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The international weekly heralding the coming of Mashiach
BEIS MOSHIACH

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Beis Moshich wishes all our readers and all the Jewish people a g'mar chasima tova and a freilichin yom tov. The next issue is scheduled to come out for Parshas Lech Lecha.

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WHY THE TORAH OF LIGHT DOESN'T BEGIN WITH LIGHT

SICHOS IN ENGLISH



SHABBOS PARSHAS B'REISHIS; 24TH DAY OF TISHREI, 5751

1. The connection between Shabbos B'Reishis[125] and Simchas Torah is reflected by the reading of the opening portion of Parshas B'Reishis on Simchas Torah. Afterwards, on Shabbos B'Reishis, the portion is read in its totality. This year, the connection between the two is further emphasized because (in the Diaspora) Shabbos B'Reishis follows directly after Simchas Torah without an interruption.[126]

The connection between the two requires explanation.

Noting the contrast between the sacrifices of Sukkos and those of Shmini Atzeres, the Rabbis explain that Sukkos is associated with the gentile nations. In contrast, the days of Shmini Atzeres and Simchas Torah are for the Jewish people alone, reflecting a state when, "Israel and the King are alone."

This appears to be the direct opposite of Shabbos B'Reishis, which describes the creation of the world. Furthermore, the world was created in a manner in which, at the outset it was characterized by darkness,

emptiness, and void, and only, afterwards, did G-d declare, "Let there be light." These concepts – included in the portion of Parshas B'Reishis read on Simchas Torah – hardly seem appropriate at a time when, "Israel and the King are alone." Indeed, it is difficult to understand why the Torah begins with such a description. Since "the Torah is light," seemingly, the Torah should begin with the statement, "Let there be light."

The resolution to these questions lies in the opening word of the Torah, B'Reishis. Our Sages have interpreted that word as a reference to "Beis Reishis," "two things which are called first"; i.e., b'reishis, the creation at large, was for the sake of two things which are called first: the Torah... and Israel.[127]

G-d created the world because He desired a dwelling in the lower worlds.[128] Therefore, the beginning of the creation – darkness, emptiness, and void – reflected the lowly nature of the world. Only afterwards is the light, the light of Torah, revealed. This comes about through the service of the Jewish people, who bring light into the world and make it fit to be a

dwelling for G-d.

Accordingly, the first word of the Torah is "b'reishis," alluding to the dwelling for G-d established through the Jewish people's service of Torah and mitzvos. Directly afterwards, the Torah mentions the setting in which this service is carried out, our lowly material world, which contains darkness, emptiness, and void.

This pattern is also reflected in our approach to Torah study. Although while an embryo is in its mother's womb, a child is taught the entire Torah, before he is born, an angel "raps him across the mouth and causes him to forget" everything he has learned.[129] Thus, a child begins to study in "darkness and void" and must develop a connection to the light of Torah through his own efforts.

Similarly, when studying any particular Torah concept, one begins by seeing how the law is stated in the Written Law. There its ramifications and application are hidden and inexplicit; it is only in the Oral Law that they are explained in a comprehensive manner.

For example, the mitzva of lulav and esrog performed on the

Sukkos[130] holiday: The Torah does not refer to any of the four species included in this mitzva by its simple Hebrew name. For example, instead of referring to the fruit by name, “esrog,” the Torah uses the expression, “the fruit of a beautiful tree.”[131] This reflects our service in transforming this lowly world into a dwelling for G-d, taking those elements of existence whose G-dly intent is hidden and bring it into revelation.

Based on the above, we can explain the reading of a portion of Parshas B'Reishis on Simchas Torah. Simchas Torah represents the conclusion of the holidays of Tishrei, the seventh month which is full and adds fullness to the entire year. The service of Simchas Torah is one of gathering in and internalizing the influences of the holidays which preceded it in order to draw down this influence into the coming year.

For this reason, Simchas Torah emphasizes how “Israel and the King are alone,” above all connection to the gentiles.

Indeed, Israel is above the Torah. To emphasize this quality, the Jewish people dance with the Torah on Simchas Torah, showing how – because they are on a higher level than the Torah – they can bring happiness to the Torah.

This advantage was given to the Jewish people for the sake of carrying out their service in the world at large. They were given these essential powers in order to reveal light within a world that is, at the outset, darkness and void.

Afterwards, this dimension is given greater emphasis on Shabbos B'Reishis, and “As one presents himself on Shabbos B'Reishis, so follows the entire year.”

2. The above concepts are also related to the opening passage of Rashi's commentary on the

Torah[132], which states:

Rabbi Yitzchok said: There is no necessity to begin the Torah before the verse, “This month shall be for you...,” which represents the first mitzva the Jews were commanded. Why does it begin with the verse “B'Reishis”? Because “The power of His works He related to His people to give them the heritage of nations.” When the gentiles will accuse the Jews: “You are thieves. You have taken the lands of the seven nations,” the Jewish people will reply, “The entire world belongs to G-d. He created it and He gave it to whomever He pleases. He willingly

It is difficult to understand why the Torah begins with such a description. Since “the Torah is light,” seemingly, the Torah should begin with the statement, “Let there be light.”

gave it to them and then, He willingly took it from them and gave it to us.”

There are several difficulties with this explanation: Firstly, if negating the gentiles' claim that the Jews are thieves is so important, G-d should never have given them Eretz Yisroel. That would be far more effective than giving the land to them and then taking it away.

Also, the question arises: Why is this the very first lesson with which the Torah begins? Surely, it would have been possible to include it

somewhat later in the Torah.

These difficulties can be resolved according to the above concepts: Just as the Torah begins with darkness and void and then, relates how G-d commanded, “Let there be light,” so too, Eretz Yisroel was first given to the gentiles, and only then, given to the Jewish people. Since the dwelling for G-d must be established within the “lower worlds,” Eretz Yisroel was made the “heritage of nations,” to the point where even the Torah mentions their accusation that the Jews are “thieves.”

Nevertheless, the Torah answers this claim with the explanation that Creation was for a specific intent, “for Israel and for the Torah.” Therefore, G-d ultimately “gave the land to whomever He desires,” i.e., the Jewish people. However, the manner in which He gave it to the Jewish people reflects His desire for “a dwelling in the lower worlds.” Therefore, Eretz Yisroel first became “a heritage of nations,” and only afterwards, was transformed into a place of holiness. To communicate this concept, the Torah “begins with ‘B'Reishis,’” showing how from a situation of darkness and void, we proceed to light.

In this context, we can understand why Rashi deviates from his usual pattern and mentions the name of the author of the quote from the Midrash, Rabbi Yitzchok. By doing so, Rashi clarifies by allusion questions that could be raised by an advanced student.

In this context, it is worthy to mention the explanation given for the mention of Rabbi Yitzchok's name by certain commentaries. They maintain that Rashi mentions Rabbi Yitzchok's name as an expression of respect for his father who was also called Rabbi Yitzchok.

This explanation, however, is not entirely appropriate for it is difficult

to expect that Rashi would depart from his goal of explaining the simple meaning of the Torah without any additions simply to show honor to his father.[133] Therefore, it can be assumed that by mentioning the name, Rabbi Yitzchok, Rashi is clarifying another aspect of the claim that the Jews are “thieves.”

This concept can be explained as follows: On the surface, even the gentiles should know that “the land is G-d’s, He created it...” and therefore, He has the right to give it to whomever He pleases, for they also accept that G-d created the world.[134]

Their claim comes about because although they believe in G-d, they believe that He controls the world through intermediaries.[135] Therefore, it is possible to explain that although originally G-d created Eretz Yisroel, He entrusted it to intermediaries, thus it became “a heritage of nations,” and should not be taken from them.

In response to this claim, the Jewish people relate that not only did G-d create the world, He is the sole power controlling the world and governing its existence. All intermediaries He uses are merely “axes in the hands of the woodchopper,” with no autonomous control over what happens. Accordingly, since G-d desired to give Eretz Yisroel to the Jews, the land rightfully belongs to them.

Rashi alludes to this concept by showing deference to his father with the mention of the name, Rabbi Yitzchok. To explain: Our Sages equated honoring one’s parents with honoring G-d Himself, for all three (G-d and one’s father and mother) are partners in bringing a person into being.

On the surface, granting honor to one’s parents parallels paying respect to the intermediaries with which G-d

creates and controls the world. Just as these intermediaries are honored because they play a role in controlling our existence although ultimately, their power has its source in G-d, a person honors his parents because they helped bring him into being, although ultimately, they are granted this power by G-d.

There is, however, a difference between the two. The intermediaries created by G-d have no choice whether to transmit influence or not. They are nothing more than, “an axe in the hand of a woodchopper.” Therefore, there is no reason to honor them. In contrast, a person’s parents have the choice whether to conceive him or not. Since they willingly did so, they are considered partners in his existence and are considered worthy of honor.

In this context, the name of the author of the above passage (and Rashi’s father) takes on added significance. From a deeper perspective, the gentile nations’ conception that the intermediaries G-d uses to convey influence have free choice is not only an error, but is also a denial of G-d’s Oneness. Why is a Jewish parent given free choice – and thus a partnership – in the conception of a child? Because a Jew is “truly a part of G-d,” “Israel and the Holy One, blessed be He, are one.” For this reason, the mitzva of honoring one’s parents in a complete sense was given only to the Jewish people.[136]

This concept is alluded to by the name, Rabbi Yitzchok. Yitzchok relates to the era of Redemption (for then Yitzchok will be given prominence over the other Patriarchs), the era when the bond of unity between G-d and the Jewish people will be openly revealed.

The knowledge that ultimately, our service will lead to such an era, inspires us to carry out that service within the darkness of the world,

illuminating it with the light of Torah.[137]

3. An additional connection to the above concepts can be found in Rashi’s commentary on the verses, “And G-d saw that man’s wickedness was increasing... and G-d regretted that He had made man and became sad of heart.” Rashi comments:

The Holy One, blessed be He, sees the future.... Although it was revealed before Him that ultimately [men] would sin... He did not refrain from creating him, for the sake of the righteous men who would ultimately arise.[138]

Rashi prefaces those statements with a problematic passage:

I wrote the following as a response to non-believers. An apikores (heretic) asked Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korcha: “Don’t you acknowledge that G-d sees the future?” Rabbi Yehoshua answered: “Of course.” If so [the apikores continued,] “Why does the Torah tell us that He became sad, [since He already knew what would happen, He should not have been affected?]”

[Rabbi Yehoshua answered in allegory:] “Did you ever father a son?”

“Yes.”

“What did you do?”

“I rejoiced....”

“Didn’t you know your son would ultimately die?”

“At a time of joy” [the apikores answered,] joy is appropriate. At a time of mourning, mourning is appropriate.” “The deeds of G-d reflect a similar pattern,” Rabbi Yehoshua replied.

Among the questions raised by this passage are:

a. Although it is important to “know what to respond to an apikores,” this is not the goal of Rashi’s commentary on the Torah. On

the contrary, Rashi sets as his goal explaining the simple meaning of the Torah. Why then does he mention “a response to non-believers?”

b. On the surface, the question: “How is it possible for G-d to have a change of heart?” is one that is likely to be asked any Jewish child. Why does Rashi associate this with apikurses (heresy)?

The answer is that Rashi is teaching us how a Jewish child should ask a question. An apikores comes with a challenge: “Don’t you acknowledge that G-d sees the future?” In contrast, a Jew believes that the Torah is true and he believes that G-d knows the future. There is room for questions, because a Jew is obligated to attempt to understand G-d. However, a Jewish child must ask in a way which reflects his faith in G-d. This implies a responsibility for teachers, that they must instruct their students in a manner which inculcates faith and belief.[139]

4. A portion of Parshas Noach was also read in the Mincha service. Hence, it is appropriate to focus on a verse from this portion. The opening verses of Parshas Noach state: “These are the *toldos* of Noach. Noach was a righteous man.” On this verse, Rashi comments: “This teaches that the primary *toldos* of the righteous are good deeds.” It is questionable why Rashi whose commentary focuses on the simple meaning of the Torah brings this interpretation. The simple meaning of the word *toldos* is “offspring.”

Some commentaries explain that Rashi chooses this interpretation because Noach’s offspring – Shem, Cham, and Yafes – are mentioned previously, at the conclusion of Parshas B’Reishis. Since the Torah is not redundant, we can assume that, in Parshas Noach, *toldos*, has a different interpretation.

This explanation, however, is not

entirely satisfactory, for we find several occasions in the Torah where mention of a person’s siring of offspring is repeated. For example, Parshas B’Reishis mentions the birth of Adam’s son, Sheis, twice. Instead, it appears that the reason Rashi is forced to adopt this interpretation of *toldos* – in contrast to the simple one – is because the verse begins, “These are.”

Our Sages teach a general principle: Whenever the Torah uses the expression, “And these are,” a continuation of the previous subject matter is implied. In contrast, use of the expression, “These are,” implies a

The knowledge that ultimately, our service will lead to such an era, inspires us to carry out that service within the darkness of the world, illuminating it with the light of Torah.

break with the previous subject matter. Since this verse uses the expression “these are,” we can assume that, instead of a continuation of what was mentioned previously, the Torah uses the word “*toldos*” in a new context.

From a deeper perspective, the mention of Noach’s offspring in Parshas Noach indicates that they too were elevated to a higher level. After the flood, “Noach saw a new world,” i.e., the entire existence was given a new potential after its purification in the flood. This represents, in microcosm, the revelations which

will characterize the Messianic age, when there will be revealed, “a new heaven and a new earth.”

5. The passage from the Midrash quoted from Rashi’s commentary has particular relevance at present. We are in the midst of unique period and have seen changes in the international political arena which are truly characteristic of the present years, 5750, “a Year of Miracles,” and 5751, “a Year when ‘I will show you Wonders.’”

Thus, we have seen nations which for years were dominated by totalitarian regimes giving way for regimes based on righteousness and justice. (The present regimes also allow freedom for religious observance.) Similarly, one of those regimes has allowed hundreds of thousands of Jews to emigrate and many have chosen to immigrate to Eretz Yisroel, an act which reflects the ingathering of exiles that will take place in the age of the Redemption. Furthermore, the present Persian Gulf crisis can be interpreted as portentous of Moshiach’s coming as explained within the context of the Yalkut Shimoni.[140]

Nevertheless, in this time, the accusation, “You are thieves,” is being leveled against the Jewish people. In particular, they are being criticized for taking possession of Yerushalayim. Even nations whose response to the Gulf Crisis demonstrated their concern for justice and righteousness have joined in the outcry.

This accusation is also one of the signs which portend Moshiach’s imminent coming. By standing fast and declaring as Rashi teaches, “The entire world belongs to G-d; He created it and He gave it to whomever He pleases,” we will refute this claim and hasten the coming of Moshiach.

NOTES:

125. Translator's Note: This year, Simchas Torah was celebrated on Friday. Accordingly, various halachic questions made it necessary to postpone the farbrengen which is usually held toward nightfall to draw down the influence of Simchas Torah into the year which follows. Instead, that farbrengen was held on a similar hour on Shabbos.

Thus, on Shabbos B'Reishis, there were two farbrengens, the farbrengen customarily held Shabbos afternoon, and a farbrengen which began before nightfall in connection with Simchas Torah. Nevertheless, the content of both the farbrengens was included in a single text and edited by the Rebbe Shlita in this manner. Therefore, it has also been translated in this fashion.

126. Furthermore, as explained in the farbrengen of Shabbos Shuva, 5751, when Shabbos follows directly after a festival, Havdala is not recited, implying that there is no separation between them.

127. In particular, Israel precedes the Torah. Thus, Israel is described by the metaphor of bikkurim and Torah, by the metaphor of truma. Bikkurim must be separated before truma.

128. More particularly, His intent was that the dwelling be established in the context of the lower worlds themselves and not that the dwelling be fashioned by elevating the lower worlds to a higher level.

129. Although the infant forgets, the fact that he has already learned the entire Torah has an influence upon him afterwards and assists him in his study.

130. It is significant that this pattern of concealment which leads to revelation is followed even in connection with the holiday of Sukkos. Sukkos is a holiday where the emphasis is on revelation, bringing into open expression our victory in the judgment of Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur.

131. The term used for the myrtle, "branches of thick-leaved trees (anaf etz avos)," shares a particular connection to the present day, Isru chag (the day following a festival). Our Sages have associated Isru chag with the verse, Isru chag b'avosim ("Bind the festive offering with cords").

132. Rashi states, "I have come only to explain the simple meaning

of the Torah." Although his commentary contains "wondrous concepts" and "the wine of the Torah," first and foremost, his intent is to explain the simple meaning of the Torah's verses. Thus, he explains that he quotes Aggadic passages only when they contribute to the understanding of that simple meaning.

In previous years, there has been an effort to explain Rashi's commentary in this context. Therefore, it is appropriate to explain several verses in this manner on Shabbos B'Reishis.

133. On the other hand, were Rashi to omit mention of his father, striking Rabbi Yitzchok's name from the teaching which opens his commentary, an advanced student who knows the name of Rashi's father might consider this an act of disrespect to him.

134. They are forced to this conclusion by the clear fact that, "an entity cannot bring itself into existence." Therefore, there must be a Creator.

135. Indeed, there are opinions in Torah law which state that the gentiles are allowed to hold such beliefs. A Jew must believe that there is no other power at all besides G-d (negating the concept of shituf). A gentile, however, is not required to have such a developed conception of faith in G-d.

136. There is a certain dimension of honor to one's parents demanded of the gentiles. This, however, is part of the obligation incumbent on them to establish a stable society and not a token of respect to one's parents in its own right.

137. Similarly, the knowledge that ultimately, "a new Torah will emanate from Me," inspires us to carry out the service of Torah study in the present age.

138. Chassidic thought provides a deeper explanation, that sin – after it has been elevated and transformed through t'shuva – is considered as a merit. Indeed, because it transforms darkness into light, it reflects a higher level of merits. In this manner, it elevates the lowest aspects of our existence, and makes them a "dwelling for G-d."

139. Similarly, a teacher must instruct a child not to drink cholov akum (milk not supervised by a Jew) for this leads to undesirable thoughts.

140. See the sichos of Parshas R'ei, 5750, and the Second Night of Sukkos, 5751.

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DON'T FAINT – HE'S COMING TODAY!

BY RABBI GEDALIA AXELROD
AV BEIS DIN, HAIFA, ERETZ YISROEL

TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY



“If I am a king, why haven’t you come until now?” If the king is here, so where are we? Are we living with the knowledge that Moshiach is coming today? Are our thoughts, words, and actions ready for the revelation of Moshiach? Do we live thinking that Moshiach is coming at this very moment, or when Moshiach comes, will we tell him, “Just another minute, we’re not quite ready yet...”? In any event, as opposed to Rabbi Aharon Karliner, we cannot faint at “HaMelech.” A Tishrei perspective.

We all surely remember the story about the tzaddik, Rabbi Aharon Karliner, who would collapse and faint when he reached the word “HaMelech” in the High Holiday prayers. Who among us is not moved when he says “HaMelech” each year?

Yet why did Rabbi Aharon Karliner faint?

He personally explained that when Rabbi Yochanan left the walls

of Yerushalayim to meet with Asphesenus, the Roman army minister, he said upon meeting him, “Peace upon you, my master, the king.”

“You are liable to be put to death,” Asphesenus responded, “for if I am a king, where have you been up until now?”

The tzaddik, Rabbi Aharon Karliner, thought about the content of these words when he reached the

word “HaMelech” – where have we been up until now? Why only now do we behold the face of the King of all kings?

THE DEMAND COMES ESPECIALLY UPON THOSE WHO ARE THE CLOSEST

We are now in a most unique and precious time, the time of Melech HaMoshiach’s revelation. As the Rebbe MH”M has established, our task is to accept his sovereignty. We must accept the sovereignty of Melech HaMoshiach in order to bring about his complete hisgalus.

Thus, we must also ask ourselves this question:

“If I am a king” – the Rebbe shlita is the king – then where exactly are we holding on this entire issue?

This question is instilled with even greater emphasis in relation to **us specifically**. Asphesenus did not present this question before a bunch of hooligans; he asked Rabbi Yochanan: If you come to me and declare that I am king, where have you been until now?

It turns out that this question and demand is specifically placed in

far greater measure before someone who is closer, i.e., a Jew who believes and lives with the faith that the Rebbe is Melech HaMoshiach. Do we really believe as we should, or is everything on the level of saying, "Peace upon you, my master, the king," while we live just as we want to live?

It is told that at one of the Rebbe Rayatz's farbrengens, one of the chassidim jumped up and grabbed some of the "shirayim" (leftovers) from the Rebbe's plate. "In their circles (i.e., among Polish chassidim)," the Rebbe Rayatz told

Moshiach did not add the words, "if you will listen to His voice," as there is no "if" with Moshiach. Moshiach is not a matter for doubt.

this chassid, "this is a privilege. In our circles, it obligates..."

We have today the great privilege of living with Moshiach – not only to hang signs and to publicize the subject, but first and foremost, there is the primary task of creating a sense of awareness that the subject of Moshiach carries with it an important obligation. Furthermore, those who are closer, specifically those who live and identify themselves more with this pure faith, have the demands and obligations placed upon them to a much larger extent.

"WHEN?" "TODAY!"

The Gemara in Tractate



Sanhedrin tells the story of the meeting of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi and Moshiach at the gate of Rome. Rabbi Yehoshua identified him according to the signs that Eliyahu HaNavi himself had given him: When you will see a poor person not conducting himself as the other poor people do [you will know it is Moshiach. That is] instead of removing all his bandages, wiping the wounds, and re-bandaging them, he loosens one bandage, cleans it, and re-bandages – one at a time – in order that when the time for the Redemption comes, we will not need to delay for a moment *ch”v* due to the time required for changing bandages.

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi approached Moshiach and asked him “*Eimasai asi mar?*” (When will you come, Master?) Moshiach responded, “Today!” Eventually, when Moshiach did not reveal himself on that day, Eliyahu explained to him that the intention was, “Today – if you will listen to His voice.”

The question is then asked: What type of a question is “When will you come, Master?” There is an explicit *p’sak* in Rambam that when the Jewish people do *t’shuva*, they will be redeemed. Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi surely knew this fact, so what was he asking with this question?

It turns out that Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi’s question was on a much deeper level. He asked the Moshiach, “*Eimasai asi mar?*” – which avoda must we attain in order to hasten your coming?

To this, Moshiach responded, “Today!” Moshiach did not add the words “if you will listen to His voice,” as there is no “if” with Moshiach. Moshiach is not a matter for doubt. If there were such a doubt, he would remove a bandage and a half... Since Moshiach has no doubts, he doesn’t remove more than one bandage, as he is certain that he

will come literally at this moment.

This was exactly Moshiach’s answer to the question, “What level must we reach in order to merit the hisgalus? The level of “Today.” We are living in a situation where Moshiach will come today. When a Jew lives with “today,” the essential fact that Moshiach is coming *today*, this hastens his coming.

THERE’S ALWAYS ROOM TO IMPROVE

This is the apparent interpretation of “If I am a king, where have you been up until now?” as it pertains to us. If he really is Melech HaMoshiach, so where are we? Are we living with the knowledge that Moshiach is coming today? Are our thoughts, words, and actions ready for the revelation of Moshiach? Do we live thinking that Moshiach is coming at this moment, or when Moshiach comes will we tell him, “Just another minute, we’re not quite ready yet...”?

What we have here is a case of “higher knowledge” and “lower knowledge.” On the one hand, we must proclaim and demand that Moshiach should come at this very moment. However, on the other hand, every moment that Moshiach has not come yet means that he is waiting for us to add and improve. This is a matter where there is always room to improve – to live more with the fact that Moshiach is coming today!

ESTIMATED TIME OF MOSHIACH’S ARRIVAL: NOW!

In the Rebbe MH”M shlita’s announcement of the Redemption, he frequently makes the proclamation “The time of your Redemption has arrived.” The Rebbe shlita brings the Midrash from Yalkut Shimoni stating that Moshiach will say, “The time of your

Redemption has arrived” to Am Yisroel, and in fact, we have heard these words from the Rebbe shlita on numerous occasions.

What is the meaning of “The **time** of your Redemption has arrived”? What is the connection between “time” and “Redemption”?

It is known that the Redemption is compared to Shabbos, as we say in *Birkas HaMazon*, “May the Merciful One let us merit the day that will be all Shabbos and rest for everlasting life.” If so, we can learn the meaning behind “time of your Redemption” from Shabbos.

It is also known that we can accept Shabbos starting from *Plag HaMincha*. During Friday’s early afternoon hours, it is not yet possible to accept the Shabbos. Even if a Jew declares that he accepts Shabbos upon himself, puts on Shabbos clothes, and his wife lights Shabbos candles, the laws of Shabbos do not apply yet. After the sun has set and Shabbos has already commenced, there is no longer a need to ask anybody anything.

The Rebbe brings in *Likkutei Sichos* that a certain doctor made a study concluding that a Jew’s pulse on Shabbos is different than on a weekday. The holiness of Shabbos is relevant to every Jew, and thus, from the moment that Shabbos enters, the entrance is absolute.

However, there is an interim period when a Jew can accept the Shabbos – from *Plag HaMincha* – and this depends on his will and desire. What happens then?

It is said that on Shabbos, the light of Shabbos penetrates everyone – even someone who declares *ch”v* that he doesn’t want the light. Even *his* pulse changes, even within *him* the light shines...

However, there is also a time when the light of Shabbos has not yet descended to the world, but the

Shabbos'dike holiness already exists. At such a time, everything depends upon the Jew: If he accepts the Shabbos, he receives the light; if not, then it's still just another weekday for him.

Similarly, we find in connection with the Redemption. The Rebbe says that we are on the level of Erev Shabbos afternoon. This means that we are at a time when the matter **depends on us**: If we accept upon ourselves the light and holiness of the Redemption, then it will surely dwell upon us.

The truth is that a Jew could always bring Moshiach, starting from the world's creation, when there reigned a state of "and the spirit of G-d hovered over the waters – this is the spirit of Melech HaMoshiach." Likewise, when the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed, and the deliverer of Israel was born immediately thereafter, we see that it is totally irrelevant to suggest that the world was *ch"v* without the possibility of Redemption for even a moment. However, in those times, it required much greater strengths. Today, we are in a time when the light of Moshiach is already found in the world, and now it only depends on us to accept the Redemption upon ourselves.

In just another brief moment, the time for the onset of the Redemption will arrive. We will open our eyes and see the revelation of the Rebbe, and then, even if a Jew declares that he *ch"v* doesn't want the Redemption, it will be no use. The Redemption will come, enwrap him, and bring him in. But now is the time when it depends on us and our acceptance.

LIVING ACCORDING TO THE LAWS OF THE TIME OF THE REDEMPTION

At this point, we must pay attention to one additional detail:

When a Jew takes Shabbos on early at *Plag HaMincha*, he is already obligated in all the laws of Shabbos. The obligation in the laws of Shabbos comes together with the wondrous light.

The same applies with the Redemption. When we greet Moshiach Tzidkeinu, then we really take on Shabbos, as we merit the wondrous light of Moshiach. But even during *Moshiach-tzait*, there are halachos, and greeting Moshiach means that we must live as we should in the era of the Redemption.

In the sicha from Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sara 5752, the Rebbe

"In their circles (i.e., among Polish chassidim), the Rebbe Rayatz told this chassid, "this is a privilege. In our circles, it obligates..."

says that we must be ready to accept *p'nei Moshiach Tzidkeinu*. What does *p'nei Moshiach* mean? *P'nei* refers to *p'nimiyus*. *P'nei Moshiach*, the *p'nimiyus* of Moshiach.

We must live as Moshiach lives, as mentioned earlier – we must live with "today." We live with the knowledge that today, at any moment, Moshiach is coming to redeem the Jewish people. This is how a Jew must live – in the faith that Moshiach is about to reveal himself and redeem *Am Yisroel*. Thus, the personal level of *yechida* within every Jew is united with the general *yechida* of Moshiach,

bringing the Redemption.

This is our answer to the question: If I am a king, so where are you?

Moshiach, we're with you! We live as you do, with the thoughts, words, and actions that convey the message that Moshiach is coming at this moment – and we conduct ourselves accordingly!

However, as opposed to Rabbi Aharon Karliner, we cannot faint. On the contrary, we must do this with great joy.

There is a story about the Tzemach Tzedek, who gave over a maamer before a group of Cantonist soldiers (Jewish boys who had been forcibly conscripted into the czarist army) on the *pasuk* "Daughter of Tzion, shed tears like a river" – the soul must be cleansed with tears. Afterwards, one of the soldiers approached the Tzemach Tzedek and said, "Rebbe! A war is won with a march!" The Tzemach Tzedek agreed – victory can only be achieved through joy.

"For you shall go out with joy" – Moshiach is joy. The Rebbe says that pure joy brings the Moshiach. Try it and see for yourselves.

This best expresses the vitality we have "today." A Jew who believes that Moshiach is coming today is a happy Jew. This is an expression of that faith. When we think about "if I am a king" in our generation, this must bring us to an intense state of joy. The Rebbe is our king, and so we come to him with complete faith that we will be privileged to immediately behold his holy countenance, the king in all his glory *mamash* before our eyes, and the entire Jewish people will be blessed with a good and sweet new year, as we proclaim before him:

Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Melech HaMoshiach l'olam va'ed!

ALL THE YIDDEN IN ONE SUKKA

*The joy of the Chassidim was boundless. Lublin had never seen such simcha before. The Chozeh himself stood in the center and encouraged his Chassidim to drink more and more. “Drink and become drunk,” he said, “for if we have a joyous Simchas Torah, we will also have a joyous Tisha B’Av” – meaning that the Geula would come and Tisha B’Av would turn into a day of rejoicing... * A compilation of stories about Sukkos and the Geula.*

THE WAY A MAN MEASURES, IT’S METED OUT TO HIM

Erev Sukkos in Anipoli. Many guests came to Anipoli to spend the Yom Tov with Reb Zushe. Poor people, wanderers, those who “went into galus (self-imposed exile),” ignorant folk, all sought out the Rebbe. They yearned to observe his holy conduct and to learn from his ways, to hear Torah from him about the *Ushpiz* of the day, or simply to bask in the Rebbe’s love for them.

When the holiday began, they all headed towards Reb Zushe’s sukka, a spacious sukka built to accommodate all the guests. Reb Zushe welcomed one and all with open arms. He beamed as he personally served his guests.

In the middle of the meal, the

Rebbe began to hum holiday tunes, and all joined in. The simcha grew until they all rose from their seats. Each put his arm on his fellow’s shoulder and they broke into a joyous dance.

It didn’t matter whether you were a wagon driver, a cobbler, or blacksmith, for they all joined with the well-to-do, and Reb Zushe led them all. With *d’veikus* and uplifted spirits, as one man with one heart, they seemed to float above the ground, until it seemed as though angels were nodding their heads, that fiery seraphs were trembling, and that all of Creation had joined in their dancing.

Reb Zushe’s Chassidim asked him, “Rebbe, why do you permit great and lowly to join you in your sukka, ignorant folk along with learned men,

paupers and the rich?”

Reb Zushe replied in his characteristically humble way, “You should know, my dear children, that when the Geula comes and all the dead come back to life, then all the tzaddikim will gather in a sukka made of the Leviyasan’s skin, and they will enjoy the light that was hidden away during the six days of Creation. But then these tzaddikim will suddenly notice a Jew who pushes his way in, in the hopes of joining them. They will stop him and address him sternly, ‘Zushe, who are you that you want to join the great tzaddikim?’

“But I will have an answer ready for them. I will say, ‘True, Zushe is not worthy to join the great tzaddikim under the sukka made of the Leviyasan’s skin, but just as Zushe did not check out his guests to determine who was worthy and desirable and who was not, he should be treated in kind...’”

CAST YOUR BREAD

One year, a large crowd went to Rabbi Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev’s sukka and it was very crowded. R’ Levi Yitzchok said:

“We must tolerate the crowding, even by the simple folk, for in the future, when the tzaddikim sit with crowns on their heads in the sukka of the Leviyasan, I will also push to sit there with all the tzaddikim. When they want to send me out, saying – why is such a coarse fellow here among the holy ones, I will say that I also tolerated the simple folk and did



not throw them out of my sukka.

THE ESROG OF THE BEIS HA'MIKDASH

One Motzaei Yom Kippur, a man came to show his esrog to the gaon R' Zalman (Baharan) Levy zt"l, who was called R' Zalman R' Nachum's. The esrog was *mehudar* except that it was missing a little piece.

That year, the first day of Sukkos was on Shabbos, and so when R' Zalman pointed out the missing piece in the esrog the man said, "So what? The first day of Sukkos is on Shabbos this year, and we don't say the bracha on the minim on Shabbos, and

according to the halacha, when a piece is missing on the later days the esrog is kosher!"

R' Zalman admonished him, "Don't you believe in Moshiach? Don't you look forward to his coming today? We believe that the Beis HaMikdash will be built any moment now, and then we will all recite the bracha on the minim in the Mikdash, even when the first day of Sukkos is on Shabbos. In that case, your esrog will be pasul. Furthermore, in the Mikdash it will be considered pasul even on the other days of Sukkos, since in the Mikdash the Biblical requirement is to take the minim on all seven days of Sukkos!"

ALL ARE READY

One year, on Motzaei Shabbos Chol HaMoed Sukkos before Melaveh Malka, the holy Rabbi Aharon of Belz called his aide, R' Efraim Traube of Krakow, and said:

"If Moshiach would come right now, there could be nothing better, for we are all ready. We don't even need to go home to put on Shabbos clothing."

ATTEMPTS TO HASTEN THE GEULA ON SIMCHAS TORAH

The Chozeh of Lublin yearned for the Geula all his days. Chassidim relate that every night, before the

Chozeh went to sleep, he would ask his aide to wake him up immediately if the footsteps of Moshiach were heard.

The Chozeh did not merely yearn for the Geula. He made numerous attempts to hasten Moshiach's coming, to the point of mesirus nefesh.

One year, the Chozeh said special prayers and made special mystical "unifications" so that he was sure that the Geula was about to come. He revealed to his disciple, R' Yaakov Yitzchok, the Yid HaKadosh from Peshischa, that as far as the simple Jews were concerned, the Geula could come, and it was the learned people who held up the Geula with their arrogance.

Tishrei 5575 (1814) was the last attempt in a series of attempts to hasten the Geula. For months before that, the Chozeh secretly made his preparations to break the iron wall and to hasten the coming of Moshiach.

Along with his fellow tzaddikim, they exerted themselves in their Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur prayers and had lofty *kavanos*, but the Satan constantly thwarted them. The tzaddikim sensed this, but did not despair; they redoubled their efforts to achieve their goal.

The Yomim Noraim passed, and in the meantime, their efforts were succeeding in hastening the Geula. They needed to continue their efforts during the joyous days of Sukkos, and the peak of joy, Simchas Torah. There are no more elevated and lofty days than these, which are auspicious for bringing Moshiach.

The tzaddik Reb Mendel of Rimanov sat in his sukka in great joy and told his Chassidim, "Daven for me that the year 5575 pass and then the Geula will come."

Hearing this, the Chassidim remembered that on Pesach the Rebbe had said, "If my colleagues will help me, we will merit that in the coming year we will be in Yerushalayim and

this cup of wine will be the cup of salvation." The Chassidim understood that it was a year of ratzon and compassion.

When the Satan saw that the tzaddikim were going all out in their efforts to bring Moshiach, he also mustered all his strength. A terrible thing happened on Erev Sukkos. The Koznitzer Maggid, who was a member of the circle of tzaddikim, fell ill. His health deteriorated and the Chassidim gathered in order to avert the evil decree with their prayers.

But the gates of heaven were

***But then these
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'Zushe, who are you
that you want to join
the great tzaddikim?'***

closed and the Koznitzer Maggid passed away. The circle of tzaddikim who were hastening the Geula had lost one of its members and the group broke up.

The Chassidim hid this information from the Chozeh so as not to give him cause for sorrow on the eve of the holiday of our rejoicing. Even the Chozeh, the Seer, remained unaware of what had happened.

However, the Chozeh felt that it was a tense and dangerous time. "I am afraid," said he to his greatest

disciples, "of those years that even Moshe Rabbeinu feared when he said (D'varim 9), 'for I feared the anger and the fury.'"

Despite the peril, the Chozeh continued his efforts. On Simchas Torah night, many Chassidim came to Lublin in order to be with the Rebbe. The joy of the Chassidim was boundless. Lublin had never seen such simcha before. The Chozeh himself stood in the center and encouraged his Chassidim to drink more and more. "Drink and become drunk," he said, "for if we have a joyous Simchas Torah, we will also have a joyous Tisha B'Av" – meaning, that the Geula would come and Tisha B'Av would turn into a day of rejoicing.

They sang one niggun after another and none of the Chassidim noticed that the Chozeh had left the dancers for a few moments in order to rest in his room, so he could return and dance once again. All hoped and prayed that Simchas Torah would really be a happy one.

But the Satan was alert and he knew that there was a serious threat to his continued existence. He was waiting for the moment that the Chozeh would go to rest in his room.

The Chozeh, knowing that it was both an auspicious time as well as a dangerous time, asked his Rebbetzin to stay with him in the room until he woke up. He knew that when two people are together, the Satan can do no harm.

The Rebbetzin stood and watched, but the Satan outwitted her. She suddenly heard the sound of a young boy crying and she left the room to calm him down. When she left the room...

What happened next was related by Chassidim, one to the other, but not too many people know what really took place. Chassidim called it the "fall." When the Rebbetzin returned to the room, she was shocked to see that her husband was not lying down in bed. The only thing she could report



was that she just managed to see a pair of outstretched hands that took the Rebbe from his bed and threw him from the window. The window was very small, narrow and high up, and nobody could understand how the Chozeh could have fallen out of that high, narrow window.

It remained a mystery.

Lublin was in a turmoil. The singing and dancing stopped. Everybody went out in search of the Rebbe who had disappeared out the window. They searched for hours until R' Eliezer of Chemlenik, the son-in-law of the tzaddik, R' Tzvi Hirsch of Stashav, saw in the distance, fifty yards away, a broken figure among the trees. Since night had fallen, it was hard to identify the person. When R' Eliezer approached, he heard a groan. R' Eliezer could not identify the Rebbe's voice.

"Who are you?" he asked.

"Yaakov Yitzchok ben Mattel," was the sad reply. R' Eliezer broke down,

which brought the rest of the Chassidim running.

The students lifted up their master to carry him in, and the celebrated talmid, R' Shmuel of Karov held the tzaddik's head. Along the way, he heard the Chozeh sighing and saying, "Oy, why didn't you tell me that the Koznitzer Maggid had passed away on Erev Sukkos? If I had known our group had disbanded, I wouldn't have started. You should know that if not for the Koznitzer Maggid, nothing of me would have remained after my fall. The Koznitzer Maggid came from the upper world and held out a tallis under my head and that is why I was only injured."

Because of the fall, the Chozeh was ill and did not rise from his bed. His disciple, the famous baal t'shuva and professor, Chayim Dovid Bernhard, visited him but had no cure. He tried to locate the source of the illness and asked where it hurt, and the Rebbe answered: the left thigh. Professor

Bernhard tried to heal the Rebbe but the Rebbe dismissed his attempts.

"All the *sitra achra* united against me," he said, "the generation is not yet worthy."

The Chozeh remained in bed from Simchas Torah until Tisha B'Av, the day of his passing. That is when they understood what he had said on Simchas Torah: We did not merit a joyous Simchas Torah and we did not merit a joyous Tisha B'Av...

The Satan had an easier time in Krakow and Berzan. A rock was mysteriously thrown at the window of R' Klonimus Kalmish, author of *Maor V'Shemesh* and the window shattered. In Berzan, the tzaddik R' Naftali Hertz danced with all his might when a fire suddenly broke out. The crowd fled the house and only R' Naftali continued dancing, but he no longer had the ability to bring the Redeemer.

The Chozeh's attempts to bring the Geula failed, and we still await the true and complete Redemption.

WHY YANOVER ESROGIM?

BY YISROEL YEHUDA

*Lubavitcher Chassidim use Yanover esrogim, which come from Calabria, Italy. Most people are unfamiliar with the background and source of this custom. Even fewer people know about the Calabrian esrogim that “emigrated” to Kfar Chabad. * This is the story of the Calabrian esrogim, about how the Rebbe supervised every detail of their transplantation in Eretz Yisroel, and about the esrogim that were brought to the Rebbe each year.*

SOME BACKGROUND

Let us begin with a historic and halachic discussion of Calabrian esrogim (also known as Yanove (Genovese) esrogim). The Alter Rebbe paskens in his *Shulchan Aruch* that “a grafted esrog — i.e., a branch of another tree grafted on to an esrog tree, which grows fruit like an esrog — is pasul, for this is not an esrog at all but a creation unto itself ...” (chelek 4, siman 648, s’if 31).

The esrog is a citrus fruit, but unlike other citrus fruits, it grows on a tree throughout the year and not just in one season. Thus, when the Torah refers to “*pri eitz hadar*” (lit. a beautiful fruit), the Gemara learns from the word “*hadar*” that



A young esrog, a very delicate fruit

this is a fruit “*sh’dar b’ilano mi’shana l’shana*” (dwells on the tree from year to year).

Another difference that characterizes the esrog is its fragility. The esrog tree is small and weak, and extremely sensitive to weather conditions, such as wind, excessive heat, or hail. Due to its sensitivity, it is prone to many diseases. As a result, the lifespan of the average esrog tree is only five years. If we subtract the three arla years and the *neta revai* that follows, there’s barely anything left!

Another problem is that of grafting. Grafting is very prevalent among citrus growers. Every so often, we hear about a new fruit on the market. These fruits didn’t fall from the sky but were created through grafting two types of trees.

Since the esrog tree is weak, many esrog growers graft it with a lemon tree. This way, the esrog gains the immunity and strength of the lemon, which protects it from the problems that arise when it is only an esrog tree. However, an esrog from a grafted tree cannot be used for the mitzva.

This is what makes the Calabrian esrogim so desirable, because they have a *mesores* (tradition) that they are not grafted. For many years, huge orchards grew wild in Calabria. No one worked on the trees and it was clear that the



esrogim were not grafted.

In the responsa of the Chasam Sofer brought in the *Seifer HaMinhagim*, he testifies to this end: “The law of an esrog is like the law of a pure bird which is not eaten without a mesores. Therefore, those [esrogim] that come from Yanove (Genoa) – for which we have a tradition from our fathers’ fathers and our teachers, the scholars of France, that those who lived in Germany always used esrogim that came from Yanove — are kosher and need no siman.”

Another advantage of Calabrian esrogim is their *yichus*. The Rebbe writes in a letter that when the Torah says, “your dwelling place will be from the fat of the land,” in the blessing Yitzchok gave to Eisav, this refers to “Italy of Greece.” The Alter Rebbe said that when Hashem told Moshe, “and you shall take for you a pri eitz hadar,” messengers were sent on a cloud to bring esrogim from Calabria.

Thus, Chabad Chassidim throughout the generations chose Calabrian esrogim, as it is brought in the *Seifer HaMinhagim*: It is a tradition we have from the Alter Rebbe, the Baal HaTanya and the *Shulchan Aruch*, to use Calabrian-Yanove esrogim for a reason known to him.

Throughout the generations, Chabad Rebbeim made the effort, even during wartime, to obtain a Calabrian esrog for Sukkos. We see proof for this in a letter the Rebbe wrote:

The custom of Chabad Chassidim for the Daled minim is to take esrogim that grow in southern Italy, and are called “Calaber” for where they grow, or Yanover for the city from where they used to export them. In recent years they would buy them from the Kerio brothers in Genoa. This is

the kind of esrog that the Rebbe, my father-in-law, would say the blessing on.

The famous Chassid, Rabbi Yisroel Jacobson a”h, was an esrogim merchant. He was the one who brought the Rebbe his esrog each year. R’ Yisroel would import esrogim from Italy. A number of esrogim would be shown to the Rebbe, and the Rebbe chose from the selection. The Rebbe would

Since the esrog tree is weak, many esrog growers graft it with a lemon tree. This way, the esrog gains the immunity and strength of the lemon, which protects it from the problems that arise when it is only an esrog tree. However, an esrog from a grafted tree cannot be used for the mitzva.

pick one that was narrow on the bottom and wider on the top.

The Chassid Rabbi Eliyahu Rivkin a”h, the owner of one of the orchards in Kfar Chabad, would say: In *Shulchan Aruch* it says that the esrog should look like a tower. Everybody assumes that a tower is wide on the bottom and narrow on top, but this is not the right p’shat. What is meant is a lookout tower that is used in army bases. These

towers are built like a pillar with a small structure on top for the soldiers to man. Its shape is narrow on the bottom and wide on top, just like the esrog the Rebbe would select. That is the real tower.

PROBLEMS THAT SUDDENLY AROSE

In the beginning of the 50’s people began to suspect the kashrus of the Calabrian esrogim based on changes in their outward appearance. Until then, the esrogim were not very nice looking, but then they suddenly began bringing big and healthy looking esrogim from Italy, which indicated that they were being well-tended. This served as a warning signal to certain people that perhaps grafting was being done, and they rushed to write to the Rebbe.

There is a letter written in the winter of 5713, which the Rebbe sent in response to Rabbi Mordechai Perlov a”h who was a rav at that time in Milan, Italy. The Rebbe wrote:

I received your letter of 10 Shvat and the one preceding it ... about your asking my opinion ... regarding the investigation into the Calabrian esrogim. In truth, I am not pleased with the doubts you raise. But since it was already done, your suggestion is proper that you should travel there in order to clarify matters... (vol. 7, p. 160)

Another letter was sent by the rav of Kfar Chabad, Rabbi Shneur Zalman Garelik a”h. He wrote that the esrogim that came from Calabria were nicer than usual and maybe they should investigate whether any grafting had been done.

The Rebbe told R’ Yisroel Jacobson to travel to Calabria to check out the situation. Prepared with instructions from the Rebbe, R’ Yisroel went to Italy. Upon his arrival, he investigated the matter,



Checking the esrogim

visited orchards, and concluded that there was indeed cause for concern. Many orchards in Italy had begun using grafting methods and it was necessary to check every shipment of esrogim from Calabria.

R' Yisroel reported to the Rebbe and the Rebbe told him that from then on, they should only take esrogim from orchards under the supervision of two local rabbanim. In addition, during the harvest, two witnesses had to be present for every tree, to ensure that the esrogim were cut from a tree that had not been grafted.

A GUEST FROM KFAR CHASSIDIM IN KFAR CHABAD

Around 5715, Kfar Chabad was still a brand new yishuv. Its residents were Chassidim, Jews who had emigrated from Russia and who worked primarily in agriculture.

One day, a Jew from Kfar Chassidim appeared. He knew that Kfar Chabad was a religious-Chassidic yishuv and he had brought young esrogim saplings. He suggested that the residents of Kfar Chabad buy his saplings, plant

them, and grow esrogim trees.

Some residents bought his saplings, among them R' Eliyahu Rivkin and R' Leib Perman. The man from Kfar Chassidim helped them plant the esrogim, offered some advice, and left.

That's how the first esrogim orchards were planted in Kfar Chabad. Actually, they weren't exactly orchards yet, but were only a few trees that people had in their yards.

THE REBBE SAID THE SAPLINGS SHOULD BE TRANSPLANTED

It was at that same time that the grafting problem in Calabria was discovered. The situation looked bleak for the grafting would surely escalate and more and more owners of orchards would use grafting methods.

The Rebbe did not only want to prevent grafted esrogim from Calabria from being imported, but wanted to expand the number of kosher orchards. The Rebbe was asked about the idea of transplanting esrogim saplings from

Calabria to Eretz Yisroel, and developing a large supply of Calabrian esrogim there.

In those days, this was no simple matter. Aside from the trip to Italy, and checking the kashrus of the esrogim and selecting the right saplings with all the halachic and logistical problems this entailed, there was another enormous problem: contending with the Agricultural Ministry in Israel.

As in other countries, the Agricultural Ministry of Israel forbade the import of agricultural products. This was both to protect local farmers, so prices wouldn't drop, and to prevent the spread of disease.

What could be done about this? A big esrog merchant by the name of Rabbi Dov Ludmir a"h lived in Eretz Yisroel. His son-in-law was Rabbi Nachman Elbaum a"h, who was apparently the one who presented the idea to the Rebbe. R' Nachman relied on his father-in-law's experience and was quite knowledgeable himself. He suggested to the Rebbe that he would take responsibility for bringing esrogim to Eretz Yisroel. The Rebbe agreed and R' Nachman went to Italy.

From that point and on, the entire project was supervised by the Rebbe. It's amazing to see in the *Igros Kodesh* how the Rebbe got involved in the smallest details in order to ensure the success of the project.

As we said, Rabbi Mordechai Perlov lived in Milan at the time. The Rebbe told R' Nachman Elbaum to meet with R' Mordechai so that the transplantation would be done under his supervision. The Rebbe sent a letter, on 26 Cheshvan 5715, to Rabbi Perlov with the first instructions:

R' Nachman Elbaum, son-in-law

of the well-known esrog merchant R' Dov Ludmir, left from here with the idea of taking seeds and saplings and cuttings of Calabrian esrog trees and replanting them in Eretz Yisroel in Kfar Chabad. I think this is proper. Even if one were to conclude that the reason Anash use Calabrian esrogim – based on [the words of] the Alter Rebbe – is not just because of the fear of grafting ... but also because we want to use “the fat of the land,” which the Midrash explains is “Italy of Greece,” which is half of the island of Calabria ... nevertheless – although the latter advantage will be lacking in the Calabrian esrogim that grow in Eretz Yisroel – it will still have the advantage of being halachically presumed not to have been grafted...

The Rebbe goes on to say that the purpose of his letter is to ask Rabbi Perlov to supervise the esrogim selection:

I spoke with him about contacting you so that you can give him a letter testifying as a sort of hechsher for the seeds, cuttings, and saplings he will take with him...

It is interesting to note that the Rebbe told Rabbi Perlov to serve as the liaison between the owners of the orchards and Rabbi Nachman Elbaum, and that as the liaison he should pick the kosher orchards.

When R' Nachman arrived in Italy, he met with R' Perlov, as the Rebbe instructed, and together they looked at orchards. They questioned the owners of the orchards in order to find the best trees and those that were definitely not grafted.

Over this period of time, there was a lively exchange of letters between the Rebbe and R' Perlov, in which questions that arose were clarified.

The first question that came up was: from which area was it preferable to take saplings. Regarding this, the Rebbe wrote on 1 Teives, two months after the first letter:

What I wrote about the Calabrian esrogim, it is known that the hiddur is that back in the time of the Baalei HaTosafos they took

The Rebbe addressed this question in a deep halachic pilpul about the halachic implications and told them to take seeds as well. Here too, you can see the Rebbe's personal concern and attention that he devoted to this matter, addressing the smallest details.

esrogim from there ... Therefore, you must try and take saplings and cuttings from that location. Even better, from the field from which they took esrogim all the years, and even better, if it is not from an orchard, meaning a section tended to by people, but in the wild. You can certainly find areas like this.

The letter went on to the topic of arla:

Regarding the matter of arla, R' Nachman Elbaum, and especially his father-in-law R' Dov Ludmir,

has experience in this. So he can tell you the details about how to take the tree, with the rock, in a way to ensure that it's sufficient [for the tree to continue growing from its original source till it is transplanted, thus it is not considered a new tree whose first three years of production are arla].

Selection was a difficult and lengthy process. From the letters we have, we see how the Rebbe's wanting them to take esrogim from wild-growing trees did not work out. In the end, they took esrogim from regular orchards. This raised new questions about the kashrus of the fruits. The Rebbe wrote to R' Perlov about this, half a year later, at the beginning of Sivan:

In answer to your letter of Motzaei Chag HaShavuot, regarding the esrogim, without making a tumult, someone should be sent to the orchard, and there should also be someone who knows the language of the country, and he should speak to the owner of the orchard in a casual way about how the esrogim are grown. Even better, he should also speak to other people who live in the vicinity who have nothing to do with the esrogim, but surely, as neighbors, they know how the orchards are tended. There's room to say that they will be able to clarify this detail. In addition, it pays to take three esrogim from different trees in the orchard and to check them in accordance with the signs brought in the Acharonim ...

Since there is no reason to say that only this orchard is not grafted, and certainly there are other places like it, they should investigate other places too.

After checking out the kashrus of the saplings, and how to move them, etc., the question remained as to which they should take – saplings or seeds. The Rebbe



Esrogim plants in Kfar Chabad

The saplings were first planted in Petach Tikva so they would acclimate to Eretz Yisroel. It was a moving scene, and two distinguished Lubavitcher rabbanim, Rabbi Shneur Zalman Garelik, rav of Kfar Chabad, and Rabbi Dovid Chanzin, as well as the Chassid R' Avrohom Pariz, were present.

R' Elbaum happily reported to the Rebbe about the successful conclusion of the project and about the planting of the saplings in Petach Tikva. On 16 Iyar 5716, the Rebbe wrote to him, thanking him for the good news. He also asked him to move the saplings from Petach Tikva to Kfar Chabad:

In response to your letter of Motzaei Shabbos, thank you for the good news about bringing the saplings and seeds to Eretz Yisroel, and about your arranging things in Petach Tikva. Please look into this further, perhaps at least some of them can be arranged in Kfar Chabad, for “there Hashem commanded the bracha forever,” and there are some orchards there, and I hear they are successful, which shows that the earth is suitable for this.

About a week later, the Rebbe sent a letter to R' Perlov. The Rebbe told him that the saplings were planted in Eretz Yisroel, and the Rebbe asked him to get the details about how the saplings were sent to Eretz Yisroel.

Since the Rebbe had asked that the saplings be transplanted in Kfar Chabad, R' Elbaum began looking for a suitably large area there. R' Avrohom Shmuel Garelik a”h agreed to have saplings planted on his land. R' Nachman and R' Avrohom Shmuel signed an agreement to be partners in growing and selling esrogim. The saplings were then transplanted in Kfar Chabad.

addressed this question in a deep halachic pilpul about the halachic implications and told them to take seeds as well. Here too, you can see the Rebbe’s personal concern and attention that he devoted to this matter, addressing the smallest details.

R' Nachman and R' Dov checked out the possibility of transplanting saplings in Eretz Yisroel. They exerted pressure and used their connections, and their efforts finally

“bore fruit.” The Agricultural Ministry allowed them to transplant the saplings.

The transplanting of the saplings was successfully completed around the summer of 5716, with R' Elbaum arriving in Eretz Yisroel with a hundred or so young saplings. He had a letter from R' Perlov testifying that he had personally gone to the forests to obtain these saplings, and that the kashrus was assured.

That's how the second esrogim orchard in Kfar Chabad came to be. The uniqueness of this orchard is that the esrogim are from the species in Calabria. They do not have the quality of being from the "fat of the land" but at least they are definitely not grafted. Now, Chabad Chassidim are able to buy an esrog mehudar from a reliable place.

SMALL BEGINNINGS

The growing of esrogim in Kfar Chabad went through many hardships before large orchards provided parnasa for their owners. As we said before, the esrog is a citrus fruit but it grows differently than other citrus fruits.

The first difference has to do with when esrogim ripen. Esrogim grow all year long. The first ripening that is relevant to Sukkos, ends around Tammuz. The esrogim that size are the type the Rebbe took. The second ripening, like those of other citrus fruits, is in the middle of the winter, **after** Sukkos. It doesn't matter when it comes to other citrus fruits, but when it comes to the esrog, if it ripens after Sukkos, it's no use to anyone!

It is possible to use chemicals and preserve esrogim from year to year. This issue was presented to the rav of Kfar Chabad. He paskened, however, that they shouldn't do that, since it says in *Shulchan Aruch* that a dried-up esrog is pasul, and an example of a dried-up esrog, says the *Shulchan Aruch*, is an esrog from last year. Even though today we can preserve esrogim in such a way that they are fresh the following year, since our sages defined it that way, we don't do it. So the esrog growers have to "fight" the natural growth of the esrog and hasten its ripening before Sukkos.

The next major problem has to do with the esrog's appearance.

With other citrus fruits, the emphasis is on the fruit's weight, its sweetness and its size. Its outer appearance is not too important. When it comes to esrogim though, the halacha is that we judge an esrog solely by its outer appearance.

The esrog is very fragile and can be damaged far more easily than other citrus fruits. This is why esrogim need personal attention (as opposed to other citrus fruits, which are tended by machine). Esrog growers watch each esrog as

In 5723, R' Eliyahu Rivkin went to the Rebbe and asked for the Rebbe's esrog so he could plant it in Eretz Yisroel. The Rebbe gave him the esrog he had used throughout Sukkos after Yom Tov, and said an esrog orchard would grow from it...

though it's their only child. They protect it from the heat, and they wrap it up when necessary to protect it from scratches from nearby branches. They tie it and cut off branches and thorns that might damage it.

The third problem has to do with quantity. A large family consumes more food than a small family, and buys more fruits and vegetables. When the price of fruits comes down, people buy more.

When it comes to esrogim, these laws of supply and demand do not apply. Whether the family is large or small, only one esrog is needed. This is why esrog growers have to estimate their need and grow only as many esrogim as they think they will sell. They don't want leftovers, because an esrog that is not purchased was carefully watched over for nothing.

The new esrog growers knew how to grow ordinary citrus fruits, but they didn't know about the special care that esrogim require. The Agricultural Ministry has a department for Citrus Care, which includes esrogim, but this isn't enough for our special requirements. The esrog growers learned how to grow esrogim as their orchards grew, and had to contend with daily difficult and unfamiliar problems.

The only thing that spurred them on was the non-stop encouragement from the Rebbe. Throughout the years, the Rebbe continued to urge them to keep working despite the hardships.

In 5723, R' Eliyahu Rivkin went to the Rebbe and asked for the Rebbe's esrog so he could plant it in Eretz Yisroel. The Rebbe gave him the esrog he had used throughout Sukkos after Yom Tov, and said an esrog orchard would grow from it.

R' Rivkin went back to Eretz Yisroel right after Sukkos and invited two witnesses, Rabbi Mordechai Shmuel Ashkenazi and Rabbi Moshe Slonim, and in their presence, he cut the esrog into four parts and planted them. Four trees grew. The other trees simply dried up, and from then on, the esrogim in his orchard are from the Calabrian esrog that the Rebbe used.

In 5726, R' Nachman Elbaum left the partnership with R' Garelik. From that point on, all the work



The Rebbe blessing the representatives from Kfar Chabad



Rabbi Shimon Beckerman presenting an esrog to the Rebbe

was on R' Garelik and it was just too much for him. He didn't see any blessing in the work either, and three years later, in 5730, he asked his son, who was planning a trip to the Rebbe, to give the Rebbe his letter in yechidus. In this letter, R' Garelik told the story of the orchard and the problems he had day in and day out, as well as his decision to quit. The Rebbe read the letter and said:

Your considered course of action is surprising, for the time will come when the Jewish people will need your esrogim because of the hardships in growing esrogim in Italy. Therefore, on the contrary, grow as many as possible.

And regarding the hardships, go to the Agricultural Ministry which you have there, and approach them with the position that there is no choice; they have to find a solution

to raising esrogim in Eretz Yisroel, since Jews need to say the bracha on esrogim as the Alter Rebbe paskens in *Shulchan Aruch*.

Naturally, after this answer, all thoughts of quitting vanished and the focus was only on how to grow esrogim.

The Rebbe continued to encourage and help. The Rebbe even gave guidance about the proper care, and connections with people who could help. One time the Rebbe said:

There is a Jew in Eretz Yisroel, called Berel [Dov] Ludmir, and he is a big expert at growing esrogim, and he's sort of related to me. If you ask him in my name to help you, he will certainly do so.

On another occasion, the Rebbe expressed surprise over a report about failure in growing esrogim:

I am surprised you are having problems in growing esrogim when, as far as I know, your earth is very suited to growing esrogim.

It is interesting to note that the area where the esrogim are grown is extremely suitable as far as the type of earth, whereas the earth in the area around it is not!

Throughout the years, the Garelik-Naparstek partners asked the Rebbe repeatedly for his esrog so they could grow an orchard from it, but they did not get a response.

In 5751, R' Moshe Naparstek went to the Rebbe and sent in a letter in which he wrote that since it was the year of "I will show them wonders," could they get the Rebbe's esrog?

R' Naparstek did not get an answer this time either, and after Sukkos he returned to Eretz Yisroel. A few days later, he got a phone call from the secretariat at two in the morning. R' Groner was on the line and he told R' Naparstek that the

Rebbe's answer was that they should be given the two esrogim the Rebbe had used that year.

Today, most of their orchard is from the esrog the Rebbe used.

GIVING THE ESROG TO THE REBBE

There's no question that the most thrilling and moving moment each year, in the orchards, is when they pick the best esrog and send it to the Rebbe, as a sort of bikkurim. R' Eliyahu Rivkin sent the Rebbe an esrog every year since 5719. The Rebbe said then that the esrog had all the signs of an esrog that was not grafted.

Each year, a distinguished delegation was appointed that went to the Rebbe to present him with esrogim. The Vaad of Kfar Chabad would buy an esrog from each orchard, and in addition, each orchard would send its best esrog to the Rebbe. The esrogim the Vaad bought were put in wooden boxes that were made in the woodworking department of the vocational school. The new boxes were designed differently each year.

Rav Shimon Beckerman, who served for many years as a member of the Vaad, had the privilege, for many years, of presenting the esrog to the Rebbe. The first time he joined the delegation was in the year 5726, and from 5736 and on, he presented the esrog every year.

He relates:

"Every year, Erev Sukkos, the Rebbe distributed the Daled minim to all the representatives who came. R' Mendel Futerfas got for Russia, R' Binyamin Gorodetzky got for France, etc. Kfar Chabad got special

treatment in that the Rebbe gave four minim to the rav of Kfar Chabad, to the Vaad HaRuchni, and to the Vaad HaGashmi of the Kfar.

"This took place in the Rebbe's room, and from 5739 and on, in *Gan Eden HaTachton*. The Rebbe stood there with a list of the representatives and invited them to choose the Daled minim. The Rebbe asked each one his name and checked to see that he was on the list. It was a special and awesome moment. The Rebbe looked at each person who chose Daled minim. We



The Rebbe reading the list of those who receive esrogim

knew that the Rebbe had checked out all the minim spread out on the table, and therefore we didn't spend time looking but just took what we needed and left.

"When we left, the Rebbe would ask whether the person took more than three hadasim, and if he didn't, the Rebbe would send him back to take more. Then the Rebbe blessed each one with, '*tamshichu kol ha'hamshachos*' (you should draw down all of the hamshachos (i.e., spiritual manifestations)). It is

interesting to note that in the last year of his life, when R' Zushe Partisan passed by the Rebbe, the Rebbe ignored him and didn't bless him with this bracha. He passed away on Sukkos.

"Right after this, the members of the committee would present the Rebbe with the esrogim. In the first or second year that I brought esrogim, the Rebbe told me, 'you have to give it with your hand.' There were also years that the Rebbe asked various questions about the esrogim – which orchard each esrog came from, and other questions of this sort.

"The owners of the orchards say that on a few occasions they received a telegram or phone call from the secretariat, in the Rebbe's name, and the Rebbe asked whether the esrogim had been tithed or not. From then on, they attached a note to the boxes saying they were tithed.

"After the esrogim were presented (two from the Vaad and two from the orchard owners), the Rebbe would give a bracha. The scene was altogether very exciting. We stood facing the Rebbe and the Rebbe looked at us and gave us a

bracha.

"In the Shmita years a question about taking esrogim out of Eretz Yisroel arose. R' Eliyahu Rivkin asked the Rebbe about it, and the Rebbe said he should ask a rav. The rav paskened that the esrogim should not be sent abroad, so the delegation arrived without esrogim, but the ceremony took place as usual."

Along with R' Beckerman went R' Shlomo Maidanchek and R' Perman.

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BRITISH SHLIACH TO THE WEST BANK

BY SHAI GEFEN

*His father is from Ireland, his mother from Prague, and he was raised in England. Now he's a shliach in Gush Etzyon where, under fire, he spreads Yiddishkeit and Chassidus in the spirit of Moshiach. * The story of Rabbi Yitzchok Yonasan Cohen.*

Thanks to political considerations taking precedence over the security of our brethren in Eretz Yisroel, shlichus in Yesha is conducted in a war zone. One of the shluchim who works in the area of Karmeit Tzur and Alon Shvut, which is a danger zone, is Rabbi Yitzchok Yonasan Cohen. He has an interesting story to share with us about how he became a Lubavitcher and how he realized his dream to become a shliach.

* * *

R' Yitzchok Yonasan was born in England 34 years ago. His mother is a Holocaust survivor, having been one of "Mengele's twins."

R' Cohen relates, "Her roots are in the Jewish community of Prague where it was thought she had been killed. The local shul has a plaque that memorializes her!"

His father is from Ireland, where

he had a connection with Chabad. "My father met Lubavitcher Chassidim who went to Ireland after the war, like Rabbi Zalman Shimon Dvorkin a" h. My mother is from a nonobservant family, while my father was from a traditional home."

The two met and married in England where Yitzchok was later born. "My connection to Chabad," smiles R' Cohen, "began on the day of

my bris. My parents were looking for a sandek and my mother decided that she wanted the local shliach, Rabbi Aharon Dov Sufirin, to be the sandek. After the bris, the sandek told my parents that it's known that the baby grows up to be like the sandek in nature, so the z'chus of my being on shlichus is thanks to my sandek!

"My parents started attending Torah classes and my mother made up for what she had missed in her childhood."

When it came time for R' Cohen to attend school, R' Sufirin asked his parents to send him to Chabad. His mother agreed, but when he was in fourth grade, his father decided to take him out of Chabad.

"But I wanted to be a Lubavitcher," laughs R' Cohen, "and although I left the Chabad school, I was still strongly attracted to Chabad, and this feeling continued to grow. My mother slowly pushed me towards Chabad, even though my father wasn't thrilled about it.

"I began going to farbrengens which took place in the Chabad yeshiva headed by Rabbi Yitzchok Meir Hertz, where I discovered a new world of divrei Torah and Chassidus. At a certain point, I officially joined the yeshiva, but this too did not come easy.

"My father did not want me in yeshiva before I attended college and studied business. He was sick at the time and wanted me to run the family business, a pastry shop. I did as he asked, and when I went to register at college, they told me, 'We are very happy to have a religious Jew here, but you can't wear your tzitzis out.'

"In hindsight I can say that a great part of my life of shlichus began there, in college, at the same time that I was studying business. Afterwards, I ran the family store and I spread Yiddishkeit there too. On the first day, I announced that whoever would enter



Mivtza Lulav with army personnel



Sometimes, you meet up with your own crowd...

the store and put on t'fillin would get a free cake. Many Jewish souls were ignited thanks to our family business.

"Later on I enrolled in the Chabad yeshiva in Manchester led by Rabbi Akiva Cohen, which my father wasn't happy about. However, shortly thereafter, he began to see the difference between Chabad and others. When my friends, who learned in the Litvishe Gateshead yeshiva, came home on vacation, they rented cars to have a good time, while we rented cars in order to spread Yiddishkeit. When my father realized the difference, he made peace with my belonging to Chabad. Later on, he would proudly say, Tomchei T'mimim is the yeshiva associated with Moshiach.

"That was the period of time that the idea of shlichus became so important to me. I remember writing to the Rebbe that I wanted my life to be dedicated to shlichus.

"In 5751 I went to the Rebbe for the first time, for Tishrei."

* * *

R' Cohen went to Eretz Yisroel in 5752 where a shidduch was suggested for him with a girl from Maaleh Adumim. They married and at first, they lived in Maaleh Adumim where he thought he would be a shliach, but they moved to Beitar Ilit, where he worked in a Chabad Talmud Torah.

In the first years after his marriage, R' Cohen was still "trying to find himself." He strongly desired to go on shlichus, and this feeling became more acute after Gimmel Tammuz when he came to 770. He saw himself passing by the Rebbe for dollars and promising the Rebbe that he would devote his life to him!

R' Cohen came to 770, to the Rebbe, for Simchas Torah 5758, where he got the push to jump into the water. "When I returned to Eretz Yisroel, I said to myself, I'm going on shlichus, come what may! I met Rav Nissan Nachshon, the shliach in Efrat,

On the one hand, we are in a time of terrible darkness; on the other hand, there is lots of light today, and we, Chabad Chassidim and shluchim of the Rebbe, have to bring this great light to the entire world.

who suggested I work in Yishuv Karmeil Tzur. I jumped at the chance, and shortly thereafter we opened a

Tzivos Hashem club there, as well as other Chabad house activities."

Since then, he is a shliach "on the front," literally.

* * *

Karmeil Tzur is a small, picturesque yishuv nestled among the Gush Etzyon mountains, almost in the center of the Gush. About seventy families live there and the peaceful atmosphere belies the fact that it is located in the middle of a war zone. The yishuv has suffered many serious attacks.

"I would like to mention Dr. Gillis (may Hashem avenge his blood), who was a great friend of Chabad, and the couple Ayal and Yael Sorek, who were also mekuravim of Chabad. After this terrible blow, we printed an edition of *Tanya* at the yishuv."

Needless to say, your work there hasn't diminished because of the security situation...

WHO NEEDS CHABAD IN ALON SHVUT?

Rabbi Cohen relates:

"When I moved to Alon Shvut, one of the people there asked me what I was doing there. I explained that I am a shliach of the Lubavitcher Rebbe. The man said, 'I'm very happy you came here, but you made a mistake; this is not a place for you. You should go to Tel Aviv or other places. There's no need for Chabad in Alon Shvut.'

"I told him, 'I certainly hope you won't need me, but if you have any problem, you'll know who to see about it.'

"On Lag B'Omer a few years ago, he called me and said that his brother-in-law had had a stroke, and his friends said that under the circumstances, only Chabad could help. I asked him to check his and the brother-in-law's t'fillin and mezuzos before we put a letter into the Rebbe's *Igros Kodesh*.

"The family checked the mezuzos and t'fillin, some of which needed to be exchanged. After we put in a letter asking for a bracha, I told him confidently that his brother-in-law would get better in the merit of the Rebbe's bracha.

"After they left, I sat down to write another letter to the Rebbe. In my letter, I added that I was asking for a bracha so that there would be a kiddush Hashem for this Jew who had said that the yishuv did not need Chabad.

"Two months later, I met the man who happily told me, 'Now I understand why Alon Shvut needs Chabad!'"



Rav Cohen at a children's rally



Rabbi Cohen visiting an outpost

“The work in these places has increased because of the situation,” says R’ Cohen emphatically.

He moved to the yishuv Alon Shvut four years ago. It’s an established yishuv, one of the biggest in Gush Etzyon, where over 600 families live. Many of its residents are nonobservant professionals, middle class or above. Until he arrived, there was no Chabad programming there except for the work done on an individual basis by Dov Brander, a mekurav of Chabad.

R’ Cohen’s expansion from Karme

Tzur to Alon Shvut followed the Lag B’Omer parade there. “I took the Chabad house car, which says ‘Beis Chabad Karmeit Tzur’ on it in big letters. In the middle of the parade someone came over to me and complained that a little yishuv like Karmeit Tzur has a Chabad house, but Alon Shvut, the central yishuv of Gush Etzyon, with hundreds of families, did not. On the spot, I decided I would move to Alon Shvut, even though that was no simple matter.”

How were you received?

“When I came, many people wondered why I had come, and what I wanted. One person told me, ‘It’s one thing if Chabad has centers in Tel Aviv and other cities, but why in Alon Shvut?’

“The man who said that is now very much a mekurav of the Chabad house and he even needed the help of the Chabad house (see box).

“The work in Alon Shvut has taken root and we even got a place. I must thank the rav of the yishuv, Rabbi Gideon Perl, who helps us tremendously. If not for him, it would have been difficult to get set up locally.

“We have a Tzivos Hashem club, and on every holiday we have a children’s rally with a variety of programs and activities. During the Three Weeks, we had a kinus of learning about the Beis HaMikdash. We have Chassidus classes for men and classes for women. Each shiur begins with a video of the Rebbe and a Chassidic niggun, which create a special atmosphere.

“Rabbi Leibel Groner came here and farbrenged. People were very excited about this and it gave them lots of chizuk.

“The shlichus wasn’t easy going at first, and as I said, not everybody welcomed our presence. But when you



With Israeli soldiers

do things in a pleasant way and explain what you're doing, then the Rebbe manages to get in everywhere. There are Jews who are mekurav to Chabad, who are mekushar to the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach. Today, even those who looked unfavorably at us at first, are friendly and welcoming."

What are your thoughts about shlichus after Gimmel Tammuz?

"Every shliach sees, daily, how the Rebbe is unlimited. The Rebbe is operating as he never operated before. Today the brachos and the results are at a much faster pace. We shluchim see this directly, whether open miracles after asking the Rebbe for a bracha through the *Igros Kodesh*, or in success in a project. I feel that the Rebbe is telling us, 'Just do, and I'll help.'

Are there no difficulties?

"I didn't say there are no difficulties! Of course, there are challenges and hardships, but the more you do, the more you see that the Rebbe is chai v'kayam in the most palpable way.

"For example, there are many people living in Alon Shvut who have

HOW THE CHABAD SHUL CAME TO BE

When R' Cohen speaks about how the Rebbe looks after his shluchim, he says he sees this constantly.

"How did we open our Chabad shul? We had the idea for a long time, but it was challenging getting it off the ground. Things began to move when Raffi Solomon, a shliach, donated an aron kodesh. I had no idea what to do with it when suddenly a family from the yishuv called me and said they wanted to donate a seifer Torah!"

WHEN A SOLDIER PUTS ON T'FILLIN

Once, one of the big donors to Tzach expressed an interest in visiting Yesha and putting on t'fillin along with the soldiers. He went to the area where Rabbi Cohen works. He couldn't get over the daring required when on shlichus in this area.

Later on, this wealthy man, who lives in Manhattan, went to an army base, and was moved to see soldiers putting on t'fillin. The thing that moved him most of all was the soldier who stopped whatever he was busy with, removed his weapons and his bulletproof vest, and put on t'fillin.

On the spot, the donor decided to put on t'fillin daily. "If that soldier is ready to drop everything to put on t'fillin, then when I'm home in Manhattan I can certainly put on t'fillin," he declared.

senior positions in important jobs, and many of them come to my house and want to write to the Rebbe. They are

In the past, some people were afraid to talk about it, but today everybody wants to know about Moshiach and Geula.

amazed by the answers they get in the *Igros Kodesh*.

"There's a fellow in the Ministry of Education who writes to the Rebbe regularly, through the *Igros Kodesh*. On the one hand, we are in a time of terrible darkness; on the other hand, there is lots of light today, and we, Chabad Chassidim and shluchim of the Rebbe, have to bring this great light to the entire world. This is possible because the Rebbe gives us extraordinary kochos to bring about the hisgalus.

"We have a Jew living here, originally from Peru, who knew nothing about Yiddishkeit. After we knew each other just a little bit, he

wanted to put on t'fillin, and not just any t'fillin, but the Chabad kind – four by four.

"It's hard to understand this sort of pull people have towards Chabad and the Rebbe. I learned that you just have to open their eyes and show them the treasures we have. I feel that the z'chus I had to be with the Rebbe must be given over to others, to people who did not see the Rebbe. This is my work here, to bring the Rebbe's wellsprings to Alon Shvut and Karmeil Tzur."

Please give us an example.

"If you look around you, you see that the Rebbe's mitzvaim have been adopted by many other religious communities. Chabad's job today is to proceed, and to instill all these things with the idea of Moshiach. Even Moshiach, which used to be 'Chabad's topic,' has become something everybody talks about. In the past, some people were afraid to talk about it, but today everybody wants to know about Moshiach and Geula.

"When I was in the Reserves, I served alongside a Druze soldier by the name of Majid. I had brought along a video of the Rebbe and I showed it to the soldiers. The Druze soldier sat there for an hour and watched the Rebbe, even though he didn't understand a word. This gentile



Reading the Megilla and simchas Purim with Israeli soldiers

soldiers at the bases in Gush Etzyon, together with shliach, Rav Nissan Nachshon. R' Cohen also says words of Torah and chizuk to the soldiers.

“A few years ago, the day after we went to an army base in Beis Lechem (Bethlehem), a terrorist tried to blow himself up among those soldiers. In an open miracle, they managed to kill the terrorist before he carried out his plan. When we came some time later, the soldiers told us that it was only in the merit of the divrei Torah of the Chabadnikim that they were saved.

“In general, our work these days has an element of kiddush Hashem, with everybody seeing that, despite the security situation, Chabad carries on. It's not easy to travel between yishuvim; the roads are dangerous. Every trip beyond the yishuv fence, no matter how short, is something you think twice about. There are yishuvim where they tell me sometimes that the bread delivery didn't arrive but Chabad did...”

And you put yourself in danger?

“When I go to yishuvim, like after the murder of residents of Karmeit Zzur, when the fear, mourning, and pain are at their height, and I encourage them, the atmosphere changes. It's worth endangering myself for this.

“There is no question that this period of time is unique and our role as shluchim is decisive. The work here definitely demands a special dedication that is not required elsewhere.”

told me afterwards, ‘I didn't understand a word of what he said but I see that he is a holy man. Our kadi also knows of the Rebbe's greatness.’

“I didn't ask him how they know about the Rebbe, but we see that before the great hisgalus we begin to have a foretaste of future times, ‘All

who dwell on earth will recognize and know that to You all knees bend...”

* * *

R' Cohen's shlichus is tough going during the ongoing war in Yesha and throughout Eretz Yisroel. He gives out tea and cake every week to the

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CHILDREN TRAVELING TO THE REBBE

BY C. BEN-DAVID

*In recent years we are seeing a unique phenomenon of children traveling to the Rebbe, for Tishrei, alone, without their parents. Fifty children were enrolled last year, and ninety are enrolled this year. How do parents send an 11-12 year old and even 7-8 years old alone? What do they gain from such a trip? What do they do while they're there?** This and more from parents and children.

Why should parents send their children to the Rebbe? What do they gain from such a trip?

This is what I asked Nechama of Kfar Chabad, who sent her two daughters twice already. "It gives them a lot," she answers immediately, and explains.

"The trip to the Rebbe greatly strengthens one's emuna. When you go and meet thousands of men, women, and children, from all corners of the world, it does something; to see how everybody comes because they all believe the same thing and want to live with the Rebbe, one's emuna is strengthened. Although we live in a

Chabad community all year, still, when you see all these people from all over the world, it makes a greater impact."

That's all true for each child individually, but what is the origin of sending a few children? I asked her.

She responded: "Aside from my gut feelings, I think that in our generation, especially in recent years, the emphasis has to be on the children. We have to focus all of our energy on them because they are the generation of Geula. I see this even in the children's level when it comes to worldly matters, for example, in their abilities in technology. Children absorb these things better than adults, and in

general, children are more impressionable, today more than ever. So we have to fill them up with spiritual influences, and in order to get these hashpaos, the best place to be is with the Rebbe.

"We know that chinuch begins from the youngest age. As soon as a child is born, we surround him with holy objects and make sure he is not exposed to impure animals. This is because children are highly impressionable.

"When a child learns to walk, we tell him where he can go and where he may not go. When a child plays, we forbid him to touch dangerous objects. If we wait until they grow older and understand things, it can be too late...

All the more so with spiritual matters. Just as we start at a young age, without explanations, when it comes to physical things, the same should be true with spiritual matters.

"Nowadays there is an emphasis on all these things, as we get closer and closer to Geula. But there is also a great confusion in the world, the likes of which we've never experienced before. We are given the ability to handle it all. I recently saw a family become more religious after one of the children influenced the parents in this direction."

Chaya, whose son went for Tishrei, says, "Going to the Rebbe gives everything! When you go to the Rebbe, you get chayus and inner simcha, the basis for life. Over there, you live with the Rebbe. You get chizuk in emuna. Everything."

Do you really see a change in the children after they come back?

Chaya says, "Definitely. I see the chayus he got, and that's why I send him year after year. He mamash lives with the Rebbe. This week I went shopping with him to buy clothes, and as we went from store to store, he asked me, 'What does the Rebbe like?'"

"The same is true for other things in daily life. We see that he cares what the Rebbe wants and what the Rebbe says about everything. In general, he has special kochos and a special chayus in everything."

Chagit, whose son also went for Tishrei, says, "I saw a chizuk in him, upon his return. He didn't change from one extreme to another;

In order to gain the maximum there, you have to be prepared, she maintains, to really go to the Rebbe and to remember that this is the goal. "I will not tolerate hearing a child say, 'I am going to America.' If you say that, you don't go!"

he was always a Chassidishe child! But the trip gave him a lot, and it is expressed in his learning, in davening, and in mitzvaim."

Nechama says, "It's difficult to point at one area and to say that it changed. I see

the chizuk in a general way, in tznius, in doing chesed, ahavas Yisroel, davening, learning, in all areas."

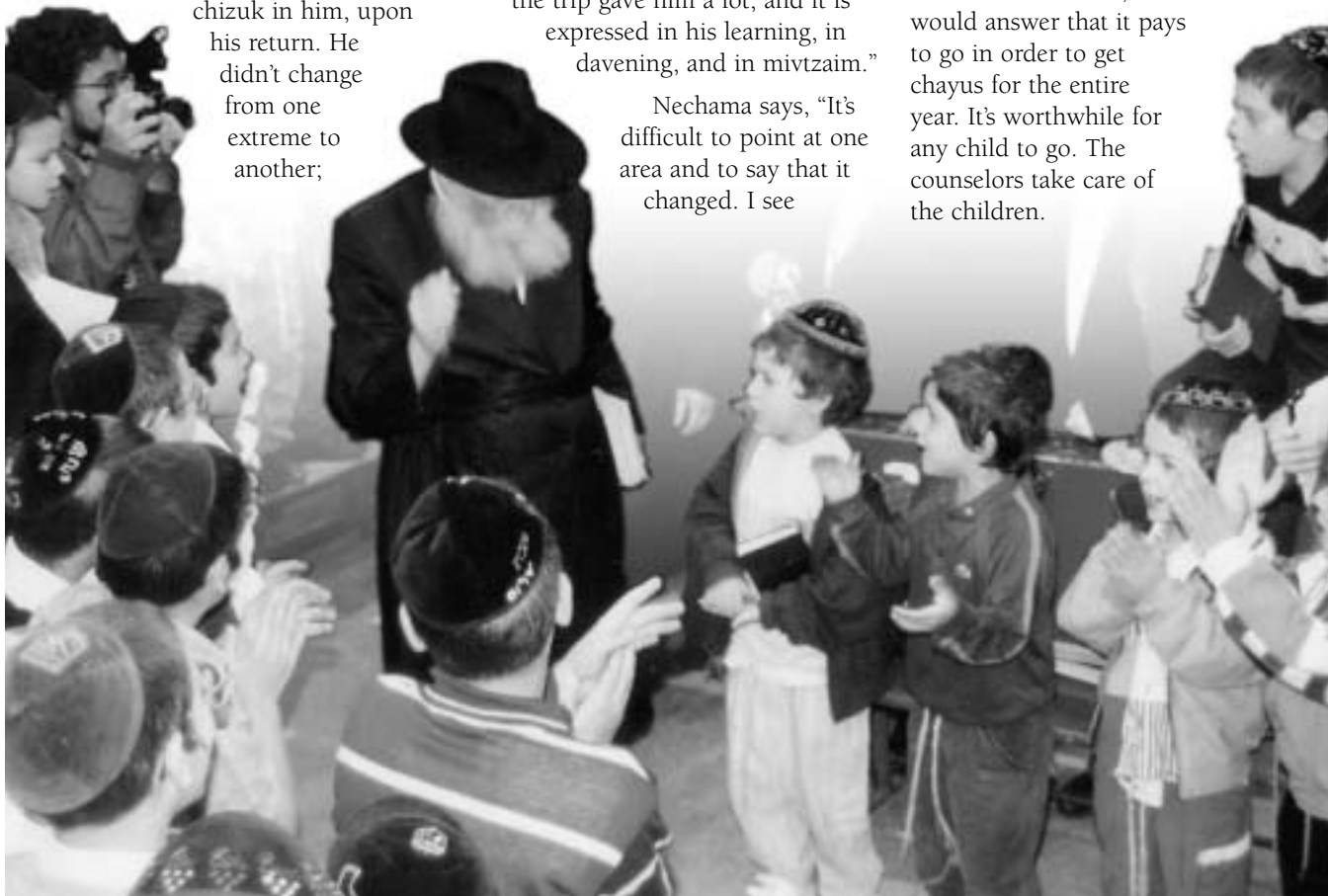
One of the girls describes it, "It's so moving, and it increases one's emuna. When I was there, I committed to a list of hachlatos tovos, first and foremost to learning *Chitas*. We began learning *Tanya* with my father, and I try to keep my hachlatos."

* * *

It sounds ideal. The boy or girl goes to 770 and returns with "spiritual luggage."

Would you recommend that *any* child go? And what about all the fears? How will the children manage on their own? Can *any* child go or only especially Chassidishe children, or only especially responsible and independent children?

M. is a child who answered decisively: "If a child would ask me, I would answer that it pays to go in order to get chayus for the entire year. It's worthwhile for any child to go. The counselors take care of the children.



There were boys who had a hard time with the shiurim, or who were homesick, and the counselor knew how to handle it.”

His mother, Chaya, also thinks that any child can benefit from going to the Rebbe. “For a number of years now, there’s an organized program for children who go for Tishrei. At first we were nervous about it, but we looked into it the first year (and we happen to be especially nervous parents) and we were reassured that there is strict supervision. There’s personal attention and there’s nothing to worry about.

“Someone was unsure about sending her son. What bothered her was that her son wasn’t sufficiently independent and she was afraid he wouldn’t manage for such a long time. I told her that the supervision and concern for the group as a whole, as well as the individual supervision and attention for each child, is exceptional.

“She sent her son and in Cheshvan she called to tell me how satisfied she was. ‘He got a lot out of the trip,’ she said excitedly. It also contributed towards his independence and self-confidence. I think that, under the circumstances, every child can go.”

Chagit is more hesitant. “I don’t think every child can travel alone. I sent my oldest son who is mature and very Chassidish. We planned on sending him when he was older, but last year we saw he was ready.

“I think it’s important that a child be really ready for a trip to the Rebbe. You have to remember the point of the trip. My son went to the Rebbe and regretted even the little bit of time he spent on buying things I had asked him to buy. But there are children who can be attracted and enticed by the excitement of New York.

“I believed in my child and especially, in the ko’ach of the Rebbe. It’s possible that children have fewer enticements, especially since their program is organized. I haven’t yet

***“I wasn’t homesick,
and I didn’t even
want to go home.
When I boarded the
plane to go home, I
nearly cried...”***

heard of a child who the trip affected to his detriment, yet you have to consider each situation individually.”

Nechama also emphasizes the need to prepare for the trip. In order to gain the maximum there, you have to be prepared to *really* go to the Rebbe, she maintains, and to remember that this is the goal. “I will not tolerate hearing a child say, ‘I am going to America.’ If you say that, you don’t go! America symbolizes gashmius, though America also has the ultimate in ruchnius. We have to choose...”

“Though someone who goes ‘to America to the Rebbe,’ won’t lose out

thereby. It makes an impact and there are positive results. Yet I recommend that a child goes only after the proper preparation, and if they remember the goal. This doesn’t mean you can’t send along some spending money, but the emphasis must be on the parents knowing why they’re going and conveying this clearly to their children. In my daughters’ school, they had contests and shiurim before the trip and I was satisfied with that. This was in addition to the preparations made at home.”

* * *

And what do the girls say?

Chana’le: “If a girl asked me whether it paid to go, I would say it depends on whether you will be homesick. I wasn’t homesick, and I didn’t even want to go home. When I boarded the plane to go home, I nearly cried... Aside from that, I had friends who thought mainly about the trip to America, touring and shopping. I would tell girls like that not to go, because you don’t feel the Rebbe that way.”

CHILDREN’S COMMENTS

Y.M.: I really enjoyed the farbrengen on Motzaei Simchas Torah. It was a very long farbrengen, and for hours we sang the niggunim of all the Rebbeim and all the niggunim of the Rebbe. It was a very special simcha and we sang with all our heart, guf and neshama.

Rivka’le: It was a unique experience. On Rosh HaShana, you don’t find a seat and when you finally get to sit down, it’s like finding a throne! When I returned to Eretz Yisroel, and went to shul, it was so strange. I asked myself: Is this a shul?

Chana’le: Every week we joined the older girls for mitzvaim. One time we met a woman and we didn’t know if she was Jewish, so we asked her. She said she was not Jewish but she apologized so much for not being Jewish that it made me feel how important I am.

Mendy: They showed us a video that really helped us feel the Rebbe, and how it was when they could see the Rebbe. I was very moved by it, and I can’t wait to see the Rebbe again – without a video.

Yossi: I feel that I really became stronger in so many things since I went. I committed to davening better and I really try. Sometimes I remember how it was with the Rebbe and this gives me the strength when I am not in the mood of davening.



Devorah Leah, grade 9, recommends that girls go but with reservations. “My parents thought about it a lot before they decided I could go. Not every girl should go; it’s not appropriate for *every* girl. I think that young girls should go for a shorter time. Three years ago, I went for only a week and a half, and I felt I couldn’t miss even a moment in 770. When you go for a month it becomes routine, and for many girls this is hard.”

* * *

Chagit talks about the special program for children. “My impressions were extremely favorable. It was well organized and they oversaw laundry and meals. I was definitely satisfied by the counselors’ care and supervision. They even kept in touch with the kids after they went home.”

Chaya is amazed by the organization. “The children’s program is even more organized than the program for the older ones. The counselors took care of everything, materially and spiritually, and they did it as volunteers.

“When the children arrived, they called the parents to inform them that everything was fine. It was hard to reach us by phone but the counselors kept trying and even after they left a message, they called back to speak to us personally. That’s one example of their care and concern.

“The children’s meals, sleeping accommodations, and activities were good. They had no time to be homesick. A child wasn’t able to wander off alone. There was constant supervision and the counselors knew where they were and what they were

doing, like in camp. The counselors also kept in touch the rest of the year. I really appreciate and thank this wonderful organization, which improves from year to year. Yashar ko’ach!”

Young Yitzchok Meir relates: “We enjoyed the children’s program. We were divided into two age groups, and each group had activities. The youngest ones were seven.

“We had shiurim as well as trips. Every night there was a farbrengen with a mashpia on various topics. The counselors were always with us. It was never boring.”

* * *

With the girls, it was different. “Four years ago, there was a small group of girls,” says C.L., a counselor for the girls. The counselors stayed in

the Hachnosas Orchim apartments with them, and took care of meals and davening, but the girls didn't have a completely organized program. There were shiurim and farbrengens and various activities, but not throughout the day and every day like the boys had.

"Sometimes a girl didn't feel comfortable at a farbrengen with the older girls or didn't get a place at the davening. There was a certain amount of effort to provide a program for the girls, but it wasn't enough."

Devorah Leah said, "There were good activities but they weren't that organized. And at the farbrengens and lectures for the older girls, it was sometimes hard to understand and concentrate. There were lectures where I had a hard time understanding the content, but there were other times that I really enjoyed it.

"All in all, I enjoyed the atmosphere, the togetherness, the farbrengens, the Simchas Beis

"When the children arrived, they called the parents to inform them that everything was fine. It was hard to reach us by phone but the counselors kept trying and even after they left a message, they called back to speak to us personally."

HaShoeiva and other special moments. The time before, I also enjoyed the farbrengens. This year I felt like it was more of a lecture, because there were more girls. Maybe it pays to divide the

farbrengens into two groups."

N.D. was happy with the program. "I thought it was a good program for the girls. There were shiurim and farbrengens. Even if they weren't always on the level of the younger girls, they took in the atmosphere. I think that every girl who went, who prepared for it, got something."

Rivka'le adds: "There's definitely an improvement for the girls but I think that even though the girls are coming to the Rebbe, they need more breaks between shiurim and more fun activities. It's difficult for a girl to sit through so many lectures.

"I'd like to thank Ariella Ben-Chayoun for organizing farbrengens and shiurim for girls. They're very good."

* * *

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From Shemen Sasson Meichaveirecha

BY RABBI SHALOM BER WOLPO
TRANSLATED BY ALEXANDER ZUSHE KOHN



Wearing sackcloth at a demonstration

PART 2

“HIS T’FILLIN ARE PASUL”

Last week, we related how Rav Amram Blau, zatzal, helped counter an attack against the study of Chabad Chassidus, which had appeared in a Neturei Karta publication.

The chassid, Rabbi Aharon Dov Halprin related an interesting story he heard from Rabbi Chaim Tzvi Schwartz, o.b.m., a Munckatcher chassid, about the individual who publicized the abovementioned words against the learning of Chabad chassidus in *Mishmeres Chomoseinu*, a Neturei Karta periodical:

“One day, between Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur, my phone rang. I was very surprised to hear Rabbi Zalman Gurary of New York on the other end of the line. ‘The Rebbe just responded,’ Rabbi Gurary said, ‘to the urgent request [for a blessing] you asked me to convey to him in connection with one of your family members. The Rebbe’s holy response was: *Your T’fillin should be checked immediately.*’

“I was taken aback: just a few weeks before, I had purchased a new, extremely *mehudar* pair of T’fillin, which I had ordered from a certain *sofer* [scribe] in Jerusalem, who is renowned as an expert and a G-d fearing person.

There is certainly a mistake here, I thought to myself. If the Rebbe knew that I just bought new T’fillin, he surely would not instruct me to check them now. Nevertheless, I decided that I would have them checked again.

“Since I was scheduled to fly to New York for Yom Kippur, I resolved to have the T’fillin checked by one of New York’s expert scribes. Early in the morning on Erev Yom Kippur, I sent my T’fillin to an expert *sofer* in Williamsburg, where I was staying, with a request that he check them immediately.

“Even before I completed the *Shacharis* prayer, the *sofer* came running to me with the pair of T’fillin, and informed me that he had found a *p’sul* in them. And not just any *p’sul*: there was an entire word missing in the T’fillin! I was stunned. I had just ordered these T’fillin from Rav . . . , who was renowned as one of the best scribes in the Holy City, and he had assured me that they were written in the most *mehudar* manner!?”

“Only two hours later, I was standing on line in 770, awaiting my turn to receive “*lekach*” from the Rebbe, as is customary on Erev Yom Kippur. When my turn arrived, and I received the *lekach* from the Rebbe’s holy hand, and the accompanying blessing for “a

good, sweet year,” the Rebbe added: ‘Since you are planning to travel [back] to Eretz Yisroel, it would be appropriate for you to travel earlier [than planned], so that you can correct your T’fillin there.’ I had originally planned to return to Israel after Simchas Torah, but in light of the Rebbe’s words, I decided to go back after Yom Kippur.

“It was always my practice to immerse in a *mikva* upon returning to Israel, in order to rid myself of the impurities of the gentile lands. This time, as well, I followed my practice. I went to a *mikva* in Meah Shearim, and to my astonishment, I met there none other than the expert *sofer* who wrote my T’fillin.

The *sofer* was surprised when I told him that I had come especially to speak with him. He was utterly shocked when I told him that a word had been found missing in the *parshiyos* he had written.

“After he calmed down a bit, he said to me angrily: ‘Rabbi Schwartz, tell me the truth! Was it not the Lubavitcher Rebbe who told you to check your T’fillin?’ ‘Yes,’ I replied, totally surprised by the question. ‘How do you know?’

“I don’t know what he wants from me!’ exclaimed the scribe. This is not the first — nor the second — incident, in which T’fillin that I wrote with the greatest care, checking them and

rechecking them, and finding them to be just as they should be, were brought back to me some time later by the purchaser, who proceeded to point out a severe disqualification in them. And in every such case, this happened after they asked the Lubavitcher Rebbe for a blessing.

I was flabbergasted, and realized that I had to get to the bottom of this. It was clear to me that there was more here than meets the eye. I asked the *sofer* if he ever did anything against the Lubavitcher Rebbe, and he said he did not. I said, 'Try to remember — you see that this is not a simple matter.'

"He pondered the matter for a while, and then remembered 'something': A few years back, he used to write essays in the Neturei Karta publication, *Mishmeres Chomoseinu*, and he once attacked Chabad and the Rebbe Rayatz in one of these essays. Not long afterwards, the Eidah HaChareidis received a letter from the Rebbe saying that since so-and-so wrote spiteful words against the Chabad Rebbes, his T'fillin were surly *pasul*.

"I was summoned to the *Badatz*,' the scribe related. 'They showed me the letter they received, and asked me to bring them my T'fillin. I brought the T'fillin, and opened it in their presence. After examining it thoroughly' — the scribe said scornfully — 'they found absolutely nothing wrong with them; the T'fillin were as kosher as can be.'

"When I heard this," said Rabbi Schwartz, "my eyes were illuminated. I suddenly understood the entire matter, and I exclaimed: 'How holy the Lubavitcher Rebbe is! How holy! Don't you see how precisely the Rebbe worded his statement!? He did not say, *he prays in pasul T'fillin*, but *his T'fillin are pasul*! **His T'fillin** — i.e., the *T'fillin you* write, the *T'fillin* attributed to you, the *T'fillin* you write so carefully, and examine and reexamine — you nevertheless discover that a whole word is missing!'

"When the scribe heard these words, he broke down in tears. Everything was suddenly all too clear to

him." (*Kfar Chabad Magazine*, issue 626.)

This is the story that appeared in *Kfar Chabad Magazine*. However, after personally consulting with the people involved in the story, I discovered that, in fact, the Rebbe had been also been referring to the T'fillin that the *sofer* wore. For the *sofer* had written to the Rebbe that he examined his T'fillin and found them to be kosher, to which the Rebbe replied that this was not possible and he should check them again,



Towards the end of his life, Rav Amram Blau, zatzal, dreamt that archeologists ascended the mountain near Meron where Shamai HaZakein is interred, and were excavating right near his resting place. With his last ounce of strength, Rav Amram traveled to Meron, where indeed, archeologists were excavating close to Shamai HaZakein's resting place. Rav Amram made a big commotion, and succeeding in putting an end to the excavations. In the picture, he can be seen standing near the resting place of Shammai, the excavations visible behind him.

(which he declined to do).

VISITING YESHIVAS HA'MASPIDIM

In 5716, twelve of the Rebbe's shluchim visited Yeshivas HaMaspidim in the Holy Land. They arrived at the yeshiva in Meah Shearim on the twenty-first of Menachem Av, and were welcomed by Rabbi Uri Rosenberg, one of the heads of Neturei Karta. In the report they later sent the Rebbe, the

shluchim wrote as follows:

"We visited Yeshivas HaMaspidim at the request of the principal, Rabbi Avrohom Leib Klien. 200 students, ages 8-16, study there. They study in the evening, for a few hours, as a supplement to their daily Torah learning in various yeshivas. (Presently, during vacation time, they are studying there the entire day.) We were shown a list of students who accepted upon themselves to study a certain amount of pages of the Talmud until they knew the pages by heart. A few of these students took it upon themselves to study between 300 and 500 pages of Gemara by heart, but the others accepted lower amounts. The yeshiva gives them prizes for this.

"The yeshiva's *mashgiach* [spiritual dean], Rabbi Uri Rosenberg, addressed the students, and very much extolled the work of Lubavitch, saying how fortunate Yeshivas HaMaspidim to have the Rebbe's emissaries visit them and speak to them. He thereupon introduced Reb Avrohom Karf to them. The *mashgiach* [by the way], is a member of the head council of Neturei Karta.

"Avrohom Karf spoke of the Rebbe's address on *Lag B'Omer*, 5713, concerning Rebbi Akiva, who noticed how dripping water had, after a long time, created a hole in a rock, and how this is a lesson that even if one studies Torah only a little at a time, he can eventually become a great *lamden*. And even the most outstanding Torah students need to know that their study of the Torah should be done out of love for the Torah, so that the Torah will be for them the "Torah of life." To accomplish this, one must study the Torah's inner dimension, for only in this manner is does one acquire the complete Torah — i.e., not only the Torah's body, but also the Torah's soul, which enlivens the body. The study of Chassidus enlivens the study of the Torah's revealed dimension so that it, too, should meet with phenomenal success. His words made an impression [upon the listeners].

FREED FROM PRISON

BY NOSSON AVROHOM

I heard the following story from the shlucha, Mrs. Rela Garelik:

A little over two years ago, a bachur by the name of Yossi Maor came to us. He was an intelligent fellow who works in the security field and lives in moshav Ben-Ami in the north. He came with his fiancée, and they asked for guidance before their wedding. At one of our meetings, Yossi mentioned that he had learned in the Chabad yeshiva in Los Angeles.

I wondered how he had come to learn there, and seeing my surprise, he explained. “Since you’re a Lubavitcher, I will tell you a story that I personally experienced with the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

“It was many years ago, after I had finished my army service. Like many others my age, I went touring. After a long period of time, when I arrived in L.A., I had used up my available funds and so I sold things illegally. I eventually forgot why I had gone there and was up to my ears in illegal activities.

“I quickly became wealthy. I bought an expensive home in a suburb of the city and became a spendthrift. I was so drunk with success that I overlooked the fact that I was giving myself away. Indeed, an undercover operation by the F.B.I. discovered what I was up to and put me in jail.

“Some months went by and it was almost Pesach. Although I don’t come from an observant family, we always celebrated this holiday, and it was important to me to do so in jail too.

“I called a relative who lived nearby and asked him to get me wine and matzos. He did so, but when he brought them to the jail, he was refused by the guards. All his pleading was to no avail, and he left.

“It was only a week and a half until Pesach, and I reminded myself of the billboard that had hung near my house which said in large letters: If you have a problem, call Lubavitch.

“I somehow got the phone number and called. A man by the name of Rabbi Groner, the Rebbe’s secretary, answered the phone. I told him my story and asked him



to help me get wine and matzos. He promised to do his best and asked me for my mother's name so he could give the name to the Rebbe for a bracha.

"A week went by and nothing happened. I called the number again and spoke to Rabbi Groner. When he heard who it was, he said that he had not been able to send matzos and wine for me, but had given the Rebbe my name and the Rebbe had blessed me that I'd be freed quickly, even before Pesach.

"When I heard that, I hung up the phone in disgust. I didn't know whether to cry or to be furious. The chances of being released from jail within the next few years was out of the question, considering the crimes I had committed. At that time, I was unfamiliar with the Rebbe's true greatness, in addition to which, my situation in jail had deteriorated the previous week. The lowest point was when I was put in solitary confinement and was not given food and drink regularly.

"Just one day later, something happened that, until this day, I cannot understand. The warden in charge of the jail came to me in solitary and politely asked me to gather my personal belongings and to accompany him to his room. There he explained that the government lacked sufficient proof to hold me in jail and therefore I was free to go. He signed the release form and asked me to leave.

"I remained standing frozen in place for a long time, and then I pinched myself repeatedly to make sure I wasn't dreaming. I used the first public phone I saw to call a friend and to tell him what happened. When he

"I quickly became wealthy. I bought an expensive home in a suburb of the city and became a spendthrift. I was so drunk with success that I overlooked the fact that I was giving myself away..."

heard what I had to say, he laughed. He thought my stay in jail had made me lose my mind. It took me quite a few minutes to convince him that I was serious, until he finally came to pick me up in his car. Boy, was he surprised to see me!

"A few days went by and then I suddenly recalled that I had forgotten that my release from jail was thanks to the bracha from the Lubavitcher Rebbe. I called one of the shluchim in my area, Rabbi Berkowitz, and after I packed some things, we went together to 770.

"We stood for hours on line to get a dollar and a bracha from the Rebbe, while the sun beat down on us. Our turn finally came and I found myself standing in front of the Rebbe. I was

emotionally overcome, and stood there silently, unable to utter a word. The Rebbe began the conversation by saying, 'Until now, Hashem did things for you. What are prepared to do for Him?'

"On the spot, I committed to eating only kosher food."

* * *

After the emotional encounter with the Rebbe, Yossi went back to L.A. where he spent a little time and strengthened his connection to Judaism a little bit with the help of the shluchim there.

The shlucha concluded:

Today, although Yossi is not fully observant, he is very particular about his commitment to kashrus. On the day of his wedding, he insisted that the Rebbe's letter be read, as it is read at every Lubavitcher wedding.



ANOTHER MUST

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FOR BOTH THE HEBREW & ENGLISH SECTIONS

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The screenshot displays the website for Beis Moshiach. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'HOME', 'PDF VERSION', 'ARCHIVES', and 'English Edition'. The main header features the 'BEIS MOSHIACH' logo, a 'bhTech' advertisement with the tagline 'Heavenly design, down-to-earth prices', and the Hebrew title 'בית משיח'. Below the header, the 'Chabad World' logo is visible, along with a banner that reads 'Long live the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach forever and ever'. The main content area shows the magazine cover for issue 439, dated 3 Kislev 5764. The cover features a portrait of a man and the title 'BEIS MOSHIACH'. Below the cover, there are three article teasers: 1. 'WE HAD NEVER HEARD IT LIKE THIS BEFORE!' Presented in honor of Tes Kislev, birthday of the Mittler Rebbe, and Yud Kislev, the day the Mittler Rebbe was released from jail. 2. 'FARBENGEN OF MASHPIM' Hundreds of farbrengens took place throughout Crown Heights during Tishrei. One of the most interesting of these farbrengens, a farbrengen of Mashpim, took place in the sukka of R' Sholom Dovber Drizin. * Part 1 Pictures by Shmuel Gewirtz. 3. 'CHASDEI BRACHIA: SPREADING JOY' In its brief existence of not even two years, Chasdei Bracha has helped hundreds of people in Flatbush to get on their feet. * Rabbi Yisroel Chaim has spearheaded this initiative and he tells...

SOLIDARITY VISIT IN GUSH KATIF

BY SHAI GEFEN

About 150 Lubavitchers went to Gush Katif to express their solidarity and support. On the way there, we watched a video with excerpts from sichos of the Rebbe about shleimus ha'Aretz.

Our first stop was at the Kisufim checkpoint, where the guide, Naor Tzimerman, awaited us. Anash used the few minutes before their tour began to put t'fillin on with soldiers, and then blew the shofar.

The guide gave a brief explanation about Gush Katif and its settlers. He apologized for being the only tour guide since the other guides were busy working on projects to prevent the disengagement.

As soon as we got underway, we saw a monument in memory of the Hatuel family, the woman and her four daughters who were murdered (may Hashem avenge their blood). On the left and the right, you can see signs of war, demolished houses or bullet-ridden buildings, as well as the remains of the outpost the terrorists blew up via the tunnel they dug underneath it.

We turned right towards Kfar Darom. It is swallowed up within all the Arab settlements. A few meters away you can see the hostile Arab village of Dir Al Balakh.

We visited a former factory, which moved to more spacious quarters. The original location was turned into a Talmud Torah after the attack on the bus that crippled the Cohen children. Supporters of the yishuv decided not to endanger the children anymore and built them a school in the yishuv. The guide spoke about the mesirus nefesh of the residents who continue to

bodily protect the Holy Land.

After a brief visit to the beach of Neve Dekalim, we went on to Tel Katifa. The guide told us about his personal encounter with three terrorists who shot an R. P. G. missile at him. Miraculously, they missed their target and he remained alive.

The guide lives in this yishuv, and when the Chassidim put t'fillin on with soldiers there, he met with his

wife and little daughter, after a few days of not seeing them because of the great deal of work the government prepared for them ...

We boarded the buses and continued on to the yishuv Shirat HaYam which was founded after the murder of one of the settlers. The residents decided to memorialize the man, and with the guidance of the rabbanim, they founded a new yishuv.



The Lubavitcher men who participated in the tour of Gush Katif.



Lubavitchers dancing at the end of the evening



Yigal Kirzenschaft addressing the audience

We arrived at the largest yishuv, Neve Dekalim, and entered the hesder yeshiva, Yeshivat Yamit, which was named after the settlement dismantled over 20 years ago. The guide spoke about the Torah flourishing in the Gush, and about the efforts to develop both shleimus ha'Torah as well as shleimus ha'Aretz.

In the early evening, we arrived at the simcha hall of Neve Dekalim. After davening Mincha, we watched a video about Gush Katif and the surrounding yishuvim. We also watched a video of the Rebbe on the subject of shleimus ha'Aretz and Moshiach. The residents of the yishuv who participated in the event, were impressed and enjoyed it.

The first speaker on our program was the rav of Tel Katifa, Rabbi Nativ Turgeman. He said a d'var Torah and words of chizuk about the mitzva of bikurim and shleimus ha'Aretz.

Dr. Simlah, the director of the Chabad house for French-speaking people in Gush Katif, is also a doctor in the yishuvim. He spoke about the mesirus nefesh the settlers exhibit day in and day out.

Yigal Kirzenschaft, the shliach, spoke about the Kassam missiles that land daily. He spoke about the necessity of everybody working for shleimus ha'Aretz with achdus, which will make Moshiach come much faster. He and his family contributed to the success of this event.

Rabbi Shmuel Hendel, director of Matteh Moshiach, represented the guests. He said that the war being waged now is the war of Moshiach, and therefore we must obey his directives, for this is a milchemes mitzva.

"When we are involved in inyanei Moshiach, we see everything that goes on in the world through the lenses of Geula. Therefore, the present war is not just a war between the Right and the Left, but a spiritual war.

ENCOURAGED BY THE ANSWER

Our guide, Naor Tzimerman, told us that he works as an educational coordinator in one of the yishuvim. Lately, he has been giving tours to guests who visit the Gush, and this he does as a volunteer. This has significantly affected his salary to the tune of thousands of shekel a month.

One Shabbos he was in Kiryat Yam with his family. He visited with some Lubavitchers who heard about his situation and suggested that he write to the Rebbe to ask for a bracha for parnasa. He did so, and when he opened a volume of *Igros Kodesh* he saw a letter in which the Rebbe says that those who work faithfully on behalf of the tzibbur, Hashem repays them, and there's nothing to worry about.

Encouraged by the answer, he continued his volunteer work. At the end of the month, when he received his salary, he saw that 3507 shekel had been deducted from his regular salary. He was really upset about this.

The next day, he went to the bank to check his account and discovered more money than he thought he had. He asked a teller where the money had come from and he said it was the stipend given to soldiers when honorably discharged.

"I was supposed to get this money a few years before! I began counting the money and was amazed to see that it was exactly the amount that had been cut from my salary!"

Rabbi Tuvia Bolton, rosh yeshiva of Ohr Tmimim in Kfar Chabad, spoke about the miracles we are witnessing. For example, when 4500 missiles fell in inhabited areas and baruch Hashem, nobody was hurt! He also spoke about the mesirus nefesh of the residents who live in the shadow of war, and how this mesirus nefesh will bring Moshiach.

Shmuel Omer of the Chabad house in Ariel spoke about the importance of daily Chitas. He asked those present to come and visit in Shomron and the Gaza Strip more often, to strengthen and be strengthened.

During the program, a large group of Lubavitchers from Tzfas came in. They had traveled five hours in order to show their solidarity.

Roz Sharabi, an activist in inyanei Eretz Yisroel and one of the guests from Tzfas, reported about the recent activities in Tzfas for shleimus

ha'Aretz. He added some more practical ideas.

Nissim Ben-Chaim sang a special song that he composed in honor of the Rebbe.

At 10:00 p.m. after Maariv and dancing, the guests boarded the buses once again and left Neve Dekalim. At 10:30, Yigal Kirzenschaft called the passengers on the bus to tell them about the miracle that happened minutes after they left. Three missiles fell on Neve Dekalim, and one of them fell meters away from the entrance to the simcha hall where they all were minutes before. It landed on a large palm tree and split it in two.

"Behold, He does not slumber nor sleep, the Guardian of Israel," and may it be fulfilled, "They plotted but were thwarted, spoke but it won't come to pass, for G-d is with us."