebbe is, what the Rebbe does for us, and what we need to do for him.

“At the end of camp, we wrote *panim* to the Rebbe with the children, and in later years, we even sent pictures to the Rebbe of camp, and received responses from the Rebbe. In certain years, we got letters for each

bunk.

“The counselors were given a special program in which they heard interesting lectures about the role of a Rebbe, and had Yemei Iyun towards the end of camp. Many non-Lubavitcher counselors became close to Chabad as a result of working for

We can see how important the Rebbe regarded camp by the personal interest he took in it, in all details, and especially by the fact that he made three historic visits there. As we know, every moment of the Rebbe’s time is extremely precious, and despite this, the Rebbe allotted nearly a full day to each visit, including the long trips there and back.

us, and some of them became actual Lubavitchers.

* * *

“Many problems arose in camp, some of them completely unexpected. For example, one day one of the girls complained about terrible pains. We took her to the hospital where they said she had appendicitis and needed to be operated on immediately. We tried reaching her mother, with the

phone number that she had listed at registration, but nobody answered the phone.

“Having no alternative, my wife signed the form, giving the hospital permission to do the operation, and baruch Hashem, it was successful. It turned out that the mother was on a trip to Netanya at the time, and it was first a few days later that we managed to reach her and to inform her about her daughter.

“In another instance, during the boys’ trip, we had a mischievous child who tried to go to a nearby room via the window! He didn’t make it, and he fell from the second story and broke his arm. Breaking an arm is no big deal but when a child is in camp that is not insured, it’s another story entirely.

“The parents sued the camp administration, which was responsible for her son. I hired a lawyer who told me to say that the camp administration only took responsibility for normal children, and not for children who went from room to room via the windows! ‘I can’t place guards at all the windows,’ I said. The judge accepted this and absolved me of all responsibility.

“There were also halachic problems that arose. Whenever we had a question, we consulted with Rabbi Shneur Zalman Garelik, the rav of Kfar Chabad. One of the interesting questions was: is it permissible for me to sit at the Shabbos table with the girls as they sang? The rav paskened that it was permissible since I was like their father.

“I would like to mention Rabbi Yosef Hartman, who was a yeshiva bachur at the time, who served as head counselor for a few years. A great deal of the credit for the incredible educational success we enjoyed goes to him.

“What follows are some of the instructions we received from the Rebbe:



Boys learning how to tie tzitzis in a Lubavitch camp



Rabbi Itche Gansburg on a camel during a camp activity

In 5715 (1955), we had some problems with budgets from various government offices. When we wrote to the Rebbe about it, the Rebbe wrote back, in a letter dated 11 Tammuz:

Regarding what you write that you cannot receive assistance from the

offices for the camp – obviously, this is quite shocking, for how are you different than other mosdos that annually receive significant financial assistance? ...

Another advantage is that it is now prior to the elections, and a number

of offices are interested in having people satisfied with them, and perhaps there is more time. May it be, at least from here-on-in, that the efforts in every matter not be left to the last minute.”

Nearly every year, starting from Pesach time, the Rebbe would write about camp. Here, for example, in a letter dated Rosh Chodesh Iyar 5716, the Rebbe writes:

It’s surprising that you don’t mention a word about the program for the summer camp.

When camp opened, I received a letter from the Rebbe, at the end of which the Rebbe wrote:

Certainly you will continue regarding the camp... You must take advantage of this auspicious time, and certainly you will collaborate with the other members of the Reshet regarding setting the children up properly in the Chabad camp, so that it makes an impression on all visitors, among whom will certainly be representatives of the ministries. You should use the camp to improve the ministries’ regard for other matters of the Reshet, as Chazal say, one mitzva drawing another mitzva along.

After a number of years in which the camp was called *Kaitanat Chabad*, I thought it was time it had a proper name. I asked the Rebbe about this and in a letter dated 18 Sivan 5718 the Rebbe answered:

In reply to your letters of 4 and 9 and 13 Sivan, in which you write about a name for the camp, surely in the meantime you received a letter from here suggesting that all the summer camps in all countries be called by the same name, Gan Yisroel of the Merkaz L’Inyanei Chinuch, branch X.

In that same letter, the Rebbe reacted to activities that were done with an emphasis that this is how Chabad does it and that we are doing it because this is the Chabad custom. Since dozens of children from other

from backgrounds attended our camp, the Rebbe wrote:

In general, it requires some thought as to whether you should emphasize Chabad every step of the way, since in a number of areas the point is to draw in as broad a circle as possible and to influence them in ways of pleasantness, and this way of wording it can frighten off certain types of people. Obviously, we don't know whether this is so regarding the camp. But in any case, you need to think about this – in the discussions regarding advertising, etc.

The Rebbe said we should examine every detail associated with the camp, even those things that seems peripheral. For example, when I wrote to the Rebbe that I was asked to prepare a detailed blueprint of the camp, and that this would cost a lot of money, the Rebbe wrote, in a letter dated 25 Adar 5718:

I just received your letter of 19 Adar. Regarding the request for an engineer's blueprint of the camp, it pays to say things as they are, to the one who made this condition – that it will cost what you say it will cost, and why shouldn't we protect Jewish money and suffice with a more general plan.

Obviously, you need to clarify ahead of time whether, technically speaking, it's possible to build a camp without this blueprint. If it is essential regardless, then on the contrary, the expenses of the general blueprint are unnecessary.

The Rebbe went on to address the problem of transportation. It was convenient for us to take the children on trips in taxis and not on buses, but the government officials insisted on buses. The Rebbe wrote:

Regarding the demand of the ministry...that they travel by regular bus and the like – you must see how others do it. Then it will be clarified either way, either their demand is justified or you will have evidence to



The first Chabad camp in Eretz Yisroel



Going on a hike

back your demand for support for traveling by taxi.

* * *

Today, Lubavitch day camps and overnight camps are taken as a matter of course. Thousands of children, who don't learn about Judaism the rest of the year, have wonderful Jewish educational experiences in the

summer months.

Like many other things, the Rebbe is the one who thought of using this tool to increase the light of Judaism and to spread the wellsprings. The thousands of children, who became observant thanks to the Rebbe's vision, speak for themselves.

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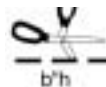
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NOTHING BUT A TEST!

A compilation from the Rebbe's sichos about how to relate to tests.

TO OUR EYES ONLY

Just as it was a given by all of us that the Rebbe will lead us towards Moshiach Tzidkeinu, it should be a given now too.

The event that occurred, etc., is nothing but to **our eyes of flesh**, and is nothing but a **test** (one of the tests of the “birth pangs of Moshiach” that must precede the coming of our righteous redeemer), whose purpose is to **hide and conceal the truth**.

(Sicha Shabbos Parshas Truma, Parshas Zachor 5710, bilti muga)

EQUIVALENT TO MOSHE

By quoting what it says in the Midrash – that Mordechai in his generation was equivalent to Moshe in his generation – the one who said this stated the law regarding himself, that he is (openly) the “faithful shepherd” of all members of the generation.

*) Along the lines of the explanation of the wording in the Mishna in Avos (chapter 3), “*din v’cheshbon*” – judgment followed by an accounting – according to the wording in a later Mishna (ibid, Mishna 16) that “he pays whether wittingly or unwittingly.” When a person declares the judgment he thinks his fellow deserves he unwittingly states his own judgment, for according to this “*din*” the “*cheshbon*” is made regarding his own situation (see *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 6, p. 283)

(Kuntres Purim Katan 5752)

NO REALITY, EVEN IN THIS WORLD

A *nisayon* (test) is a manifestation of something that has no reality at all, and it's only purpose is to bring about a *neis* (miracle [from the same root as

“*nisayon*”]) and uplifting [as is done with a banner, which is also “*neis*” in the Holy Tongue], by showing that one is completely unfazed, for then the truth is revealed that there is no reality to it at all except to bring about a *neis* and uplifting.

Regarding the tenth test [of Avrohom], the Midrash says, “On the third day – if the distance of the journey was short, why was he delayed three days? Since [the Satan] saw that they [Avrohom and Yitzchok] did not accept his blandishments, he appeared as a broad river before them.

Immediately Avrohom went into the water...when he reached halfway across, the water reached his neck. At that moment, **Avrohom raised his eyes to Heaven**, and said Master of the World, etc., and immediately, Hashem shook the spring **and the river dried up**, and he stood on dry land.”

In other words, the “broad river” in which “the water reached his neck,” **had absolutely no reality** (not just spiritually, but) **even in this physical world**; it was only an **illusion**. Therefore, when Avrohom showed that he was unfazed by it (and continued to walk, in order to fulfill Hashem's command) and “Avrohom raised his eyes to Heaven,” then the **truth** was revealed – that there was really no river here at all, “the river dried up and he stood on dry land.” On the contrary, all that remained of it was **neis and uplifting**.

So too in our situation, the *nisayon* has no reality at all, even in this physical and material world, “the world of klipos.” Therefore, when “he raised his eyes to Heaven,” it became openly revealed to all that there was no reality

here at all, and all that remained was nothing but **neis and uplifting** – that through this there should be a greater increase in spreading the wellsprings outward by increasing the publishing and printing of the manuscripts of our Rebbeim, etc. ...

OBVIOUSLY ONE CANNOT MAKE IT INTO A METZIUS

Based on this, it's obviously understood that the entire emphasis needs to be solely in regard to the **neis and uplifting**, and not in regard to the *nisayon* itself.

The *nisayon* has no reality to it at all, as was said. Since this is the case, talking about it is [talking about] **something that has no substance**, and therefore, is pointless. In fact, by talking about it and regarding it as a reality (55), he confuses himself and his yetzer ha'ra, etc.

On the other hand, the idea of **neis and uplifting** is that this is the true reality – the intent and purpose of the test, as was said – for through this he will increase even more in spreading Torah and Yiddishkeit and the wellsprings outward.

55) For obviously he cannot make it into a metzius, as Chazal say (B'Reishis Rabba 39:14), “If all people would convene to create a mosquito, etc.”

(Sicha Parshas VaYeichi 5747; muga)

WHEN YOU ARE NOT FAZED, YOU SEE IT'S NOTHING

You just need to know that all the tests really having nothing to them, since reality cannot conceal Hashem's will, and when a person strengthens himself and is unfazed by them, then he sees, with eyes of flesh, how it is



indeed nothing.

When Avrohom Avinu led Yitzchok to the Akeida, the Satan presented himself as a mountain and a river, and when he [Avrohom] was unfazed by this, he saw it was nothing. The deeds of the Avos are a sign for the children. When we are unfazed by tests (in one's personal life, and all the more so in communal work), and don't reckon with anything – and not only does one not diminish expenditures, but on the contrary – then the test is nullified, to eyes of flesh as well.

With the measure that man measures, so is he measured. When one reckons with a test, then the test indeed becomes a concealment ^rl. But when he knows that it is nothing but a test, and he does not reckon with it, and actually acts in accord, then all the limitations go away and there is greater and greater expansiveness.

(Sicha 12 Tammuz 5714, bilti muga)

EVEN IF IT WERE REAL, YOU SHOULD'N'T BE FAZED

Since in the future, there will be the inyan of “I will remove the spirit of impurity from the earth,” then also one's avoda in spreading Judaism and the wellsprings needs to be done in this way, meaning that there is no recognition of hindrances and obstacles and concealments. This is not something that is “wondrous for you,” but something that pertains to the avoda of every single man and woman, since they are given all the kochos for this. He needs to know that this is nothing more than a test, and as is explained in sifrei musar and chassidus, the idea of a test is nothing but an illusion; it truly has no reality. It's nothing more than an illusion so that he will break through and pass the test.

As it says in the Midrash, when Avrohom Avinu walked to the Akeida, the Satan stood there in the guise of a river that blocked the way to Har HaMoriya. When Avrohom merely entered the river, he saw it was not real; it was nothing but, “and G-d **tested** Avrohom.” What was needed was

merely to jump in.

Even if it were that the obstacle is (not just an illusion but) real, still there is no reason to be fazed by it; one must simply fulfill Hashem's command.

There's a river? So there's a river!
There's a furnace? So there's a furnace!
Regardless, he is going to fulfill Hashem's command.

All the more so when the truth is that it is not real, and it is nothing more than an illusion.

(Sicha VaEschanan, Shabbos Nachamu, 15 Av 5737, bilti muga)

TO US IT IS NOT A CONCEALMENT

When we know that we have the Geula already, and we just need it to be revealed, it is a lot easier to go through

*There's a river? So
there's a river!
There's a furnace? So
there's a furnace!
Regardless, he is
going to fulfill
Hashem's command.*

all the concealments of this world in general, and in Galus in particular, and in the latter generations even more particularly. For the truth is, that we already have the Geula from the physical and spiritual galus, it's just that it is not yet visible, and therefore we think there are concealments. But the truth is that all the concealments are not concealments at all; they are only perceived as concealments **by us**. Furthermore, even to us it is not a concealment since we already have the promise of “and I will bring,” and Hashem's word is considered like action that it is already done – that even to us there are no concealments and obstacles and delays. It's nothing more than an illusion, and therefore we need

to go with strength and not be fazed by anything that can be an obstacle to the fulfillment of Torah and mitzvos. When you go with this strength, you truly see, with eyes of flesh, how it is truly nothing.

(Sicha Parshas VaEira 5714, bilti muga)

BREAKING AND CASTING IT ASIDE IS ITS TIKKUN

A number of times, we heard from the Rebbe, my father-in-law, based on what is written in a number of s'farim of our Sages, that the existence of klipa is nothing but an absence [of good], which is [manifest] in [one of] two forms, either birur or nisayon. In the former [manifestation of klipa], there is some good within the opposition, and it needs to be refined and elevated. Whereas regarding the latter form, breaking or casting it aside is its tikkun, and when you stand firmly against it, it becomes nullified as a matter of course. Then you see, even with eyes of **flesh**, that even to begin with there was nothing to it except that it was a test.

In fact, I saw this in a number of your issues – that you looked on them as something that opposed and fought you, but [in truth] it was nothing but a test, i.e., from the beginning there was no basis for concern. And if you had demonstrated the proper strength, the opposition would have been nullified without leaving any impression of aggravation, G-d forbid.

(Igros Kodesh vol. 4, p. 74)

BEYOND ALL TESTS

Nowadays we are already past all tests, etc. As in the well-known expression (of the Rebbe, my father-in-law, Nasi Doreinu), even “polishing the buttons” was already completed. Therefore, there needs to be the fulfillment of the promise already of “I will remove the spirit of impurity from the earth,” for then all the avoda will be in the realm of holiness, in a way of “going from strength to strength,” until “they will be seen before Elokim in Tziyon.”

(Sicha Truma, 6 Adar 5749, bilti muga)

ANOTHER MUST

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FOR BOTH THE HEBREW & ENGLISH SECTIONS

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The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the Beis Moshiach website. The address bar shows <http://www.beismoshiach.org>. The website header includes the Beis Moshiach logo, a bhTech advertisement with the tagline "Heavenly design, down-to-earth prices", and the Hebrew title "בית משיח". Below the header is the "Chabad World" banner with navigation links for Hebrew, English, and other languages. A central banner reads "Long live the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach forever and ever" with a small image of a man in a hat. The main content area features a large image of the magazine cover for issue 439, dated 3 Kislev 5764. Below the cover, there are three article teasers, each with a small image and a title: "WE HAD NEVER HEARD IT LIKE THIS BEFORE" (Presented in honor of Tes Kislev, birthday of the Mittler Rebbe, and Yud Kislev, the day the Mittler Rebbe was released from jail), "FARBENGEN OF MASHPIM" (Hundreds of farbrengens took place throughout Crown Heights during Tishrei. One of the most interesting of these farbrengens, a farbrengen of Mashpim, took place in the sukka of R' Sholom Dovber Drizin. * Part 1 * Pictures by Shmuel Gewirtz), and "CHASDEI BRACHA: SPREADING JOY" (In its brief existence of not even two years, Chasdei Bracha has helped hundreds of people in Flatbush to get on their feet. * Rabbi Yisroel Chaim has spearheaded this initiative and he tells...).

CHASSIDIM FARBRENGING: STORIES OF THE REBBE

*It was a special atmosphere in the Nachum Yitzchok shul in Kfar Chabad on Gimmel Tammuz night. Chassidim farbrenged for hours, relating personal encounters with the Rebbe MH”M, and miracles they experienced or witnessed. The Rebbe’s niggunim that were sung by Anash and the T’mimim completed the sense of deep hiskashrus. * Among those farbrenging were Rabbi Yaakov Edery, Rabbi Meir Bostomsky, Rabbi Tzvi Greenwald, Rabbi Levi Wilimosvky, Rabbi Michel Vishedsky, Rabbi Amos Karniel, and Rabbi Shimon Bekerman, who fascinated the crowd until late into the night. * Beis Moshiach presents a compilation of stories.*

“WHY ARE YOU SAD? THERE’S A REBBE!”

Rabbi Shimon Bekerman related:

Echaim! Echaim! The truth is, we all need to know that if not for the fact we were niskarev to Chabad, who knows where we would be today. Whatever we have is thanks to the Rebbe. Our entire lives are the Rebbe.

A few of us Anash went to the Rebbe for Yud Shvat 5740 or 5745. On the flight we were at the back of the plane when a lame Jew with a long

beard passed by. He walked near us, back and forth, and seemed to want to tell us something. He finally said, “I can see that you’re Lubavitchers.” We told him he was right, and that we were going to the Rebbe. The man said, “I want to tell you a story.”

“When I was younger, I lived in Afula. One day, when I went to daven, the shliach, Rabbi Chaim Sholom Segal, came over to me and said: Reb Yid, why are you sad?

“I told him that I had problems. He

wanted me to tell him about them, but I said: How can you help?

“He didn’t leave me alone, until I finally told him that I had a son who had many problems, who suffered a lot, and now the doctors at HaEmek hospital wanted to operate on him.

“Rabbi Segal said: So why are you sad? There’s a Rebbe among the Jewish people! Write to the Rebbe!

“I said: Why should I write to the Rebbe when I’m a Belzer chassid?

“He didn’t give up, but said: If you have a problem, then write to the Rebbe.

“I said that a letter wouldn’t help because the operation would take place in a few days, and until the letter arrived and I would get a letter in response, weeks would go by.

“Rabbi Segal insisted, however, that chassidim have a tradition that as soon as you write the letter, the Rebbe receives it, and a bracha is given.

*“I couldn’t refuse him, so I wrote to the Rebbe. Shortly thereafter, I received a response. The Rebbe didn’t know me but he answered me with a letter of blessing and then in a postscript he wrote that certainly I know about the enactment of his father-in-law to say *Chitas* every day, and if I didn’t do it until then, I should start, etc.*

“I didn’t know precisely what the Rebbe was referring to, and I didn’t give it much thought since I was so busy with our problems. I put the letter in my pocket and carried on with my responsibilities.

“After a few days, my son went in for the operation. They took X-rays the day before, and the next day, my wife and I sat outside the operating room and said T’hillim. In the middle of the operation, we saw something odd. People were coming and going out of the operating room, not as is usually done during an operation. I noticed one of the doctors and nervously asked him, ‘What is going on?’

“He said: ‘We took the child in for

the operation with all his X-rays, and a few minutes before the operation was supposed to begin, the surgeon decided to take another X-ray. The new X-ray showed no problem whatsoever! We thought that maybe something was wrong with the X-ray machine, and we took another X-ray with another machine, but it showed no problem with the child. We called a meeting of all the big doctors to discuss this bizarre turn of events.’

“I took the Rebbe’s letter out of my pocket and showed it to the doctor, saying that I had a bracha from the Rebbe.

“Since then,” concluded the man, “although I am not a Lubavitcher chassid, I learn the daily *Chitas*. And my son is fine.”

* * *

R’ Shimon Bekerman went on to say:





RABBI SHIMON BEKERMAN: *We thought that maybe something was wrong with the X-ray machine, and we took another X-ray with another machine, but it showed no problem with the child. We called a meeting of all the big doctors to discuss this bizarre turn of events.'*

About thirteen years ago, I went to the Kfar HaNoar of the Kfar HaYarok, and a woman came over to me who introduced herself as Chana, and said she had a problem. She said, "I have a son who has been married for a number of years and does not have children."

I told her to tell her son to write a letter to the Rebbe and to ask for a bracha. She said that he didn't know the first thing about the Rebbe and writing to him. I asked her where he lived, and she said he lived in Hertzeliya. I suggested that he go to the Chabad house in Hertzeliya and write a letter to the Rebbe there.

About a week later, she came to me and I asked her, "Nu, what happened?" She said that her son went to the Chabad house in Hertzeliya, where they told him that rather than write to the Rebbe, it would be better if he went to see the Rebbe!

He did go, and when passing by the Rebbe for "dollars," he asked for a bracha for children. The Rebbe asked his name and his wife's name, and their mothers' names, and he told the Rebbe the names, and the Rebbe blessed him.

The next week, he passed by for "dollars" again, and this time too, he asked for a bracha for children. The Rebbe said: But you already got one? But the man insisted.

His wife gave birth ten months later to a boy, and at the festive bris, the couple told their guests about the Rebbe's miracle, and that it was thanks to his bracha that they had a son.

Within a day or so, the treasurer of the yishuv came to them and complained, "Why didn't you tell me about the segula?" He said he was married for the second time, and he wanted a bracha for a son from this marriage. They suggested that he write to the Rebbe and ask for a bracha. The treasurer did so, and two weeks later, he received a phone call in which he was told that the Rebbe said he should check his t'fillin and mezuzos.

When the treasurer told this to his friend (the father of the miracle baby), the friend asked him, "So, what did you do?"

The treasurer said, "I didn't think about it much. I just went to B'nei Brak and asked for the finest t'fillin and the finest mezuzos and I replaced everything."

A month later, he came by with good news.

WHEN A KIBBUTZNIK WENT TO THE REBBE TO SAY THANK YOU

Rabbi Michel Vishedsky relates:

When I lived in New York, I had a shoe business. At that time, I had an

Israeli friend who has a store on the East Side. We bought a lot of merchandise together, and thus were able to get it cheaper.

One time, when I was on the East Side, I went to visit my friend at his store. When I walked in, I saw a man with a yarmulke, along with his wife and three- or four-year-old daughter, who was running around. The man was standing near some suitcases and I realized that they had just arrived from the airport.

My friend introduced me to them and said I was a Lubavitcher. "Are you really a Lubavitcher?" the man asked, and I said that I was.

"Tell me," he asked, "does the Rebbe have ruach ha'kodosh?" I said that he certainly does.

"Can the Rebbe read minds?" he asked, and I said yes. He asked more and more questions, and I finally said to him, "Why are you asking me all these questions?"

He looked towards his daughter and said, "Do you see that girl running around? She was born with a certain condition, and the doctors said she would never be able to walk."

The man was a kibbutznik, and he said that a Lubavitcher had come to his kibbutz to give lectures. He personally didn't believe in anything or anyone, and this was true for most of the

people who attended the lectures, but they listened respectfully nonetheless.

“One time, he came to me and said: I can see that you’re always sad. How about telling me, why are you sad? I said to him: why shouldn’t I be sad when I have a beautiful and clever little girl who cannot stand on her own two feet?

“The Lubavitcher said, ‘So why don’t you write to the Rebbe?’

“What Rebbe? I don’t believe in G-d and you tell me to write to a Rebbe!”

“The Lubavitcher urged me to write to the Rebbe, but I said that I couldn’t. I didn’t believe, so how could I write? He finally suggested that he would write for me, and I agreed to this.

“The Lubavitcher began writing the letter and worded it as though I was writing the letter and telling the Rebbe the whole story. He asked me my name and my mother’s name and signed the letter with my name.

“A few weeks went by and I received a letter from the Rebbe. The Rebbe wrote that if I agreed to commit to observing the laws of family purity, he blessed me that my daughter would walk normally.

“When I got this letter I was very surprised by its contents because the Rebbe didn’t know me, and so how did he know that I did not keep the laws of family purity (especially when

the letter had been written as a Lubavitcher would write it)?

“In any case, I took it seriously and the next time the Lubavitcher came to the kibbutz, I asked him to bring along his wife so they could teach us the laws of family purity. I decided that for my daughter’s benefit, I wanted to try this, because I had no other options. We learned the laws and began observing them.

“Three months went by but we saw no change in our daughter. We considered stopping observing the laws because it wasn’t helping. Then one day, I was sitting at home on the couch, reading the paper, as my wife and daughter were in the kitchen. Suddenly I heard a big bang and a scream. For a split second, I thought the worst had happened. I dashed over to the kitchen and saw my wife lying on the floor in a faint. I began to pour water on her and shake her, until I succeeded in rousing her.

“I asked her what had happened, and she said: Don’t you see? Look at her!

“I looked at our daughter and nearly fainted too. She had always sat in her carriage and now she was standing on the floor and holding on to the carriage!

“We took her to the doctors and they couldn’t believe what had

happened. She began getting physical therapy and today she runs around like any other little girl.

“Now we’ve come in order to see who the Lubavitcher Rebbe is and to show him our healthy daughter. Everybody knows the story at the kibbutz, and many of them began observing family purity. They still eat treif and travel on Shabbos, but they observe the laws of family purity, thanks to what happened to us.”

TWO STORIES

Rabbi Meir Bostomsky relates:

I will tell two stories – one that took place in the year 5727 (1967) and the other one in 5758 (1998); one that took place before Gimmel Tammuz, and one that took place afterwards.

In 5727, I went to the Rebbe for the first time. This was after R’ Reuven Dunin worked on me for a long time, because I didn’t see the importance in going to the Rebbe. But at R’ Reuven’s farbrengens I was finally convinced, and I saw the Rebbe for the first time at Mincha. I didn’t dare to look, but the Rebbe looked at me. The chevra told me that the Rebbe, “deep cleaned you.”

I had two private audiences. At the first one, I got up the nerve to ask many questions, including the question everybody wants to know: What’s going to be with me? I had



RABBI MICHEL VISHEDSKY: “Tell me,” he asked, “does the Rebbe have ruach ha’kodesh?” I said that he certainly does. “Can the Rebbe read minds?” he asked, and I said yes. He asked more and more questions, and I finally said to him, “Why are you asking me all these questions?”

another question about a beard. I was very worried at that time about my father, who had heart trouble. He had spent his life running away from religion, and now I was getting involved in religion, which he saw as isolating me from the world. I was afraid to go back to him looking different, because I didn't know how he would take it.

I told all this to the Rebbe, and the Rebbe said that according to *Shulchan Aruch* and the ruling of the Tzemach Tzedek, one was obligated to grow a beard. The Rebbe even referred to various passages which spoke about the necessity of having a beard. The Rebbe added, "If you are going to be torn, then your father will make you feel even more torn. But if you're committed to it, and take it all the way, with Rabbeinu Tam t'fillin too (which was one of my questions), then your father will accept you."

By the way, I used this advice from the Rebbe with the religious-nationalist youth I worked with. Whenever guys vacillated about a beard and Rabbeinu Tam t'fillin, I told them: If at first you're enthusiastic but then you have second thoughts and stop, that's no good. I managed to convince all of them of this point and they all put on Rabbeinu Tam t'fillin till this day.

Another question that I asked the Rebbe was: what should I be doing in life? I had a desirable degree in mechanical engineering, but I still didn't know what to do in the future. The Rebbe said, "If you are interested in money, you have a successful profession. But if this doesn't interest you, then try chinuch."

The yechidus lasted twelve minutes. When I left the room, I told a friend what had happened. He said to me, "If the Rebbe told you something that you hadn't thought of, then this seems to be your role in life."

When I returned home – naturally, a hat and jacket, a beard and a black yarmulke instead of the knitted one I

had worn – my father looked at me and I was really nervous. Baruch Hashem, it was fine, and he lived a long life.

I told my father that the Rebbe had told me to work in chinuch. My father was overcome by this and said, "My son, I hid something from you. A father wants to see his son realize his aspirations. I had you take an aptitude test, in order to know which profession to direct you towards. The results showed that you should not learn any profession other than teaching. I had a hard time with this, and despite the test results I sent you to study a profession. Apparently, the Rebbe sees what you are really suited for.

* * *

The next story took place at the end of 5758. At that time, I retired from teaching and thought that I would finally be able to fulfill my dream of learning in kollel.

However, I was asked to run the Chabad Talmud Torah in Petach Tikva, and the way it was put to me was: Either you take the job or the school will fold.

I thought about it for a week. The school was in bad shape. I read a story in *Kfar Chabad* about the Rebbe Rayatz, who sent the enormous sum of \$3000 to save a Litvishe school from closing and said, "In my day, no yeshiva will close."

I thought, if the Rebbe Rayatz did this for a yeshiva which was not run by chassidim, then shouldn't I do all I could to ensure that one of the Rebbe's schools didn't close? So I took the job, thinking that Moshiach was coming momentarily and the job was temporary.

Three months after I took the job, I received a letter from the tax office that the school owed a great deal of money since my predecessor hadn't paid the income tax on the salaries of his teachers, and this added up to an astronomical sum. They warned that if we didn't pay the full amount, the

collection agency would repossess the school.

I began to use my connections. I reached the deputy minister of the treasury, who strung me along for two months. Then I was called to a hearing by one of the heads of the tax collection agency in Yerushalayim who is responsible for entire Central Israel. I knew that my fate and the fate of the school were in his hands, for better or for worse. To be honest, I was very afraid because I knew that the tax agency was like a shark that smelled blood and was looking for prey.

I was called to a meeting at twelve, but the official showed up at one. Facing me sat the man responsible for tax collection in Petach Tikva, and near him sat the man in charge from Yerushalayim. I whispered under my breath, "Rebbe, help me!" Then I said 'Yechi,' and the hearing began. The top man asked me if I was a Lubavitcher. I said that I was, and he asked me if I knew a certain person. I was taken aback because this person stayed with me in my home, and of course, I knew him well. Then he said that it was his cousin.

For half an hour, we discussed his cousin. Then he told me that his daughter studied at Machon Weizman, and she had also gotten interested in religion and Chabad, and was studying at Machon Alte in Tzfas. I asked him how old his daughter was and he said she had already reached marriageable age. I offered my assistance in helping her find a shidduch.

Finally, he said, "What exactly do you need? Why are you here?" I explained the problem and he said, "Okay, it's no problem. How many months do you need for a payment plan?"

I said, the more the better. He said that he could approve a payment plan for 24 months, and if he asked his manager, he could get another six months. He made a phone call and got the approval on the spot. This month,

RABBI MEIR BOSTOMSKY: *I asked the Rebbe what I should be doing in life? I had a degree in mechanical engineering, but I still didn't know what to do. The Rebbe said, "If you are interested in money, you have a successful profession. But if this doesn't interest you, then try chinuch."*



I am making the final payment.

Baruch Hashem, I constantly see Heavenly assistance and the Rebbe's hand helping in the chinuch of Jewish children.

MIRACLES IN CHOLON

Rabbi Levi Wilmovsky relates:

The story I will tell is a famous story, which was repeated in many versions over the years. I want to tell what really happened since I was a witness to it.

When I was the director of the Chabad house in Cholon, the religious deputy council leader was completely opposed to Chabad, and when he wanted to do something, he knew good and well how to interfere.

One day, I was sitting in the Chabad house in the afternoon when a woman walked in. She introduced herself as the wife of this deputy council leader, and she said that she had a letter that she wanted to translate for me. Then she explained that she had a cousin who was a big businessman in France. For many years, he did not have children, and then thanks to a bracha from the Rebbe he had a daughter. In appreciation, every time he was in America on business, he davened his last Mincha in New York with the Rebbe.

Some time ago, the daughter

became very sick, and her condition was growing worse, to the point that he couldn't go to his office. One day, he was sitting sadly at home with a large picture of the Rebbe smiling opposite him. Being very upset, r"l, he took his shoe and threw it at the Rebbe's picture.

As time went on – she read and translated from the letter – the girl began to feel better, though they didn't know why or how. Since business was pressing, he flew to America on business, and as he always had done, he went to daven Mincha with the Rebbe.

Before he could enter the small *zal*, the door opened and the Rebbe came out. The Rebbe looked at him and said, "I got the shoe in the chest!"

The man was shocked but the Rebbe went on to ask how his daughter was feeling. The man apologized and said he hadn't meant ... The Rebbe said, "You'll return home and your daughter will feel a lot better."

And that's what happened. He went home and the girl quickly recovered.

* * *

Rabbi Wilmovsky went on to relate:

For Mivtza Chanuka we would bring bachurim from the yeshiva in Kfar Chabad, and together we would go by bus, dancing at the bus stops,

and making house calls from apartment to apartment, urging Jews to light the menorah. We also did Mivtza Mezuzah, and suggested that people check their mezuzos. We added that if anybody wanted mezuzos, he should fill out the form and if it was urgent, he should write this in big letters.

One form was from the Shaulov family from Rechov Chankin 22 in Cholon. They wrote that it was urgent.

Chanuka was over on a Thursday, and on Motzaei Shabbos I called them. The father picked up the phone and I said who was calling and reminded him that he had asked that we come immediately. He said, "My wife is sick. Come right away!"

I went to see him that very evening. The man told me he was a businessman who had a factory that made delicate machinery in Tel Aviv. "Whatever I saved up over the years, I spent on medical bills," he said. "Half a year ago she suddenly sank into a depression. We have gone to the best doctors but they were unable to help her."

As he talked, I began checking the mezuzos. The word *nafshechem* (your souls) in the mezuzah on the bedroom door had a crack.

Two days later, I called Mr. Shaulov again and asked him how things were doing. He said I should come the next

evening, and we would call the Rebbe together.

"You'll speak to the secretary and tell him all the details." And that's what we did. He spoke with R' Leibel Groner and told him the whole story.

On Wednesday evening, I called him a third time and he yelled, "R' Levi, come over right now!"

When I got there, he told me, "Every morning, before I go to work, I prepare myself breakfast and lunch. This morning I prepared a fried egg, and then left for work. I return home at seven at night, and as I approached my house, I could smell something. Oh no! I thought. I hope I didn't forget to shut the gas!"

"I went in and saw my wife cooking after a year and a half of not cooking!"

Mrs. Simcha Shaulov said, "I got up at eight o'clock this morning. As on every other morning, I didn't want to get up. Suddenly I saw an old man who yelled, 'Get out of bed!'"

"I was frightened and I got up and began to work around the house as I used to do."

When I heard her story, I took a picture of the Rebbe out of my bag and showed it to her. She cried out, "That's him! That is the man who yelled at me!"

That evening, she decided to fly to the Rebbe to thank him. She did so, and following this, they began to keep kosher.

LUBAVITCHER REBBE – YOU'RE DREAMING

Rabbi Tzvi Greenwald relates:

In the years 1950-1951, the Rebbe came out with the idea of activism. The Rebbe spoke with Rabbi Eliyahu Makotovsky (later known as Rabbi Eliyahu Kitov) who was an activist on behalf of Poalei Agudas Yisroel and the Rebbe asked him to get involved in politics.

R' Eliyahu said, "But I wrote a book

Ish U'Beiso (A Man and His Home) and that's what I do!"

The Rebbe replied, "A young man from the yeshiva *Etz Chaim* could have written it too. Although it wouldn't have your flair, the contents would be the same, whereas when it comes to politics, others cannot do what you can do."

R' Eliyahu ran for elections in 5709 and then once again, but he wasn't elected. Then he was secretary for the chief rabbinate, but there were people who interfered in his work. In light of his bitter experiences, he fled communal work, and this is why the Rebbe tried to convince him to go back to it.

In one of their conversations, the Rebbe said, "If I had ten young married men, I could infiltrate *HaShomer HaTzair* and I would show them how wonderful Torah is. Then they would come in hordes."

But R' Eliyahu protested, "Lubavitcher Rebbe, you have fantasies! Over there, they burn everything! Everything is being burned up there!"

You must remember that these were the years when thousands of immigrants from North Africa emigrated to Eretz Yisroel, and they were divided according to parties. In other words, each party, according to its size, was allotted a certain number of immigrants to its institutions. There were immigrants who had a connection with Chabad in Morocco, but Chabad received nothing since it wasn't a party.

Later on, the Rebbe began work along the lines of *u'faratzta*, and began infiltrating even among the non-religious. I remember kibbutznikim who begged R' Yisroel Leibov a"h to come and speak, to show them what chassidus has to offer. Week after week, a few nights a week, Anash traveled to kibbutzim where they were warmly received. There was a great spiritual arousal.

The Rebbe asked for detailed reports about all the work being done among the people on kibbutzim and moshavim, and even said that they were not reporting in enough detail.

Some time later, before the Six Day War, I went to the Rebbe. Before my trip, I had Yerushalmi friends, who said, "Why do you go to the kibbutzim and moshavim to hobnob and talk with those people? Let them know who and what they are. There is nothing to them! Give it to them over the head, the way they deserve!"

I mentioned this in a note I gave to the Rebbe along with a package of letters that had been written by people from the HaTikva neighborhood. It was a big bundle of pages.

The Rebbe looked quickly through the pages and I thought that the Rebbe only saw the headings, and that later he would look at it more carefully. But to my great surprise, the Rebbe answered me regarding each letter, and each topic that was raised. The Rebbe spoke, but I felt that I couldn't absorb it all.

I told the Rebbe that I couldn't remember it all, especially when I didn't know what was written in the letters.

Then I saw the Rebbe stand up and say, "Regarding what you write about the way to speak to them, in a negative fashion – G-d forbid! You put a barrier between us if you speak that way, and you won't have anybody to talk to. They didn't come to you to ask you what they lack. They came to ask you what chassidus can offer them, what you have to sell, what you have to give. And this is what needs strengthening and support."

When I returned, my Yerushalmi friends laughed at the Lubavitchers and the baalei t'shuva, but the Rebbe, with his great ahavas Yisroel, said to look at the good in every Jew, and not at their deficiencies and flaws.

RABBI TZVI GREENWALD: “Regarding what you write about the way to speak to them, in a negative fashion – G-d forbid! They didn’t come to you to ask you what they lack. They came to ask you what chassidus can offer them, what you have to sell, what you have to give.”



A LETTER THAT REVEALED RUACH HA’KODESH

Rabbi Yaakov Edery relates:

Our family came to Eretz Yisroel a few days before Shavuot 5715 (1955). My father had passed away two years earlier, and we children came with our mother a”h. The Zionists took the little children and sent them to youth camps where they took their Yiddishkeit away from them. The immigrants didn’t know what was awaiting them. We were all naïve, and thought that the Holy Land, the land of Avrohom, Yitzchok, and Yaakov, is a land of people who want only Torah and holiness. It was a tremendously dangerous time – spiritually speaking.

They didn’t succeed with my brother Moshe and me, because we stayed with our family and did not go to a youth village. This was a miracle.

We also experienced incredible Divine providence. When we arrived at the transit camp in Ashkelon, we were walking down the street when we met Rabbi Yisroel Leibov a”h. We approached him and he set my family up in Kfar Chabad, and arranged that we go to yeshiva. We learned in Pardes, by Rabbi Yaakov Yemini and Rabbi Yosef Golani.

In our class, we had a friend by the name of Avrohom. I think he was from

Beit Shaan. His father was very sick and the teacher wrote a letter to the Rebbe, in the name of the class, and asked for a bracha for his father. For three or four weeks, there was no reply.

One day, we heard that the boy’s father had passed away, but the boy still didn’t know about this. That afternoon, a letter arrived from the Rebbe for the teacher. The Rebbe wrote a letter of consolation about the passing of the boy’s father.

In those days, the mail was very slow. A letter from the U.S. arrived only after many days. That means that the letter of consolation was written before the father passed away.

EDUCATIONAL ADVICE

Rabbi Amos Karniel relates:

About thirty years ago, I lived in Kfar Maimon, a village of religious Jews, the type who wear knitted yarmulkes. In 5733 (1973), our oldest daughter became bas mitzva, and we faced serious challenges. Everybody there went mixed swimming, but our children didn’t go. The school was also co-ed.

That year, I decided to go to the Rebbe. I wrote to the Rebbe about the children and added that they were dealing with the challenges of living there. I wrote this hoping that I would get the Rebbe’s approval to

continue living there.

The Rebbe answered that the older the children got, the greater their yetzer ha’ras would be, and not to rely on how it had been until now. The fact that the children had remained strong until now was no proof to anything.

When we asked whether we should move to Kfar Chabad, the Rebbe said we should if my wife agreed.

I was working as a principal at a school in Moshav Brosh. My yechidus lasted 23 minutes, with most of the time devoted to matters of chinuch. One of my questions was about the combined 5th-6th grade, which had nine students of vastly different abilities.

One boy knew 900 Mishnayot by heart, while other children in the class were very distant from achievements like this. There was even a boy who didn’t know how to read and write, and he really wanted to switch to a regular middle school in Kfar Maimon. We thought that for the good of the class, he should remain in school, although there were reasons he should switch.

The Rebbe’s answer was that the good of the group prevailed, but not to put our foot down, but to convince him with “ways of pleasantness.”

SPAGHETTI-SPINED POLITICIANS

BY ALIZA KARP

Twenty seven years ago, on Shushan Purim of 1977, the Rebbe spoke out very strongly against forming any partnership with a government that goes against the decisions of the Rabbis, against the Torah, essentially – against G-d.

The Rebbe spoke about religious members of the government who would not give up their seats when Halacha, Jewish law, ruled against them remaining. He said that the non-religious members were spitting in the faces of the religious members, while the religious members rationalized the insults by saying it was raining.

But then the Rebbe said: The example of spit is a mild expression; the actuality is much lower.

The Rebbe expounded that the religious members fool themselves if they think they can have an influence. Their government 'partners' tell them nothing and do not even invite them to meetings. Being part of such a government is a self-abasement and a path to destroying the Jewish nation in the name of religion.

In today's situation concerning the Gaza/Shomron expulsion plan, the government does not have to listen to the religious members, the remaining NRP, at all. If they did not leave after the Nation Union ministers were fired, nor did they leave when the expulsion plan was passed, it is clear to all that they will stay in the government under all circumstances. And therefore the government need not listen to them, not one iota. They will have no influence by remaining

in the government.

It is clear that they want their seats at all costs. A total sell out. If their alleged reason to stay in the government is to keep the Labor party out, then the powers at be know they can do what they want without regard to the wishes of the religious public – and for sure nothing to strengthen Yesha – the government can operate with certainty that the religious rubber stamps will be at their desks, yes sir! At your service.

A spokesman for the NRP member Yahalom claimed that as long as they keep Labor out of the government, the expulsion plan can be stopped. Who is going to stop it? Sharon has shown he stops at nothing. Not when President Bush tells him to wait until after the US elections, not when his own party votes against him and for sure not when some replaceable NRP members express dissent. Does the NRP think they can – again – threaten to leave the government, and this time Sharon will get frightened and scurry to undo on all his hard work?

The remaining NRP do not have the power to stop the expulsion, not even to delay it.

The remaining NRP are claiming that their being in the government prevents a greater disaster and even accusing the ones who did have the integrity to resign as being the renegades. But they do not know for sure, that in the wake of their resignation the Labor would join. They do not know how the Shinui would react to Labor joining. They do

not know how Likud would react to Labor joining. They do not know the full positive effect of a strong opposition that could be formed if they would quit the government.

What they do know for sure is that they are participating in a government that is planning to expel Jews from their homes in the Jewish homeland, and replace the productive, healthy Jewish communities with terrorist strongholds. This is what they know for sure. And this is what they are choosing.

Or do they know? Have they visited the blossoming communities in Gush Katif, to see, smell and feel their beauty, and to experience their significance? And have they delved into the slimy details of the Hamas terror network and the studied the horrific acts perpetrated by Hamas against innocent Jews? Or does their desire to stay in their seats, take away any quest to know the truth and act with integrity?

And when there are complaints about what the government is implementing, all one has to do is look and see that there are religious people in the government, so therefore, what is being done must be Kosher. Yes, religious people sitting in the government is like giving a Kosher certification. The plan to evict the Jews of Gush Katif and the Shomron is being done in the name of religion.

In his discourse mentioned above, the Rebbe uses the term, Rachmanus G'dola, a great pity. He says these



religious members of the government are extending the Galus, the exile. They think they are living through the beginning stages of Geula, redemption, but in truth they are pushing away the redemption.

The Rebbe explains, when a Jew puts on T'fillin and then sits in such a government, he is not ushering in the beginning of the redemption by elevating the government, not if the government is acting against the Kingdom of Heaven. Rather, the religious member is degrading the T'fillin, by selling out his Judaism in order to have a seat in the government, and he is spreading darkness, G-d forbid.

"How," the Rebbe asks, "can one trust someone who is ready to sell everything for the sake of his chair?"

So who can we trust? How do we move forward?

Excuse me, but I am now going to leap from quoting the Rebbe to quoting Moshe Saperstein. Mainly because if a Rebbe tells you to trust in Hashem, you might discount it as something Rebbes are known to say. But when Moshe Saperstein, a resident of Neve Dekalim, a victim of war and terror and a folk hero, writes about where to turn, he puts a different spin on it.

"We have finally been forced to cast off our hopes in spaghetti-spined politicians...who make up much of the apparatus of the religious parties. We come to understand the Hebrew saying, "There is no one on whom we can rely, except our Father in Heaven.

"Relying on Him, we will win out. How this will come to pass is unknown, certainly by me. What means will be used, what sacrifices will be demanded, is hidden from me. But we will win and it will clearly be His doing. Not that I expect many to see His hand at work. Luck, they will say. But luck will have had nothing to do with it.

"At this point some of you, including some of my dearest friends, are letting out deep sighs and shaking your heads, 'Poor Moshe. He's lost it. He finally cracked under the strain.'"

Moshe is right. He is not saying that a strong west wind will blow all night and lift all our enemies into the sea. He is saying that we have to do our part and Hashem will do his. We do not have to worry about who to trust and what will be. We have to follow the Torah and do as many Mitzvahs as we can. We have to trust that Hashem will orchestrate the right scenario, at the right place, in the right time.

We have to work with the system, support a righteous government or bring down an evil regime. Even if this means toppling one government after another, eventually the politicians will get the message. We have to vote for a political party whose leaders have fear of heaven, not love of power. But our loyalty and our trust do not belong in the system or with our leaders. Our loyalty and our trust are in the true ruler. We have learned the hard way, but we have learned.

What they do know for sure is that they are participating in a government that is planning to expel Jews from their homes in the Jewish homeland, and replace the productive, healthy Jewish communities with terrorist strongholds. This is what they know for sure. And this is what they are choosing.

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400 BOYS CELEBRATE THEIR BAR MITZVA ON MASADA

A unique bar mitzva celebration took place on Masada near Arad. About 400 bar mitzva boys, davened and heard Krias ha'Torah and divrei Torah from Rabbi Ben-Tzion Lipsker. This celebration is the 28th of its kind that takes place at sunrise on Masada.

Rabbi Lipsker planned this event starting a few months ago, by preparing a special learning program for the bar mitzva of all the seventh grade students in Arad. The boys heard lectures on the topic of bar mitzva and kabbalas ol mitzvos.

On the day of the celebration, the 400 boys and the families met



Hundreds of bar mitzva boys at Shacharis

at the bottom of Masada, and went up the Snake Path at sunrise. They were warmly greeted by the talmidim of the Machon L'Hora'a (smicha program) Ohel Levi Yitzchok. Rabbi Lipsker led the procession while holding a Torah.

The ceremony began with a brief explanation about the significance of the day, and then the boys began to put on t'fillin, with the help of the talmidim of the Machon L'Hora'a. Hundreds of participants davened Shacharis together and heard Krias ha'Torah, with a few of the boys getting aliyos.

The mayor of Arad, Mordechai Brill, appeared moved by the celebration, as his son was one of the bar mitzva boys.

At the end of the program, many parents thanked Rabbi Lipsker for the special learning program and for the beautiful celebration.



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