

CONTENTS



The International Weekly for All the Corners of Mankind
BEIS MOSHIACH

4 | CHANUKA: A VICTORY OF THE SPIRIT

D'var Malchus / Sichos in English

10 | EVER-INCREASING IN LIGHT

Letters of the Rebbe MH"M

12 | AN "ACCEPTABLE MATTER" IN AN "ACCEPTABLE MANNER"

Moshiach / Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Wilschanski

17 | THIS IS HOW WE LIGHT CHANUKA LIGHTS!

Chassid / Menachem Ziegelboim

20 | IS THERE A LEADER OUT THERE?

Shleimus HaAretz / Dafna Chaim

25 | EIGHT MIRACLE STORIES FOR EIGHT DAYS OF CHANUKA

Miracle Stories / Nosson Avrohom

32 | WE'VE GOT SOME EXPLAINING TO DO (CONT.)

Moshiach / Interview with Rabbi Zushe Silbersteinby by Avrohom Raynitz

36 | MISSION IMPOSSIBLE?!

Shleimus HaAretz / Shai Gefen

39 | KIBBUTZ-STYLE U'FARATZTA ON YUD-TES KISLEV: GETTING THEIR ACT TOGETHER AND HITTING THE ROAD

Special Report / Chana Katz

42 | THE GAON AND TZADDIK: RABBI CHAIM MENACHEM SHLOMO DRUK ZATZAL

Feature / Rabbi Shalom Ber Wolpo

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CHANUKA: A VICTORY OF THE SPIRIT

SICHOS IN ENGLISH



SHABBOS PARSHAS MIKEITZ, SHABBOS CHANUKA; 28TH DAY OF KISLEV, 5751

1. In connection with Chanuka candles, our Sages relate, “One who regularly [lights] candles will have sons who are Torah scholars.” Rashi associates this statement with the verse, “For a mitzva is a lamp and Torah is light,” explaining that the ‘lamp’ of the mitzva of Shabbos and Chanuka candles brings the ‘light’ of Torah.”

The commentaries question what is the rationale that associates Chanuka candles with sons who are Torah scholars. Although Rashi cites a proof text from the Tanach, that proof text merely indicates that a connection exists, it does not explain that connection. Furthermore, the association with the proof text is seemingly problematic. How is it possible to say that the “lamp of mitzva” will bring the “light of Torah,” when a lamp is less powerful than light?[287]

A mitzva is like a lone and single light, limited in its scope. In contrast, the Torah is

unlimited.[288] Furthermore, “study is great because it brings to deed.” Thus, it is difficult to understand: Why does Rashi explain that the “lamp of mitzva” leads to the light of Torah. If anything, the opposite is true, the light of Torah brings one to the mitzvos.[289]

There is another difficulty with Rashi’s statement: On the surface, the phrase, “a mitzva is a lamp” relates to all the mitzvos. Why does Rashi limit it to the Chanuka and Shabbos candles?

These difficulties can be resolved through a deeper understanding of the mitzva of Chanuka candles. Although, on an apparent level, the miracle of the military defeat of the Greeks was a greater miracle, our Sages associated the commemoration of the Chanuka with the kindling of candles to emphasize how the essence of the war and the Jews’ victory was spiritual. The Greeks sought to wipe out, not the Jews as a people, but rather, the Jew’s observance of Torah and mitzvos, “to make [the Jews] forget Your Torah and make them violate the decrees of Your will.”

Similarly, the Jews’ victory reflects the victory of “the lamp of mitzva” and “the light of Torah” as they are reinforced by a commitment of mesirus nefesh. Thus, since the Chanuka candles represent a renewal – and an enhancement – of the commitment to Torah and mitzvos as a whole, through the lamp of this mitzva comes, “the light of Torah,” sons who study Torah. This “light of Torah” leads to the fulfillment of all the mitzvos for “study is great because it leads to deed.”

Further explanation is, however, required. Ultimately, any mitzva, even a mitzva which – like Chanuka candles – relates to Torah and mitzvos in their totality, is merely a “lamp” which is limited when compared to “the light of Torah.” In particular, this limitation is seen with regard to the mitzva of Chanuka candles which are associated with a specific time, the eight days of Chanuka, and within those days, with a limited time in which they are required to burn. If so, how is it possible for a limited mitzva of this nature to bring about “the light of Torah,” sons who are Torah scholars.

This difficulty can, however, be resolved by a comparison between the Chanuka candles and the candles lit in the Menora of the Beis HaMikdash. In regard to the kindling of the Menora, the Torah commands us to “keep the lamp burning continuously.” Although the mitzva was for the Menora to burn only at night, “from the evening until the morning,”[290] since it was lit each afternoon, it can be considered as “burning continuously.”

We see a similar concept in regard to the korban tamid (the daily sacrifice offered each morning and afternoon). Literally, this phrase means “a continuous offering.” In this instance as well, since the offering was always brought in the morning and the evening, it could be considered “continuous.”

There is, however, a deeper dimension to the use of this term. The implication is that since these mitzvos are always fulfilled at the required time, their influence is continuous, having an effect throughout the entire day.[291]

There are other examples of this principle: When one wears a garment that requires tzitzis, the obligation to fulfill the mitzva of tzitzis applies throughout the entire day. The mitzva is fulfilled for the entire day by donning a garment and reciting the blessing at one particular time and then one continues to wear the garment throughout the day.

A second example: We are obligated to give tz’daka continuously throughout the day, whenever we meet a poor person (even when we meet the same poor person several times a day). Nevertheless, we find that – to help the poor people – our Sages established certain times for tz’daka to be given.

A more inclusive example: We are obligated to study Torah every moment of the day and night. Nevertheless, the overwhelming majority of the Jews fulfill this mitzva by studying at fixed times throughout the day. Only unique individuals like Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai and his colleagues are on the level of Torasam Umnasam (“Torah study is their livelihood”) and thus, study Torah the entire day. Most people fulfill the charge, “This Torah shall not depart from your mouths” by studying “a portion in the morning and a portion in the evening.”[292]

Our Sages associated the commemoration of the Chanuka with the kindling of candles to emphasize how the essence of the war and the Jews’ victory was spiritual.

These examples reflect that although the observance of these mitzvos is limited to a specific time, when they are fulfilled at that time, the influence of that mitzva continues throughout a greater period. The same concept can apply in regard to the entire year; for example, although the mitzva of dwelling in a sukka is observed for merely a short period, seven days, its influence continues throughout the year.[293]

The same applies in regard to Chanuka candles. They – like the candles of the Beis HaMikdash with which they are associated – are “a

constant lamp.” Furthermore, the Chanuka candles possess an advantage over the candles of the Beis HaMikdash for as the Ramban explains, “the Chanuka candles will never be nullified and are fulfilled at present even while we are in exile.” In contrast, the fulfillment of the mitzva of lighting the candles of the Beis HaMikdash was nullified with the destruction of that structure.

Thus, although the mitzva of lighting Chanuka candles is associated with a limited time – eight days – and also, a limited time of day – the half hour when the candles must burn, their influence continues throughout the entire eight days of Chanuka, throughout the entire year, and indeed, throughout the entire continuum of time.

This concept itself requires explanation: Why should a mitzva which is limited in the times (and places) when it must be fulfilled have an influence which is unlimited?[294]

This difficulty can be resolved within the context of a larger scope: Each Jew’s soul, even as it is enclothed in the body, is an “actual part of G-d from above.” Just as G-d Himself is unlimited, “the actual part of G-d” enclothed within the body is also unlimited.[295] Therefore, it is difficult to understand: How can a Jew be asked to serve G-d in a limited manner?[296]

The explanation of this concept is as follows: A Jew’s service of G-d is by nature unlimited. We should serve G-d with every aspect of our being, in every situation in which we are found. Nevertheless, since we live within a world of limitation, our service of G-d, i.e., performance of mitzvos, also takes on the limits of the world at large. This, however, applies only to the

actual performance of the mitzvos, the bond with G-d established through the performance of the mitzvos is above all limitation.[297]

The unlimited dimension of the mitzvos is expressed, not only by the fulfillment of all the mitzvos together, but rather, by the fulfillment of each individual mitzva. Therefore, “a person who is in the midst of fulfilling one mitzva is not obligated to fulfill all the other mitzvos” and, indeed, is considered to have fulfilled the other mitzvos as well. This is because G-d’s will is expressed in each mitzva, not as a particular element of a general category, but rather as an expression of the essence which connects one to His essential will as it exists above all limitations.

The infinite dimension of the mitzvos is further enhanced when a Jew fulfills the mitzva as an expression of his unlimited desire to cling to G-d, to love Him, “with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might.”[298] Thus, a Jew’s soul which is “a lamp of G-d” is unlimited and it finds expression in the continuous performance of mitzvos whose inner dimension is unlimited.

The limitations of the actual performance of the mitzva do not confine the unlimited potential of the Jewish soul. From this, we can infer that the influence generated by a mitzva is also unbounded and therefore, continues even after the actual performance of the mitzva has ceased.

Nevertheless, the unlimited dimension that exists within the performance of the mitzvos is not revealed on the limited plane of material existence. This is the uniqueness of the Chanuka candles. They reveal the continuous influence and unbounded potential of the mitzvos in an openly

perceivable manner.

This is reflected in the perceivable light produced by the Chanuka candles which reveal in a manifest way how the performance of mitzvos contributes light to the Jewish home. Light, even light in this material world, is related to – and representative of – G-d’s infinite light. This is expressed in the fact that one can continue lighting one candle from another ad infinitum.

Furthermore, each night of Chanuka, we add another candle, showing how we are constantly adding light, transcending even the limitations of holiness.[299] In addition, the Chanuka candles are placed, “at the outside of the

The bond with G-d established through the performance of the mitzvos is above all limitation.

entrance to one’s home,” indicating how the light of holiness should not remain contained within one’s home and family, but should shine into the world at large. This shows the unbounded nature of the light of the Chanuka candles, and reflects how they extend beyond the limits of holiness.[300] This is further emphasized by the fact that they are lit at night and shine into the darkness, indicating how the light of holiness shines into the darkness of the world.

The unlimited nature of the Chanuka lights is further emphasized by the fact that eight candles are lit[301] (in contrast to the seven lit in the Beis

HaMikdash). Seven represents a complete cycle of the natural world. Eight, in contrast, represents a step above that order. Since the Chanuka candles reflect an unlimited potential, they have the power to draw down the light of holiness into the darkness of the world, into the public domain, the area “at the outside of the entrance to one’s home.”

The potential for the Chanuka candles to have an unlimited effect stems from the fact that the miracle of Chanuka came as a result of the Jews’ mesirus nefesh, their willingness to give themselves over to holiness without reservation. This commitment made it possible for the infinite potential of “the lamp of mitzva” and “the light of Torah” to be revealed.

Based on the above, we can understand why a person who is meticulous in his observance of the mitzva of Chanuka candles will merit sons who are Torah scholars. Since the mitzva of Chanuka candles brings a revelation of the infinite light of Torah,[302] this infinity is expressed in that the light of Torah is revealed, not only for oneself, but also, for one’s children. Indeed, in this context, the word “sons” can be interpreted as “descendants,” i.e., the revelation of the light of Torah continues in future generations as well.

Furthermore, it can be explained that the mitzva of Chanuka candles brings out the infinite dimension that exists in all the mitzvos, revealing how they: a) draw G-dliness down into this world; b) follow a pattern of continued growth; c) shine “the lamp of mitzva and the light of Torah” at the outside of the entrance of one’s home, projecting this light into one’s surrounding environment.

2. There is a connection between the above and this week’s Torah

portion, Parshas Mikeitz. The word mikeitz means “At the conclusion of,” and thus expresses the concept of limitation. Indeed, Torah Or interprets mikeitz as relating to the limits that exist within Torah study. Yosef who reflects the potential for increase without any limitation allows the infinite dimension of Torah to be revealed. When, however, Yosef is “forgotten,” the Torah appears to be limited, and Yosef remains limited, confined in jail.[303] Nevertheless, this is only a temporary situation, and ultimately, Yosef “leaves prison to rule,” and is given the potential to reveal his true unlimited nature.

This lesson is relevant for every Jew, for Yosef is also used as a name for the people as a whole. Thus, Yosef’s imprisonment in jail can reflect each Jew’s confinement in a physical body in this material world. Here, “those imprisoned by the king,” i.e., each Jew whose soul is sent into this world by G-d, King of kings, “are confined.” This, however, is not a Jew’s true place and he can “leave prison to rule,” to take control over his environment.

Based on the above, we can interpret our Sages’ statement, “One who goes to a city should adopt its customs” as follows: When the soul descends within the limits of the body and the material world, it should accept those limits, but not because they confine the soul, but rather because the soul is on a mission, to elevate and refine the world.

The same applies to the concept of “the law of the land is your law.” A Jew must submit to the law of the land, not because it has real power over him, but because by doing so, he can elevate it and use it as a medium to spread righteousness and justice throughout the world, influencing the entire populace to accept the seven universal laws

commanded to Noach and his descendants. In this manner, the Jews and Torah will take control of the world at large. It will be revealed how following the laws of the Torah will bring benefit to any country which does so. This will hasten the coming of the time when it will be revealed throughout the world that, “the sovereignty will be the L-rd’s” in the Era of the complete Redemption.

3 .In this context, a lesson can be derived from the special Torah reading associated with Chanuka, the sacrifices offered by the fourth of the N’siim, the Nasi of Reuven. Reuven was Yaakov’s firstborn. A firstborn is by nature, a leader, one who influences his brothers, an example whose conduct they emulate. Similarly, the word Nasi means “prince” or “leader.” Thus, a reading connected with the N’siim and in particular, the Nasi of Reuven, reflects the leadership potential each Jew possesses, the ability to influence the world at large.

The fourth day of Chanuka also contributes an additional concept. Four alludes to the four corners of the world and makes each person realize that these are his responsibility. His service must encompass all four corners of the world, making the world like a closed Mem which will prevent the intrusion of any undesirable elements.

It is human nature that when a person who is involved in a particular issue confronts any new concept, he immediately looks for the connection it shares with the idea with which he was originally involved. A Jew must constantly be involved in the yearning and desire for the coming of Moshiach. “Each day, we must wait for him, that he come.” Therefore, it is natural for a Jew to look for a connection to

Moshiach’s coming in every event or concept which he encounters. This also applies regarding Chanuka. Since the Chanuka miracle took place in the Beis HaMikdash, its commemoration arouses an even greater yearning for the era when the Menora will be kindled again in the Third Beis HaMikdash.

Similarly, there is a connection between the above and this week’s portion, Parshas Mikeitz. When a Jew hears the name mikeitz, because he is constantly yearning for Moshiach’s coming, he immediately associates it with the word keitz which refers to the time of Moshiach’s coming. Similarly, when he hears the vision of the Menora mentioned in the Haftora, he immediately associates it with the Menora of the Beis HaMikdash.

This is enhanced by the fourth light of Chanuka which alludes to the fourth redemption and heightens our expectation of the time when we will, “kindle lamps in Your Holy courtyard,” with the coming of Moshiach. May it be in the immediate future.

LIGHTING UP THE WORLD

(After the afternoon service, children from all over the world recited the 12 p’sukim. Chanuka Menoros were lit in the various cities and the niggun, HaNeiros Hallalu was sung. Afterwards, the Rebbe Shlita delivered three sichos. In the text below, they have been adapted and presented in the form of a single address.)

As is Jewish custom, the Chanuka Menora has been lit in the synagogue, a place where Jews gather together for prayer. Similarly, in the spirit of Chanuka, whose lights are placed “at the outside of the entrance to one’s home,” we have witnessed through telecommunication, the kindling of the Chanuka lights “outside,” in far

removed corners throughout the world.

THE LESSONS OF THE CHANUKA LIGHTS

The Chanuka candles provide us with a clearly visible expression of the teaching, “A mitzva is a lamp and the Torah is light.”[304] In regard to other mitzvos, the mitzva’s function as a lamp is not as apparent. In contrast, the mitzva of Chanuka candles produces discernible light and spreads that light throughout one’s surroundings.

The Chanuka candles are lit for eight days. This does not mean that the same mitzva is repeated eight times in succession. Just as in a physical sense, new candles are lit each night, in a spiritual sense too, each night represents a new light: a new mitzva to be fulfilled with new fire.

The newness of the mitzva is further emphasized by the custom of adding a new candle every night. Beginning from the second night, for seven[305] successive nights – once on each of the days of the week – we increase the number of candles we light. This reflects how we must constantly increase our efforts to spread the “lamp” of “mitzva” and the “light” of “Torah.”

The Chanuka lights also reflect the light of the Jewish soul. As the Tanach[306] teaches, “The soul of man” – i.e., each and every Jew, young or old – “is the lamp of G-d.” The mitzva of lighting Chanuka candles enables each person to fulfill the purpose of his soul’s descent in the world – to spread G-dly light, not only in his home, but in his surroundings, and even, as expressed in the Menora lightings which we have just witnessed, in the furthest removed corners of the world.

CHILDREN AS LEADERS; THE POWER OF TZ'DAKA

The above is particularly relevant to Jewish children, for they are called Tzivos Hashem, G-d’s army. This name implies that they have been chosen by G-d and entrusted with special missions by Him.

Each Jewish child – boy or girl – should know that G-d loves him or her like a father loves an only son.[307] As an expression of that love, G-d grants him all of his needs and also gives him extra delicacies. Similarly, He entrusts him with special missions to increase and spread Judaism and

When the principles of Jewish education are engraved in a child’s heart, he will constantly add new light as he grows and proceeds in life.

Torah among his fellow Jews.

The very name Chanuka points to this concept, for it relates to the word Chinuch, which means “education.” We are taught,[308] “Educate a child according to his way [so that] even when he grows older he will not depart from it.” Just as we continue to add new light each night of Chanuka, similarly, when the principles of Jewish education are engraved in a child’s heart, he will constantly add new light as he grows and proceeds in life.

In particular, the importance of a Jewish child’s efforts is expressed through the mitzva of tz’daka. The

tz’daka given by a child is superior in a certain way to the tz’daka given by an adult. An adult works to earn his livelihood, and thus can always replace the money that he has given away. In contrast, a child does not earn his own money and has only what he has been given by his parents. Nevertheless, his nature is not to stint, but rather to give generously when he sees a person in need or a worthy Torah institution.

Furthermore, in keeping with the Chanuka lesson of increasing light, he does not remain satisfied with giving once, but continues to give many other times. And also – and this is of essential importance – he gives with joy, happy at the opportunity to fulfill G-d’s will and do his share in making “a dwelling for G-d in the lower worlds.” So happy in fact will he be that his own parents will learn from him how to rejoice in their observance of the mitzvos, and particularly when giving tz’daka.

To enable you to fulfill the mitzva of tz’daka, in addition to three[309] coins which you will be given as Chanuka gelt, you will be given a fourth coin to give to tz’daka. Our Sages[310] teach that tz’daka brings the future redemption closer.

May the tz’daka we give hasten the fulfillment of the heartfelt prayer of the Jewish people – and particularly of Jewish children – that G-d work miracles for the Jewish people as He did “in those days, at this time.” May we witness, “at this time,” immediately in the present moments – how G-d will cause the Third Beis HaMikdash to descend from the heavens, and then we, together with the entire Jewish people, will watch the kindling of the Menora, “in Your holy courtyard.” May this be in the immediate future.

NOTES:

287. Similarly, in the analog, our Sages relate that “Just as a lamp protects only for a limited period of time, a mitzva also protects only for a limited period. In contrast... just as the light protects forever, the Torah protects forever.”

288. This is reflected in the fact that the performance of mitzvos is limited to specific times and places. In contrast, the obligation to study Torah applies in all times and in all situations. Thus, even when the Beis HaMikdash is not standing, a Jew who studies the laws of the sacrifices is considered as if he has actually offered them.

289. This is particularly true in regard to the mitzva of Chanuka candles which was ordained by the Rabbis and thus, is totally dependent on “the light of Torah.”

290. Even according to the Rambam who maintains that the candles of the Menora should also be kindled in the morning, greater importance is placed on kindling the menora at night. Perhaps this can be explained by the fact that, during the day, the light of the candles is obscured by the light of the sun. In contrast, at night, their light is noticed.

In Or HaTorah, the Tzemach Tzedek explains this concept according to Kabbala. The seven candles of the Menora refer to the seven emotional attributes of Malchus. During the day, i.e., while the seven emotional attributes of Atzilus shine, the light the seven attributes of Malchus contribute is insignificant.

291. The continuous influence of the daily offering is reflected in our Sages’ statement that the daily offering sacrificed at night would atone for sins committed during the day and the daily offering sacrificed in the morning atones for sins committed during the night.

292. In regard to this verse, we find a difference of opinion among the Sages. Rabbi Shimon maintains that the verse should be fulfilled literally; we should devote our entire time to Torah study. Rabbi Yishmoel, in contrast, explains that our obligation to study Torah constantly is fulfilled by studying a limited portion of Torah each day. Our Sages conclude this discussion by relating, “Many followed Rabbi Shimon and were successful. Many followed Rabbi Shimon and were not successful.”

293. The continued influence of the mitzva of sukka is reflected in the law which states that whenever one builds a sukka for the sake of the holiday, even from the beginning of the year, it is acceptable. This shows how the mitzva of sukka shares a connection with the entire year.

294. This question is reinforced by the fact that there is a specific commandment which forbids adding to the commandments of the Torah.

295. This is because, “when you grasp a portion of the essence, you grasp the essence in its entirety.”

296. A Jew’s existence within the limitations of this material world is not as problematic because, as will be explained, in truth these limitations do not constrain him. The difficulty is how can a Jew’s service of G-d, a dimension which seemingly should be unlimited, be confined within limitations.

297. Thus, all mitzvos are part of the Torah which is above

all limitations.

298. This love of G-d and its expression through the observance of the mitzvos is equivalent to mesirus nefesh, “self-sacrifice.” Giving over one’s will, mesirus ha’ratzon, is equivalent to actual mesirus nefesh.

299. Although in Talmudic times, this practice was observed only by the mehadrin min ha’mehadrin, at present, it is common custom throughout the Jewish community to fulfill the mitzva in this manner.

300. This extension beyond the boundaries of holiness was also reflected by the Chashmonaim kindling of lights in “Your holy courtyard.” The mitzva is to kindle the Menora in the Beis HaMikdash itself. When they rededicated the Beis HaMikdash, the Chashmonaim extended that light and “kindled lamps in Your holy courtyard.”

301. Even on the first nights of Chanuka when eight candles are not lit, it is known that ultimately the Menora will be lit for eight days and that, on the last night, eight candles will be kindled. (The significance of the eight candles is further emphasized by the Pesikta Rabbasi which states that when the Chashmonaim entered the Beis HaMikdash, they found eight iron staves and used them to kindle the Menora.)

302. This relates to the principle explained in connection with our Sages’ interpretation of the verse, “You made me dwell in darkness,” as referring to the Babylonian Talmud. The approach of the Babylonian Talmud is characterized by “darkness,” questions and concealment. Nevertheless, it is through this approach that the unlimited nature of Torah is revealed.

[In this context, it is related that the Alter Rebbe offered to give the Tzemach Tzedek all of his Torah knowledge as a present. The Tzemach Tzedek declined to accept it, explaining that he wanted to labor in Torah study. Afterwards, he regretted his decision because he realized that he could have accepted the Alter Rebbe’s gift and then, begun laboring from that level of knowledge. There is ample room for progress since the Torah is truly unbounded.]

303. Also, this narrative is connected to the dreams of Pharaoh and his butler. This likewise relates to exile which is often described by the metaphor of a dream.

304. Mishlei 6:23.

305. These seven days correspond to the number of branches in the Menora of the Beis HaMikdash. As emphasized by the vision shown to the prophet Zechariah (ch. 4), this Menora serves as a symbol for the entire Jewish people.

306. Mishlei 20:27.

307. Kesser Shem Tov, Hosafos, p. 70.

308. Mishlei 22:6.

309. Doing something three times constitutes a chazaka; i.e., it establishes a practice firmly. This word also signifies strength. This is especially relevant to the Jewish people who grow in strength from day to day in their observance of the Torah and its mitzvos. This growing strength is reflected in the number of Chanuka lights, which increase from day to day throughout the holiday.

310. Bava Basra 10a.



EVER-INCREASING IN LIGHT

RABBI MENACHEM M. SCHNEERSON
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By the Grace of G-d
15th of Kislev, 5734
Brooklyn, N. Y.

Miss Devorah Chanah Benjamin
1, Eastwold
32, Hunter St.
Yoeville
Johannesburg, So. Africa

Blessing and Greetings:

I was pleased to receive your letter, which reached me only just now, since it apparently went by ordinary mail.

Thus, your letter was received at a very good time, just before Yud-tet Kislev, followed by Chanukah. I trust you know the history and meaning of both these festivals. The main point of both of them is that a Jew must always try to spread the light of Torah and Mitzvoth both in his or her life, as well as all around, and that this should be done in an ever growing measure, just as we light the Chanukah candles in growing numbers from day to day.

Wishing you a happy Chanukah and an ever growing measure of brightness in all your affairs,

With blessing, *M. Schneerson*

When my daughter, Devora Chana, was seven years old she wrote the Rebbe her good news: She began playing "Jump rope". In the above letter the Rebbe writes that he was pleased to receive the letter, and went on about Chanukah...

Readers and collectors of the Rebbe's letters: We urge you to send in the Rebbe's English correspondence which was not yet published in the 7 English existing volumes and which pertain to issues of general relevance. Please send them in so that the letters can be published for everybody's benefit and thereby preserved forever.

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AN “ACCEPTABLE MATTER” IN AN “ACCEPTABLE MANNER”

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

TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY

Since all matters pertaining to Moshiach and the Redemption have already been accepted in the world, it is clear that when the Rebbe says that the information must be conveyed “b’ofen ha’miskabel,” this does not place restrictions, rather it creates greater opportunity. The Rebbe gives an additional instruction: When we explain the subject of Moshiach, we must make the message suitable for everyone “according to his intellect and understanding.” There is no “exemption” here from publicizing Moshiach, only an “obligation.” Excerpts from a class in Moshiach and the Redemption analyzing the sicha from Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sara 5752.

THE POINT MUST BE INSTILLED “OPENLY”

In the sicha delivered during the 5752 International Shluchim Conference, Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sara, the Rebbe MH”M revealed a new innovation to the whole subject of shlichus. Until then, the whole avoda of shlichus was for the purpose of bringing Moshiach. However, the emphasis was on the shlichus itself, and not on its objective. In this sicha, the Rebbe reveals that not only has the subject of Moshiach been transformed into the chief objective and the subject of primary involvement, but also all matters of shlichus have become instilled with it. Moshiach is the central point with which the entire avoda of shlichus must be instilled.

Some people raised a number of important points from this sicha, and I would like to touch upon them here briefly:

In Sec. 14 of the sicha, the Rebbe says, “All the details in the avoda of shlichus in spreading Torah, Yiddishkait, and the wellsprings of chassidus must be instilled with this point: how this

brings us to greet Moshiach Tzidkeinu.”

Regarding this phrase, there are those who point out that when the Rebbe received the sicha for editing, it included the word “openly,” as follows: “All the details in the avoda of shlichus in spreading Torah, Yiddishkait, and the wellsprings of chassidus must be instilled **openly** with this point: how this brings us to greet Moshiach Tzidkeinu.” Yet the Rebbe omitted this word from the final edited version. Thus, they draw the conclusion that the Rebbe doesn’t want the subject of Moshiach to be instilled openly in the avoda of shlichus. In other words, although this is something that must be felt by shluchim, nevertheless, we’re talking about an internal matter, and it is forbidden for everyone to know about it... In any event, they claim that all the ruckus revolving around Moshiach and the Moshiach Campaign is unnecessary and even against the Rebbe’s will!

Before we get to the heart of the matter, it should be clear to any knowledgeable person that the Rebbe’s proofreading corrections are not meant for public consumption. Therefore, if we want to know what the Rebbe wants from us, we simply have to open the printed sicha that the Rebbe submitted for publication in the press, and to see what the Rebbe says.

Anyone who learns the sicha without knowing that the Rebbe omitted the word “openly” from that section, reading the Rebbe’s words, “everything must be instilled with the idea of greeting Moshiach Tzidkeinu,” understands simply that the intention is to act in such a way that everyone will realize that all the mitzva campaigns must be instilled with

this concept. There is no allusion here to an instruction to leave this matter in the realm of our inner feelings.

Even after we know that the Rebbe deleted the word “openly,” it is still quite clear from that same section of the sicha, submitted for publication, that this point must be instilled openly in the avoda of shlichus, as the Rebbe did not change the meaning of the instruction by the omission of the word “openly.” In the final analysis, before the proofreading corrections, there was an **additional** emphasis



on a revealed aspect to the avoda, and now it is without that emphasis. But there remains a clear and absolute instruction to act in a manner so that everything will be instilled with this concept. The fact is that this point was written so clearly, there is nothing that changes the Rebbe’s explicit words that have already been publicized on the matter.

To put it simply, the proofreading omission of a particular word can stem from many possible reasons, and apart from the proofreader himself, no

one can establish with absolute certainty the actual reason for the omission. This is true all the more when the proofreader is the Rebbe, whose ways “are higher than our ways,” and whose thoughts “are higher than our thoughts.” The Rebbe’s omission of a particular word cannot serve under any circumstances as a basis for determining the reason for that omission.

We can bring here an interesting fact to illustrate this point. Chassidim once submitted a question to the Rebbe regarding a certain section in one of his writings, asking if they had understood his intentions correctly. The Rebbe’s response: “There are a number of meanings here.”

What is clear is that we must learn the printed sicha and act accordingly. Everyone admits that the simple meaning of the sicha is that this point must be openly instilled in all aspects of mitzvaim.

Furthermore, since the entire sicha deals with the issue of publicity and spreading the message, in the words of the Rebbe, “spreading Torah and Yiddishkait and spreading the wellsprings outward,” there is no question that the simple meaning of the Rebbe’s orders is that things must be done openly. The whole point of the publicity is that the message should reach everyone in a revealed manner. Thus, when all this is instilled with the concept of Moshiach, then this is what everyone gets – Moshiach.

To those who still have their doubts on this point, it is recommended that they study the sicha in greater depth, particularly the page before the aforementioned section, at the end of Sec. 11. The Rebbe writes there (as it appears in the original Yiddish sicha and the

Hebrew translation in *D'var Malchus*): “In every shlichus that a Jew has ‘to serve his Maker,’ he receives (as it were) from the *m’shaleiach* (G-d) ‘all that [H]e has,’ including the power of His Blessed Essence and Being (including ‘all that [H]e has’), in order to bring out the uniqueness of a Jew’s body and soul in this physical world. This must be done in a way that every last detail of a Jew’s avoda is instilled with one point and one sole purpose: **the revelation of Moshiach Tzidkeinu** (the fulfillment of shlichus, the *yichud* of *ma”h* and *ba”n*).”

The Rebbe speaks here about the shlichus of the entire Jewish people, emphasizing that the point must be instilled openly. Thus, it is clearly understood that when the Rebbe proceeds to discuss the subject in far greater detail in connection with the avoda of the shluchim, he continues along the same lines, i.e., the point must be instilled in an open manner.

Even at the very beginning of the sicha, it is possible to understand the Rebbe’s exact intention: Many people erroneously quote the Rebbe as saying that the Moshiach Campaign is “the main shlichus,” meaning that there are many forms of shlichus and Moshiach is the main one. The Rebbe doesn’t say that! At the beginning of the sicha, the Rebbe says that the Moshiach Campaign is “the main thing and a fundamental principle.” In other words, there is one shlichus, which includes all the mitzvaim, and the main shlichus is: **the middle bar that extends from one end to the other – Mivtza Moshiach.**

WHAT IS THE CONCEPT OF MOSHIACH?

An additional point that the Rebbe touches upon in this sicha is how we are supposed to publicize

the matter. In the Rebbe’s golden language:

“And the simple meaning is that we must come and bring good resolutions from the Shluchim Conference on how every shliach must prepare himself and all Jews in his location, his city, etc., to greet Moshiach Tzidkeinu through his explaining the subject of Moshiach, as clarified in the Written and Oral Torah, in an acceptable manner for each person according to his intellect and understanding, including especially the study of the

Chassidim once submitted a question to the Rebbe regarding a certain section in one of his writings, asking if they had understood his intentions correctly. The Rebbe’s response: “There are a number of meanings here.”

subject of Moshiach and the Redemption, particularly in a manner of wisdom, understanding, and knowledge.”

The doubters come waving their edited copy of this section as well, where it was written initially “through his explaining the subject of Moshiach **and who Moshiach is,**” and the Rebbe omitted the words “and who Moshiach is.” On the basis of this omission, they claim

that this proves that the Rebbe negated publicizing Moshiach’s identity.

Thus, we must come again with the simple and logical principle. Since the Rebbe’s proofreading corrections are not meant to be brought for our consideration, therefore, if we want to know what the Rebbe wants from us, we simply have to open the printed sicha that the Rebbe submitted for publication, and to see what the Rebbe says.

What exactly does the Rebbe say? “Through his explaining the subject of Moshiach, as clarified in the Written and Oral Torah.” What does this mean? Anyone who opens Rambam to the *Laws of Kings and Their Wars and Melech HaMoshiach*, Chapter 11, will see that the Rambam is dealing with the identity of Moshiach. The Rambam brings the criteria that establish who Melech HaMoshiach is. In simple terms, according to halacha, when we know of someone who meets all these criteria, we have an obligation to believe that he is Melech HaMoshiach. These are the halachos that the Rebbe is asking us to learn!

This means that despite the fact that the Rebbe omitted the words “and who Moshiach is,” the subject itself is included in the sicha. If the Rebbe’s intention was to take this issue and erase it completely, he should have gone back and written that we need to explain that “the subject of the Redemption” does not necessarily lead to the identity of Moshiach, nor does “the subject of Moshiach” directly bring those who learn about it to the identity of the Rebbe as Melech HaMoshiach.

AN ACCEPTABLE MATTER IN AN ACCEPTABLE MANNER

In the section quoted above, the Rebbe instructs us to explain the subject of Moshiach “in an

acceptable manner for each person according to his intellect and understanding.”

There are those who claim that this proves how the Rebbe wants to limit the publicity on the Redemption, and permits only what is deemed acceptable. Anyone who learns the Rebbe’s sichos from 5751-5752 cannot come to a bigger mistake than this in his understanding of this sicha. In the sicha from Shabbos Parshas Shoftim, the Rebbe writes that “the Redemption is not an innovation,

rather all matters of the Redemption have already begun (“as in the beginning”) and they have already been drawn and accepted into this physical and lowest of all worlds.” It is stated clearly here that all matters of the Redemption have been accepted in the world, and thus, it is

simply impossible to say that certain aspects to the announcement of the Redemption cannot be accepted and are forbidden to publicize.

Since all matters pertaining to Moshiach and the Redemption have already been accepted in the world, it is clear that when the Rebbe says that the information must be conveyed “*b’ofen ha’miskabel*,” this does not place restrictions, rather it creates greater opportunity. The Rebbe gives an additional

instruction: When we explain the subject of Moshiach, we must make the message suitable for everyone “according to his intellect and understanding.” There is no “exemption” here from publicizing Moshiach, only an “obligation.”

The Rebbe specifically writes “an acceptable **manner**,” not “an acceptable **matter**,” as the matter of Moshiach **is** acceptable and nonnegotiable. However, this matter must be conveyed in “an acceptable manner.” In other words, when we speak before a



group of children, we talk about, for example, how “delicacies will be as common as dust,” and when we speak before adults, we focus upon the announcement of “at that time, there will be no hunger and no war.” Before people who see things superficially, we have to emphasize the more material aspects, while those who can comprehend in greater depth can hear about its more spiritual side. This is what’s called “an acceptable matter in an acceptable manner.

The Rebbe wants things to be explained to each person according to his intellect and understanding in a manner acceptable to them, in order that they will be deeply instilled with the subject of the Redemption and be ready to greet Moshiach.

The idea of “*b’ofen ha’miskabel*” exists in all matters pertaining to the Rebbe. Its emphasis in connection with the Moshiach Campaign stems from the simple fact that it does not focus upon a particular physical act, but an inner

understanding that is openly apparent as it penetrates every detail of our daily lives. As a result, each person must absorb this matter in an acceptable manner according to his intellect, understanding, and senses.

Therefore, when we explain the issue of Moshiach to a specific group

of people, we must look for the appropriate methods so that they will accept the conveyed message. Of course, this does not mean that we can avoid our involvement in the subject by claiming that it won’t be accepted.

THERE’S STILL SOMETHING LEFT, NAMELY...

In connection with the study of this sicha, there is another important point to emphasize that properly clarifies how the Moshiach

Campaign includes the subject of Moshiach's identity, which appears in Sec. 13 as follows:

"We understand from this that since the shlichim have long passed the start of the avoda of shlichus in spreading Torah and Yiddishkait and spreading the wellsprings outward, and they have long passed the middle stage of the avoda of shlichus (as in the abovementioned announcement of the leader of our generation), and nevertheless, the true and complete Redemption has yet to come in actual deed – we must say that there still remains something to do to bring the True Redemption."

What's left to do? The Rebbe continues to explain in the next section:

"Namely, according to the known statement that 'in every generation, someone is born from the seed of Yehuda who is fit to be Moshiach in Israel,' 'one who is fit from his righteousness to be the Redeemer, and when the time comes, G-d will reveal to him and He will send him, etc.,' and according to the announcement of my saintly father-in-law, the Rebbe, leader of our generation, that all of the avoda has been completed – it is understood that the shlichus of my saintly father-in-law, the Rebbe, 'Please send in the hand of who You will send,' has begun to take place.

The idea of "b'ofen ha'miskabel" exists in all matters pertaining to the Rebbe. Its emphasis in connection with the Moshiach Campaign stems from the simple fact that it does not focus upon a particular physical act...

Furthermore, it is understood from this that the only thing that remains now in the avoda of shlichus is **to greet Moshiach Tzidkeinu in actual deed**, in order that he can fulfill his shlichus in actual deed and take all Israel out of exile!"

The entire italicized section seems to be totally unnecessary. It can be completely skipped to begin from "the only thing that remains now in the avoda of shlichus is to greet Moshiach Tzidkeinu in actual deed." It is abundantly clear,

however, that the Rebbe wants to emphasize here an important point, i.e., the Moshiach whom we must greet is the leader of our generation!

The Rebbe states that Moshiach exists in this world and we must greet him in order that he can fulfill his shlichus to take all the Jewish people out of exile. Afterwards, the Rebbe explains how we go about greeting Moshiach.

This is the simple reason why initially the sicha's publishers wrote explicitly the words "and who Moshiach is" – for this is the simple meaning in the sicha itself. The whole sicha speaks about this very point, and anyone who doesn't know that the Rebbe omitted these words (something that no one is supposed to know, certainly not the thousands of Jews that read this sicha printed in the papers) understand quite simply that the Rebbe means that there is a Moshiach in our generation, and he has already begun his shlichus in the world. Now, all we have to do is greet him by preparing ourselves, etc., in order that he can accept his shlichus to take all Israel out of exile, immediately, mamash, NOW!

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THIS IS HOW WE LIGHT CHANUKA LIGHTS!

BY MENACHEM ZIEGELBOIM

PART I

The Chassid, R' Mordechai Chanzin, was imprisoned three times in his life. The first time, he sat for ten years, the second time it was five years, and the third time it was six years. Shortly after his release, he was imprisoned again on various pretexts. Altogether, he spent 21 years in jail, labor camps, and various exiles, from 5695-5716 (1935-1956), when he was released for good.

It is difficult to describe what he went through in the labor camps. He suffered tremendously, but with his indomitable spirit, his faith, and his stubbornness, he managed to prevail and to make it through hell intact.

During one of his imprisonments, after the interrogation and sentencing, he was sent to do hard labor near the North Pole, a place called Nowy Lazimiya, which means, New Land. People hadn't been there before; aside from penguins and other birds, there was nothing to be seen.

One of the first jobs he was told to do was to chop trees. Mordechai was not a tall and strong fellow, he had no access to kosher food and never ate treif, and so he was weak. He continually had to come up with excuses to avoid being assigned to chopping wood, preferring to be drafted for any other job.

One time, they sent him to work

in a coal mine. He was a young bachur, and when he was about to enter the pit, a husky Ukrainian miner grabbed him and whispered, "Child, listen to me and don't go in there! Run away!"

Mordechai said, "They'll kill me if I don't go in and work."

But the miner convinced him not to enter.

"You lit Chanuka lights? Chanuka lights?" the judge asked in wonder. He seemed to be shaken by this. "What did you say? Chanuka lights?" he repeated a third time in wonderment.

A few minutes later, there was a tremendous flash flood, and the mine collapsed. Whoever was in it was killed. Mordechai had barely climbed completely out when he saw the tragedy take place before his eyes.

His life was in danger many times, and there was anti-Semitism even in these forsaken places. One day, one of the jailers got angry at

him and wanted to kill him. He had taken out his revolver, but Mordechai wasn't afraid. He went over to him, looked him in the eye, and pointed at his forehead and said, "Here, shoot over here at my Jewish forehead."

Incredibly, the man lowered the revolver and Mordechai's life was saved.

He had the ability of finding the right approach to the heart of everyone he met, and thus, he made many friends among the prisoners, as well as numerous enemies.

In one of the camps, a group of Moslem prisoners set up an ambush in an attempt to murder him. Another group of criminal prisoners whom Mordechai was friendly with found out, and the latter made sure to defend him and protect him.

Throughout his years in labor camps, he kept Shabbos and ate only kosher food. He was helped tremendously by packages that his old and sick mother sent him, packages of cigarettes that he sold for food to sustain him.

For a few years, he also had t'fillin, which he managed to smuggle in. The prisoners who were close to him knew of his secret, and on more than one occasion they said, "Nu, put on those boxes of yours."

PART II

Observing Shabbos was extremely difficult. Every Shabbos, he found a different excuse to get out of

working, but the guards were constantly on his case. One Shabbos he didn't come up with a satisfactory excuse and so he simply announced that he doesn't work on Shabbos. The guards tried to force him to work but couldn't budge him.

When the commander of the camp heard about this, he asked that Mordechai be brought to him. The commander was known as a cruel man who killed many prisoners without blinking an eye. Mordechai was convinced that he wouldn't leave the meeting alive, but he stuck to his guns.

When he was brought into the commander's room, the commander ordered everybody else out of the room. Mordechai was convinced that his end was near. The commander closed the door and began pacing back and forth. Suddenly he turned to Mordechai and asked, "What's your father's name?"

"Menachem Mendel."

"And your mother's name?"

"Freida."

"Aha, Freidela, Mendele," the commander mumbled to himself. He continued pacing and then suddenly stopped and asked Mordechai to bless him.

It turned out that the commander was a Jew sent into exile during the Revolution due to no fault of his own. Thanks to his toughness and cruelty, he had achieved this position.

After Mordechai left the commander's room, the commander ordered the guards not to dare harm him.

PART III

Mordechai loved to relate his experiences in Russia. He considered this his testimony – to relate to the generations to come what had taken place over there. He felt even more compelled to relate the following story, viewing it almost as a mitzva,

because of a promise he made...

* * *

As Chanuka approached, a group of bachurim in a labor camp in Siberia gathered together to figure out how they could light the menorah despite the danger. Someone promised to get margarine, wicks would be made from threads in their clothing, and something to put the melted margarine in would be obtained from somewhere or other.

Mordechai was the oldest of the 18 bachurim in the group. They all agreed that in the dead of night they would all gather to secretly light the Chanuka lights. Mordechai was honored with the lighting, and he emotionally said the brachos. He

***Mordechai said,
"They'll kill me if I
don't go in and
work." But the miner
convinced him not to
enter...***

remembered his parents and their home of Torah and Chassidus, and the wonderful days of Chanuka that he celebrated with them.

While he still stood there and watched the lights, NKVD agents burst into the room. They threw all eighteen boys into a dark cell.

The first one to be put on trial was the oldest, Mordechai. The trial, of course, was a farce, for the sentence had been decided beforehand.

Although Mordechai was familiar with the Communist system, he was still surprised to hear the judge say that he was accused of planning a rebellion. The basis for the accusation was the lighting of flares

to alert the enemy of their position.

The room where the trial took place wasn't large. On one side was the judge's chair, and the accused faced him. The judge read the accusation in a somber voice. He concluded by saying that the punishment was death, and did he have anything to say for himself.

Mordechai asked whether the sentence was only for him, or for the entire group. The judge looked at him and said, "For all the counter-revolutionaries."

Mordechai felt the room spinning around. Up until this point, he had tried to maintain an air of indifference, but when he heard that it wasn't just his life on the line, but that of all his friends, it was altogether different.

Mordechai burst into tears, feeling it was his fault, since he was the oldest and he was responsible for all of them.

Mordechai stood there and cried while the judge sat and watched. Mordechai, who was emotional by nature, couldn't hold back his feelings. All the pain that had been pent-up in his heart for years, burst forth.

"Come over here," suddenly said the judge.

Mordechai approached the judge who began asking him about his family, their names, their occupations, and other personal details. Mordechai answered all the questions through his tears.

When the judge finished questioning him, he got up and began pacing back and forth. He kept repeating all the names and information that he had just heard.

"What do you have to say in your defense?" the judge suddenly asked.

Mordechai got up his courage and replied, "We are Jews and we lit the lights in order to fulfill the mitzva of lighting the Chanuka lights. This was why we gathered together."

“You lit Chanuka lights? Chanuka lights?” the judge asked in wonder. He seemed to be shaken by this. “What did you say? Chanuka lights?” he repeated a third time in wonderment. He looked inexplicably moved and it was apparent that he was experiencing an inner turmoil.

A moment later, the judge motioned to the two soldiers who were present to wait outside. After they left the room, the judge said, “If you lit Chanuka lights, I’ll show you how you really light Chanuka lights!”

The judge lit the oil-lamp on his desk and began to burn all the papers that denounced the accused. His hands shook, and he quickly put the papers into the fire as though fearing he would change his mind.

“Here, this is how you light Chanuka lights! See? This is how we light Chanuka lights!” and he continued feeding the papers into the fire until they were all consumed.

Then he took the ashes and threw them out the window. The Siberian wind quickly scattered them. Within a few seconds nothing remained.

Then the judge pressed a button on his desk and the soldiers returned.

“Take all the imprisoned boys,” he said authoritatively, “and separate them. They shouldn’t meet one another. They are despicable enemies. Don’t shoot them because they aren’t even worth a bullet.”

After the soldiers had left, the judge said to Mordechai, “I am a Jew and I ask you to relate to the generations that follow, how we light Chanuka lights!”

* * *

After Khrushchev rose to power, in 1956, the government pardoned hundreds of thousands of prisoners, and their names were cleared. Mordechai Chanzin’s name was

cleared too, and he was permitted to return home.

PART IV

Mordechai Chanzin told this story in the beis midrash of the Machnovka Rebbe zt”l in B’nei Brak, after Shacharis, saying l’chaim for his mother’s yahrtzait, and weeping throughout.

Among those present were Rabbi Tzvi Shtammer one of the mekuravim of the Machnovka Rebbe, as well as his son, Reb Dov Shtammer, who immediately wrote the story down. He also wrote up the story as a theatrical play, and it was performed at a *tish* of the Sanzer Rebbe, entitled, “Chanuka Licht in Siberia.”

Thus, Mordechai listened to the judge’s behest, to let people know of the Jew who saved the life of his fellow Jews.

(I heard the story from Reb Dov Shtammer)



Mordechai Chanzin (third from the left) at a Yud-Tes Kislev farbrengen in Kfar Chabad

IS THERE A LEADER OUT THERE?

BY DAFNA CHAIM

The fascinating story of Yehudis Huygens, a convert from South Africa who came to Lubavitch as a loyal soldier in the army of the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach.

I met Yehudis Huygens for the first time on Chaf-Beis Shvat 5763. I was attending a special program connected with the Kinus HaShluchos in New York as a journalist. This terrific program was for mekuravos of the shluchos from around the world.

That is the story of Yehudis, a geras tzedek, a righteous convert, from Johannesburg, whose inner spark gave her no rest. For a long time she searched and experimented until she finally found what she was looking for.

Recently, on a visit to Tzfas, I met Yehudis again. She invited me to farbreng with her to mark ten years since the day she converted.

The farbrengen took place at Machon Alte, where the mother and her daughter Danielle learn together.

THE FLYER THAT OPENED MY EYES

Yehudis relates:

I was born in Johannesburg, to a Jewish father and a Catholic

mother. Although there was almost nothing Jewish in my home, my sister and I always felt we were Jewish.

When I became 18, my sister (who also eventually converted) suggested that I approach the local beis din to make my Jewish status official. I went to the beis din (twelve rabbanim) and told them, with youthful passion, that I was Jewish.

Naturally, they were unimpressed by my declaration, but when they saw that I was insistent, they sent me to study Judaism with a ninety-year-old man in preparation for conversion.

After half a year of studying (each lesson cost \$100), I felt I wasn't making progress and I decided to abandon the idea. In order to give validity to my Jewish feelings, I went to Eretz Yisroel, where I stayed on Kibbutz Netiv HaLamed-Hei in Gush Etzyon (a kibbutz of HaPoel HaMizrachi). My three-month stay there did nothing at all to strengthen my Jewish

feelings.

Throughout this time, I was in touch with Paul, a gentile from a Greek background, and when I returned to Johannesburg, we decided to get married. This essentially buried my desire to convert deep within me.

I continued to live my life with no significant connection to Judaism. Life was about family, work, trips and entertainment. It looked like I was living the good life. I had a devoted husband, two adorable daughters, Hadassa and Danielle, a large and beautiful house in the city, a summer home on the coast, an expensive car, plenty of money, what more could I want? Yet, I felt a terrible emptiness, and an intolerable lack of peace of mind. I felt a yearning for something hidden, but didn't know how to explain it.

As the years flew by, it became harder and harder, until I became anorexic. Today I know it was connected with my confusion, with my despairing search for a life of meaning.

At a certain point, I got all sorts of signs from Above, inspiring me to renew my connection with the Creator. When my two daughters were miraculously saved from a terrible car accident, I decided to more seriously search for meaning.

Some of my friends at that time – some of whom were Jewish – advised me to join them on a trip to Peru, which was very popular back then. There were workshops on “Kabbala,” yoga, New Age thinking, etc. Fortunately, I canceled at the last minute, for I had a strong feeling that this wasn’t what I wanted.

At that time, during 5751-2, all sorts of incredible things took place in the world, like the dismantling of the Soviet Union and the fall of the Berlin Wall, which led to the reunification of East and West Germany. I thought these events were earthshaking, and I was extremely disappointed by people’s apathy to what was going on.

Something so enormous was going on, something that had to be part of a much more significant and deep process. The world was undergoing massive changes, and there was a reason behind it. All this just confused me more. I asked myself why no leader had arisen to explain what was really going on, someone who could take charge,

It looked like I was living the good life. Yet, I felt a terrible emptiness, and an intolerable lack of peace of mind. I felt a yearning for something hidden, but didn’t know how to explain it.

who could lead us.

One Friday night I got up the courage and went to Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Hecht’s shul in Sandtown, and it was an amazing experience. I loved it immediately. It had a special atmosphere, a holy atmosphere. Rabbi Hecht’s impressive appearance, his face framed in a full beard, and his hat

and sirtuk, emanated authenticity. I felt this was real Judaism and that I belonged. I thought that if one day I would renew my search, because of my Jewish roots, then I would start here.

I found a flyer with Hebrew writing on it and a picture of the Rebbe, which caught my attention. I was hypnotized by the picture and couldn’t take my eyes off it. Although I still didn’t know who he was, I felt that this was an outstanding personality, a powerfully spiritual man, come to bring the news of Geula to the world – Moshiach! (Although I didn’t know this term then).

I felt I had found what I had been searching for all my life. It was an incredible feeling, which suffused me with calm and satisfaction.

I took the flyer home, and as soon as I was able to, I showed it to an Israeli friend and asked her to translate what it said. It was a quote from the Rebbe, in which he referred to the miraculous events taking place in the world at that time, which were a preparation for the coming of Moshiach. The Rebbe even gave examples like the crumbling of the Soviet Union and the dismantling of the wall in Germany...

After hearing this, I was absolutely sure of how to proceed. It was clear to me that I would be setting out on a long and difficult journey, back to my Jewish roots, and this time, no obstacle would stand in my way. I resolved that I would not rest until I achieved my goal.

WHY CONVERT?

When I went to the beis din with my request to convert, they tried to dissuade me.

“You are married to a gentile,



Rabbi Heller in front of Beis Menachem in Johannesburg with sign that Yehudis made

you have a beautiful family, and there's no reason to break it up," they said. But I didn't give up. I went home and explained to my husband what I felt and that I couldn't deny it any longer; it was simply stronger than me, and there was no future for our marriage.

Two months later, I was divorced and I began the official conversion process. I studied with Mashy Lipsker, the wife of Rabbi Menachem Mendel Lipsker, shliach in Johannesburg. (I would like to thank this wonderful woman; she dedicated a lot of her precious time and energy to me and I am very grateful to her)

I had met Rebbetzin Mashy earlier. It was at the Kinus that the shluchim here made in response to the Jews flocking to Peru in search of spirituality. They brought out Rabbi Immanuel Shochet from Toronto to speak, and Mashy opened the event. She spoke beautifully about a life of k'dusha and tahara, and I was very touched by what she said.

When the event was over, I sat on the side and waited for the hall to empty (the entire time I was scared that they would discover that I wasn't Jewish and throw me out, so I tried to be inconspicuous). I went over to Mashy and asked her to learn with me. I was so emotional that I couldn't control my tears and it was hard for me to speak. Mashy calmed me down, took my phone number and promised to keep in touch.

I was thrilled when she called me the next day and invited me to come over and talk. After this conversation, we began learning together, and this was after she got the okay from the beis din, because they generally have their own teachers.

We learned for sixteen months,

in the course of which I was under the watchful eye of the members of the beis din. They examined me under a microscope every step of the way, and throughout that time, I lived in fear that I would trip up. It was a very difficult and stressful time for me.

A very interesting thing happened on Rabbi Shochet's second visit to Johannesburg, that the community was a witness to. Rabbi Shochet spoke in the shul, before a large crowd of men and

Rabbi Shochet spoke in the shul, before a large crowd of men and women, about Moshiach. He said that when Moshiach comes, converts will no longer be accepted. When I heard that, I was shaken up and I cried out.

women, about Moshiach. He said that when Moshiach comes, converts will no longer be accepted. When I heard that, I was shaken up and I cried out.

I was really surprised at myself, since I am not the type to yell, and certainly not like that, but it burst forth spontaneously. This was shortly after the Rebbe made a big commotion about Moshiach and the feeling was strong that Moshiach was coming any minute! I was terrified by the thought that

Moshiach would come and I would be left behind. It just shattered me.

I left the shul red in embarrassment, and broken by the information. Luckily, when the lecture was over, Rabbi Shochet came over to me and said that since I had started the conversion process, my conversion would be accepted even if Moshiach would come before I finished. That calmed me down.

WHAT BLESSING DO YOU SAY WHEN YOU SEE THE OCEAN?

Baruch Hashem, after a long and difficult journey, I had finally reached the end, or was it the beginning?

On 24 Av 5754, my two daughters, 11-year-old Hadassa and 8-year-old Danielle, and I went to the beis din in Johannesburg for the final test. The rabbis tested the girls too (who had already transferred to Jewish schools and learned with me too, so that their knowledge of Judaism was really good). One of the rabbis asked Hadassa to enumerate all the fast days. She named them all except for the 10th of Teives, which slipped her mind. When she couldn't remember it, she burst into tears, fearing that because of her, we would fail the conversion process.

The rabbi asked Danielle, "You have a summer house at the ocean, tell me what blessing do you say when you see the ocean?"

Danielle answered, "I don't know, but it doesn't really matter."

"Why doesn't it matter?" asked the rabbi.

"Because my mother always has a siddur in her pocketbook and when she needs to say a bracha she opens her siddur to see what the correct bracha is," said Danielle

with a big smile.

The rabbi smiled too and said, “Come back tomorrow to immerse in the mikva.”

TEARS ALONG THE WAY

Now we’ll switch to Danielle, a charming young lady. She is all of 18 but she displays leadership skills, which include taking initiative and responsibility (next year, G-d willing, she will be a madricha at the Rosenfeld’s seminary in Tzfas).

She has spent the last eight months in intensive study at Machon Alte, and she’s thrilled to be there. She warmly thanks the staff and girls, who are like family to her.

Danielle’s path wasn’t strewn with roses either, and she shared some of her experiences:

“I undertook the conversion process with love and joy, but didn’t feel the same for Chabad. I felt much more comfortable with other groups such as Young Israel. I went to their school and to B’nei Akiva, and was even an active leader there and was very involved in the community.

“My mother tried to drag me to Chabad, but wasn’t too successful. One time, she managed to convince me to go to camp Gan Yisroel, and it was a nightmare. I hated every minute of it. I went home and asked my mother not to talk to me anymore about Chabad or the Rebbe.

“My mother, like every Lubavitcher, didn’t give up until she attained what she wanted more than anything: a Chassidische chinuch al taharas ha’kodesh. So last year, my last year of high school, I transferred to Torah Academy of Chabad. This time too, it was a nightmare, but don’t think it stopped there. When I finished high

school, I didn’t want to hear about a Chabad seminary. It was out of the question! But my mother didn’t rest for a minute, and she came up with a new plan: Machon Alte in Tzfas!

“Naturally, I opposed this idea, but my mother had her way, and I sadly headed off for Tzfas. Throughout the flight, I cried and didn’t understand why she was doing this to me. I would never forgive her for ruining my life, I



Rabbi Heller with the seifer Torah that Yehudis donated

thought.

“I got a real shock when I arrived at the ‘end of the world’ in Tzfas. How would I live in a place like that? The school looked awful to me. It was a cold and rainy winter, windows were broken and rain and freezing wind blew into the rooms while the heat didn’t work at all.

“If that wasn’t enough, I was assigned kitchen duty two days

later, I, who had grown up with a nanny, had to scrape the t’china off the plates!

“With the third plate, I broke down and ran to call my mother. ‘Get me out of here!’ I pleaded. ‘I want to go home.’ That was the gist of most of my conversations with my mother at that time.

“Then one day, my mother said, ‘Danielle, you’re there already. Try to get the most out of your stay there, and if in another three months you want to come home, I’ll be happy to have you come home.’

“I realized I didn’t have much choice and instead of crying over the situation I tried to get the most out of it, and actually began to enjoy it. Today, baruch Hashem, I am so happy and so proud to be part of this place... More than anything else, I thank the Rebbe for not giving up on me. The spiritual abundance showered upon me here, the warmth and love, all this will accompany me everywhere I go and throughout my life.”

* * *

Danielle’s mother watched her, deriving much nachas from her beloved daughter’s heartfelt words. Who but her could better appreciate what the two of them went through until they reached this point.

THE LESSON I LEARNED ON GIMMEL TAMMUZ

Yehudis’ commitment and determination to follow through on what she believes, have been applied to the topic of Moshiach, a burning topic for her from the beginning. She has thrown herself into this in order to promote something that needs a real boost in Johannesburg.

Yehudis says, “Gimmel Tammuz 5754 was shortly before the completion of the conversion

process. When I first heard the news, I was shocked and saddened, but I immediately recovered and I felt a strong emuna that this was only a test, the final darkness before the great revelation. I was afraid of sharing my thoughts with anyone, lest they say it was connected with my being a convert.

“I went around for months with these thoughts, keeping them to myself. You have to understand, what motivated me to convert, my entire chayus in Yiddishkeit, came from the belief that the Rebbe is Moshiach. This is what gave me the strength to stand up to all the difficulties, and it’s what got me into Chabad. I just could not relate to what happened on Gimmel Tammuz the way it seemed.

“A year later, I came across a book by Rabbi Shmuel Butman which strengthens the belief that the Rebbe is Moshiach. This book was very important to me, because I finally felt no longer alone in my thoughts. I subsequently got to know other Lubavitchers who believe that the Rebbe is Moshiach and is chai v’kayam.

“I have a billboard business in Johannesburg. One day, when I got to my office, I had a message from

During 5751-2, all sorts of incredible things took place in the world, like the dismantling of the Soviet Union and the fall of the Berlin Wall, which led to the reunification of East and West Germany. I thought these events were earthshaking, and I was extremely disappointed by people’s apathy to what was going on.

Rabbi Heller (whom I didn’t know at that time) who wanted to order a billboard which said, ‘Let’s Welcome Moshiach

with Acts of Goodness and Kindness.’ When I saw the message, I jumped for joy.

“I called Rabbi Heller and bombarded him with questions: Who are you? Why do you need the sign? Where are you located? Etc. He told me that the sign would be hung in the doorway of the shul in his home, and he explained the significance of the sign. Through him, I became familiar with the fervent belief of Chassidim that the Rebbe is Melech HaMoshiach, chai v’kayam, and this belief gave me a renewed chayus.

“This connection made me tremendously excited. Since Rabbi Heller’s house was too small for all the worshippers, we bought him a new building which is called Beis Menachem, and it serves as a shul and a center for inyanei Moshiach and Geula in Johannesburg.

“Aside from this, I was privileged to donate something towards the development of the community in the resort town (a two-hour flight from Johannesburg), where our summer house is. Many Jewish vacationers go there, but the place was a veritable desert from a spiritual perspective.”

Fortunate are we, that we have been privileged to all this!

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EIGHT MIRACLE STORIES FOR EIGHT DAYS OF CHANUKA

BY NOSSON AVROHOM

Beis Moshiach presents eight miracle stories recounted by Rabbi Moshe Entizadeh, rav of the Iranian community in Netanya.

Rabbi Moshe Entizadeh is a beloved figure in Netanya. Among his many activities as a rav of the Iranian community in Netanya and rabbi of their main shul, he gives classes in Chassidus throughout the week.

His humility and uncompromising belief in the words of the Rebbe are integral parts of his personality. Rabbi Entizadeh has been involved in numerous *Igros Kodesh* miracle stories, and when he relates them, the emuna of his audience in the Rebbe's brachos and prophecies is strengthened.

STORY #1 ON HIS BIRTHDAY

The first miracle I saw from the Rebbe had to do with the shul where I serve as rav. About twenty years ago, the first rav of the community died, and he was followed by two rabbis, both of whom didn't last long. For a long time, the community remained without a rav and mentor.

One of the leaders of the community, Mr. Avrohom Sameyach, went to the Rebbe in 5750 in Av.

When he passed by for dollars, Avrohom told the Rebbe about the situation, and that the community was deteriorating without a rav. The Rebbe promised to personally get involved and send them a rav.

I was also visiting the Rebbe at that time. A few days after Rosh Chodesh Elul, I left for Eretz Yisroel, and I saw that Avrohom was on the same flight. He was happy to meet me because I speak Persian. After hearing that I was a Lubavitcher Chassid, he told me that he was also returning from a trip to the Rebbe, and that the Rebbe said he would send him a rav for their Persian community in Netanya.

I was very surprised by the fact that even though he wasn't a Lubavitcher, he had made the trip from Eretz Yisroel out of concern for his community. We spoke a lot about the Rebbe's greatness, and he told me many miracles he had heard that had resulted from the Rebbe's brachos.

A year later, I visited 770 once again. One day, I met a few Lubavitcher Chassidim who were also

originally from Iran. At some point, they said that it wasn't right that I sat and learned all day while the community I came from had no rav. When I told them that I wasn't qualified since I didn't have smicha, they urged me to write to the Rebbe to see what he had to say.

That very day, I wrote to the Rebbe. A few days later, I received the Rebbe's answer, which said: "Get smicha and become a rav – with great success." It was clear to me that the Rebbe had designated me to serve as rav.

I went home and changed my learning program to that of the smicha curriculum. After four years of in-depth study, I passed the smicha test at Heichal Shlomo. Then I went with Rabbi Menachem Mendel Volpe, rav of the Chabad community in Netanya, to a meeting with the shul committee. I told them that I was coming on shlichus from the Lubavitcher Rebbe, and that I accepted the shlichus of being a rav in their community. The community was happy to hear this and prepared a banquet.

A few minutes went by, and amidst all the blessings and good wishes, Avrohom Sameyach came over to me and asked me when my birthday was. I was surprised by his question. Before going to the shul, I had thought of

many questions I might be asked, but it didn't occur to me that I would be asked when my birthday is! I answered him, "Tonight! 17 Tammuz is my birthday."

His face lit up and before I could digest the point of his question, he had made his way to the bima and asked for people's attention. When the room was quiet, he began his story:

"After a year had passed since the Rebbe had promised to send us a rav, I flew to see him again. When I passed by for dollars, I asked the Rebbe where was the rav he had promised? The Rebbe smiled and said that we would get a rav in four years. And the Rebbe added prophetically that the rav would arrive on his birthday!"

STORY #2 AN INCREDIBLE FIND

I travel to Raanana every day where I learn in the Birchat Yitzchok Kollel of the tzaddik Rabbi Yitzchok Hoberman. One day, one of the Kollel members approached me and told me that when his wife had gone that morning to pay their children's tuition, she realized that she had lost her identity card as well as the bank check she was going to use to pay the tuition. She retraced her steps and checked everywhere, but couldn't find her papers. She unhappily returned home and told her husband what had happened.

At that time, there were no volumes of *Igros Kodesh* in the Kollel, but there was a volume of responsa of the Rebbe on topics in *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*. The man made a good resolution, wrote down what had happened, and put the letter into that volume.

We were amazed to read that the topic we opened to was the halacha that when something is lost in a public domain, if the owner did not give up hope of finding it, it still belongs to him.

I encouraged my colleague, telling him it sounded like his wife would find what she had lost, and he shouldn't despair.

The next day, when I walked into the Kollel, the man came over to me smiling and told me that a few hours later, his wife took a bus in a completely different direction. At the end of the trip, she felt she was stepping on something. When she looked to see what it was, she was shocked to see the bank check and her ID card!

I was surprised by his question. Before going to the shul, I had thought of many questions I might be asked, but it didn't occur to me that I would be asked when my birthday is! I answered him, "Tonight! 17 Tammuz is my birthday..."

STORY #3 WHAT HAPPENED TO THE JUDGE?

Chacham Yedidya, a"h, was one of the outstanding people in the Persian community in Netanya. Recently, however, he passed away, to the sorrow of the community who loved him dearly. On my first day as a rav, he was the first to greet me and he helped me settle into my new position. Chacham Yedidya enjoyed hearing the speeches and lectures I

gave, and I enjoyed hearing stories of tzaddikim that he would relate.

One day, he visited me at home, looking very upset. He told me that his oldest son has been in the United States for many years, and works in marketing and importing textiles. Some of his competitors had informed on him, saying that he was avoiding paying taxes, and he would soon have to face a federal judge. The chances of his getting out of this were nil. His son took a top-rated lawyer, and when they read the indictment and the evidence against him, they concluded that he would have to spend four or five years in jail, in addition to paying a hefty fine.

I did my best to cheer up Chacham Yedidya and together we sat down to write to the Rebbe. In the letter that we opened to the Rebbe explained how important it is to learn Chitas and give tz'daka, and the letter ended with the words, "with Hashem's help, you will relate good news."

When I saw the answer, I told him not to worry; if his son fulfilled what the Rebbe said, to learn Chitas and give tz'daka every day, things would be fine.

He quickly called his son and urged him to do as the Rebbe said, and he promised to do so.

A week later, when I walked into shul, Chacham Yedidya approached, and hugged and kissed me. He said that the trial had taken place a few hours before, and although the prosecutor had clearly incriminating evidence, as the trial began, the judge got up, banged on the table, and inexplicably yelled, "This is not how we conduct a trial. The accused is free to go!"

The son, who was moved to tears by this miracle unfolding before his eyes, immediately called his father and told him what had happened. The lawyers were stunned and said this was the first time they had seen a case

this bizarre, in which the accused was freed at the very beginning, even though there was seemingly good reason to put him on trial.

STORY #4 AT THE LAST MINUTE

In order to get to the Kollel in Raanana, where I learn, I have to wait at a stop in Netanya for a van that picks up all the Kollel men. One day, when the ride was late, I decided to hitch a ride. After a few minutes, a car stopped to pick me up. The affluent-looking driver asked me where I wanted to go, and when I told him, he said he was going in the opposite direction. He closed the door and disappeared among all the cars on the road.

A few minutes later, he came back and invited me in, and promised to take me to Raanana. On the way, I took out a *Tanya*, as I usually do, and read the daily portion out loud. That day it was a chapter in *Igeres*

HaT'shuva. A few moments went by and then I heard the driver crying bitterly. I asked him why he was crying, and he told me that he was about to do two things, "return the car we are driving in and then commit suicide."

I was shaken up by what he said, and for the rest of the ride I tried to dissuade him from his terrible plan. He began to open up to, telling me that he used to own many real estate offices and he did well, becoming fabulously wealthy. More recently, the wheel of success had turned, however, and his wife left him and his business started going downhill.

Some of the business deals in which he had invested a lot of money failed. He took out a few bank loans without the funds to cover, and he wasn't able to repay his debts. The law and the bank had confiscated his house, and now he was about to return the last thing he had, his car.

Despite his anguish, I was able to inspire him with hope and managed to convince him not to commit suicide. I told him that we are fortunate in that we can write to the Rebbe. I then asked him to pick me up in a few hours, and together we would go back to Netanya to write to the Rebbe.

When I arrived at the Kollel, I had misgivings about pushing him off for a few hours. Perhaps despair would overtake him and he would, G-d forbid, carry out his terrible plan. How glad I was to see him a few hours later, when I finished learning and saw him waiting in his car outside the Kollel.

We drove to my house, and after he made a few good resolutions he wrote to the Rebbe. In the letter he opened to the Rebbe provided advice for relieving depression, namely, to introduce joy into one's heart and to be careful about the mitzva of t'fillin.

When I finished explaining the



Rebbe's letter to him, and told him a few incredible miracle stories that happened thanks to the Rebbe's brachos, we danced together. When he left the house, he promised to be careful about putting t'fillin on every day.

A few weeks later, he called me up and told me that he saw an improvement and his businesses were beginning to slowly recover. I recently spoke to him again and he enthusiastically told me that his businesses were flourishing once again, and that he doesn't miss a day without t'fillin.

STORY #5 THE TZITZIS CURE

A year or so ago, a recently married couple came to me, saying they want to write to the Rebbe for a bracha for success, a happy life, and for children. They made a number of good resolutions pertaining to their marriage, and sat down to write.

On the page they opened to, they read a bracha for a son, and at the end of the letter the Rebbe wrote, "regarding the woman's son who stutters, he should be punctilious in the mitzva of tzitzis."

I asked the woman whether anybody in her family stuttered, and she said, "Yes. How did the Rebbe know?"

She said that her brother hadn't stuttered in the past, but one year in his childhood he began to stutter, and he stuttered every since.

"My parents spent a fortune on experts in this field, but nobody could rid him of his stutter. He has been stuttering for years; the family has already gotten used to it."

She seemed stunned by this answer from the Rebbe, and the next day she told me that her brother accepted the Rebbe's instruction and he bought himself tzitzis mehudaros.

A few days ago she called me to say that her brother had started talking normally again.

STORY #6 THE REASON FOR FEARS

A little less than two years ago, one month before the Kinus HaShluchim in Kislev 5763, a Libyan Jew came to me, complaining about insomnia and fears. He felt his life wasn't worth living and he couldn't go on.

We wrote to the Rebbe, and along with a bracha, the Rebbe spoke about

A few moments went by and then I heard the driver crying bitterly. I asked him why he was crying, and he told me that he was about to do two things, "return the car we are driving in and then commit suicide..."

bris mila, discussing whether or not to use anesthesia. I wondered whether to mention this point in the letter to the man, since being from Libya, there was no question that he had a bris.

I finally got up the nerve to ask him if he was circumcised. He nearly fainted when he heard the question. He sadly told me that he had been circumcised by a doctor and not by a mohel. He knew as a child that his circumcision wasn't kosher, but he procrastinated until he forgot about it.

I explained to him that the Rebbe's

answer suggests that this is the main reason for his fears, and I gave him the phone number for the organization Bris Yosef Yitzchok.

At the Kinus HaShluchim, I joined one of the farbrengens, in the course of which I told this story. When I finished, Rabbi Yaron Amit, one of the directors of Bris Yosef Yitzchok, got up and confirmed the story, adding that after the man had come to him, his fears ceased and his life returned to normal.

STORY #7 WHY WAS THE COHEN IN JAIL?

Eleven years ago, I went to New York to raise money for the Chabad mosdos in Netanya. I met a young bachur who introduced himself as a driver for fundraisers, and he accompanied me throughout my trip. He took me to Cleveland, and for an entire week, I made the rounds of the wealthy Jews who live there. Baruch Hashem, I raised more money than I had expected.

Two years later, I met the bachur at one of the unity gatherings of Chabad that took place that year in Eretz Yisroel. When I asked him why he was in Eretz Yisroel, he said that he had found a good opportunity and was making more money than he did in the U.S.

Last year, I got a phone call from that bachur. He sounded upset, and before I could interject any comments of my own, he began to tell me about what was going on with him. He had been arrested and thrown in jail and he was about to stand trial. The lawyers he was in touch with, told him the situation was a lost cause, and he would have to spend years behind bars.

He said that since he had heard that I help people write to the Rebbe through the *Igros Kodesh*, could I help him too?

RABBI ENTIZADEH: A FASCINATING BIO

Rabbi Entizadeh moved to Eretz Yisroel from Iran when he was six years old, together with his parents who were traditionally observant. After completing elementary school, he studied mechanics at ORT in Netanya, where he also became familiar with karate. He liked it, and began studying it seriously.

“I had an excellent sensei, one of the best trainers in the world. He treated me like his son, and provided not only physical training but also a spiritual path in life.

“I was busy studying nearly all day and I felt great. I trained 17 hours a day, and this included long-distance running with sacks of sand on my back, high-jumping, etc. It was exhausting but I loved it. I attained a high rank and my teacher promised that he would try to move me into the next stage of my studies, to a monastery, the Shao-lin Temple, in China, a place that combines martial arts with the study of Buddhism. That was my dream at that time, and I waited impatiently for the day that I would go there.

“When I reached draft age, I was drafted into the paratroopers’ division, and then I took an officers’ course and led combat troops in the Yom Kippur War and the Peace in Galilee campaign. I was injured in one of the battles in the Yom Kippur War, and this is what pushed me, more than anything else, back towards Judaism. I shot an anti-tank grenade at a tank in the midst of a secret mission in southern Lebanon. The grenade exploded on me, and miraculously, I was only wounded by shrapnel in the knees and face. I spent a long time in the hospital until I recovered.

“After being released from the hospital, I looked for a job to finance my trip to China. My parents helped me buy a grocery store, and this is when the turning point occurred. Shluchim of the Rebbe in Netanya, Rabbi Menachem Volpe and Rabbi Nesanel Dreyfus, began shopping in my store. They got into conversations with me, and spoke about Judaism. I would also agree to put on t’fillin.

“Just at that time, I came across a book by a German author about a ‘holy’ Indian who spent his life in search of the truth. The book described his search, his doubts, and the suffering he endured, until he attained an ‘elevated spiritual level.’

“This book made me rethink where I was heading in life. The next time I met the Lubavitchers, I asked them to lend me books on the Jewish religion. I finally realized that in my search for the truth, I had to start with my own religion, Judaism.

“I studied Chabad Chassidus and became mekushar to the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach.”



I immediately wrote a letter for him and put it into a volume of *Igros Kodesh*. In the letter I opened to, the Rebbe said to do two things: one was to do t’shuva and the other was to enable other Jews to put on t’fillin.

He called me back the next day in order to hear what the Rebbe’s answer was. I told him the bracha he had gotten and about the two things the Rebbe said to do. He accepted what the Rebbe said and consulted with me about how to do them.

I told him that he should learn the twelve chapters of *Igeres HaT’shuva*, and he should help other prisoners put on t’fillin.

He promised to do both things. I didn’t hear from him for a number of weeks. Then a month later, he called me back all excited. He said in amazement that the judges had agreed to overlook all his misdemeanors on the condition that he take some citizenship classes in order to learn what he did wrong and how he could avoid repeating his mistakes and improve his life.

There was another Jew in his cell, who was following the sequence of events. When he saw how his cellmate had been released, he also asked for a bracha. He told me that he was in jail for no fault of his own. His young daughter became friendly with a man that he didn’t like, and when he tried to keep them apart, she got him into trouble.

I told him that if he was truly innocent, the Rebbe would surely help him. I wrote a letter to the Rebbe explaining the complicated situation, and the Rebbe’s answer stated that it was impossible for a Kohen and a divorcee to live together!

The next day, when he called me back, I asked the man, a Kohen, whether his wife was a divorcee. For a few long seconds there was silence on the line, and then he asked in amazement, “How did you know?”

I said that it was in the Rebbe's answer. The Rebbe mentioned the halacha that a Kohen may not marry a divorcee. The man understood immediately and said he needed time to think.

After a few days of soul-searching, the man decided to leave his wife. Three days went by and without any apparently logical reason, the authorities decided to release him.

Here too, it was after he promised to learn in a yeshiva for baalei t'shuva and to shape up. Today he learns Torah, and day by day he is becoming a baal t'shuva.

STORY #8

A MATCH MADE IN HEAVEN

We always have many guests at our Shabbos meals. A few years ago, my wife and I noticed that among our

I asked the man, a Kohen, whether his wife was a divorcee.

For a few long seconds there was silence on the line, and then he asked in amazement, "How did you know?"

guests were a divorced man and an older single girl from Machon Alte. We thought they made a nice couple, but when we suggested it to the girl, she said she had to think about it, and

didn't get back to us.

One Motzaei Shabbos, she came to our house, wanting to write to the Rebbe because she had been offered a job and she was unsure whether she should take it. She went to the bookcase and "mistakenly" took a volume of *Igros Kodesh* of the Rebbe Rayatz. When she opened it, in my presence, she was shocked.

It said, "regarding the shidduch, speak to Mr. _____" and it was the same family name as that of the man I had suggested. As far as the job, the Rebbe didn't like the idea.

She stood there for a long time, dumbfounded, not knowing how to digest the answer.

A short time later, they were engaged. Today they are shluchim of the Rebbe.

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WE'VE GOT SOME EXPLAINING TO DO

INTERVIEW BY AVROHOM RAYNITZ

*When they put up the “Hichonu L’Bias HaMoshiach” signs in Eretz Yisroel and “Moshiach Is On His Way” signs in the U.S. they said this was Phase One of the mivtza. The next stage was supposed to be a massive explanation of the topic of Geula. This stage has yet to be implemented in a serious way. It’s time to move on! * An interview with Rabbi Zushe Silberstein, shliach in Montreal and director of the Moshiach Information Center. * Part 2 of 3*

(Continued from last week.)

MORE EXPLANATION IS NEEDED

If everything is so wonderful, and people can accept the message, then why haven’t large parts of the Jewish nation accepted the Rebbe’s Malchus?

It’s our own fault. In surveys done in 5752, after Mivtza Moshiach began, it was clear that it was unprecedented for a new message to be conveyed on such a massive scale and in such a short time. The big problem is that we’ve gotten stuck in the publicity stage and have barely progressed in the explanation stage.

When the “Hichonu L’Bias HaMoshiach” signs went up all over Eretz Yisroel, and outside of Eretz

Yisroel there were the, “Moshiach Is On His Way” signs, they said this was the first phase of the campaign, the phase in which you arouse public consciousness about the message. The next stage was supposed to be a massive explanation campaign through classes, lectures, and seminars. We still haven’t done this in a serious way, and that is a big problem.

I’m sorry to see that we are still in the first phase of the campaign and are putting in thought and energy into publicity, while neglecting the more important part right now, the explanations. It’s like an army that keeps bombing from the air but doesn’t send in the ground troops.

Now, more than ever, we need

explanations in inyanei Moshiach in general, and particularly regarding the identity of Moshiach after Gimmel Tammuz. For us, who live with the sichos, it’s clear, but think a minute about someone who never saw the Rebbe’s sichos. The whole thing is bizarre to him.

There’s a man who comes to our Chabad house occasionally for a class. One day he came and said that his rabbi, not a Lubavitcher, said that it’s possible that the Rebbe is Moshiach.

What was this about? He attends a Gemara class with his rabbi and they were learning the tractate Sanhedrin, daf 98, about how the talmidim said that their teachers were Moshiach. When they learned how Moshiach could come in one of two ways, he asked his rabbi: If so, then you can say that the Lubavitcher Rebbe is Moshiach. His rabbi, being an honest man, said that yes, according to this Gemara, you can believe that.

So what happened here? Someone who knew nothing about it, studied the Gemara and immediately realized that the Rebbe could be Moshiach. Even his rabbi agreed. Until he learned this Gemara, he had heard from us that the Rebbe is Moshiach but didn’t accept it. As far as he knew, Gimmel Tammuz made it impossible for the Rebbe to still be Moshiach. One shiur in Gemara changed his thinking.

Do you see the light at the end of the tunnel?

Lately, I've noticed a change in focus. In recent years, more weekly brochures are being published on inyanei Moshiach, like *HaGeula*, which is in both Hebrew and English. There are other publications, but it isn't enough. People need to learn this in a serious way, and a weekly brochure, as important as it is, is not the medium through which you learn such a complex subject.

In order to explain the topic of Geula and Moshiach, you need a curriculum of classes and lectures which presents the topic from A to Z. I'm glad that this past year, the Shluchim office has begun working on this. In the meantime, we have gotten a curriculum for four lectures from them, with the title, "Contemporary Kabbala." A lecture with a title like this attracts lots of people, and they learn the deeper meaning of Moshiach and Geula.

They also send out a weekly sermon for the shluchim on the sidra and inyanei Moshiach, in English and Hebrew. This is a big help for the shluchim, because it enables them to give weekly classes on inyanei Moshiach, and the work is done for them. As a shliach who receives this material, I can tell you that it helps me a lot.

How can we make the topic of Geula be something for everybody?

If we could convene shluchim, mashpiim, and rabbanim, and come up with a plan about how to work in unison, I have no doubt that we could transform the world. The Rebbe said that a Jew is not expected to do what he cannot do, and since the Rebbe demanded that we prepare the **entire world**, then he certainly gives us the ability to do so.

The world is interested in hearing about this. Every shliach can tell you about numerous phone calls from

This was the first phase of the campaign, the phase in which you arouse public consciousness about the message. The next stage was supposed to be a massive explanation campaign through classes, lectures, and seminars. We still haven't done this in a serious way, and that is a big problem.



people who want to hear what the Rebbe said and want the Rebbe's bracha. Jews are "believers, children of believers," and they want to hear. In the crazy times we live in, who doesn't want to hear good news, and what news could be better than the besuras ha'Geula?

The problem is that everybody is doing their own thing. One Chassid does extreme things, which even he agrees isn't necessary, but he does them only because another Chassid doesn't even do the things that he himself agrees can be done, because of the extreme things the first Chassid does! We are wasting the enormous powers that the Rebbe gives us, and we are not achieving the goal.

THERE IS NO REAL MACHLOKES

How do you think Chabad can attain achdus with its differing opinions?

The entire machlokes is the work of the Satan, and it makes no sense. If we get down to the root of it all, we see that there is no real machlokes. Is there a Chassid who doesn't believe the Rebbe is Moshiach? In the Jewish papers, there were articles about a professor who tried to get shluchim to sign that they don't believe the Rebbe is Moshiach, and not even one shliach signed!

Is there a Chassid who doesn't believe that the Rebbe is *chai v'kayam*? Even the Chassid who uses phrases and acronyms that signify the opposite of life, also writes and says that the Rebbe is the *Nasi HaDor*! He doesn't refer to the *Baal Shem Tov* or the Rebbe *Rayatz* as the *Nasi HaDor*; only the Rebbe. What does that tell us?

As for the Chassidim who don't write "Yechi," but write, "may we merit to see the Rebbe and he will redeem us," what's the big difference?

And those Chassidim who write “Yechi” and publicize that the Rebbe is chai v’kayam, do they see the Rebbe? I don’t see the Rebbe. If somebody is privileged to see the Rebbe, I envy him. The vast majority of us do not see the Rebbe.

So what is the argument about?

The only argument is about publicity. Most people realize that you have to put thought into what you are taking to the street, and when it comes to this point, there are differences of opinion. But differences of opinion are not a reason for machlokes! We can definitely understand one another, because we agree on most points.

When the Rebbe said that every shliach has to teach the people in his city inyani Moshiach and Geula in a way that each person can accept it with his intellect and understanding, the simple meaning of this is that inyani Moshiach and Geula are accepted in the world. (The Rebbe said this explicitly in the sichos of R’ei and Shoftim 5751). It’s just that when you give a class, you have to cater to the level of your audience.

That’s why I am certain that if we sat down together, we could come to an agreement about projects that we can all do in inyani Moshiach, as per the Rebbe’s sichos.

I mentioned before the ready-made sermons that the shluchim get every week. These lectures are written by shluchim from across the spectrum, which goes to show how



minor the differences are. Shluchim who are not known as big activists in inyani Moshiach write lectures, as do shluchim who are active in Moshiach projects. Suddenly you realize that there isn’t a big difference between the two in their outlooks.

They all write sermons that present the parsha in light of the Geula. The only difference is that one

ends with “Yechi,” another writes, “v’nizkeh,” and still another one writes that we should merit the immediate Redemption. That shows that there isn’t a real difference between the shluchim, and we can bridge our differences and come to a meeting of the minds.

(To be continued.)

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MISSION IMPOSSIBLE?!

BY SHAI GEFEN

“WHOEVER IS FOR HASHEM, TO ME!”

At this point in the battle against the unilateral Disengagement Plan, or in other words, the agreement with the new terrorist leadership, only the people can stop it. Unfortunately, we have seen that all democratic means have failed. Sharon and his colleagues have sneered at every law, in order to save their skin from the criminal charges hanging over their heads. (It's interesting that last week, shortly after the announcement that Omri Sharon will stand trial, Sharon announced again that he would carry though on the Disengagement.)

We cannot rely on what used to be called “the national camp.” They have turned out to be a bunch of “shleppers” at best, and at worst, a group of reckless people whose seats are worth a lot more to them than anything else. Whoever anticipated support from the legislative branch and from those Knesset members who waved the flag of loyalty to Eretz Yisroel in the elections knows that there is nobody to rely on any longer. Even Uzi Landau announced that in an orderly agreement he is ready for painful compromises.

What we've got left is the nation... The events in Kiev and other countries, as we've seen in recent years, have proven that the people have more power than all the politicians put together. We are at a critical crossroads now, regarding the future of the Jewish people in Eretz Yisroel, not just the future of Gush Katif.

This attitude ought to be instilled

within every person who is loyal to our holy land. We will win the battle only if we decide that we will win. If tens of thousands will stand at Gush Katif like a fortified wall, no army in the world will be able to chase the Jews out of there (there is no need for violence; the media will be waiting to find one violent person and when they won't find him, they'll make things up in order to de-legitimize us).

We are certain that in the present era, it won't be possible to transfer Jews. The real question is, are we ready to dig in our heels? Or are we satisfied with, “we've got love and it will triumph,” in which case we won't have either love or victory.

In the battle over the planned expulsion, we must be part of the tens of thousands of people who care and who are really pained by this. We must be part of those Jews who are ready to stand like a fortified wall to defend the lives of Jews in Eretz Yisroel. When we make it clear that this expulsion is just not happening, thousands more will join, including the soldiers in charge of the evacuation who will not participate in this crime against humanity.

Baruch Hashem the nation isn't blind. People understand that this is a ruthless decision, which must not be carried out. If we stand unwaveringly, it will work and it will spread (just as the Left made it clear that we can't transfer Arabs to the point that nobody can even suggest this).

“The work is not for you to complete, and you are not free to desist from it,” say Chazal. People are ready to hear this. We have to be firm and focused on our goal.

In the spirit of Chanuka, we need to say: The time has come to raise the flag of rebellion, and to say, loud and clear: **Not another expulsion of Jews!**

DO EVERYTHING YOU CAN

Last Wednesday, there was an emergency meeting in Gush Katif of all the extra-Parliamentary movements, where they made plans for the future battle. It's important that everybody realize that this battle is no longer about in-house debates with family and friends. This battle requires action, because this battle is about our existence and we may not lose it. Whoever thinks we cannot win should stay home, as it says in the Torah that the person who is fainthearted should go home.

We Chabad Chassidim know that there is no such thing as “impossible,” or “we can't.” We are on the king's shlichus, on the shlichus of halacha, and the Torah will be victorious. We have to devote ourselves to that shlichus in order to win.

Despite all the announcements and Sharon and his office's daily provocations, we have to know that they are under pressure and are very afraid. If we are strong in our unity, we will win. The fact that no politician is on the right side of the map is a point of merit in this battle, which is entirely one of taharas ha'kodesh with no agendas.

Among the ideas raised at the meeting was a double campaign: each family in Gush Katif will host another family during the critical time, thus doubling the number of people in Gush Katif. There's a big difference if



there are 8000 people in Gush Katif or 30,000 people, for the army cannot deal with the latter.

They also spoke about visiting Gush Katif more frequently, as well as shaping public opinion against those who support the expulsion of Jews. There is no doubt that if the politicians realize that a defensive wall of tens of thousands of determined people are facing them, none of them will be able to oppose the truth: Jews don't expel Jews.

THE DISENGAGEMENT LAW: A DISGRACE

The basis for Sharon's position is lies. Sharon thought that when he offers compensation to the settlers, they would run to grab it, as the residents of Yamit did. Fortunately, these aren't yishuvim of libertines that seek compensation, but yishuvim of Torah and k'dusha; yishuvim of G-d-fearing Jews.

This is the reason Yonatan Bashi, who is overseeing the transfer, was faced with humiliation and disgust that cut across all lines. Two weeks ago, Bashi convened a press conference in which he announced that a third had already said they wanted compensation. It turned out that Bashi lied, and *Kol Yisroel* discovered that it was a lie. Thus far, nobody has received the advance payments he offered. About 30 million shekel are sitting around and nobody is coming to take them.

The fight to save the Jewish nation in Eretz Yisroel is one that can be won. People are faithful, strong, and determined, and we must be a defending wall. We must stand like soldiers on the day of reckoning.

Most of the news is deliberate misinformation, designed to weaken the resolve of those involved in the fight against Disengagement. Sharon put the law of "Disengagement Compensation" to a vote. It's very worthwhile describing it, in order for

people to understand how dangerous it is, and how serious it was for chareidi Knesset members to try and support this law. This law is the only one that can make the Disengagement legally "kosher."

A majority in the government and Knesset approved the Disengagement Plan. However, this was merely a "statement" and lacked any practical ramifications. In order to carry out the plan, the government needs to pass a law called, "The Law to Implement the Disengagement Plan."

As of now, the expulsion of settlers from their homes is illegal, for it opposes, "A Fundamental Law: Man's Honor and Freedom." This "Fundamental Law," was not in existence when Yamit was dismantled. What it does is, make such expulsion illegal unless a special law is passed that permits or requires such an action.

This was the first goal of the "Law to Implement the Disengagement Plan."

The Disengagement Plan costs a lot of money: the initial costs of the plan are estimated by the Treasury to be 2.2 billion shekel! (for the year 5765 alone, with an additional 4 billion shekel to be paid in the years to come, and this is all based on the first estimate). This amount wasn't mentioned in the State's budgetary law which will soon be presented for the Knesset's approval. The sum is listed separately in the same "Law to Implement the Disengagement Plan."

This is a huge budget, and if it is not approved by the Knesset, the Disengagement will not be able to be carried out, from both an economic perspective and from the legal perspective (for the law prohibits the government from carrying out anything for which a budgetary source was not approved).

Why is the law called "Disengagement/Compensation"? This is part of the propaganda used to get

*In the spirit of Chanuka, we need to say: The time has come to raise the flag of rebellion, and to say, loud and clear: Not another expulsion of Jews! * We Chabad Chassidim know that there is no such thing as "impossible," or "we can't." We are on the king's shlichus, on the shlichus of halacha, and the Torah will be victorious. We have to devote ourselves to that shlichus in order to win.*

the law passed. The name “Disengagement/Compensation” gives an innocent impression, as though the point of the law is to compensate those who will be expelled in any case. But what it really is, is a law whose goal is to enable the government to carry out the Disengagement. The compensation is a side issue, and it won’t even cover the losses of those who they wish to expel.

Therefore, it is not a law about compensation but a “Law of Limited Compensation,” or even: the “Law of Non-Compensation to Those who will be Expelled” for a considerable amount of the damages that will accrue as a result of the expulsion.

“RABBANIM OF THE EXPULSION”

The military rabbinate has become part of the expulsion plan. The chief military chaplain announced that the military rabbinate will participate and will even persuade soldiers to take part in this crime.

It’s hard to understand why the military rabbinate is ready to collaborate in this terrible thing, even though it is an inseparable part of the armed forces. Can the Torah be exchanged for a position in the army?

It was also publicized, in the name of the military rabbinate, that members will ensure that during the disengagement, there will be no contact between men and women. When I read this, I didn’t know whether to laugh or cry.

They’re going to carry out a crime, and they’re awarding prizes to those who amputated the feet of the Cohen children and to those who sent 5000 mortars into Gush Katif, and Military Chaplain Yisroel Weiss is worried about the halachos of tznius! This piety is something we’ve experienced before in our blood-soaked history. When the priest led the Jew to the stake for not converting, he asked the Jew not to step on the ants because “His mercy is

on all His creatures...”

Rabbi Weiss: One can acquire his world in one hour, and one can lose his world. If you will collaborate in this crime, you will be disgraced forever. You will be considered like the government-appointed rabbis of Europe who sold their souls and the Torah. You cannot say, “I am following orders.” If you are a rav and they require you to carry out something against the Torah, turn in your keys and resign! Collaborating with the expulsion plan is collaborating to do a sin. You will be responsible for endangering the lives of millions of Jews. You will be collaborating to uproot shuls, to dig up cemeteries. You will be a collaborator with our enemies.

Thus far, nobody has received the advance payments he offered. About 30 million shekel are sitting around and nobody is coming to take them.

THE BAKER TESTIFIES ABOUT HIS DOUGH

Last week, we wrote about the shameful behavior on the part of chareidi Knesset member Yaakov Litzman, who went to Sodom while the Finance Committee voted on the Law of Compensation. He did this in exchange for a bribe, money for yeshivos.

In this era of “many will be clarified and whitened and refined,” even chareidi journalists admit to this, and announce it loudly. A well-known chareidi paper wrote the following in a weekend edition, about this approach

that causes a desecration of Hashem’s name:

“Go and explain to them that the only political plan of Yahadus HaTorah is the State budget. If it includes the paragraphs relevant to us, they can give it all back (except the area between Shamgar Street and Sorotzkin, which will remain as an autonomous enclave). Otherwise, we will go out with fire and brimstone against any political plan that the government suggests.”

Unfortunately, every word is correct and this sums up it accurately. It’s not only about the political situation, but about every other religious issue. Everything can be sold for a price.

In the sicha of the third day of Chol HaMoed Sukkos 5743, the Rebbe spoke about those Jews who, in their private lives act properly, but when it comes to security issues, they do the opposite of *Shulchan Aruch*:

... not like those Jews who forget – Heaven forbid – about “Jewish pride,” and completely nullify themselves to the goy and are prepared to act in such a way that the goy himself would never have thought of – the opposite of what the goy expected of him, and even the opposite of *Shulchan Aruch*!

In his private life, he might behave properly, but when it comes to matters aside from his private life, when he has to come in contact with the goy, then he loses his “Jewish pride,” and acts in opposition to *Shulchan Aruch*. And in a way that is the opposite of the purpose of protecting the security of Jews who live in Eretz Yisroel, and the security of Eretz Yisroel as a whole.

Therefore, you should know that “the word of G-d endures forever,” and “they plot but the plan will be thwarted, they speak but it will not come to pass, since G-d is with us.” And all this, even when the “plan” comes from a Jew whose behavior is the opposite of proper behavior for someone associated with a “wise and discerning nation.”

KIBBUTZ-STYLE U'FARATZTA ON YUD-TE'S KISLEV: GETTING THEIR ACT TOGETHER AND HITTING THE ROAD

BY CHANA KATZ

It was U'faratzta at its best, charged by the power of Yud-Tes Kislev and a blessing from the Rebbe. A farbrengen on wheels of sorts, all taking place at the most unlikely of places: the huge dining hall of Kibbutz Ayelet HaShachar in the northern Galilee.

The baalei t'shuva learning at Machon Alte in Tzfas, some of whom had led highly successful stage careers in the arts and entertainment, had put together a special show of song, dance and skits, spiced with the light of Chassidus and the spirit of this special night.

With the Rebbe's urgings and blessings, they got their act together and took it on the road...

* * *

It was an unlikely shidduch. The northern Galilee is dotted with lovely but isolated kibbutzim and moshavim, where, as one young woman in the audience put it, "you can grow up Jewish but not know you have a connection to G-d."

A women-only evening of entertainment, which ended with everyone in the room joining together singing "Yechi Adoneinu," wasn't exactly the kind of event these earthy folks from some of the land's most splendid and pristine farms and nature areas were used to.

On the other hand, many of the

young women learning at Machon Alte, weren't used to exporting their powerful farbrengens. They had left the hustle and bustle of life in Galus and were drawn to the womb of Machon Alte, where they were nourished and nurtured with the very best until they emerged as new generations of Jewish wives, mothers, and lamplighters the

She explained that the Rebbe's message to the girls was really the message of Chabad: "You don't just sit in yeshiva and take, take, take; you give. And that's what they're doing tonight."

world over.

There was no need to venture out, although the students regularly went on mitzvaim at hospitals, nursing homes and the like around Tsfat. The farbrengens at Machon Alte soared. In the classrooms and patio shaded by a 2,000-year-old olive tree, spiritual manna was

dropped daily by some of the best Torah teachers and Chasidim in Tsfat and from all over the world.

That's why this past Yud-Tes Kislev was different.

As Machon Alte *madricha* Mirit K., explained: "The Rebbe wrote us to go out with all our power...with all that we learned...and with all that we know...to go out with our power and to spread the wellsprings forward...to go as far as she can go."

Now the question was no longer what they were going to do, but how to do it...

* * *

"I told them to put the comedian first," said Tova Mordechai, a former Machon student whose multi-faceted contributions as a Machon Alte staff member now defy a particular title. "Because when people laugh they open up..."

As Mrs. Mordechai navigated her car up and down the winding hills from Tzfas to the kibbutz she explained that the Rebbe's message to the girls was really the message of Chabad: "You don't just sit in yeshiva and take, take, take; you give. And that's what they're doing tonight."

Inside the large kibbutz dining hall, the rows were all being filled. Candles burned softly on the dessert bar and some Machon students took soda bottles and cups

and made their way through the aisles offering refreshments. Poised among the group were also some seminary students from Anash in Tzfas whom strategically took seats around the blue-jean, sweatshirt clad high school girls who came to see the performance.

* * *

The lights dimmed.

Shlomit, a Machon student who recently “graduated” to the chuppa, started to sing “Ani Zmirot.” She was accompanied on the electric organ and vocals by Liora Rut, a young Machon Alte student and kalla who came from Hungary. The audience fell silent. The singing captured the soul and opened it wide for everything else that was to follow that evening...

“Shlomit was accepted in one of the top drama schools and was picked for the lead role in a production,” Mrs. Mordechai later explained in a whisper. “But the opening was going to be on a Friday night and she had just started to keep Shabbat. She begged them not to perform on Shabbat. But they gave her part to someone else and kicked her out of the school...On the opening night of the show the electricity blew...”

Before they began a second song, Tzama Nafshi, Shlomit shared that when she left public performance and did t’shuva a Chabad rabbi had told her that every time she sang before a group of women only it was like a “korban Hashem.”

* * *

“Erev Tov and a Gut Yom Tov,” said Machon Alte dean Rabbi Yosef Rosenfeld. In a brief, but poignant talk, Rabbi Rosenfeld explained the significance of Yud-Tes Kislev, drawing upon the example of the king who had to grind the precious stone on his crown in the hope that



Rav Rosenfeld, Dean of Machon Alte, gives over a davar Torah to members of Kibbutz Ayelet HaShachar

a drop would enter the mouth of his critically ill son..

He also drew the connection between the mesirus nefesh of women throughout Jewish history and their particular role in this generation which will culminate with the revelation of Moshiach.

* * *

The power of the Rebbe...The power of the Rebbe...That’s what Sharona was told would carry her through the next performance. And judging from the massive burst of applause that followed, it worked.

“Sharona was so sick the day before the show we thought she had bronchitis,” explained Mrs. Mordechai.

Sharona was an awesome dancer, a product of some of the best dancing instructors and schools around. Would this part of the show not go on? everyone wondered.....Not if you go with the Rebbe’s ko’ach, said Mrs. Mordechai, who shared a personal story with Sharona that took place many years ago during one of her many world-wide speaking engagements in which she told her own amazing story published in her

book, *To Play With Fire*.

“I was burning with fever and I had to catch the red-eye flight from New York to California for a speaking engagement,” recalled Mrs. Mordechai. “But I decided to go and asked the Rebbe for a blessing. And after speaking, a Reform rabbi said he was going to buy a pair of t’fillin and another woman asked for help in kashering her kitchen. The shliach said in eight years of working with this group no one had been so moved...”

Ask the Rebbe for a blessing, Sharona, Mrs. Mordechai encouraged, “and let his ko’ach carry you.”

* * *

Odelia took her electric mandolin. Chaya Rifka and her friend took out their darbuka drums. The trio stirred the crowd. A baby standing on his mother’s lap was tapping his feet and moving his head to the rhythm. It didn’t take too long before the audience was enthusiastically clapping along...

If anyone wonders why sometimes Machon Alte students are late for classes in the mornings, it’s because of the many farbrengens

they have like this under the starry Tzfas sky and the 2,000-year-old olive tree that shades the school's stone patio. How they exported this once-private gathering to the large kibbutz hall is worth noting.

One of the Machon students travels to Ayelet HaShachar in the afternoons as an ulpan teacher for the young group of Ethiopian students who live in a dormitory there. She became friendly with the group's house mother, who used her connections to gain them entree into the kibbutz dining hall. She hadn't exactly told her what kind of entertainment they were going to have that evening and this little story remained a secret. As one kibbutz member, Kinneret, said after the show, "I really don't know how they came here...!"

* * *

The audience looked closely at the young sheitl-wearing kalla who approached the stage and began to tell her story...Was she the one who starred in that show...? Yes, it was her...Colonit, known as Yasmin, a Machon Alte student who had just joined her other half under the chuppa in recent weeks...She wasn't exactly as they remembered, though...

Yasmin's parents divorced when she was five-years-old and her father became a baal t'shuva. But she didn't want any part of it. She

distanced herself so that by the time she was 15 she had no contact with her father at all.

After high school, she was accepted into a prestigious acting school where the competition was tough and grueling. She emerged with a lead role on a daily teledrama series, portraying an obnoxious teenager.

It wasn't too long before that job ended that she received her second major television role, this time...playing the role of a religious girl...

Remember, she said to no one in particular, "I'm only playing this role..." But something in her started to enjoy this role, even more than any other role she had ever played... The Avrohom Fried and Mendy Gireffe music...it moved something in her...

But that too came to an end. The next series involved finding a shidduch for someone who was not particularly pretty. She tried hard to make herself less attractive, but in the end she had to leave the show. From that experience, though, she learned that true beauty is on the inside and it didn't matter what the outside was...

One thing led to another and her next role was a real life situation. She became a Machon Alte student, met her chattan, and

started to speak again with her father to the point where they now have a wonderful relationship...

* * *

The girls had worked especially hard on this farbrengen, even putting together a newsletter with some stories about Yud-Tes Kislev and their own personal experiences to offer to the audience.

As the evening came to a close with a video of the Rebbe and Shlomit's leading the audience in singing "Yechi"...the event's organizer, Mirit, appeared to beam.

"I wanted to show secular kibbutz ladies and women that religious girls have content," said Mirit. "They have their own creativity, ambitions and inner abilities. Yud-Tes Kislev is the day the light of Chassidus shines and it's an opportune time to shine the inner light of Chassidus."

* * *

As the women mingles with the students in the waning hour of the night, several expressed a desire to take classes at Machon Alte and at least one person desired to learn full-time in the dormitory.

So this Yud-Tes Kislev farbrengen in the Galilean Hills never really did come to a close. It was more like a beginning.

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THE GAON AND TZADDIK: RABBI CHAIM MENACHEM SHLOMO DRUK ZATZAL

From Shemen Sasson Meichaveirecha

BY REB SHALOM BER WOLPO
TRANSLATED BY ALEXANDER ZUSHE KOHN



Rav Chaim Menachem Shlomo Druk was born in Jerusalem around the year 5680 (1899-1900) to his father, the rabbi and *chassid*, Reb Binyomin, of blessed memory, a graduate of Jerusalem's Toras Chaim yeshiva, who was known as a very diligent Torah scholar, and a person who excelled in the quality of *chesed* (helping others). Rav Druk was fortunate enough to have had Reb Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld, *zatzal*, as his *mohel*. As a child, Rav Druk studied Torah diligently, and displayed exceptional awe of Heaven. He was still young when his mother, Bas Sheva, passed away, and he was raised by his grandfather, the rabbi and *chassid*, Reb Dovid Eliyahu Teitelbaum, *zatzal*, from whom he absorbed Torah and holiness.

In his youth, Rav Druk studied in Jerusalem's Eitz Chaim yeshiva, and was one of the close disciples of Reb Isser Zalman Meltzer, *zatzal*. He grew up to be an outstanding scholar of the Talmud and halachic commentators, and was particularly distinguished in his brilliance on halachic issues of practical relevance. He was also proficient in other areas of Torah, such as Midrash, Zohar, and works of *drush*.

In 5716 (1955-56), at a mere thirty-six years of age, the *gaon* published his *seifer*, *Oros Chaim*, on the subject of

*Bein HaShmashos*¹ according to the view of Rabbeinu Tam. An essential work for anyone wishing to delve into this complicated subject, it was welcomed by the Torah world with great enthusiasm, and received the approbations of the generation's leading Torah sages.

In his approbation to the *seifer*, the *gaon* of Tchebin, *zatzal*, wrote: "In his absolute diligence and great proficiency, he has revealed the deeper [dynamics] behind the views of many Rishonim . . . Whoever studies this *seifer* will understand and grasp how much good is hidden in it, and that [the author] produced a work of craftsmanship."

The *gaon* Reb Isser Zalman Meltzer, *zatzal*, wrote: "I have seen the *seifer* of my beloved friend, the *rav* and *gaon*, the penetrating and erudite one — he is Sinai², and he uproots mountains³ — one of the greatest [graduates] of our yeshiva . . . [It is] an outstanding *seifer*, which navigates the depths of Shas⁴ and the halachic commentators with brilliance and erudition."

The *gaon* Reb Zelig Reuven Bengis, *zatzal*: "My lips will utter praise' for the honor of the lofty *rav* and *gaon*, the young scholar filled with ancient [wisdom]⁵, the sharp and erudite one, the gleaming light . . . for I have

known him as a great Torah scholar ever since I spoke with him on matters pertaining to *Issur Veheter*.⁶"

The *gaon* Reb Yechiel Michel Tuktzinsky, *zatzal*, who, twenty-five years earlier, wrote the great work *Bein HaShmashos*, speaks in extraordinary terms in his letter to Rav Druk, dated 12 Tammuz, 5713 (June 25, 1953): "First of all, I must tell you that despite the fact that in this *seifer* of yours your position conflicts with my own position [as presented] in *Bein HaShmashos*, I nevertheless rejoiced in seeing how one of the outstanding [students] of our yeshiva, [known for] plumbing the depths of halacha, has excelled to the point of being able to write a *seifer* such as this, which displays your skill and your toil in Torah, [and how] you plumb the depths of the Talmudic discussions and the teachings of our sages. In your great efforts, you have removed many difficult queries⁷ against the approach of Rabbeinu Tam and those who take his position [on *bein ha'shmashos*]. Your elaborate and intricate presentation bears witness to your talent and toil in Torah . . . This *seifer* is one of a kind; we have never seen the likes of it . . . May the merit of these sages assist you in rising on the ladder of Torah."

In the second edition of *Oros Chaim* there is also an approbation from the *gaon* Reb Dovid Yungreis, *zatzal*, in which he writes: “My friend, renowned and famous for his Torah [insights], and his brilliance, erudition, pure awe [of Heaven], lofty qualities, and noble character traits . . . the *gaon* and author *shlita*, renowned and famous here in Jerusalem as a great and very assiduous Torah scholar; indeed his great exertion is evident in this important *seifer* of his.”

Rav Druk would deliver profound Torah lectures to outstanding students of the Eitz Chaim yeshiva, Beis Midrash Gevoa Lehoraa - Beis Zvul, and Kollel Zev Dovid in Jerusalem’s French Hill neighborhood. He was also known to put tremendous emphasis on performing mitzvahs with vitality and enthusiasm, and notwithstanding his greatness, he always humbled himself before others, and never let his positive accomplishments get to his head.

Despite the fact that he always lived in poverty, and suffered various hardships, the *gaon*’s face constantly radiated joy, which affected everyone around him. Even at the height of his illness, when he was suffering greatly, he continued immersing himself joyously, by day and by night, in the study of both the revealed and esoteric dimensions of Torah. It was during these difficult days that he put out a compilation on the subject of *Esrog HaMurkav* (*grafted citron*), where he attempts to find merit for those who use this type of *Esrog*.

Rav Druk passed away on the eighth of Adar, 5743 (February 21, 1983), a mere sixty-two years of age. He left behind additional writings — such as on the laws of Mikvaos, for example — that have yet to be published.

THE REBBE INQUIRES ABOUT HIS SEIFER

In his youth, Rav Druk studied in partnership (*chavrusa*) with his very close friend, the *gaon* Reb Moshe Hershler, *zatzal*, [later to become?] one

of the great *geonim* of Jerusalem. Together, they studied the Tzemach Tzedek’s *Derech Mitzvosecha*. As a young man, Rav Druk lived by his father-in-law, the *rav* and *gaon*, Reb Moshe Aharon Golomb, of blessed memory, in Jerusalem’s Shaarei Chesed neighborhood. From there, he would walk to the Chabad shul in Meia She’arim, and study Chabad Chassidus.

When the Rebbe assumed the mantle of leadership, the *gaon* used to learn the Rebbe’s holy talks. He also followed the Alter Rebbe’s *nusach* of *davening*⁸, chose the Chabad shul on Baal HaTanya Street as his place of prayer, and participated in the *farbrengens* that would be held on



the Shabbos preceding Yud-Tes Kislev. He continued on this path for thirty years, until his passing.

At the beginning of his *Oros Chaim*, Rav Druk printed the letter the Rebbe sent him on the fifteenth of Nissan, 5715⁹ (April 7, 1955), in which he answers the *gaon*’s question regarding the contradiction between *Shaalot UTshuvos HaTzemach Tzedek* and the Alter Rebbe’s *siddur* concerning *bein ha’shmashos*.

When *Oros Chaim* came out, the Rebbe asked the rabbi and chassid, Reb Naftali HaKohen Roth of Jerusalem, if Rav Druk’s *seifer* was gaining quick recognition, in accordance with the *gaon*’s great stature. When the *gaon*

visited the Rebbe at the *farbrengen* of Yud-Tes Kislev, 5742 (December 15, 1981), the Rebbe showed him a lot of affection and had him seated right near him.

FORBIDS GIVING PARTS OF ISRAEL TO THE ARABS

When I sent Rav Druk a copy of my *seifer*, *Daas Torah B’inyanei HaMatzav B’Eretz HaKodesh*¹⁰ he sent me a letter, in which he wrote the following: “I am privileged and grateful to have received your noble *seifer*, *Daas Torah*, based on the holy view of the holy *Admur*, the holy *gaon* of Lubavitch, *shlita*, which explains and clarifies very well, using unassailable sources from the Talmud and *Shulchan Aruch*, that according to Torah law giving back portions of the land of Israel to the enemies of the Jewish people endangers the nation that dwells in Tzion.” (The *gaon* then presents additional bases for this Torah ruling).

“WHAT DO YOU WANT — HE’S MY TEACHER!?”

The *gaon*’s son, the rabbi and chassid, Reb Avrohom Druk of Jerusalem wrote to me as follows:

1. When my father, the *gaon*, *zatzal*, began putting on T’fillin, a month before his Bar Mitzvah, his father took him to the holy Reb Nachumtce of Rachmastrivke (who was a relative of his). Reb Nachumtce put the T’fillin on my father — it was my father’s very first donning of T’fillin — with his holy land, and instructed him in the importance of not talking while wrapped in T’fillin, citing stories of *tzaddikim* [relating to this subject].

2. Despite the fact that my father learnt by Litvishe Torah leaders, he was very talented in defending the honor of the Baal Shem Tov and his holy disciples. Whenever he would hear someone criticizing a chassidic practice from a halachic perspective — such as the chassidic custom of immersing in a warm mikva on Shabbos, by way of example — he would hasten to write a halachic responsa that reinforces the words of [the Chassidic] sages. Many

such halachic essays of his have appeared in the Torah journal, “Noam.”

3. When father published his *seifer*, *Oros Chaim*, on *bein ha’shmashos*, he went to Reb Isser Zalman Meltzer, *zatzal*, to ask him for his approbation. Reb Isser Zalman told my father that he would only give him his approbation if he could explain to him why his approach to the view of Rabbeinu Tam was unique. Father thus sat many days with Reb Isser Zalman explaining and demonstrating his approach.

Reb Isser Zalman’s wife, known to have been a very learned and righteous woman, was very surprised at the amount of time her husband was dedicating to this young man who was barely thirty years old. When she complained to her husband about this, he said: “What do you want — he’s my teacher!” (He meant to say that when it came to this subject my father was the expert, and he took pleasure in listening to his insights.)

4. Every year, before the High Holidays, father sent the Rebbe a *paan*.¹¹ Likewise, whenever there was a joyous celebration in our family, especially a wedding of one of the children, he would send the Rebbe a letter requesting his holy blessing. Father sent me to learn in the Tomchei T’mimim (Lubavitch) yeshiva in Lud, and my brother, in Toras Emes (Lubavitch).

5. I recall that when the Rebbe’s shlichim [emissaries] arrived in Israel a farbrengen was held Shabbos night in the Baal HaTanya shul in Meia She’arim, and father went there to listen to the words of the shlichim. Reb Shalom Dover Lipsker, then a Tamim,¹² recited by heart “*V’Yadata – Moskvow*,” a long chassidic discourse the Rebbe Rashab said in 5657. Due to the great length of the chassidic discourse, some participants complained that it was a strain on the congregation¹³; father, however, came home very enthusiastic and greatly satisfied at having merited hearing this wondrous discourse.

6. The *gaon* and *chassid*, Reb Aharon Mordechai Zilberstrom told me that he often had delightful Torah discussions

with my father, and he would listen to father’s insights. One Shabbos, father told him a beautiful insight on a Talmudic discussion related to that week’s Torah reading. A few days later, there arrived in Israel a transcript of the public address the Rebbe delivered on the preceding Shabbos. Incredibly, the Rebbe had chosen to focus on the very same point [father’s insight had focused on], and he explained it in a most wondrous manner. When Reb Zilberstrom brought my father the transcript of the Rebbe’s talk, father’s joy knew no bounds.

THREE S’FARIM WITH AUTHORS NAMED “DRUK”

Here’s the place to relate an amazing story I heard around the year 5742 (1981-82) from the *gaon*’s nephew, Reb Yehuda Druk,¹⁴ o.b.m., of Shaarei Chesed, Jerusalem, after he merited seeing the Rebbe:

I entered the ‘770’ building and saw scores of people crowded very tightly into the entranceway, making it impossible to pass through. When I asked what was going on, I was told that in another moment, the Rebbe would be passing by to go into the small *beis midrash* for Mincha. *I’ve just been given a golden opportunity to greet the Rebbe*, I said to myself. Without asking too many questions, I pushed myself into the densely packed crowd, near the ‘path’¹⁵ the Rebbe would be walking through.

The Rebbe emerged from his room looking entirely regal, and everyone pushed back to widen the ‘path’. Before the Rebbe’s secretary knew what was happening, I had thrust my hand out to shake the Rebbe’s and said, “My name is Yehuda Druk, of Jerusalem.”

Still striding quickly toward the shul, the Rebbe turned his head toward me and said, “And what is your connection to the *Oros Chaim*?”

That’s my uncle, Reb Chaim Druk,” I replied. In the blink of an eye, the Rebbe asked: “And what is your connection to the *Mikdash Me’at*?”

“That’s my son, Reb Zalman Druk.” The Rebbe then asked me about a third

seifer,¹⁷ and again I gave my answer. As I finished my reply, the Rebbe stepped through the doorway of the shul. An instant later the door closed behind him.

“As he related this story, Reb Yehuda spoke with great awe and enthusiasm, and he said to me: “Listen, I’m a *misnaged*, and [therefore], nothing impresses me. But this fleeting encounter with the Rebbe affected me deeply.¹⁸ First of all, when I gave him my hand and he gave me his in return, I was completely overwhelmed. And then when I heard him recall three *s’farim* whose authors are named Druk in a few quick seconds, while walking quickly [to a different place], I couldn’t believe my ears.

NOTES:

- 1 I.e., twilight, the period between the end of the day and the beginning of the night.
- 2 A euphemism for someone with encyclopedic Torah knowledge.
- 3 A euphemism for a Torah scholar with a phenomenally incisive mind.
- 4 I.e., the Talmud.
- 5 Lit., A new container filled with old.
- 6 Lit., “Forbidden and permissible,” a reference to subjects dealt with in Yoreh Deiah, the second book of the Shulchan Aruch (Code of Jewish Law.)
- 7 ... in original
- 8 I.e., version of liturgical text.
- 9 Letter # 3387.
- 10 Hebrew, The Torah View on the Situation in the Holy Land.
- 11 I.e., Pidyon Nefesh, a special written request that the Rebbe intercede with Heaven on one’s behalf.
- 12 Chassidic reference to a Lubavitcher bachur.
- 13 I.e., “tircha d’tzibura.”
- 14 Father of the rav and gaon, Reb Zalman Druk, rav of the Rechavya neighborhood, the Beis Midrash HaGadol in Jerusalem, and more.
- 15 Lit., “shvil.” When the Rebbe enters, the densely crowded congregation melts back to either side, clearing a path for the Rebbe to walk through.
- 16 A *seifer* of the laws of synagogues.
- 17 Authors note: I don’t remember the name of the *seifer*, and I was unable to find out.
- 18 Lit., “Yatzasi Meihakeilim”