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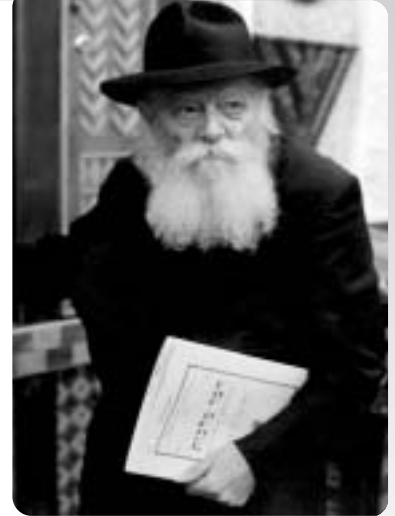
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THE AVODA OF LEVI

SICHOS IN ENGLISH



SHABBOS PARSHAS EIKEV; CHAF AV, 5750

1. Each year, a yahrtzait involves an ascent to a higher spiritual level. This year, the 46th anniversary of Rav Levi Yitzchok's yahrtzait, is unique for 46 is numerically equivalent to "Levi," Rav Levi Yitzchok's first and primary name. Significantly, this week's Torah portion also mentions the uniqueness of the tribe of Levi.

The service of Levi is alluded to in the verse which the Matriarch Leah used to explain the rationale for the name Levi, "This time, my man will become attached to me." This refers to the ultimate marriage bond, with "my man" referring to G-d and "me" to the Jewish people. This attachment to G-d is reflected in the Levites' service: "to stand before G-d, to serve Him... G-d is their portion." Nevertheless, these qualities are not exclusive to the tribe of Levi alone as the Rambam writes:

Not only the tribe of Levi... but each and every person... whose generous spirit and intellectual understanding motivate him to separate himself and stand before G-d and serve Him... becomes sanctified as holy of holies.

This implies that every individual has the potential to reach the level of

the Levites. Furthermore, the expression, "holy of holies," is an allusion to the High Priest, the most distinguished individual of the tribe of Levi. Even his spiritual level can be reached by others.

In particular, the service of the Levites is characterized by two qualities: On one hand, the Levites are separated from the people at large, as our Torah portion relates, "At this time, G-d separated the tribe of Levi." [204] Conversely, the Levites were charged with: Instructing the masses in His just ways and righteous judgments as it is written, "They shall instruct Yaakov in Your judgments and Yisroel in Your Torah."

Thus, it was their task to reach out to the entire Jewish people and lift them up to a higher level. This applies even when the Jews are on a low spiritual rung as implied by the fact that the selection of the Levites came – as our parsha relates – after the sin of the Golden Calf. Although the Jews had sunken to such a level, the Levites were able to lift them higher and motivate them to t'shuva.

These two extremes are also seen in the Beis HaMikdash, the place of the Levites' service. On one hand, the Beis HaMikdash – and in particular, the Holy of Holies – is the holiest place in

the world. Conversely, the Beis HaMikdash's windows were structured so that "light would go out from there to the entire world." Similarly, the concept of a dwelling for G-d's Presence, the function of the Holy of Holies, is intended to be extended throughout the entire world until the world at large becomes, "a dwelling for G-d," a place where His essence is revealed.

These two extremes are also reflected in the primary service of the Beis HaMikdash, the offering of the sacrifices. The Seifer HaBahir states: "The secret of the sacrifices ascends to the secret of the Ein Sof." From that level, influence is drawn down into this world, elevating all the animal, vegetable, and mineral elements of existence. [205]

This fusion of opposites was revealed within Rav Levi Yitzchok's life. On one hand, he was an elevated individual, uplifted by his immense Torah knowledge which included both the revealed realm of Torah law and the hidden secrets of P'nimius HaTorah. Nevertheless, he also served as a Rav of a large city and was responsible for spreading Torah and strengthening Jewish practice throughout the region.

These activities were particularly

significant because, at that time, the persecution of the Soviet Government had forced many Rabbis to reduce their public activities and remain content with observing Torah and mitzvos together with a small core of followers, and, at times, only by themselves. Some Rabbis were even coerced into signing statements for the Government which ran contrary to their own convictions or to the teachings of the Torah.

In this environment, Rav Levi Yitzchok continued to carry on his Rabbinic functions openly and proudly. Indeed, due to the vacuum of Rabbinic leadership, he spread his activities throughout Russia. Not only did he refuse to concede to the Russians' demands, he traveled to Moscow and interceded on behalf of the Jews and Torah and mitzvos with high government officials, including the President of the Country. Furthermore, he was successful in securing the observance of certain mitzvos,[206] for example, shmura matza.[207]

His activities were carried out at a risk to his life. As a result of this activity, he was exiled, a punishment which, from a certain perspective, is more severe than death and ultimately, he passed away in exile.

Even while in exile, he continued his activities to spread Yiddishkeit in whatever degree possible. Furthermore, it was there in which he composed his Torah writings, despite the difficulty in obtaining ink and paper, with the intention that eventually, these be published.[208]

Rav Levi Yitzchok's activities extended to the lowest aspects of existence. Thus, as Rabbi and afterwards, while in exile, he also worked to spread justice and righteousness among gentiles. In this manner, he reflected the service of Levi, extending the highest levels of spirituality throughout the world at large.

These qualities receive greater emphasis today, his yahrtzait. Although

a yahrtzait commemorates the departure of a soul from the body and an ascent from this world, the Zohar teaches that the presence of a Tzaddik in all the worlds (even this physical world) is felt more powerfully after his death than in his lifetime.[209]

It is possible to receive influence from a Tzaddik by studying his teachings as implied by the Rebbe Rashab (Rav Levi Yitzchok's Rebbe) who told Chassidim at the time of his passing, "I am going to heaven, but I am leaving my writings for you." This implies that through studying his writings, it is possible to establish a connection with him as he is "in heaven."

Although the Jews had sunken to such a level after the sin of the Golden Calf, the Levites were able to lift them higher and motivate them to t'shuva.

This concept can be explained as follows: The word Anochi (the first word of the Ten Commandments) is an acronym for the Hebrew words meaning, "I wrote down and gave over Myself," i.e., by giving the Torah, G-d gave Himself over to the Jews. Since, "the righteous resemble their Creator," they also invest themselves in the texts they compose.

Similarly, in the world at large, after his passing a tzaddik effects even the lowest levels of existence:

All [a tzaddik's] deeds, teachings, and service which he carried out throughout his lifetime are revealed and shine... from above downward at

the time of his passing,... bringing about salvation in the world, atoning for the sins of the generation.

On the day of a tzaddik's yahrtzait, he ascends to an even higher level.[210] Nevertheless, these high peaks are also drawn down into this world – to those who follows the tzaddik's teaching and to the world at large – as obvious from the text of the Kaddish: "May His great name be exalted and hallowed... May His great name be blessed forever and ever." The Hebrew word for "blessed" also has the connotation, "be extended" and the Hebrew for "forever," can also mean, "to the world." Thus, the above verse can mean: "May G-d's great Name be extended into the world."

To explain this concept from a deeper perspective: Before the soul descends into this world, it is described "as standing," i.e., confined to a particular level beyond which it cannot advance. Through the descent into a physical body and the service of Torah and mitzvos within the context of our material world, the soul is given the potential to proceed. Thus, all the ascents of the soul in the spiritual worlds are dependent on the soul's service in this realm.

Because the soul's service on this plane is the source for its potential to ascend, all the peaks to which it ascends have an effect in this world, influencing the students who are connected to that soul. This, in turn, gives the soul the potential for further and higher ascents. Also, it hastens the coming of the ultimate fulfillment for the soul when it will again enclothe itself in this world in the Era of Resurrection.[211]

2. The date of Rav Levi Yitzchok's yahrtzait, the 20th of Av, also provides us with a lesson. The Hebrew word for 20 is numerically equivalent to the Hebrew word Kesser, meaning "crown." There are ten S'firos, each of which has a dimension which rises upward and a dimension which descends below, thus equaling 20.

Kesser which is above all these levels, permeates and pervades them.

This concept is also reflected in our service: Kesser is connected with royalty for a crown is the symbol of kingship. When describing the effect of the Jews' declaration of Naaseh V'Nishma, the Midrash relates the following parable which sheds light on the relationship between a king and the crown: The subjects made three crowns for the king. One, he put on his own head, and two, he placed on the head of his subjects.

This implies that the three crowns are on the same level and thus, the crowns given to the subjects are connected to the crown worn by the king. Furthermore, even the crown worn by the king was given to him by the subjects – metaphorically, is dependent on the service of the Jews in this world. This concept is reflected in the verse, “A king is subjugated to the field.” Although the people in the field are on a lower level than those living in the king's capitol, their service in the field crowns the king – metaphorically, fulfills G-d's intent and desire for a dwelling in the lower worlds.

The service of refining the lower levels shares an intrinsic connection to the 20th of Av: The month of Av is connected with the transformation of the lowest levels to holiness as the Midrash states:

A lion (Nebuchadnezzar) arose in the month whose sign is a lion (Av) and destroyed the “lion of G-d” (the Beis HaMikdash) in order that a lion (G-d) should come in the month whose sign is a lion and build the “lion of G-d.”

Thus, the revelation of the lion of holiness (which is a reference to the level of Kesser) comes about through the transformation of the forces which destroyed the Beis HaMikdash. This begins on Shabbos Nachamu and receives more intensity from Shabbos to Shabbos with G-d promising[212] the Jews, “I, yes I, will console you.”

There is also a connection between

the above and the coming new year.

“Aryeh,” Hebrew for lion, can be interpreted as an acronym for the Hebrew words: Elul, Rosh HaShana, Yom Kippur, and Hoshana Rabba. From the 15th of Av, when it is customary to wish a colleague to be inscribed for a good and sweet year, and more particularly, from the 20th of Av[213] onward, we begin the preparations for the month of Elul, the month of t'shuva and mercy, when the King goes out into the field and the

Even while in exile, he continued his activities to spread Yiddishkeit in whatever degree possible. It was there in which he composed his Torah writings, despite the difficulty in obtaining ink and paper, with the intention that eventually, these be published.

people in the field greet Him. He receives them all pleasantly, showing a shining countenance to all and fulfilling their requests. (This reflects the advantage of the service of the people in the field as explained above.)

The above concepts can be connected with the end of this week's Torah portion (11:24) which declares:

Every place on which your feet will tread will become yours. Your boundaries will extend from the desert [to] Lebanon, from the river, the

Euphrates river, until the Final Sea.

By referring to the Mediterranean as “the Final Sea” (instead of “the Great Sea” as in Parshas Massei 34:6), the Torah alludes to the concept that, ultimately, in the Messianic age, Eretz Yisroel will expand throughout the entire world, reaching, “the Final Sea.”[214]

The Euphrates river mentioned is also significant, as we see that the Torah (D'varim 1:7) refers to the Euphrates as “the Great River.” In his commentary on that verse, Rashi notes that the Euphrates is actually not a large river and is referred to as “great,” because it is next to Eretz Yisroel.[215] Rashi concludes, quoting a parable offered by our Sages, “If you come close to a person anointed with oil (Eretz Yisroel, the chosen land), oil will become attached to you (importance is also attached to the Euphrates).”

The significance of the latter statement can be understood in terms of our Sages statement:

All the mitzvos the Patriarchs performed before You were vaporous in nature (i.e., they did not effect the material substance of the world), but in regard to us, “Your name is like oiled poured forth.” [“Like one who pours from one vessel to another;” i.e., the mitzvos we perform have actual substance.]

Oil is connected with the essence and, yet, is drawn down into the lowest levels. Similarly, after the giving of the Torah, holiness can be drawn down into the material substance with which the mitzvos are fulfilled.

This concept is also related to the Euphrates River which B'Reishis describes as the fourth of the rivers emanating from Eden. This implies an association with the lowest levels. Thus, our Sages associate this river with the fourth exile which we are presently enduring. Through oil, the revelation of the essence which permeates through all things, even this low level can be elevated.

3. The first Mishna of the fifth

chapter of Pirkei Avos states, “The world was created with ten utterances.” Our Sages note that the expression, “And G-d said, ‘Let there be...’ “ is repeated only nine times in the Torah. However, “B’Reishis (the verse, “In the beginning,...”) is also considered one of the utterances.”

In Chassidus, it is explained that the utterance B’Reishis is general in nature,[216] including all the other nine statements which brought about the creation of all the particular elements of the world. Nevertheless, it is also “an utterance,” i.e., its spiritual level shares a commonality with the other utterances and reflects only the aspect of G-dliness which is associated with the creation of the worlds.

There is, however, a positive

interpretation of the word maamer, “utterance.” In Parshas Ki Savo, it has the meaning of “importance” or “praise.” This implies that it is possible to draw down into the world a level of G-dliness that transcends the limits of the world. Torah, which is one with G-d, can be drawn into the world making it more “praiseworthy” and enhancing its “importance.”

4. This Shabbos follows the fifteenth of Av[217] which as mentioned previously,[218] is connected with an increase in Torah study. Preferably, this increase should be expressed in communal study, in groups of three, and if possible in groups of ten or more. G-d promises to bless those who increase their study with extended life. Every Jew, men,

women, and children, should make such an increase.

In this context, it is worthy to mention the importance of the education of young children[219] and the presence at this farbrengen of the children from Camp Gan Yisroel,[220] a camp “in the field.”

May this increase in Torah study lead to the time when, “A new Torah will emerge from Me.” Then, we will merit true extended life, the era of the resurrection when, “Those who lie in the dust will arise and sing,” with Rav Levi Yitzchok at their head (for today, the spiritual source of his soul shines powerfully).[221] May this take place immediately, in 5750, “a year of miracles,” which will lead to 5751, a year when, “I will show you wonders.”

NOTES:

204. Because of this separation, the Levites were given the task of carrying the Ark, an elevated and holy service.

205. The influence of the sacrifices in the world at large is intimated at by the word used by the Seifer HaBahir for “secret,” “raz.” Although this refers to a “secret,” a level which transcends revelation, nevertheless, “raz” is numerically equivalent to “ohr,” meaning “light.” Ultimately, this level will be revealed within the world at large.

206. Note the sichos of the 6th of Tishrei, 5750, in which Rav Levi Yitzchok’s activities are described at length.

207. The observance of the mitzvah of matza is related to that of all other mitzvos. Thus, our Sages interpret the verse, “And you shall watch the matzos,” as “And you shall observe the mitzvos.”

208. After his death, through many efforts that involved genuine self-sacrifice, this desire was fulfilled. His writings were brought out of Russia and published and are studied by many Jews today.

Significantly, the writings by Rav Levi Yitzchok which have been published are primarily those composed in exile. He also wrote thousands of pages while serving as Rav in his city. The whereabouts of these writings, however, is – at present – unknown.

209. Tanya (Igeres HaKodesh 27) explains that while a tzaddik was alive, his body limited the extent of his influence. In contrast, after his passing, those constraints no longer exist.

210. The tzaddikim ascend to higher levels in the spiritual world each day as our Sages declared, “The righteous have no rest, not in this world, nor in the World to Come as it is written, ‘And

they shall go from strength to strength.’ “ Nevertheless, these ascents are all relative. On a yahrtzait, a tzaddik rises to a higher level that is immeasurably above his previous rung.

211. This follows the Ramban’s opinion – which is supported by Chassidus – that the ultimate era of fulfillment for mankind is the Era of Resurrection when the souls will be enclined in this world again.

212. This promise is stimulated by a complaint issued by the Jews. Although the Haftora of Shabbos Nachamu contains powerful words of consolation, the message was transmitted to the Jews by the prophets. This provokes the Jews to protest, as this week’s Haftora begins, “And Zion said: ‘The L-rd has forsaken me.’” Thus, the Jews remain, as related at the beginning of the Haftora of Shabbos R’ei, “O poor and storm-tossed one, who is not comforted.” This motivates G-d to promise, as the Haftora of Shabbos Shoftim begins, “I, yes I, will console you.”

213. The 20th of Av is 40 days before Rosh Hashanah. The number 40 is significant. Our Sages speak about prophecies that are made forty days before a child is conceived.

214. Similarly, this expression can also be taken as an allusion to the end of time as Rashi comments on D’varim 34:2: “Do not read, ‘the Final Sea (yam ha’acharon),’ read ‘the Final Day (yom ha’acharon).’ “

215. The commentaries question this statement, wondering whether the Jews were commanded to conquer the area that reaches until the Euphrates or whether this area was promised to the Jews over and above the territory of Eretz Yisroel.

216. The Rabbis explain that the utterance B’Reishis brought into being the primal matter, that is above the level of the particular creations.

217. This year, the 15th of Av was celebrated on

Monday. Monday, the second day of creation, is associated with the creation of controversy. Shabbos, which elevates the days of the previous week, reflects how this can be transformed into “a controversy for the sake of heaven,” like the controversy of Hillel and Shammai.

This week’s chapter of Pirkei Avos explains that such a controversy “will continue,” i.e., both opinions are of eternal relevance. This will be expressed in the Messianic age when the halacha will follow the School of Shammai. Nevertheless, the opinion of the School of Hillel will also be relevant for there are several levels of the performance of mitzvos. For example, in giving tz’daka, there are those who give a tenth of their income, those who give a fifth, and those who follow the Alter Rebbe’s advice in Tanya and give without any limits at all.

218. See the Sichos of Parshas VaEschanan, 5750.

219. There is a connection between these children and the concept of oil mentioned previously. Our Sages interpret the verse, “Do not touch My anointed ones,” as a reference to Jewish children who study Torah.

220. They have come wearing special clothes so that “everyone who sees them will realize that they are children blessed by G-d.” They should all say L’chaim and sing a happy niggun, the Simchas Torah niggun composed by Rav Levi Yitzchok. Surely, they will make good resolutions to increase their study of Torah and fulfillment of mitzvos. May their parents and teachers merit to raise them to Torah, chuppa, and good deeds and may they merit much Chassidische nachas from them.

221. The Jerusalem Talmud makes this statement about a birthday. Surely, it applies regarding a yahrtzait which is day of even greater significance.

AM I DOING WHAT THE REBBE WANTS, OR WHAT I FEEL LIKE DOING?

RABBI HESCHEL GREENBERG, SHLIACH IN WILLIAMSVILLE, NEW YORK
IN A SPECIAL INTERVIEW WITH AVROHOM RAYNITZ

*How is it that ten years later our emuna that the Rebbe MH”M is about to be revealed hasn’t weakened? What is the source of the difference of opinion in Chabad and why shouldn’t we compromise for the sake of achdus? What is the point in publicizing Moshiach’s identity, and why is it so important to stress that the Rebbe is chai v’kayam? Why are there Lubavitchers who shy away from publicizing their belief that the Rebbe is Moshiach and why are they bothered when others publicize it? And most importantly: How can we change things? * A conversation with a very learned shliach and a popular lecturer – Rabbi Heschel Greenberg. Part 2 of 2.*

HOW DO WE EXPLAIN?

How can we possibly explain to a non-Chabad Chassid that the Rebbe is Moshiach?

Before I answer you, I would like to start with an introduction. When you give a class or a lecture on Chassidus to a non-Chabad crowd,

you have to do so with the assumption that your audience is unfamiliar with Chabad concepts. When you write in an inside Lubavitch publication that the neshama is a portion of G-d Above, or that true reality is G-dliness, you don’t need to explain these concepts. However, if you refer to these

concepts when speaking to non-Lubavitchers, you need to know that they are not accepted tenets.

The same is true when speaking about Moshiach. Within Chabad, there is no need to explain what Moshiach is. Every child knows that Moshiach is a human being, a king from the house of Dovid, who will bring perfection to Torah and mitzvos, and perfection to the world at large. However, the world out there thinks differently, starting with similarities to other religions and including many mistaken ideas. Even from Jews don’t understand what Moshiach is about, and they associate him mistakenly with other things. Lately there has been somewhat of an improvement in this, in the frum world, but they are still far from the simple understanding of a Lubavitcher child.

This is why, when speaking about Moshiach to a non-Chabad audience, you have to be careful not to use terms that can be misunderstood. This is what Chazal meant when they said in Avos, “Wise ones, be careful with your words.” I personally have experienced situations in which despite all my efforts to explain the concepts on a level that everybody can understand, some people completely misconstrue the message.

There are Chassidim who like to

quote the Rebbe, and this is important, but you have to know that there are places where quoting the Rebbe can do damage, because people will misunderstand what you are saying. Since the important thing is (or should be) that the person understand us, we must improve our delivery. You can retain all the oros of Tohu but they must be drawn down into keilim of Tikkun, in terms your audience can understand.

Now, to address your question – how do we explain that the Rebbe is Moshiach? I would ask it differently. Why do you think it's difficult to explain to people that the Rebbe is Moshiach? What, in your opinion, interferes with the belief that the Rebbe is Moshiach?

When a non-Lubavitcher hears the besuras ha'Geula, it all sounds strange to him, and that is an understatement. You tell him that at any moment someone can get up and bring all the Jews back in t'shuva, fight our enemies and win, and bring all Jews to Eretz Yisroel, get rid of the mosques on the Temple Mount, and build the Beis HaMikdash.

This sounds so far from reality that he wonders whether the Lubavitcher telling him this believes what he is saying. Since he knows the Lubavitcher to be a normal person, he figures he didn't mean it literally. "These are spiritual ideas," he says to himself comfortingly, and goes on his Galus'dike way.

And that's when the Lubavitcher drops his bomb: The Rebbe is Moshiach!

That's when he realizes that the Lubavitcher is serious about everything he said, for the Rebbe is a human being, and if the Rebbe is Moshiach, then it all has to be meant literally and in our generation. It sounds impossible, and he's sure to think of the Lubavitcher as someone with bizarre ideas.

In other words, the belief that the Rebbe is Moshiach doesn't bother anyone. If people protest, it is because they are bothered by everything having to do with Moshiach. The very idea that a human being in our generation can get up and change the world is hard to grasp.

Go over to a yeshiva bachur from



If people protest, it is because they are bothered by everything having to do with Moshiach. The very idea that a human being in our generation can get up and change the world is hard to grasp.

a non-Lubavitch yeshiva and ask him if he believes that Moshiach could come today. He will say that of course he believes that. Ask him who Moshiach is. Is it his rosh yeshiva? Certainly not. Ask him if he knows anyone that is fit to be Moshiach (aside from the Lubavitcher Rebbe). He will say he doesn't. Then go back to the original question: Do you think it's logical to say that the Moshiach whom nobody knows may come today? He won't be so sure any more...

If you learn inyanei Geula with him, and with the ko'ach of Torah manage to change his ideas from worldly ideas to Torah ideas, until he believes that Moshiach can come at any moment, and is a human being who will change the world, he won't have a problem believing that this man is the Lubavitcher Rebbe. On the contrary, it's a rational conclusion, because they all concede that the Rebbe got people talking about Moshiach, and that the signs in the Rambam about Moshiach fit the Rebbe, and he is the most fitting man to be Moshiach.

If there are Lubavitchers who maintain that they know people who became turned off from Chabad because of the publicity about who Moshiach is, I would suggest that they check and see what exactly bothered those people. I am sure that most – if not all – of them did not learn enough about the topic of Moshiach in general, and their belief in Moshiach is very superficial, and therefore, when they heard that the Rebbe is Moshiach it sounded real and true and scary to them, and this bothers them.

If a Jew asks you whether you believe that the Rebbe is Moshiach, what do you answer?

I assume that the person asking the question has no idea what a Rebbe is and what Moshiach is. If he knew what a Rebbe is and what

Moshiach is, he would realize that the Rebbe is Moshiach.

Therefore, I say to him, in order to understand the truth about whether the Rebbe is Moshiach, you first have to understand the concepts “Rebbe” and “Moshiach.” Let’s try to understand what Moshiach is, where he appears in Torah, in Navi, in the Rambam, and after you know what Moshiach is, and you also learn what a Rebbe is and what the Lubavitcher Rebbe has done in this generation – then you yourself will understand that the Rebbe and Moshiach are one and the same person.

I once had a shiur with twenty people who were not religious, and after I explained at length what a Rebbe is and what Moshiach is, I said that the Rebbe is Moshiach. Nobody said boo. I am not telling you that they all began believing this, but they definitely accepted it as something reasonable.

On another occasion, I gave a lecture to a group of Reform Jews, and I explained that according to the Rambam the Rebbe is Moshiach. Their “rabbi” was there and after he looked at the Rambam, he told his congregation that if we accept what is written in the Rambam, it’s logical to assume that the Rebbe is Moshiach... He had a problem with the Rambam but he understood the logic.

The problem is that many of us mistakenly think that everybody understands what a Rebbe is and what Moshiach is, and they refer to many Chassidic concepts which the people they are talking to do not begin to understand.

Again, the direct approach is to learn inyanei Geula and Moshiach. When you understand what Moshiach is, and what he is supposed to accomplish in the world, then you can easily accept that the Rebbe is Moshiach.

WHAT BOTHERS THEM?

There are Lubavitcher Chassidim who are very disturbed by the publicizing of Moshiach’s identity. How do you explain this?

When you are talking about a shliach who worked for decades to be mekarev Jews to the Rebbe and Chassidus, and his logic tells him that when you speak to them about inyanei Moshiach they will be turned off from Chabad – you can certainly understand his opposition. He is making a mistake, but even so, you can be *melamed z’chus* on him and say that after all, he is concerned about the Rebbe’s inyanim.

He might also be afraid that certain wealthy donors will stop contributing towards Chabad, and Chabad cannot continue without financial support. Again, this reflects a genuine concern.

Here too, the real problem is that people don’t learn enough. If that shliach would learn the Rebbe’s sichos, I am certain that he would understand that this is what the Rebbe wants, and since this is the case, along with the directive comes the ability to carry it through. The Rebbe sees to it that it will not turn people off of Chassidus, and will not harm us financially. But when you don’t learn, you don’t know.

Another point, human nature is such that when a person thinks something through once and comes to a decision, he doesn’t bother to rethink it. He relies on his earlier understanding, and this is how he views everything. So once someone decides that publicizing Moshiach’s identity turns people off, he won’t acknowledge the strong sichos about inyanei Moshiach, and he won’t see the answers in which the Rebbe encouraged the publicizing of Moshiach’s identity. He is convinced that the Rebbe is against this kind of publicity, because he equates this publicity with turning people off of

Chabad, and it isn’t possible that the Rebbe would tell us to do something that would turn people off of Chabad...

When it’s not a shliach, but someone in a Lubavitch community who is bothered by someone saying “Yechi” among Lubavitchers, generally speaking this is someone who hasn’t learned enough of the Rebbe’s sichos and doesn’t understand the importance of this

When you are talking about a shliach who worked for decades to be mekarev Jews to the Rebbe and Chassidus, and his logic tells him that when you speak to them about inyanei Moshiach they will be turned off from Chabad – you can certainly understand his opposition.

inyan.

But this is not what bothers him. It is a fact that when people talk during Krias HaTorah, which everybody agrees is wrong, it doesn’t bother him (or not as much) as when someone says “Yechi.”

What bothers him is something else entirely. When a Chassid says “Yechi” and he doesn’t join in, he is sure that the Chassid who is saying “Yechi” looks at him as though he’s a

heretic. It could be subconscious, but it affects his view of the whole inyan of “Yechi.” I am certain that if the Chassid who says “Yechi” would go out of his way to do favors for him, even b’gashmius, suddenly the “Yechi” would stop bothering him.

I know many people who, generally speaking, are not in favor of “Yechi,” but when they saw someone saying “Yechi” with sincerity, they told me that when *that person* says it, it doesn’t bother them.

How do we understand this? If it’s not right to say “Yechi,” what difference does it make who says it? Rather, they also realize that it is right to say “Yechi,” and what

He is making a mistake, but even so, you can be melamed z’chus on him and say that after all, he is concerned about the Rebbe’s inyanim.

bothers them is the thought that it’s all about politics, and that the Chassid who says “Yechi” thinks he’s a Chassid and they’re not.

This is why it is very important to look positively at every Chassid, even if he doesn’t believe everything we believe. After all, everybody has areas he is weak in, and why should we judge someone else negatively? In general, in Galus you can’t have complaints about Jews, especially not after Gimmel Tammuz. I am sure that a lot could be accomplished if we understood one another.

All the *limudei z’chus* that are brought in *Tanya* about a Jew who

fails in some area, are true about Chassidim too. We can and must understand one another, believing that the concealment by the other person is so great that if we would be in his place, it’s doubtful whether we would withstand the test. Who are we to complain about him?

In Lubavitch, we were taught that it’s not kiruv rechokim, because every Jew is close. The Rebbe taught us that every Jew is a “captive child,” yet he is also full of mitzvos like a pomegranate is full of seeds. So there could be a non-religious Jew who is on a higher level than us, for we learn and know everything, yet we don’t do enough. Why is it that when it comes to a non-religious Jew, we can make these calculations, but when it comes to Chassidim we don’t? What the Rebbe said about every Jew also applies to Chassidim!

THE PURPOSE IN PUBLICIZING MOSHIACH’S IDENTITY

You explained why publicizing Moshiach’s identity is not harmful, but it’s still not clear – why is it a positive thing to do?

First of all, before we talk about the purpose and spiritual benefit, let’s talk a little about human nature. We are publicizing to the world that Moshiach is coming any minute now. We know who Moshiach is, but don’t tell anyone. The moment we are all waiting for finally arrives and the Rebbe is revealed as Moshiach. All our mekuravim complain: Why didn’t you tell us? Why didn’t you include us when *you knew*?

Every Chassid who learned about kabbalas ha’malchus knows that you can’t command people to be mekabel the Malchus, because the whole point of kabbalas ha’malchus is the people’s *desire* to coronate the king. Therefore, in the Rebbe’s sichos you won’t find much on this subject, even though there are definitely

sichos in which the Rebbe talks about the appointment of Melech HaMoshiach and that we need to be mekabel his Malchus, especially the famous sicha (Beis Nissan 5748) about proclaiming, “Yechi HaMelech.” But in the Rebbe’s answers to shluchim who worked on this, there are clear and explicit answers illustrating how pleased the Rebbe was with this: he gave blessings that it should increase, and whoever has one hundred wants two hundred, etc.

In addition, in the Rebbe’s sichos it says numerous times that the Rebbe is Moshiach, starting with the many places where the Rebbe says that the Nasi HaDor is synonymous with the Moshiach of the dor, and “Menachem is his name,” “and also Mendel,” and Moshiach is located at 770 Eastern Parkway, etc. Therefore, even if there isn’t a separate directive to publicize Moshiach’s identity, there’s an obligation to publicize this as part of the besuras ha’Geula, as an inseparable part of the sichos.

Second of all, knowing who Moshiach is strengthens emuna and gives a chayus to the fulfillment of Torah and mitzvos. When a Jew believes in Moshiach in general terms, it seems like an abstract idea to him and it doesn’t affect his daily life. But when he knows that the Rebbe is Moshiach, the belief in Moshiach is palpable and he lives more with inyanei Moshiach, and this naturally affects his Torah and mitzvos.

Third of all, and this is the main point, the whole idea of Moshiach is that he’s a king, and you have to accept his Malchus. As long as we were in the stage of preparing the world for Geula in general, the kabbalas ha’malchus of Moshiach wasn’t as important. It was there, though not out in the open, for every Chassid knew it was important to connect as many Jews to the Rebbe and to bring Jews to the Rebbe. This

was an act of kabbalas ha'malchus, though not an open one.

The Rebbe told us that the time for Redemption has arrived and we have the revelation of the metzius of Moshiach and his hisgalus has begun to be apparent to all through his activities. Then, at the Kinus HaShluchim, the Rebbe said that the only avoda left to do is to prepare the world to greet Moshiach. All of this can only mean one thing – that there is Moshiach and you have to be mekabel him. The Rebbe didn't say to prepare the world for Geula, because we already passed that stage. The Rebbe said that the avoda of birurim is over, and the world is already prepared for Geula. What we need to do now is to be mekabel p'nei Moshiach Tzidkeinu, and it is this point that is central to all the mitzvaim.

The Rebbe said in the sicha of Parshas VaYeira 5752, "In addition to that which was explained previously, that the metzius of Moshiach exists within the spark of Moshiach (the yechida) contained inside each Jew, **there is also the metzius of Moshiach, literally** (the general yechida)... And, as the Rebbe, my father-in-law Nasi Doreinu, Moshiach of our dor said, that all the avoda is completed and we are standing ready to greet Moshiach, in our day... there is (not only the **metzius** of Moshiach, but) also **the hisgalus** of Moshiach, and now we only need to **be mekabel** p'nei Moshiach Tzidkeinu b'poel mamash."

THE TIME FOR GEULA

When you say that the time for Geula has arrived, you mean to say that the Geula has already begun?

It wasn't me who said that; I am simply quoting the Rebbe. It is very important to examine these words closely, since the Rebbe fought for years against those who said that we have the is'chalta d'Geula.

The truth is that when you examine what the Rebbe said you won't find the Rebbe using the term "is'chalta d'Geula," even once. There are similar expressions, but they are different. The Rebbe said dozens of times that "the time for Geula has arrived," and the word *higia* (arrived) is like *negia*, that we are already "touching" the time for Geula. As the Rebbe said elsewhere: "We are already standing on the threshold of the beginning of Yemos HaMoshiach, on the threshold of the beginning of the Geula" (Balak 5751). "Inyanei

The time for Geula has arrived, inyanei ha'Geula have already begun, and we have a microcosm and the beginning of the promises of Geula, and these days are already defined as "Yemos HaMoshiach."

HaGeula have already begun" (Shoftim 5751); "These days – Yemos HaMoshiach – that we are in now" (Yud-Tes Kislev 5752); "We see (something like and) the beginning of Moshiach's affect on the nations" (Mishpatim 5752).

The **time** for Geula has arrived, **inyanei** ha'Geula have already begun, and we have a microcosm and the beginning of the **promises** of Geula, and these days are already defined as "Yemos HaMoshiach." However, the **Geula** itself has still not begun,

because the Geula is a clear halachic concept that begins when Moshiach gathers all the Jews and builds the Mikdash in its place. Only after the fulfillment of these two conditions does the Geula begin.

Today we are in an intermediate stage, or as the Rebbe put it, "*der hechste tzait*" (peak time), in transition from Galus to Geula. At this point, Moshiach is already revealed and he has begun to affect the world, and the world has begun to change. We are already "touching" the Geula, but we are still in Galus. Therefore, at this stage, the main avoda has to be focused on **kabbalas p'nei Moshiach Tzidkeinu b'poel mamash**.

In other words, on a deeper level, all the inyanim of Geula have already been achieved in this physical world, but we have to open our eyes and actually see this reality. This is why, as long as we haven't opened our eyes and we don't see the true reality with our own eyes, we cannot say, from a halachic perspective, that we are in a Geula state.

The same is true for belief that the Rebbe is *chai v'kayam*. We know, based on the Rebbe's sichos, that this is the true reality, but we don't see it with our own eyes. Are we happy with this state of affairs? G-d forbid! Nobody is happy about it, but we know the true reality and we do everything we can to make this the reality that we can all see.

In the maamer of Erev Shavuot 5749, the Rebbe said that "when Yisroel paskens a p'sak din according to Torah that the time has already arrived for Geula (for all endpoints were passed and Yisroel already did t'shuva), so shall it be, and the Geula comes immediately." It is interesting to note what the Rebbe's source is for "Yisroel already did t'shuva," "as in the p'sak din of the Rebbe, my father-in-law, that the sigh of a Jew is a great t'shuva" – **the HaYom Yom for**

Gimmel Tammuz.

The terrible concealment of Gimmel Tammuz 5754 made us all sigh, and if just any sigh is a great t'shuva, then the sigh of Gimmel Tammuz is the greatest possible t'shuva!

The very fact that a Jew can think that the Rebbe is not chai v'kayam is the greatest concealment. This is not the Geula the Rebbe spoke of, and this is not the Geula that we are hoping for. When the main point of Geula, Moshiach, is not revealed to us – this is the greatest concealment. Yet, it's specifically because of this that we must do everything to remove the concealment and reveal that the Rebbe is chai v'kayam, because the more we see and show that the Rebbe is chai v'kayam, the more it removes the concealment.

LIVING WITH THE REBBE

Why is it so important to publicize that the Rebbe is chai v'kayam?

It is an integral part of hiskashrus to the Rebbe. One aspect of hiskashrus is the chayus and koch in those things the Rebbe has a koch in. When you learn the sichos of 5710-5711, we see a special koch in the point that the concealment is just a test and we have to know that the Rebbe is chai v'kayam. After the Rebbe accepted the nesius, naturally there was no longer any need to talk about the Rebbe being chai v'kayam. (Even though, in later years, when the topic came up, like during the

court case over the s'farim, the Rebbe repeated and emphasized quite clearly that the Rebbe is chai v'kayam. And not even a rav or a lawyer can change the simple reality that he is alive, and therefore there is nothing to talk about when it comes to an inheritance!)

But now, when we don't see the Rebbe, we must learn these sichos and be involved with a koch and a chayus in those things the Rebbe was involved in. In addition, the Rebbe emphasized then that we need to examine the last sichos we heard from the Rebbe. When we examine these last sichos that we heard, we clearly see that the Rebbe talks about there not being an interruption in the seventh generation, but we go directly to Geula with eternal life. The natural feeling of a Chassid is such that he wants to be involved in what his Rebbe is involved, even if he doesn't understand the purpose in it.

All the more so in our situation, when this approach – that the Rebbe is chai v'kayam – comes from the approach that says that Elokus, the Torah, and the Rebbe are eternal truth, and the concealment is not true. That is what Moshiach is all about, the truth of G-d forever, that we see the true reality of the world, as it is viewed through the Torah's perspective, not as it's seen by worldly perception.

In the famous sicha of VaYechi (Likkutei Sichos, vol. 35), the Rebbe says that there are two approaches:

how Hashem sees things and how the world sees things. The Egyptians reckoned with the ways of the world and that is why "it seemed to them that he [Yaakov] had died," and they did what was called for in the situation. But we must look at everything as Hashem sees it.

When in Galus, there is reason to look at things according to the world's perception, but when we are already touching Geula, we must emphasize how the Torah looks at things.

In our situation, the Torah's view of the Rebbe's metzius is that the Rebbe is chai v'kayam. It says so in the sichos, and it's obvious to those who learn in Chassidus about the role of the Nasi HaDor in general, and Moshiach in particular.

If we look at some side issue with the world's perspective, perhaps it's not so bad, but when we take something which is the very heart of Geula, Melech HaMoshiach, and we look at it with Galus eyes, it is a monumental contradiction!

When the Rebbe says we need to "live with Moshiach," it means we need to live with the concepts of Moshiach, with the Torah's view, to see everything from the Torah's perspective. As I brought earlier at length from the Rebbe's sichos, by learning Torah in inyanei Moshiach and Geula, we accustom our minds to look at the world through the Torah's eyes, the Geula perspective.

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TWO COUSINS NAMED LEVI YITZCHOK SCHNEERSOHN WERE EXILED TO CH'ILI

BY SHNEUR ZALMAN BERGER

*Presented in honor Chaf Av, the yahrtzeit of the gaon and mekubal, Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Schneersohn a”h, the Rebbe’s father. * Beis Moshiach discovered that when the Rebbe’s father was in Ch’ili, his cousin of the same name, from Chernigov, was exiled there too.*

“There is history, and there is history. Our history began on March 8th, 1939 [17 Adar 5699]. We heard wild banging on the door at night. Our parents woke up and opened the door. A few men came in and ordered, ‘Weapons on the table.’ Naturally, my father did not have weapons. The secret police did a lengthy search. They examined every paper, every book, every kitchen item. Then they took my father to jail. The next day, we learned that other Chassidim in Chernigov were arrested, including my father’s cousin, Rabbi Mendel Schneersohn, a known rav in Chernigov.

“In the morning, after a sleepless night, my mother went to the N.K.V.D. to find out my father’s fate. He was a shochet at the time of the arrest.

“Your husband is a foreign agent,” was the terse response. The real reason for the arrest of the Chassidim was, of course, the fact that they were

Chassidim who observed Torah and mitzvos.”

This is how Mrs. Margolia Schneersohn of Chernigov in the Ukraine, begins the story of the arrest of her father, Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Schneersohn, who was known as Der Kleiner Levi Yitzchok (the little Levi Yitzchok). He was the cousin of Rabbi Levi Yitzchok, the Rebbe’s father. She also describes the arrest of her father’s uncle, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneersohn, who was also a great-uncle to both her and the Rebbe MH”M.

WHO ARE RABBI LEVI YITZCHOK AND RABBI MENACHEM MENDEL SCHNEERSOHN?

Who were Rabbi Levi Yitzchok and his uncle, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneersohn, both arrested on the same night?

We need to trace the family tree, starting with Rabbi Levi Yitzchok, the son of Rabbi Boruch Sholom, the Tzemach Tzedek’s oldest son. Rabbi Levi Yitzchok died young, leaving behind three sons: Rabbi Avrohom, Rabbi Menachem Mendel, and Rabbi Boruch Shneur. Rabbi Avrohom’s son was Rabbi Levi Yitzchok, Margolia’s father.

Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneersohn was an uncle to Rabbi Levi Yitzchok, Margolia’s father. He was a rav in Repka and then in Chernigov. He had sons and daughters, among them Rabbi Shneur Zalman Schneersohn a”h, one of the leading Chabad askanim in Russia and France, and Mrs. Yehudis Butman, the mother of Rabbi Sholom Ber Butman of Tel Aviv and Rabbi Shmuel Butman of Crown Heights.

Rabbi Boruch Shneur’s son was Rabbi Levi Yitzchok, the father of the Rebbe MH”M.

Most of the time when we refer to Rabbi Levi Yitzchok in this article, we are referring to the Rebbe’s father’s cousin and the Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneersohn referred to here is the Rebbe’s father’s uncle. Both were Chassidim of stature. We don’t know much about them, and nobody knows where they are buried.

THE TRAGIC DEATH OF THE COUSIN, MENACHEM MENDEL

Mrs. Margolia Schneersohn:

“Chernigov is not a large city, and the news spread quickly. Everybody heard about the arrest, and this brought additional damage, aside from the suffering that our father and we endured. The Chassidim arrested that terrible night were tortured. They were beaten and humiliated. The

also been taken there. They read his verdict that had been received from Moscow – exile in Kazakhstan for five years. Then they came over to me and read my verdict, which was identical to his.

“I remained with him, alone in the room, for five days until we were sent out. We were overjoyed by the good news that we were granted life. I learned five chapters of Mishnayos from the tractate Shabbos with him, by heart, and this was a veritable treasure.



The Rebbe MH”M’s father, Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Schneersohn a”h

interrogators had no mercy on them, which is why, by the end of the interrogation my father didn’t have many teeth left.”

The Chassid Rabbi Gavriel Kagan was also arrested in Chernigov that night. In his writings, he describes his meeting, in prison, with Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneersohn:

“On 29 Kislev they took me and carried me to a small room and I saw that R’ Mendel Schneersohn z”l had

“Before he was sent out, Rabbi Mendel Schneersohn told the doctor that due to his weak heart, it would be a death sentence to send him with the other prisoners [R’ Mendel was 76 years old at the time – S.Z.B.], but they didn’t listen to him. After he left we heard the sad news that he had died on the way to exile at the train station in Charkov.”

Margolia also told of the tragic death of her uncle Rabbi Mendel

Schneersohn:

“It was in Charkov, on the way to exile. The prisoners marched along and he fell. My father wanted to go over to him but they didn’t let. One of the guards said, ‘one less.’ My father understood from that that my great-uncle Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneersohn couldn’t take the suffering and had died.”

It was Rosh Chodesh Adar I 5700 (1940) when they transferred those sentenced to exile from one prison to another in Charkov. They stumbled in the cold, and as his friend, Rabbi Gavriel Kagan figured, Rabbi Mendel Schneersohn couldn’t bear it and died. Since he had died, his body was placed in a vehicle and taken to jail. When Rabbi Levi Yitzchok arrived at the jail, he saw his uncle lying there, covered with a coat, and it was clear that he was no longer alive (may Hashem avenge his blood). Until this very day, we do not know where he is buried.

A SURPRISING MEETING IN EXILE

From Charkov, Rabbi Levi Yitzchok was taken to exile.

“They exiled my father to Kazakhstan, to a small forsaken place called Ch’ili, for five years. He worked as a pharmacist. Ch’ili is a little place that is divided by train tracks. The residents are Kazakhim, Uzbekim, and Korianim, all of them “enemies of the people,” exiled there by the authorities.

The exiles surprisingly, found a common bond and thus had a great deal of unity. Their suffering united them. They were denied permission to travel at all, and every month they had to register with the police.

When he arrived in Ch’ili, he was surprised to meet his cousin, the gaon and mekubal Rabbi Levi Yitzchok (the Rebbe’s father). Three weeks after he was arrested on 9 Nissan along with his uncle, the gaon Rabbi Levi Yitzchok was arrested and was also sentenced to five years of exile in Ch’ili.

Sadly, Rabbi Levi Yitzchok told his cousin about the death of their mutual

uncle. Rabbi Levi Yitzchok (the Rebbe's father) paskened to permit the widow to remarry based on his testimony. Rabbi Levi Yitzchok wrote this in a letter, which he sent to the son-in-law of Rabbi Menachem Mendel, Rabbi Shneur Zalman Butman. That is how the widow Liba Leah Schneersohn, nee Menuchin, was freed from the uncertainty of being an *aguna*.

It is interesting to note that in the memoirs of Rebbetzin Chana, she describes everything she and her husband experienced in Ch'ili, but she doesn't mention their cousin who was there with them. Perhaps the reason is that in those days it was dangerous to be associated with the Lubavitcher Rebbe. She knew that if her writing was confiscated, it would entail certain danger to the family and to his daughter, Margolia, who lives in Chernigov till this day.

SPECIAL CONNECTION BETWEEN THE FAMILIES

Just as Rebbetzin Chana went to visit her husband, so too, Margolia and her mother, Chaya Schneersohn, went to help the father of their family.

"My mother and I left Chernigov for Ch'ili. We lived in a clay hut. My father didn't speak much about his prison stay. He just sadly said that on the way to exile, in Charkov, Rabbi Mendel Schneersohn, our uncle, had died.

"There was a special connection between my father and his cousin, Rabbi Levi Yitzchok (the Rebbe's father), and between my mother and Rebbetzin Chana. There were many visits, and our relationship was a good one.

"We lived in poverty and suffered greatly from it. My father was swollen from hunger. He died of starvation and weakness about a year before his release, March 12, 1943 [5 Adar II 5703] and he was only 44 years old.

"Every mitzva performed publicly was dangerous for exiles, who lived under constant surveillance. Nevertheless, my father and cousin

davened on Shabbasos in a secret minyan, but when my father died, I didn't believe that my cousin would endanger himself to give him a Jewish burial. Yet, Rabbi Levi Yitzchok and some other Jews gave him a Jewish funeral and burial.

"Due to the danger involved, they forbade women to attend the funeral, and my mother and I did not attend the funeral and did not know where he was buried. Until this day, I do not know where my father (may Hashem avenge his blood) is buried."

THE DAUGHTER OF AN "ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE" DISCOVERS THE FILE

"After my father died, my mother and I left Ch'ili and returned home. I was accompanied throughout by paragraph 58 of the Soviet Union's laws of punishments – the paragraph about enemies of the people – and was considered the daughter of an enemy of the people.

"In 1961, I petitioned the chief prosecutor of the Soviet Union, Rodinko, and asked him to clear my father's name. His answer angered me. 'Schneersohn, Levi, under the cover of performing religious rituals, was involved in activities that opposed the state. After reviewing the material on his interrogation, there is no basis to clear his name.'

"Thirty years later, communism began to disintegrate and I realized that the time had come to ask, once again, that my father's name be cleared. In 1989 I asked the district prosecutor in Chernigov, and shortly thereafter I received a certificate clearing my father's name.

"At that time, I asked permission to see the documents they had on my father, but the employee at the Ministry of Security refused, giving me an odd reason, 'We try not to give files to relatives so as not to cause traumas...'

"Five years after that I finally got his complete file, number 108076. The file dealt with four Chassidim who had

been imprisoned then:

Gavriel Kagan (who learned in Lubavitch and was a melamed in Chernigov)

Levi Yitzchok Schneersohn (father of Margolia)

Shmuel Shulman (a shochet in Chernigov)

Menachem Mendel Schneersohn (uncle of Levi Yitzchok)

What follows are portions of the file:

According to Law 54, paragraph 10, according to the law of the Soviet Union, the following are charged:

Kogan, Gavriel – born 1879 in Antult, Poland [that's what it said on the document he presented, in order to avoid being drafted, but his real name was Shlomo Zelkind Kapilkov, and he was born in Nevel, Ukraine in 5649/1889 – S.Z.B.]. A Jew. No party affiliation. Sexton in a synagogue. He lived, until his arrest, in Chernigov at 74 Chevchinko Street.

Shulman, Shmuel – born 1877 in the village of Sadnaev, Chernigov district. A Jew. No party affiliation. Slaughters chickens [a shochet]. He lived, until his arrest, in Chernigov, at 11 Oritzky Street.

Schneersohn, Mendel – born 1864 [His grandson, Rabbi Sholom Ber Butman, relates that as far as he remembers, his grandfather was named for the Tzemach Tzedek, who passed away in 5626, and was one of the first to be named for him. Apparently, he was listed as older than he was, on his documents – S.Z.B.] in Lubavitch, Mohilev district. A Jew. Unemployed. He lived, until his arrest, in Chernigov, at 7 Chechov Street.

Schneersohn, Levik – born 1899 in Podobranka, Byelorussia. A Jew. No party affiliation. Worked as a chicken slaughterer [shochet]. He lived, until his arrest, in Chernigov, at 11 Shilman Street.

The file also contains the cases against Rabbi Levi Yitzchok and his fellow Chassidim:

*Those arrested are members of a



A clay hut in Ch'ili



A wagon driver on the streets of Ch'ili

Jewish religious organization which is anti-Soviet, and they have ties with the tzaddik Yosef Schneersohn [the Rebbe Rayatz]

*This criminal group received 2000 rubles to build a mikva in 1938, and within a week a sum of 12,000 more rubles was collected from the residents, for charitable purposes.

*The prisoners are accused of anti-revolutionary activities, of illegal charitable organizations, of learning with Jewish children, of ties with émigrés, and of transmitting information of a spying nature

[probably, the letters they wrote told of the terrible political and economic situation in the Soviet Union, and this was considered spying.]

EXHAUSTING INTERROGATIONS LATE AT NIGHT

From the file we see that the interrogations generally took place at two or three in the morning, for many hours. They were held by the interrogators Zutov and Rubiov.

In a decision made by a special

meeting of the N.K.V.D. on January 17, 1940 [5 Kislev 5700], without due process norms of criminal law, the prisoners were to be exiled as dangerous people.

Margolia relates:

“My father learned in the yeshiva in Nevel, where he got smicha to be a shochet. His smicha document is included in his file. The one who informed on my father visited our house often and even came to console us after my father’s arrest!”

Margolia writes what happened to the Chassidim mentioned in the file:

My father, **Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Schneersohn** – died in exile in 1943.

My uncle, **Rabbi Mendel Schneersohn** – died on the way to exile.

Rabbi Shmuel Shulman – completed his term in exile, corresponded with the authorities regarding his rights and received no reply. I know nothing of his fate or his descendants.

Gavriel Kagan – he became very sick and was treated in the prison hospital, and then in the city hospital. On September 19, 1940, he was released from jail, but he remained in exile under N.K.V.D. supervision. It was only in 1947 that he and his family left for Eretz Yisroel. His daughter Chana lives in B'nei Brak and is a doctor.

All the Chassidim whose names appear in this file had their names cleared after they died.

In recent years, the Rebbe’s shluchim arrived in Chernigov and met with the Jewish community. They have holiday programs and they started a Jewish school.

“Today in Chernigov there are all the things that my father, my uncle, and their friends dreamed of; those things for which they paid for with their freedom and their lives,” says Mrs. Margolia Schneersohn wistfully.

(Thanks to Rabbi Sholom Ber Butman for his assistance in preparing this article.)

A SHEPHERD TURNED CHASSID

*After studying sifrei Chassidus, Chaim Navo left his flock for the truth, for Chassidus. * Profile of a baal t'shuva.*

BY SHNEUR ZALMAN LEVIN

From the yishuv Achuzat Barak in the north of Eretz Yisroel, the world looks different. The houses of the yishuv, made of wood and stone, surrounded by magnificent cypresses, look as though they were taken straight out of the Ukraine hundreds of years ago.

Even during the daytime, the yishuv doesn't hum with activity and the residents don't leave their homes much. At night, it is utterly still, and you can hear the leaves rustling every so often.

At dawn, a lone figure can be seen making his way to a large car. He leaves at this time every day, even in the winter. It is Chaim Navo, a dynamic Chassid involved in all areas of hafatza, who makes this long and exhausting trip every morning.

It's long and exhausting for ordinary people, but for Chaim Navo the way is not long at all. His fascinating life story is far longer and more involved than his daily route.

I met him one morning as the sun's rays were first shining on the roof of the shul he davens in. Chaim greeted me with a smile and a warm handshake.

"The trip I make daily forced me to start my day very early in the morning, but it has a big advantage.

At this time of day, I feel alone. Alone with G-d."

LIFE WITH NO RESPONSIBILITY

Chaim grew up in the Ramat HaTayasim neighborhood in Tel Aviv. The neighborhood had a heterogeneous population who got along with one another, which made it a pleasant place to live. His father was traditional, in a way that was very different than his friends. He wanted to establish a shul, but it quickly turned into a weekly club where the participants schmoozed about current events.

While Chaim was still a child, the Six Day War broke out. At the end of the war, he organized a neighborhood choir that appeared at different events, some in the shul. A talented conductor led the choir, and thanks to him, the choir was very successful.

The choir sang soulful songs as well as happy songs, songs that expressed the feelings the Jewish nation felt after their miraculous victory. The talented conductor turned portions of the davening into joyous song, with each child getting a chance at a solo performance.

Years later, when Chaim became a baal t'shuva, he met the conductor once again. When he heard Chaim's

name, he became very excited and began singing the portion of the davening Chaim had sung...

When Chaim became bar mitzva, his father gave in to him and allowed him to do as he pleased. "Despite the fact that I enjoyed my frequent visits to shul, I felt that my going to shul wasn't voluntary and was done only to please my father. When I became 13, my father saw he had no choice and he let me do as I saw fit."

Chaim used this freedom to the nth degree. He gradually stopped attending shul. His marks went down drastically. When his father registered him for engineering at Givatayim, Chaim opposed this idea but his father insisted that he go to school there. At first, Chaim gave in and went there occasionally, but he didn't learn a thing.

This went on for months, with Chaim attending school but not learning anything, while his father thought he was progressing nicely in his studies. Finally, Chaim got fed up with the situation and decided to run away. Late one night, he packed his few belongings, took some food, and left the house. He had no idea where he was heading.

Early in the morning he walked to the town's central bus station, and on a whim, he took a bus to Eilat.

Eilat had always appealed to him. It is a seacoast town, full of hotels and tourists, noisy and full of life. In those days, the trip to Eilat was long and exhausting, but Chaim was determined to get there. He just couldn't see himself going back to the oppressive school.

Chaim finally arrived in Eilat, got off the bus, and walked to the beach. "I looked at the waves breaking on the rocks and thought, 'This is like the unfortunate situation I am in. I'm like a wave breaking on the sand.'"

He was at a loss as to what to do next. His decision to run away to Eilat was foolhardy and irrational. Night fell and Chaim spread some of his clothing on the sand and lay down to sleep. He did the same in the days that followed. Neither the rain nor the heat deterred him. After all, it was his only option.

In the morning, he would get up and go work at a bakery. He spent the evenings hanging out with shady street kids, which made him deteriorate even further, until he

"I looked at the waves breaking on the rocks and thought, 'This is like the unfortunate situation I am in. I'm like a wave breaking on the sand.'"

stopped behaving like a civilized person. He let his hair grow wild and he wore rags.

"Life as a homeless person," Chaim explains, "came from the deep emptiness I felt in my daily life. Whatever I did, I felt the same emptiness, and to a great extent, the falsehood in it. Without spiritual content and depth, the fraud and deceit come to the fore."

It looked as though this meager lifestyle would become his routine, but Divine Providence made itself felt and everything changed.

G-D AND ME, ALONE IN THE FIELD

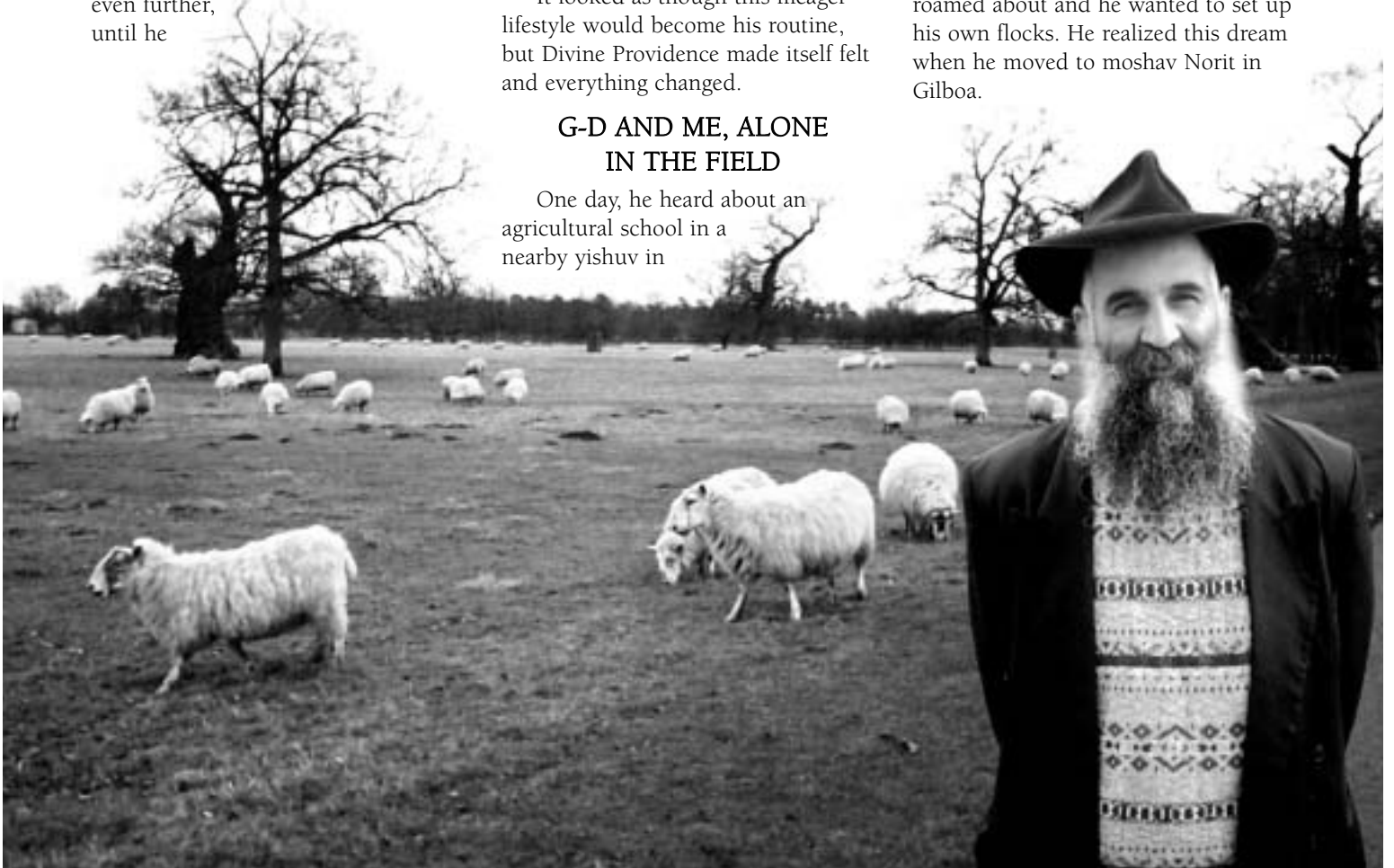
One day, he heard about an agricultural school in a nearby yishuv in

which they studied half a day and worked for pay the remainder of the day. Chaim went to check the school out and was impressed by what he saw. Since then, he has been interested in farming and pasturing. In order to register at the school he had no choice but to call his father in order to get his approval. His father was happy to hear that his son was alive and well, and he gave his immediate consent.

Chaim got off to a good start in school and he excelled in his studies and made good friends. He suddenly discovered a reason to live. He loved every minute there and enjoyed nature. He cut his hair a bit and began dressing like a normal human being.

Being drafted into the army put him completely back on track. He was motivated and he became an excellent soldier who wanted to please his superiors.

When his finished his army duty, he married and lived in a yishuv in the Galil amidst the beauty of pastureland. Many flocks of sheep and cattle roamed about and he wanted to set up his own flocks. He realized this dream when he moved to moshav Norit in Gilboa.



At first, he worked as a shepherd for the yishuv, and then he set up his own flock, which was a miraculous accomplishment since the laws of the Ministry of Agriculture forbade private pasturing.

“Generally, these are troublemakers who ruin pastureland, and that’s why the Ministry of Agriculture forbids private pasturing. I was different. I zealously followed the law and I tried to do things properly, and so I got a permit, unlike the other shepherds.”

To a large extent, the reason Chaim got the permit was because of his stubbornness, when he lived for a few years on an old bus with his wife and two children.

“The difficulties in getting this permit were enormous, so I decided to do something out of the ordinary that would attract attention. I called the Egged bus company and said I wanted to buy an old bus as a place to live. Naturally, they thought this request was bizarre, but when I said that I would pay them well, they sold me one.”

The day Chaim got the bus, the Navo family rejoiced. The place where the bus would stand was thoroughly cleared, and the bus underwent renovations so it could serve as a proper home. The front section became a living room/bedroom and the rear section was the children’s room. The remaining area became a tiny kitchen outfitted with all the necessary accessories.

Once everything was ready, the bus was brought to the top of a hill and was parked, and a new chapter in the life of the Navo family began.

“I can remember the first days we spent on the bus. I would get up in the morning, go to the sheep, and take them out to pasture. Then my little kids woke up and helped me in the pasture. My children loved the sheep and life in the bosom of nature, and they were active partners in the

raising and care of the flock.

“As I told you before, I discovered my love of nature when I was much younger. I enjoyed watching the cows grazing peacefully. I would look at each animal and relate to it as it was. It was a magical world for me. When I raised my own flock, I felt I had reached the pinnacle.”

This love for pasturing began with the cock’s crow every morning, when Chaim went to his sheep even before he was fully awake. He would look at his flock lovingly, and then he would ask how they were doing, as if they understood his language.

He took the sheep out in an orderly fashion to the surrounding pastureland, and put each sheep and calf where it belonged. Only after each lamb and calf found the right grazing area did Chaim lie down on the ground, look up at the blue sky, and let his thoughts roam. He would think mostly of his present situation and about his future, about increasing the size of his flock.

He lived this way for a few years and Chaim felt that his head was in

the clouds. His young family grew, his little children grew older and were sent to school, and his flock grew to 500 sheep!

It would seem that Chaim had found what he was seeking, but it was not the case. One day, he came across a thick book that contained wondrous miracle stories. The author spiced up the stories with Chassidic thoughts. This book lit up his life with a new light and gave him a deeper understanding and appreciation for Judaism than he had until then.

“The stories aroused a great deal of emotions and I began to worry about the compromised chinuch I was giving my children. I was afraid they would grow up to be as wild as I was.

“Judaism had always seemed like a wondrous and magical wisdom, and this is why I wanted to study it. After reading these books, I felt more strongly about this. At that time, by Divine Providence, I met Rabbi Yitzchok Yadgar, the principal of the Chabad school in Taanachim, and since I considered him an authentic Jewish figure, I asked him to teach me about Judaism.”



Chaim Navo in front of his mitzva tank



Chaim Navo giving a lecture to a group of soldiers



Chaim Navo putting t'fillin on someone on his mitzva tank

ON THE WAY TO LIVING A JEWISH LIFE

The way Chaim first got to know Rabbi Yadgar had to do with a business deal that Chaim had done with an Arab sheep merchant. They had gotten into an argument about a sum of money, and Chaim, who had heard about the legendary “Moreh Yitzchok,” asked him what to do. When he heard Rabbi Yadgar’s astute response, he was very impressed. He was also taken by Rabbi Yadgar’s appearance – the long beard, the wise

eyes, and the calm voice.

When he asked Rabbi Yadgar to teach him Judaism, Rabbi Yadgar referred him to Rabbi Yitzchok Goldberg, the rosh yeshiva in Migdal HaEmek. Chaim went to the Chabad shul in Afula, where Rabbi Goldberg gave a class.

The first time he went, the shul was empty. Although it was time for the class, the shul was dark. The same thing happened the following week. Chaim was very disappointed and almost lost interest in learning, but

decided to give it one more try. The third week, the shul was packed with people who listened closely to Rabbi Goldberg’s class on *Tanya*.

Chaim joined the crowd and was quickly impressed. Despite his unusual appearance – he wore shorts, a short shirt and a long beard – he fit in at the shul. He was influenced primarily by the wisdom in *Tanya*, and he gradually took on mitzva observance.

“I decided to start by covering my head. I wore a large kippa. It wasn’t easy because the people who knew me, laughed at me, but I ignored them. The more they laughed, the more determined I became.

“One day, I met Rabbi Sharon Harel from Migdal HaEmek, who invited me for Shabbos. The Shabbos I spent with him changed my life. For the first time in my life, I learned a sicha of the Rebbe, and I was enormously impressed by it.

“I transferred my children to the Talmud Torah, and I began learning regularly at the local yeshiva.”

Gidi Sharon of Kiryat Tivon convinced him to go to the Rebbe. Chaim was mostly impressed by the farbrengens that took place in 770. The time he spent with the Rebbe he used primarily for intensive learning, together with new, challenging commitments.

Chaim wanted to buy Rabbeinu Tam t’fillin, but the price of the ticket to New York, as well as the cost of the *tashmishei k’dusha* that he bought at the time, made this very difficult. He asked the Rebbe for a bracha that he would pass the tests he faced. The next day he got a surprise donation that enabled him to buy the t’fillin.

One day, he met Shmarya Harel, commander of the Mitzva Tanks in Eretz Yisroel, who suggested that Chaim work on the tanks. Chaim agreed, and for about seven years now, he’s been working on the tank from early in the morning until late at

night.

* * *

I heard Chaim's story when we sat together on the tank, as we drove through magnificent scenery to moshavim and kibbutzim in the north. Chaim was sitting in the driver's seat, deep in thought. Suddenly he broke the silence and said, "Do you know what bothers me? Every day I meet many soldiers. In the past, even non-Jewish soldiers were ashamed to say this outright, but today it's much different. They are not ashamed to say it, and they even take pride in the fact that they aren't Jewish."

Chaim went on to talk about the situation in Eretz Yisroel. He is very in touch with the public's feelings, since he works a lot with people.

In the afternoon, the tank stops near the Golani Junction in the Galil. The place swarms with soldiers, and Chaim asks them to put on t'fillin. Many agree, maybe because it's Chaim who asks them, as many of them know him. A long line of soldiers forms.

Throughout the day, I watched how Chaim operates. When a group of soldiers passes near the tank, he invites them to come in and have something to eat. The tank fills up with soldiers and they make a bracha on some nosh and l'chaim.

"We are living in a special time," Chaim announces. They quiet down and Chaim talks to them about the need to yearn for the hisgalus of the Rebbe MH" M. He explains to them about the significance of the life of a tzaddik, "Even though we do not see the Rebbe, the Rebbe continues to bestow us with abundance."

The group is amazed by miracle stories of the Rebbe, and they thank Chaim for his hospitality. "That's just part of the work," says Chaim with a smile. During the course of the day, I watch him as he does the work he does all year, from Chadera in the



Chaim Navo at the entrance to an army camp

south until Kiryat Shmoneh in the north.

A tall man gets on the tank and hugs Chaim. "Chaim, the Rebbe's bracha was fulfilled!" The man had financial woes and health problems, and he met Chaim, who told him about writing to the Rebbe through the *Igros Kodesh*. The man wrote a letter and then opened to a letter that dealt directly with his situation. From then on, his life improved. The pain he had suffered from, disappeared, and his financial situation began improving.

Chaim wasn't unduly impressed. He spoke with the man and promised him that another good hachlata would

improve things even more.

That is Chaim. He is a Chassid who is well liked by whoever meets him, and this is how he succeeds in drawing them towards Chassidus. You can't not like him. "The work on the tank is in a way of makif," says Chaim. Many people have become mekurav to Yiddishkeit in some way or another thanks to him. He wakes up the Jewish spark in the heart of every Jew, and surely, this spark will turn into a flame.

Chaim still works in pasturing, but it's a modern-style pasturing, with an outfitted tank. Instead of sheep, he provides food for souls.



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LIFT UP YOUR EYES AND SEE

A compilation of thoughts from our Sages and Chassidic greats about the importance of anticipating the Geula and the coming of Moshiach.

LEAVING IN THE JUBILEE YEAR

This is how the holy R' Chaim ben Attar, the *Ohr HaChaim* explains the verse, “and if he does not have enough, then his sale is until the jubilee year, and he goes out in the jubilee year and returns to his portion”:

“And if he does not have enough” – if the Master, Hashem, sees that the Jewish people do not have the strength to endure more birth pangs of Moshiach because our debts up Above are overwhelming...

“Then his sale is until the jubilee year” – this is the deadline for Geula, “in its set time,” and then...

“He goes out in the jubilee year and returns to his portion” – because the Galus will end even if all the Jewish people are utterly wicked, G-d forbid.

(Ohr HaChaim VaYikra 25)

AROUSING LONGING

“Go and gather the elders of the Jewish people ... *pakod pakadti* – I have remembered you and heard your voice”

The holy Reb Menachem Mendel of Kotzk said: “*pakod*” means

longing. Only the true redeemer will be able to arouse the hearts of Israel with longing for their Father in heaven.

(Zer Zahav)

LISTENING AND SEEING

The Rebbe Rayatz once said:

“Moshiach is already close.

Whoever has a good sense of hearing and a good sense of sight, hears his voice and sees him.”

(Seifer HaSichos 5696)

VERY, VERY CLOSE

The Chassid R' Yaakov Weintraub once said, “When I sat at the Melaveh Malka meal with Rabbi Yisroel Abuchatzzeira (the Baba Sali),



he whispered in my ear, ‘Moshiach is close, close, close, very close.’”

(Chassidim Zekeinim, Meoras MeiOlam ha’Chassidus)

LIFT UP YOUR EYES AND SEE

A Chassid of the holy Reb Avrohom Yaakov of Sadigur asked his Rebbe:

“Why did the g’dolim and tzaddikim give allusions for when Moshiach will come when the time they said passed and the Geula didn’t happen?”

His Rebbe answered, “My father zt”l [R’ Yisroel of Ruzhin] once commented on the Gemara that says, ‘*kalu kol ha’kitzin*’ (all endpoints for the Geula have ended) that just as the Divine Presence left in ten stages from the Mikdash into Galus, so too, it will return in stages.

With each *keitz*, the Divine Presence descended another level into this world. Right now, the light of Geula is in the lowest heaven called *Vilon*. But I say, that the light of the Geula is already spread around us and is right above our heads, but we don’t notice it since our heads are bowed down from the pressures of Galus. May Hashem raise our heads and we will see the Geula with our own eyes!

(Sippurim Chadashim)

WHERE’S THE MONEY?

Chazal say, “Ben Dovid (Moshiach) will not come until pockets are emptied of coins.” The Chiddushei HaRim, Rabbi Yitzchok Meir of Gur explained this as follows:

A pocket is the place to keep money. When pockets are emptied of money, i.e., when money is put in inappropriate places, meaning among people who are not worthy and who don’t use their money for tz’daka and chesed, then Moshiach will come.

(Chiddushei HaRim)

THE HIDDEN ALLUSION

R’ Elimelech of Grodzinsk once said to his Chassidim:

At the beginning of Parshas VaYechi, Rashi explains why there is no space between VaYigash and VaYechi, saying that since Yaakov Avinu passed away, the eyes of the Jewish people were closed from the tribulations of servitude. Rashi also says that Yaakov sought to reveal the end of time to his children but it was

The light of the Geula is already spread around us and is right above our heads, but we don’t notice it since our heads are bowed down from the pressures of Galus. May Hashem raise our heads and we will see the Geula with our own eyes!

hidden from him.

This is surprising, for could it be that Yaakov’s wish to reveal the *keitz* was not fulfilled, ch”v?

The answer is that the very fact that Yaakov wanted to reveal it and it was hidden from him itself alludes to the *keitz*!

R’ Elimelech’s Chassidim could not understand what the Rebbe meant by this, so the tzaddik explained:

This is the way it is: When we see that tzaros increase until the Torah becomes a closed book and battei midrashos and yeshivos are closed, and it seems that all *kitzin* have, G-d forbid, passed, then we can be sure that the *keitz* is imminent.

(Be’er HaChassidus)

WHICH OF YOU IS WAITING?

“A voice goes out from the Heavenly academy – which of you waits every single day? ... and whoever does not anticipate this every day in this world, has no share in the World to Come.”

THEY ARE WORTHY OF BEING REDEEMED

“If Yisroel has nothing but hope, they are worthy of Geula in the merit of hoping...”

(Midrash T’hillim [Shocher Tov] Mem, Yalkut Shimoni T’hillim, remez 736)

MEGILLAS ESTHER AND MEGILLAS EICHA

The author of Levush writes:

“All my life I wondered, why is it that although we read Eicha with a congregation and say the blessing over it, we don’t write it on parchment as a separate megilla... Perhaps this is the custom because they never had Megillas Eicha available since the sofrim didn’t write them in anticipation that every day would be transformed into a joyous day. If they wrote a Megillas Eicha it would look as though they despaired of the Geula, G-d forbid. Whereas with Megillas Esther this is not a problem since the days of Purim will never be nullified. This is why they read Eicha from Chumashim.”

(Levush – siman 559, s’if 1)

THE MERIT OF THE BELIEVERS

Rav Elimelech of Lizensk wrote:

“The merit of the true believers in the coming of our Moshiach, who await him every day, will stand by us to break the strength of the klipos and dinim and to establish our Beis HaMikdash speedily in our days...”

(Noam Elimelech, VaYishlach)

GROWING BECAUSE OF HOPE

Rabbi Chaim Dovid Azulai, the Chida explained the words in Shmoneh Esrei, “the planting of Dovid Your servant shall speedily

sprout ... because we hope for Your salvation all the day,” as follows. We ask Hashem, “the planting of Dovid Your servant shall speedily sprout,” and if You will say we don’t have the merit for this, it should sprout anyway. Why? “Because we hope for Your salvation all the day,” in the merit of hoping and anticipating the Geula, we should be redeemed.”

(Midbar K'deimos – Kivui)

ANTICIPATION

The holy R' Shlomo of Radomsk explained anticipating the Geula thus:

This anticipation entails being pained and praying about the exile of the Sh'china – that Hashem’s honor is desecrated among the wicked, and one yearns for Hashem’s speedy salvation.

When a person spends all his days with this thought, by doing so, he speedily arouses the inyan of Geula. And if all Israel anticipated this salvation, and repented for their sins with all their heart and soul, then they would truly arouse the keitz of the Geula.

(Tiferes Shlomo – Acharei)

LIKE THE BLINK OF AN EYE

The holy Rebbe of Komarna wrote in his *Heichal Bracha* about how much a person should yearn for the Geula:

“Just as a scout constantly watches to see if the enemy is approaching, thus shall a Jew anticipate with his eyes and innermost chambers of his heart constantly, perhaps Moshiach is coming at this very moment. At every moment his heart should be embroiled and anticipating Hashem’s salvation, for Hashem’s salvation is like the blink of an eye, and perhaps this very moment is the blink of an eye of Israel’s salvation.

(Heichal Bracha – Parshas B'Reishis, p. 37)



Artwork: Yossi Rosenstein

PROPER PREPARATION

Rabbi Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev asked:

Why did Moshiach answer the tanna Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi, who asked, "When are you coming?" – "Today, if you heed His voice," when it says, "Behold, I will send you Eliyahu HaNavi **before** the coming of the great and fearful day of G-d?"

And why must Eliyahu come to herald the Geula?

When R' Levi Yitzchok saw that nobody was answering his questions, he said:

The reason is because people are immersed in the travails of this world and Eliyahu must come before Moshiach arrives in order to pull them away from their work and prepare them to greet Moshiach. However "if you heed His voice," i.e., if we shake ourselves free of worldly matters, then Moshiach can come "today," immediately, without Eliyahu having to prepare us for his coming.

(Sifsei Tzaddikim – B'Haaloscha)

THE CREATOR AND THE AUTHOR

Reb Menachem Mendel of Kotzk said:

The author of *Avkas Rocheil* goes on at length describing the terrible

"The author goes on at length describing the terrible things that will happen before Moshiach comes. But you need to know that the author must fulfill the will of Hashem and Hashem does not need to fulfill the will of the author..."

things that will happen before Moshiach comes. But you need to know that the author must fulfill the will of Hashem and Hashem does not need to fulfill the will of the author..."

The Rebbe of Kotzk also said:

When Moshiach comes and redeems us from Galus, and everybody goes to greet him, this will take a few weeks, but I will stand off to the side and will not approach Moshiach to greet him, until the end.

"Where have you been until now?" Moshiach will certainly ask me, and I will say, "And where have you been until now?"

(Emes v'Emuna)

EVEN THE HERETICS

Rav Tzaddok HaKohen of Lublin writes:

"Even those willful sinners of the Jewish people who did not have a thought of t'shuva...still, if they will be told that Moshiach has arrived, they will certainly believe it and do a complete t'shuva. And even those heretics who even then will not do t'shuva, when they hear the sound of the great shofar, then even those lost and forsaken ones will come.

(Machshavos Charutz p. 33)

CONVERSATION OF TALMIDEI CHACHAMIM

The holy R' Naftali of Ropshitz so yearned for Moshiach to come in his generation that he said, "When Moshiach comes he will seek out Torah scholars in order to engage them in divrei Torah, but he won't find anybody suitable.

"Tell him that if he was in the generation of the Rebbe from Ropshitz then he would have had with whom to speak in learning!"

(Divrei Chana HaShaleim, vol. 2, p. 351)



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THANKS TO CIVIL GUARD DUTY

BY SHNEUR ZALMAN LEVIN

Ilan and Jacquelyn are a typical Jewish couple, representative of the “ingathering of nations,” with Ilan being Ashkenazi and Jacquelyn, Sefardit. They live a nice life in northern Israel, have children and make a nice living. Their connection to Torah and mitzvos was tenuous, until Divine Providence changed their lives overnight.

* * *

It was in the middle of the 70’s, after the Yom Kippur War. Terrorist attacks took place frequently, and the general atmosphere on the streets of Eretz Yisroel was one of panic. This was especially the case in cities on the border, and in those places where terrorists had had prior success, such as Beit Shaan, Kiryat Shmoneh, Nahariya, Maalot, and Yerushalayim. Private citizens felt vulnerable to attack, and naturally, this disturbed their equanimity.

It was at this time that the Rebbe MH”M announced Mivtza Mezuzah, asking people to check their mezuzos and to place kosher mezuzos on their doorposts for protection. Thousands of families made sure their mezuzos were kosher and a certain measure of calm was restored.

The trauma of the Yom Kippur War, the public outcry about it, the political upheavals following the war, and the murderous attacks,

resulted in the formation of the Civil Guard. Hundreds of thousands of citizens, without being called upon to do so by the “Establishment,” knocked on the doors of police stations and local authorities and demanded the tools, the authority, and the framework within which they could help

You were not able to pick your partner for your night on duty. You needed Heavenly assistance to get someone nice, a bit talkative, and at the very least, not virulently opposed to Judaism.

ensure internal security.

In Nissan 5734, the government ratified Motion 411 that transferred internal security of the State to the police. The Guard, comprised of volunteers, was established at first in the northern cities that were more exposed to terror, and later on in every city and yishuv around the

country.

Everybody joined the Civil Guard – well-known professors, businessmen, laborers, students, and even religious men who were exempt from army duty. Every healthy citizen had to show up at his designated time. In areas with fewer people, they served more often.

Chabad Chassidim realized that Civil Guard duty provided them with a golden opportunity to spread the wellsprings. You were not able to pick your partner for your night on duty. You needed Heavenly assistance to get someone nice, a bit talkative, and at the very least, not virulently opposed to Judaism.

THE REBBE: BE CAREFUL WITH KASHRUS

One winter night, Ilan had guard duty with Yankel, a Lubavitcher Chassid. After a brief exchange of information, they realized they were neighbors, although they had never met before. If not for Civil Guard duty, they may never have met.

After talking about this and that, about their families and what they did for a living, they began to touch upon more sensitive subjects, such as Torah and mitzvos, Mivtza Mezuzah, and of course – the Rebbe.

At some point in the middle of that cold night, they both went up to the Chassid’s apartment in order



to warm up with some tea. They continued talking until they reminded themselves that they had a job to do. They took their weapons and went back out to continue patrolling the city.

In their first conversation, Ilan displayed knowledge in a variety of subjects, including parapsychology. Yankel thought Ilan was ripe for kiruv and he immediately began arranging meetings between their wives and children, in addition to learning with Ilan.

The two families hit it off, and they became very friendly with one another. The fact that they lived right next to each other, made it even easier. The two wives began attending Torah classes in the area, leading to heightened attentiveness to the performance of mitzvos. They were closely in touch, sometimes daily. Yankel's children, who had been lonely until then, were happy to play with their new friends.

One day, the Lubavitchers heard that Jacquelyn suffered from a rare health problem affecting her legs. They wrote to the Rebbe and the answer they received said to be careful with the kashrus of food and drink.

Ilan and his wife did not compromise when it came to instructions from the Rebbe, and since there weren't too many kosher l'mehadrin products where they lived, Ilan looked elsewhere. He began shopping in the city nearest to them, which has a chareidi population. This was an hour and a half trip, each way. Since they didn't have a car, this wasn't easy, but they did it anyway, making sure to buy only kosher l'mehadrin products.

Jacquelyn's condition improved. Her illness is chronic, but she was finally able to avoid any more attacks and hospitalizations. There was an enormous improvement and

it was clear to them that this was connected with listening to the Rebbe.

Life continued pleasantly until...

“DO AS THE RAV FROM NETIVOT SAYS”

Ilan and Jacquelyn vacationed each summer in her brother's house in the south. That year everything was different. Since they ate only kosher l'mehadrin, how were they to stay with her brother and observe the Rebbe's instruction?

Jacquelyn packed most of her

She tried to diplomatically explain to him that her husband and family were mekushar to the Rebbe, and she was not interested in getting a bracha from anyone else, as great as he might be.

pots, and took canned goods, meat and other kosher l'mehadrin products along. She checked out the kashrus of dairy products in the south, and bought paper plates. They rented a big car for all their boxes, and praying that they would be able to observe kashrus, they set off.

Later on, Jacquelyn described how difficult it was to keep basic kashrus in her brother's home. They were two families with many children. Each time someone else used the wrong utensils, mixed

things up, etc. She could guard her family's food products, but her brother and his family bought what they were used to eating, and she had to make sure that his food and her food didn't get mixed up.

Jacquelyn got sick again and had to be hospitalized. Ilan, who was still on vacation, helped out as much as he could, but when his vacation was over, he had to go back to work. Her sister-in-law took care of their children, and Ilan went back home.

When Jacquelyn was still not better, Ilan wrote a letter to the Rebbe and asked for a bracha for his wife. The answer was very unusual, for it said to do as the Rav in Netivot said to do.

Ilan was dumbfounded. He realized that the Rebbe was referring to Baba Sali, Rabbi Yisroel Abuchatzera, but why wouldn't the Rebbe bless his wife? Why did the Rebbe refer him to Baba Sali? Nobody could explain it. The Rebbe's answer was clear but mysterious. It didn't say to go to an expert doctor, or to a doctor who was a friend, nor to a rav, but to the Rav from Netivot!

Back then, many Israelis didn't have phones, and before Ilan and Jacquelyn could talk about this on the phone, the reason for the Rebbe's answer became clear.

WATER FROM THE BABA SALI

Jacquelyn remained hospitalized in the south. Her brother visited her every day. It was hard for him to see her suffer, and he was especially worried that she wouldn't ever recover. Since her husband wasn't around, he felt responsible for her welfare and he kept thinking about how he could help her.

Since he lived in the south and was a Sefardi, he had certainly heard of the Baba Sali as someone

who worked wonders. He decided to go to the Baba Sali and to ask for a bracha for his sister. He found out when Baba Sali received visitors and prepared for the trip.

At his next visit to his sister, he excitedly told her about his idea, and how she would certainly get better after being blessed by the tzaddik. He expected his sister to be enthusiastic about his idea and was very disappointed by her negative response.

He couldn't understand why she refused to agree to it. She tried to diplomatically explain to him that her husband and family were mekushar to the Rebbe, and she was not interested in getting a bracha from anyone else, as great as he might be. She tried to keep a balance between thanking her brother for his willingness to help her, on the one hand, and making sure he understood that she was adamantly opposed to seeking Baba Sali's bracha, on the other hand.

Her brother knew that the Lubavitcher Rebbe lived overseas, and had never seen her or her

Jacquelyn was touched by her brother's concern, but she wondered what she would tell her husband. She decided not to use the bottle of water until she had discussed it with him.

husband. He reasoned that Baba Sali was a local tzaddik who would see him personally, would hear the problem and would give his blessing as well as a bottle of water for refua. What could be wrong with that?

He couldn't understand his sister's stubborn refusal and he decided that since this was a matter of pikuach nefesh, he would go to the Baba Sali anyway. He was allowed to go, and even obligated

to go, even without her permission. And that's what he did.

The next day he brought a bottle of the Baba Sali's water to his sister. He was nervous about her reaction and wondered whether he should have defied her. He hesitantly told her that he had gone to the tzaddik in Netivot and he put the bottle on the dresser next to her bed.

Jacquelyn was touched by her brother's concern, but she wondered what she would tell her husband. She decided not to use the bottle of water until she had discussed it with him.

That is when the pieces of the puzzle began to fall into place. When she next spoke to her husband, he told her about the unusual answer from the Rebbe and that he didn't know what to do about it. There was stunned silence from Jacquelyn's end of the line.

Jacquelyn had heard plenty about the Rebbe's ruach ha'kodesh. She had experienced the results of not being punctilious about the kashrus of food and drink (though she had done her best). To think that the Rebbe had seen what her brother had done, from his home in Brooklyn – that was beyond anything she could have imagined.

This miracle, along with other miracles that happened to Ilan, were the final straw for them. They became fully observant and Ilan was mekarev other families to the light of Chabad Chassidus, teaching them what he had learned, and helping them to establish lives of Torah and mitzvos and hiskashrus to the Rebbe.

Thanks to the Civil Guard for the being the means of connection for many families to the Rebbe MH"M!

(Names and places were changed, all other details are accurate.)



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The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the website <http://www.beismoshich.org>. The page features a header with the logo "BEIS MOSHIACH" and "Chabad World". Below the header, there is a navigation menu with options for "HOME", "PDF VERSION", "ARCHIVES", and "English Edition". A prominent banner reads "Long live the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach forever and ever." The main content area displays an article titled "BEIS MOSHIACH" with a sub-headline "WE HAD NEVER HEARD IT LIKE THIS BEFORE". The article text describes the presentation in honor of the birthday of the Mittler Rebbe and Yud Kislev. To the right of the article, there is an "Archive" section with a dropdown menu set to "To Issue: 438" and a "Back To NEWS" button. The bottom of the page shows a footer with the text "Internet".

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

From Shemen Sasson Meichaveirecha

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



PART I

Rabbi Pinchas Menachem Alter was born to his father, the holy Imrei Emes *zatzal*, on the twenty-first of Tammuz 5686 (July 3, 1926). As a child, he was known for his sharp mind and the diligent manner in which he studied Torah and served his Creator. Together with his father, he was saved from the Holocaust and ascended to the Holy Land in the month of Iyar, 5700 (May-June, 1940). There, he served as the *Rosh Yeshiva* of the S'fas Emes yeshiva for many years, and as a leading member of Agudas Yisroel's "Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah."

Immediately after the passing of his brother, the Lev Simcha *zatzal*, in Tammuz of 5752 (July-August, 1992), Reb Pinchas Menachem was crowned as the *Admur* of Ger, and he carried on the golden legacy of his predecessors in a grand way.

The *Admur* was renowned throughout the Torah world for his great brilliance in both the revealed and esoteric dimensions of Torah. As a

result of his profound lectures in all areas of the Talmud, he acquired a reputation as a throwback to the great Kotzker *gaonim* of bygone generations. He was first and foremost in all matters pertaining to the leadership of the *chareidi* community, and succeeded in enacting some important practices that quickly proved to be very beneficial for the Jewish masses.

"THE POWER TO GRAPPLE WITH THE WORLD"

The *Admur* visited the Rebbe a number of times, and they discussed various topics in Torah and Chassidus.

Following his first visit to the Rebbe, on Thursday, 4 Adar 5726 (February 24, 1966), he said: "From the day my father *zatzal* departed [this world], I met no one capable of grappling with the world.¹ Now, however, I met a second Jew who has the power to take on the world. (In the chapter on Reb Simcha Bunim Alter, we cited a similar statement made by that *Admur* after his first private audience with the Rebbe: "My father was a Rebbe, and he too is a Rebbe)."

After his first meeting with the Rebbe, Reb Pinchas Menachem became very connected to the Rebbe, and on various occasions, would

express his great love and admiration for the Rebbe. When the Rebbe enacted the daily study of Rambam, the *Admur* stated publicly that he had taken this practice upon himself and now studied Rambam every day. For the first cycle he studied three chapters a day, and then continued with one chapter a day for the subsequent cycles.

The renowned chassidic philanthropist, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Gutnick of



With his brother, the Lev Simcha

Australia relates that when he met the Gerrer Rebbe, the latter said to him, **“Just as I love Chassidus, I love the Lubavitcher Rebbe with an essential² love.”**

The chassid Rabbi Moshe Gelbstein of Kfar Chabad once visited Reb Pinchas Menachem during the leadership of his brother, the Lev Simcha. At the end of their conversation, Reb Pinchas Menachem told Rabbi Gelbstein that he is pained by the fact that although a long time has passed, he still has not received a response from the Rebbe to a letter he had written the Rebbe concerning an important matter. As they conversed, they walked in the direction of the door, for Reb Pinchas Menachem also had to leave. Just as they opened door, the mailman arrived and handed Reb Pinchas Menachem the Rebbe’s letter, which had just arrived. Reb Pinchas Menachem was enthusiastic: “Aha!” he exclaimed. Do you see the power of a tzaddik? (I heard this from Rabbi Gelbstein himself.)

“YOU CAN CONQUER THE WORLD”

Regarding the *Admur’s* subsequent private audiences with the Rebbe, I know of one that took place on Sunday, 2 Adar 5734 (February 24, 1974), and another that took place on Rosh Chodesh Nissan of the same year. (Each of these private audiences lasted approximately an hour and a half.

In the *seifer B’tzel HaChochma* there are transcripts of conversations from private audiences of later years:

On the **thirteenth of Elul, 5739 (September 5, 1979)**, Reb Pinchas Menachem went into the Rebbe for a private audience, together with his in-law³, the *gaon* Reb Menashe Klien *shlita*. His son, the *gaon* and chassid Reb Yuda Aryeh alter o.b.m., who was

engaged to Reb Menashe Klien’s daughter, also went in with them. When they entered, the Rebbe instructed that a chair be brought for the *chossan* too, for a *chossan* is likened to a king, and should be honored thus.

Some of the things they spoke about at that meeting: * Tzaddik or Baal T’shuva — which is greater? * The practice of interrupting the *chossan* while he is reciting a Torah thought. * How novel it is that in the month of Elul we decrease in Torah learning (in accordance with the *Shulchan Aruch*), and increase in



prayer, etc — after all, the Second Tablets were given in the month of Elul!? * Should one’s initiation into Torah study follow the pattern described in *Pirkei Avos*⁴ — i.e., “*At the age of five one begins to study Scripture . . .*” — or should it follow the pattern that is popular today? * The need to increase in Torah study during a *shmita*⁵ year. * Printing *S’fas Emes* with cross-references. * Studying Torah even “not for its sake.”

During that private audience, the Rebbe told Reb Pinchas Menachem: “You are a Rosh Yeshiva, and one of the leaders of Agudas Yisroel. In

addition, you are also a member of the Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah. You can conquer the world! I’m not kidding.”

“FORTUNATE AM I THAT SUCH ARE THE COMPLAINTS AGAINST ME”

Private audience of 19 Teives 5742 (January 14, 1982). They discussed the following topics: * Why Jews say “*shalom*” when they meet one another. Since the word “*shalom*” is also one of G-d’s names, is it permissible to write it? * The reason the Sages informed us of the fact that in the Footsteps of Moshiach,⁶ “each day will exceed the previous day . . .” * The virtues of those who dwell in the Holy Land. * The giving of *tz’daka* is beneficial for the giver. * Why do we find that the great Torah leaders were not particular about fulfilling the mitzvah of writing a Torah scroll? * Granting Jews the merit to purchase a letter in a Torah scroll. * The Rebbe inquired about the health of the Lev Simcha.

They also discussed the idea that demanding Moshiach’s immediate arrival through expressions such as “Moshiach Now!” does not, G-d forbid, push off his coming. The Rebbe said: “Fortunate am I that the complaints against me are that I speak of Moshiach’s immediate arrival.”

“GUARDS HIS MOUTH AND TONGUE”

4 Iyar 5743 (April 17, 1983). Reb Pinchas Menachem asked the Rebbe what the Rambam’s source is for his understanding that the verse, “He guards his mouth and tongue” refers to the guarding of one’s mouth against [inappropriate] foods? Indeed, Rashi interprets it as referring to the guarding of one’s tongue against inappropriate speech? The Rebbe immediately answered that the

Rambam derives this from the seemingly redundant “mouth” and “tongue”; since “tongue” refers to speech, “mouth” must refer to food.

They also discussed the following topics: * Do the Rambam’s rulings concerning the preservation of one’s physical health apply today, or has the nature of the human body changed? * How is it possible to say about a given concept in the eternally relevant Torah that it does not apply today? * The Torah spoke in exaggerated terms. * Defining the teaching “Lest there arise a *Beis Din* that will increase the “amounts.”⁷ * Bringing the *Pesach Sheini* sacrifice if the Holy Temple is rebuilt between Pesach and Shavuos. * “We await your salvation every day,” and the comment of the *gaon* of Brisk on these words.

TO CONCLUDE THE YERUSHALMI ON A POSITIVE NOTE

Some information about the *Admur’s* visit to the Rebbe on the **fourteenth of Adar 5744 (February 17, 1984)** appears in *Yoman Rishuma Shel Shana* — 5744:

“A few moments before 8:00 pm, the *gaon* Rabbi Pinchas Menachem Alter *shlita* arrived, escorted by tens of Gerrer chassidim. At 8:00 they began to enter, accompanied by the members of [the Rebbe MH”M’s] secretariat. They conversed for approximately forty-five minutes, after which Reb Pinchas Menachem asked to speak with the Rebbe privately. Everyone went out, and Reb

The Rebbe said: “Fortunate am I that the complaints against me are that I speak of Moshiach’s immediate arrival.”

Pinchas Menachem remained with the Rebbe for approximately an hour and a half, until 10:15.”

Nothing is known about the nature of their conversation during that hour and a half, but during the forty-five minutes of the less private part of their meeting, they spoke a lot about topics related to the Lev Simcha’s enactment of the daily study of Talmud Yerushalmi:

* Does a siyum celebration on a tractate of the Talmud Yerushalmi have the status of a *seudas mitzvah*? * Who established the order and number of pages in each tractate? It is all Divine providence. * The Rebbe encourages making the siyumim with great fanfare, on each independent Order⁸ of the Talmud, so as to publicize the practice of the daily study of Yerushalmi. The Rebbe reinforced this idea with the teaching in Tractate Megilla (29a) that when it comes to Torah, it is not enough to publicize it even before 600,000 people. We also see from this teaching that one need not be concerned about the words of

the Sages regarding the consequence of the First Tablets, [which were given with great fanfare]; (indeed, that was a unique situation). * The Rebbe suggested that with regard to those chapters of Yerushalmi whose Gemara we are missing, the Mishnayos should be printed — just as is customary with regard to the last four chapters of Tractate *Shabbos* — and included in the daily study. The Rebbe added that with regard to the concluding of the entire Yerushalmi with Tractate *Nidda*, if the Mishnayos will not be included in the daily study, it will mean that the study of the entire cycle will conclude with a Talmudic discussion of something involving impurity, [and this ought not be] because we generally try to conclude a [study session] on a positive note. * There is proof that we conclude [a study session] on a positive note from the Yerushalmi’s Tractate *Brachos*, beginning of chapter 5. (See also chapter on Reb Yisroel Alter, with regard to the Rebbe’s handwritten note on the *sefer Beis Yisroel*.)

NOTES:

- 1 “Vas ken zich far mesten mit der velt.”
- 2 “Ahava Atzmis,” a love that comes from the very essence of one’s being.
- 3 Mechutan.
- 4 Ethics of the Fathers.
- 5 The Sabbatical year.
- 6 I.e., The era immediately preceding Moshiach’s arrival.
- 7 Shiurim.



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“SUITABLE WORK AND OUTSTANDING WEALTH”

BY NOSSON AVROHOM

Rivka X. has been working for nearly twenty years as a teller in Bank HaPoalim. Recently, a number of things happened to change her life.

It all began a year ago. An armed robber threatened her with a gun and took a few hundred thousand shekalim. The robber's identity was eventually discovered, but by that time, he had left the country for Germany.

If that wasn't enough, a few months later, on her way to work, her car collided with a truck. Rivka was taken to the hospital, where she stayed for quite a while. She was unable to work for a few weeks.

These events made her depressed yet she continued her routine of going to work at the bank without people being aware of her emotional turmoil.

And to top it all off, her manager informed her that the bank was laying off 900 employees and she was one of those being fired. Most of those fired were not yet of retirement age and the bank compensated them with 100 points, the equivalent of 100,000 shekel, half the amount of the pension.

Rivka did her best to convince her superiors to allow her to stay at her job, citing the traumatic events

she had recently experienced. Her superiors said, “We'll consider it, but you should be aware that if you end up staying here it will entail working from morning until night.”

Rivka's son had begun the t'shuva process the year before.

She called her son again and told him that she had to go and sign the papers that day. He said, “Even though it looks bleak, it's only a test. The Rebbe's words must be fulfilled. There's no doubt about it.”

Today he is a Tamim in the Chabad yeshiva in Tzfas. He often mentioned the idea of writing to the Rebbe through the *Igros Kodesh*.

When Rivka heard about her being fired, she called her son and

asked him to write to the Rebbe for her to ask for a bracha. Her son agreed to do so, though not before asking his mother to make a good resolution of some kind.

Rivka committed to dressing modestly. Her son was surprised and very impressed by this undertaking and he wrote a letter to the Rebbe. Then he took volume 4 of the *Igros Kodesh* and placed his letter in it at random.

The answer he opened to was on page 461:

I don't know if it pays to limit ahead of time the types of work, and then to match the membership of the committee to the limitation. The opposite seems more reasonable: to consider the talents of the members of the committee and to arrange the work in such a way that it will utilize the talents of the members 100% ... and with good news ... in all your needs.

He read the answer to his mother. She began to believe that she would find work that suited her, as the Rebbe said, but in the meantime she tried to take natural measures. Day after day, she went around to the offices of the bank's managers in order to convince them not to fire her. She also went to top lawyers in the hopes that they could help her, but it came to no

avail.

The management told her that on a certain day, she should show up for her dismissal papers and to sign the forms so she could receive her compensation.

She made one last effort to speak with the manager of the bank she worked at, but failed in this attempt. Although he was sympathetic, the manager said, "This is a decision made by the top executives, and there's no appealing it."

Judgment day approached and there seemed no reason to expect any change in plans. Rivka came to terms with the fact that the decision to fire her was final, and she had to show up to get the papers. She was out, and the pain and shame bothered her more than anything else.

She called her son again and told him that she had to go and sign the papers that day. He said, "Even though it looks bleak, it's only a test. The Rebbe's words must be fulfilled. There's no doubt about it."

His words, said with such certainty, made a great impression on her.

When their conversation was over, her son went to the beis midrash. He saw bachurim sitting there watching a video of the

Rebbe, and he went over to join them. The Rebbe was saying a sicha about a man who told him he wanted to be a millionaire. The Rebbe explained that being a millionaire didn't mean having a million dollars in the bank; it meant that he has sums that keep growing, even more than a million. At the end of that sicha, the Rebbe said



that every Jew ought to have money like our ancestors had when they left Egypt, as it says, "and their silver and gold with them."

Her son smiled at the Divine providence in the Rebbe's message. He felt that the Rebbe's words were meant for his family.

The auditor at the bank, who took care of those being fired, called Rivka and told her to come and sign the forms, otherwise she would lose the compensation the bank was paying her.

After hearing the Rebbe's answer and her son's encouraging words, Rivka went to the auditor's office in a calm frame of mind. She no longer felt the shame of being fired and was at peace with the Heavenly decree.

The auditor got into a conversation with Rivka, and when she heard Rivka's personal story she decided to triple her points to 350 (350,000), an amount that was far greater than the compensation and the pension put together.

Rivka realized that Someone was running the show, but she was still without a job. A few hours later, while she was still trying to digest what had happened with the auditor, she got a phone call from a relative who told her that the manager of the bank he worked in

was looking to hire someone for some months now, in her area of expertise. "When he heard that you had been laid off because of cutbacks he asked me to offer you the job."

Thus, the Rebbe's bracha was fulfilled in its entirety.

THE CHAIN GOES ON AND ON

BY SHAI GEFEN

...NOW WHAT?

The Human Chain on Sunday will definitely be remembered as one of the largest protests in Israeli history. It expressed the grassroots view and united Gush Katif with the remnant of our Mikdash, and not just physically.

That is all well and good but the big question is, what do we do the day *after* the Chain? How do we continue to frustrate the carrying out of this terrible crime of Jews expelling Jews in the Holy Land? How do we prevent this tragedy from happening so it doesn't happen in other parts of the country?

We have incredible strength which has not been fully tapped. From Heaven they have shown us how successful we can be when we work together. The same thing happened with the Likud referendum, when we succeeded in tipping the scales, so too with the enormously successful Chain.

Let us not delude ourselves that the battle is over; it is all far from being resolved, but there is no doubt that the public's awesome power will be used to continue protesting, and this power can frustrate Sharon's plans.

We all need to continue fighting and we cannot lose hope. The one who will win the fight will be the one who stands strong until the final moment. The one who blinks

first, loses.

THE FIGHT IS NOT OVER GUSH KATIF

One of the serious mistakes people make is in thinking that the fight is for the residents of Gush Katif, as though this is about a particular piece of real estate. G-d forbid. Although the fight is motivated by the threat to the residents to Gush Katif, and they are the ones who will be affected first by the implementation of this obscene expulsion plan, this is still not the main point.

The director of the Shin-Bet, Avi Dichter, the lackey for this government who has agitated constantly against the activists of the Right, said last week at a Foreign Policy and Security Committee meeting, that after the withdrawal, the southern part of the country will turn into southern Lebanon. He added that only physical control of the area will stop the missiles from being shot at us. He said that what we are seeing now is child's play compared to what we are going to see, and that the terrorists are presently improving their long-range weapons.

Well, even when Israel is in Gaza, as it is now, it doesn't manage to stop the shooting of Kassam missiles into the kibbutzim and yishuvim within the Green Line, and the south has already turned

into the frontlines, with all its residents in danger.

Remember, this is not the battle of the residents of Gush Katif, and not even that of the residents of the settlements in general; it is the battle of every single one of us for our very existence as people and as Jews. Perhaps this sounds exaggerated, but this sounded exaggerated after the signing of the Oslo Accords too, and we all know what happened on the streets of our cities the past decade. The more we withdraw, the closer the front approaches us.

If we residents of Israel, even those of us who live in the center of the country, don't get up and announce that every withdrawal will lead to a civil war and that we will not allow our lives to be put in danger – we'll be in big trouble. This is a war. Not for the lives of the residents of Gush Katif alone, but for all the millions of Jews who live throughout Eretz Yisroel, and even around the world.

If we don't call a halt to this, it won't stop with Gaza, or with Sderot or even Ashdod. International terror organizations derive their strength from our weakness. Everybody knows that Hezbollah is already deep in Yesha and little Israel, with thousands of Israeli-Arabs forming part of the terrorist infrastructure.

We all need to join the fray and with Hashem's help, we will win.

THE BATTLE ISN'T LOST

Many people wonder, "What else can be done? This is a dictatorial government and Sharon doesn't care what anybody thinks."

This constitutes running away from battle, aside from the lack of truth therein. This is the feeling that Sharon and his cohorts are trying to get us to feel, but the truth is very different.

Mr. Uzi Benzimon, a senior writer for *HaAretz*, tells it like it is, and it pays to read what he has to say in order to understand that the public protest and constant battle is very influential. This is what he says:

"They will quickly see that the people presently appointed to carry out the withdrawal are pessimistic about their ability to see it through, certainly within the timetable designated to them.

"The more they progress in clarifying the details of carrying out the disengagement plan, the more gloomy the ones appointed to make it happen are. They have mapped out its components and have found, in each one of them, that which is likely to make it fail. The combination of difficulties facing them has made them wonder whether they can carry out the operation altogether. In more optimistic moments, they say that the plan can be carried out but not within a year and a half. In pessimistic moments, they wonder whether it can be carried out at all. The problem lies not in the determination of the politicians but in the reality of the situation: the morass generated by the entire settlement issue.

"The main difficulty that the people working on the plan have identified is the grassroots opposition to it. They are concerned not only by acts of

violence on the part of extremists (as the head of the Shin-Bet warned the other week) but by massive undertakings to prevent the withdrawal from happening.

"An additional impediment is the legal angle which will delay the plan. Another difficulty is the Palestinians who can ruin the plan by continuing to shoot rockets towards Israeli settlements within the Green Line and by attacking I.D.F. forces and settlements in the Gaza Strip. This makes withdrawing problematic and creates the impression of a withdrawal under fire.

"A different problem lies in the political arena: How long will Sharon (even after Labor joins the government) be able to maintain a stable Parliamentary majority that will enable him to pass the necessary resolutions and legislation in order to carry out the disengagement. Weakness in this area is more than obvious, both within his party and his coalition.

"An additional arena which is fraught with difficulties is the conduct of the international community. Despite the great support which the plan enjoys, it is becoming ever clearer to those involved that certain powerful international forces want to link the withdrawal from Gaza with a plan for the future withdrawal from most West Bank settlements, and in any case, they are demanding that Israel drop the unilateral component of the plan.

"On the economic front, it is becoming more and more clear that the continuation of a connection between Israel and the areas under P.A. authority is vital. Even the bureaucracies of the various government ministries make the plan difficult to implement; despite the establishment of an inter-office



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committee, each ministry looks out for its own interests. For example, there is a debate going on at present about the budget for the Security forces in view of the expenses entailed in carrying out the disengagement plan.

“On the eve of his meeting with Sharon, Peres announced that one of the Labor party’s goals, if it joins the government, is to shorten the period of time designated to evacuate Gaza and northern Shomron. Peres believes that speeding up the withdrawal process will establish the facts on the ground and will force the settlers to make their peace with it. As things look today, a unity government will have to, first and foremost, breathe new life into the professional sector appointed to carry out the disengagement plan and to convince it that it can actually implement it.”

What we understand from this article is that we have the power to stop the withdrawal in its tracks. It’s up to us.

DON’T SELL YOUR SOUL TO THE DEVIL

An open letter to Yonasan Bassi, who wears a kippa, who accepted the job of overseeing the disengagement plan:

Many harsh words have been hurled against you by people who are usually moderate. Many of them

Mr. Bassi! You must get something clear. They didn’t take you to oversee the expulsion of your fellow Jews because of your outstanding abilities... They took you because of the kippa on your head, so you will be the one to expel your brethren.

don’t often get worked up, and some of them are even inclined to compromise. However, your appointment to oversee the disengagement process set off warning bells.

Many people went back 65 years and remembered the Judenrat and Jewish kapos, people who merely carried out orders – and destroyed their people.

Mr. Bassi! You must get something clear. They didn’t take

you to oversee the expulsion of your fellow Jews because of your outstanding abilities, because there are many who are better than you. They took you because of the kippa on your head, so you will be the one to expel your brethren. This is far more frightening than the actual disengagement process itself.

The commander in the south, Yom Tov Semia, who is not of the Right, refused to accept the job, because he understood that he would be used, and the goal of the government was to use him to carry out the churban.

We won’t resort to extremist rhetoric to convince you to immediately leave this difficult position. Sit down and rethink this. Do you really want to go down in history as the man who betrayed his brethren? What do you think you will get for it? Is it worth it?

The Jewish people have an unusually long memory, and we remember all the traitors and wicked people. It’s specifically because you are a religious Jew that you are being called upon to drop this evil job immediately. Rest assured that not only will you be accepted with open arms; you will also make a kiddush Hashem and will succeed, with Hashem’s help, in bringing about the cancellation of the disengagement plan. The sooner the better.



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