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THE MIRACLE OF PURIM 'BROKE THROUGH'

SICHOS IN ENGLISH



SHABBOS PARSHAS TRUMA; 2ND DAY OF ADAR, 5751

1. This Shabbos falls in the beginning of the month of Adar, a month whose nature is characterized by our Sages' statement, "When the month of Adar enters, we increase our joy." Joy is a fundamental concept in the service of G-d that is appropriate throughout the year as it is written, "Serve G-d with joy." To quote the Rambam: "The happiness with which a person should rejoice in the fulfillment of the mitzvos and the love of G-d who commanded them is a great service."

Since the service of G-d must continue every moment of our lives, for "I was created only to serve my Creator," it follows that at every moment of our lives, we must be involved in the joy mentioned above. Thus, the Rama concludes his gloss to the *Shulchan Aruch*, Orach Chayim, "A good-hearted person is always celebrating."

Beyond this happiness which is relevant at all times, there is an additional measure of happiness associated with the month of Adar. Indeed, that additional happiness is felt, "When the month of Adar enters," at the very beginning of the

month.

In particular, this applies on the present day which is the second of Adar, which together with the two days of Rosh Chodesh Adar represents a *chazaka*, a three day continuum of happiness. Also, Shabbos is referred to as "the days of rejoicing." And thus there is a unique dimension of happiness associated with the present day.

To focus on our Sages' expression, "When the month of Adar enters, we increase our joy" in greater depth: In his commentary on the Talmud, Rashi explains the reason for our increase in happiness, "These are days of miracles for the Jewish people: Purim and Pesach." The commentaries question why Rashi mentions Pesach. On the contrary, what connection do the miracles of Pesach share with the beginning of the month of Adar? And also, we do not find as great a stress on celebration and happiness in the month of Nissan. According to Rashi's commentary, Nissan should also be characterized by happiness.[334]

Also, the expression, "increase our joy" implies that the joy is of the same nature as that experienced

throughout the year, there is merely more of it. On the surface, since the joy of Adar is associated with unique miracles, it should be of a totally different kind than the joy experienced throughout the year.

The explanation of the above concepts is as follows: The celebration of Purim is associated with the renewal of our commitment to the Torah. Thus on the verse, "The Jews established and accepted..." our Sages commented that "they now established what they had already accepted when the Torah had been given." Although the Jewish people had willingly accepted the Torah at Mount Sinai, it was not affirmed as an intrinsic, unalterable part of their beings until the events of Purim. At the giving of Torah, "G-d held the mountain over their heads like a tub," forcing them to accept it, as it were. In contrast, in the era of Purim, the Jews accepted the Torah willingly.

Here we see the connection to Pesach because the ultimate intent of the exodus of Egypt was to lead to the giving of the Torah, as G-d promised Moshe, "When you take this people out of Egypt, you will serve G-d on this mountain."

Our Sages' statement explaining the uniqueness of the Jews' affirmation of the Torah on Purim is, however, problematic. The deficiency in the Jews' acceptance of the Torah on Mount Sinai is that it was associated with miracles, that the influence of these miracles upon the Jewish people was so great, that they had no free will. Thus they were forced to accept the Torah. As Rashi emphasizes in his commentary to the above passage, however, the events of Purim were also associated with miracles. Thus, the question arises: Why are the events of Purim considered more of a willful acceptance of the Torah than the process which began with the exodus from Egypt and which was completed at Mount Sinai.

This question can be resolved within the context of the theme that the Purim miracle involves the transformation of darkness into light or to use the phraseology of the Megilla, "the month that was transformed." The very same Achashverosh who ordered to have the Jews killed, ordered the Jews to do "what is right in their eyes." In contrast, during the exodus from Egypt, the nature of the Egyptians was not transformed, and, on the contrary, it was necessary to wipe them out entirely through the miracles of the Red Sea.

To explain the contrast in a slightly different manner: The essence of the Pesach miracles was the revelation beyond the limits of nature. "The King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He, revealed Himself to them and redeemed them." Thus, it was the intensity of the revelation which nullified the opposing forces. On Purim, in contrast, the miracles were en clothed within the forces of nature and thus, the essential emphasis was on the transformation of the nature of the Jews' setting within the world and not on the nullification of the

opposing forces.

Thus these two approaches are also reflected in the Jews' relationship with the Torah. After the exodus from Egypt, the emphasis was on receiving the revelation from Above, responding to G-d's prompts. In contrast, the acceptance of the Torah on Purim was characterized by an inner desire of the Jewish people, an arousal stemming from their own initiative.

The uniqueness of the miracles of

The events of Purim were also associated with miracles. Thus, the question arises: Why are the events of Purim considered more of a willful acceptance of the Torah than the process which began with the exodus from Egypt and which was completed at Mount Sinai.

Purim evokes a happiness of a different nature, a happiness which surpasses understanding, ad d'lo yada. Happiness and miracles are interrelated for "happiness breaks through boundaries" and similarly, miracles represent a breaking through the boundaries of nature.

Although in general, all miracles represent the breaking of the boundaries of nature, in particular, there is an aspect of the Purim miracles which surpasses all other

miracles in this quality. Breaking through boundaries does not represent the utter nullification of the limiting forces. Rather, it implies that a boundary exists and yet it becomes broken. Thus, since Pesach is associated with the revelation from above, its miracles involve the nullification – but not the breaking through – of nature's boundaries. In contrast, in Purim, the boundaries of nature were not nullified. Nevertheless, although the natural setting remained in force, a miracle above nature "broke through."

Since the miracles of Pesach represent a nullification of all the opposing forces, the redemption that follows this nullification is not as great a new development. In contrast, in regard to the miracles of Purim, even after the miracles transpired, Achashverosh remained in power. And therefore, the fact that in such a setting, Haman's decrees were nullified and Mordechai and the Jewish people as a whole were given positions of power, reflects how the power of redemption breaks through the boundaries of exile.

For this reason, the joy – which breaks through boundaries – of Purim is greater than that of other holidays, transcending all limits, ad d'lo yada. Since the Megilla associates the totality of the month with the Purim miracle, describing it as "the month which was transformed," the joy of Purim affects the entire month and therefore, "When the month of Adar enters, we increase our joy."

Rashi, however, also mentions the miracles of Pesach because the ultimate of happiness involves the appreciation of the advantages of both the miracles of Pesach and the miracles of Purim and the fusion of these two services.

The miracles of Pesach possess an advantage; they reveal a higher level

of G-dliness, a dimension which transcends nature entirely. Nevertheless, this revelation negates – and is not internalized within – the limits of our worldly existence. Thus the miracles of Purim are a necessary complement for they involve the limits of nature. Nevertheless, they also require the complement of Pesach for they are lacking the dimension which transcends nature.

To restate the concept in other terms: The miracles of Pesach represented the redemption from Egypt. However, Egypt was nullified, it was not transformed into good. In contrast, the miracles of Purim did reflect the transformation of Achashverosh. However, the redemption of Purim was not complete. Even afterwards, we remained subjects of Achashverosh.

Thus, the ultimate of redemption reflects the fusion of both Pesach and Purim, that the forces of nature be transformed and not nullified, but that the redemption be complete and not partial. This will be revealed in the Era of Redemption when “as in the days of your exodus from Egypt, I will show you wonders;” i.e., there will be a revelation from Above which resembles – indeed which transcends – the revelations of the exodus from Egypt. Simultaneously, that revelation will be connected with the transformation – not the nullification – of the world as reflected by the prophecy, “I will transform the nations, [making them] pure of speech.”

Based on the above, we can also resolve the problem raised originally that, our Sages’ expression “When the month of Adar enters, we increase our joy,” implies that the happiness of Adar is merely an increase, but not of a different nature, than the happiness experienced throughout the year.

The happiness of Purim which results from the miraculous breaking through the boundaries of nature [but doing so within the context of nature as explained above] is also connected with the Jews’ reaffirmation of their acceptance of the Torah on Purim. Both of the concepts share an emphasis on internalizing G-dliness within the world. The Jews’ willful acceptance of the Torah is paralleled by the transformation of the worldly aspects of our environment.

The reaffirmation of the acceptance of the Torah on Purim must be drawn down throughout the entire year, affecting the totality of our service. Therefore, the happiness of Purim is drawn down throughout the entire year, emphasizing how Torah permeates (rather than breaks) our worldly environment.[335] Thus, the happiness associated with the acceptance of the Torah is of the same nature as that of Purim. Purim, however, represents an intensification of that happiness each year.

2. There is a connection between the above concepts and this week’s Torah portion, Parshas Truma. Parshas Truma continues the theme of the giving of the Torah, begun in Parshas Yisro. The giving of the Torah emphasizes how the Torah is given within the context of our material world. Parshas Truma develops this theme further, revealing how a Sanctuary for G-d can be established within this material world, how physical entities can become a dwelling for Him.

To explain: On the opening verse of Parshas Truma, “And you shall take an offering for Me,” our Sages comment:

There is a sale in which the one who makes the sale is sold together with the merchandise. The Holy One, blessed be He, said to Israel, “I sold My Torah to you, it is as if I

sold Myself with it.... I gave you My Torah, I cannot part from it, nor can I tell you not to take it. Wherever you go, make a dwelling for Me and I will dwell within. This is what is meant by the command, “And you shall make Me a Sanctuary.”[336]

Indeed, the construction of the Sanctuary represents the fulfillment of the intention of the giving of the Torah, that G-dliness be drawn down to the world as it exists within its own context. There are two dimensions to the revelation of the giving of the Torah: the spiritual realms descend to the material and the material realms ascend to the spiritual.

Parshas Yisro represents the descent of the spiritual into the material, while the construction of the Sanctuary described in Parshas Truma reflects how the world, as it exists within its own context, becomes a dwelling for G-d.[337] Thus, Parshas Truma is appropriate for the month of Adar, a month which as explained above, is associated with the transformation – and not the nullification – of the framework of material existence within its own context.[338]

In particular, there are two dimensions to Parshas Truma: a) The connection between Truma and the Torah. “Truma” can be broken up into “Torah” and Mem , the Mem alluding to the forty days in which the Torah was transmitted to Moshe. Thus, Truma relates to the Torah as it is transmitted within this world. b) Truma refers to the physical entities from which the Sanctuary was made, the gold, silver, brass, and the like which became a dwelling for G-d.

These two dimensions which exist within Parshas Truma parallel the two aspects of Purim described above. The concept of the transmission of the Torah relates to the dimension of Purim associated

with the Jews' willful reaffirmation of their commitment to the Torah. And the concept of the physical entities of the world becoming part of G-d's dwelling parallels the transformation of Achashverosh and the natural setting which accompanied the Purim miracle.

The ultimate expression of this process of transformation will be realized in the era of Redemption. At present, "we are servants of Achashverosh," and our efforts of transforming our worldly environment are therefore limited. It will not be until the era of Redemption that this process will be completed in a full sense.

Similarly, although in every place and in every era, the Divine Presence dwells within the Sanctuary, in microcosm within the Jewish heart and within each particular Jewish home, nevertheless, the ultimate expression of a dwelling for G-d will be in the era of Redemption, in the Third Beis HaMikdash, "the Sanctuary of G-d established by Your hands."

3. The above concepts should also be applied within our actual conduct. Thus, reflection on the above should produce: a) an increase in Torah study for as explained above, the word Truma includes the word Torah. b) An increase in giving to tz'daka, giving our financial resources for a G-dly purpose. Jewish law requires one to give a minimum of ten percent of one's capital, and preferably twenty percent. At present, however, one should give without any reservations at all.[339] c) Making one's home and one's environment, a dwelling for G-d, a Sanctuary in microcosm. d) Influencing gentiles to observe the seven universal laws commanded to Noach and his descendants and thus, preparing for the fulfillment of the prophecy, "I will transform the nations to a clear speech." [340] e)

Spreading the mitzvos of Purim through the Purim campaign. There should not be a single Jew in a far removed corner of the world who does not have the opportunity to fulfill all the Purim mitzvos.

And all the above should be carried out with joy, the increased happiness of the month of Adar, which breaks through the boundaries of the world, transcending all limitations.

These activities will enhance the wondrous nature of the present year, causing G-d to nullify all the undesirable elements associated with Haman and his household. On the contrary, the nations of the world

The nations of the world will elevate the Jews – as they did to Mordechai – and bring them to positions of power and influence.

will elevate the Jews – as they did to Mordechai – and bring them to positions of power and influence.

These two developments, the nullification of the enemies of the Jewish people and the assistance the gentile nations will offer the Jews, represent a foretaste of the era of Redemption, when we will witness the fulfillment of the prophecies, "And I will cause the spirit of impurity to depart from the earth," and "And all your brethren of the nations shall bring an offering for G-d... in a pure vessel."

May we soon no longer have to content ourselves with a foretaste for

the redemption will have actually come. Thus, we will "join redemption to redemption," and even before celebrating the redemptions of Purim and Pesach, experience the ultimate and complete redemption. May it be in the immediate future.

NOTES:

334. Indeed, since Rashi associates this increase in happiness with miracles, the happiness of Nissan should surpass that of Adar. The miracles of Nissan were openly revealed and transcended the natural order. In contrast, in Adar, the miracles were confined within the limits of nature.

335. Indeed, as emphasized by Rashi's association of Purim with Pesach, the influence of Purim has the potential to effect the transcendent revelations and internalize them within our worldly sphere of reference.

336. Similarly, the Midrash continues comparing the Jews' relationship with the Torah to a wedding bond. After a couple is married, the bride's father – in the analog, G-d as it were – comes to visit with the new couple.

337. Although Parshas Yisro also involves the ascent of the material realms as reflected in the verse, "And Moshe ascended to G-d," that ascent involves leaving the framework of material existence. In contrast, the ascent of Parshas Truma involves elevating the material framework of existence on its own level.

338. Parshas Truma is also associated with happiness, the characteristic quality of the month of Adar, for the day of the construction of the Sanctuary was a day of great rejoicing for the Jewish people.

339. This relates to Parshas Sh'kalim's description of tz'daka as being "atonement for one's soul." See Igeres HaKodesh, Epistle 3, where the Alter Rebbe advises "squandering" one's wealth for charity. Just as a person would give everything he has for his own physical health, he should be prepared to make similar sacrifices for his spiritual health, "atonement for his soul."

340. One aspect of this transformation can be seen in the fact that one of the greater nations of the world has made provisions in its laws allowing for the expression of faith in G-d.



THE DUAL PROFUNDITY OF MONOTHEISM

By the Grace of G-d
16th of Shvat, 5724

Dr.
c/o Rabbi Moshe Feller
1404 Washburn Ave. N
Minneapolis, 11, Minn.

Blessing and Greeting:

It was a pleasure to meet you at the Farbrengen, and it was gratifying to receive regards from you subsequently through Rabbi Moshe Feller. Recently, he also informed me that you addressed a gathering at the home of the Nemtzovs, at which you gave your impressions of your visit here, and stimulated your audience toward greater activity to strengthen Yiddishkeit in your community in general, and the work of the Regional Merkos Office in particular. I understand that you spoke, as our Sages said, with words coming from the heart," and I therefore hope that they have penetrated the heart and have found fertile soil to take root and produce good results.

Although I have not heard from you since our meeting, I trust that this will also come eventually, for there is really no substitution for one's own impressions when delivered personally, rather than through a second party, even if it is an eyewitness account.

At any rate, I wanted you to know that I was very gratified to receive your regards, as well as the report about the said meeting.

Now that we are in the weekly portion of Mattan Torah, we can all draw inspiration from it, as indeed we ought to, in accordance with the teaching of the Old Rebbe, author of the *Tanya* and the *Shulchan Aruch*, that the weekly portion of the Torah should be a source of timely inspiration and instruction to every Jew, in all his affairs of that week. Mattan Torah has the further significance in that it has to be regarded and accepted as a new experience every day. This is also evidenced from the Brocho over the Torah which we make every morning in our morning prayers "Notten HaTorah" – in the present tense. As you know, our Sages declared that the words of the Torah should be as new every day.

One of the basic messages of the Ten Commandments is contained in the fact that that begin with "I am," etc. I.e. the profound principle of monotheism, which in itself was a

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Again, any correspondence you may have please send in, and please encourage your friends neighbors and family to do so as well. Please inquire also your non-Lubavitch acquaintances, as many who received these letters were not necessarily Lubavitcher Chassidim.

B'ezras Hashem, there are plans under way to, bli neider, **reward** those who send in letters. So please include a return address and other contact information.

tremendous revolutionary idea in those days of idolatry, dominated by the polytheistic culture of Egypt (as indicated in detail in the Second Commandment, where all forms of idolatry are strictly prohibited). Incidentally, the emphasis on monotheism, and the denial of polytheism, is to be seen not only in the fact that these ideas form the subject of the first two Commandments, but also in the quantity of words and detail which they contain.

At the same time, the Ten Commandments conclude with such apparently simple and obvious injunctions as "Thou shalt not steal," etc.

The profundity of monotheism, with which the Ten Commandments begin, and the simplicity of the ethical and moral laws, with which the Ten Commandments conclude, point to an important lesson, namely:

a) The true believer in G-d is not the one who holds abstract ideas, but the one whose knowledge of G-d leads him to the proper daily conduct even in ordinary and commonplace matters, in his dealings with his neighbors and the respect of their property, even if it be an ox or an ass, etc.

b) The ethical and moral laws, even those that are so obvious as "thou shalt not steal," and "Thou shalt not murder," will have actual validity and will be observed only if they are based on the first and second Commandments, that is to say, based on Divine authority, the authority of the One and only G-d.

If in a previous generation there were people who doubted the need of Divine authority for common morality and ethics, in the belief that the human reason is sufficient authority for morality and ethics, our present generation has, unfortunately, in a most devastating and tragic way, refuted this mistaken notion. For, it is precisely the nation which has excelled itself in the exact sciences, the humanities and even in philosophy and ethics, that turned out to be the most depraved nation of the world, making an ideal of murder and robbery, etc. Anyone who knows how insignificant was the minority of Germans who opposed the Hitler regime, realizes that the German cult was not something which was practiced by a few individuals, but had embraced the vast majority of that nation, who considered itself the 'super race,' etc. Surely it is unnecessary to elaborate on this at greater length.

With all good wishes, and
With blessing,

IN THE BEGINNING... EVOLUTION VS. INTELLIGENT DESIGN

BY SIMON JACOBSON

The debate rages on.

Is this elegant universe a product of intelligent design or of random coincidences?

The prevailing secular theory for the past century and a half is based on Darwin's ideas on evolution. Basically his theory consists of two central precepts. The first is universal common descent, that every living creature can trace an unbroken lineage back to the same primitive life forms, which arose billions of years ago from nonliving matter. The second is natural selection, which holds that the entire complexity and ingenuity of life has evolved by the accumulation of small random mutations. Changes that help the organism survive in its environment are more likely to be passed on. Repeated over many generations, the process produces life as we know it.

Yet, strong voices continue to resist evolutionary theory and maintain that the infinite complex synchronicity of the universe reflects the deliberate design of a conscious, rational intelligence, something that has recently been coined "intelligent design."

A Seattle think tank called the

Discovery Institute represents a scientific dissent from Darwinism. About 350 scientists have signed their operative sentence, which reads "We are skeptical of claims for the ability of random mutation and natural selection to account for the complexity of life."

Polls consistently show that nearly half of all Americans believe in the Biblical account of creation, which states that humans, in their present form, were created in the Divine Image, distinct from animals. Even when it comes to scientists, surveys show that about 40 percent of them say not just that they believe in G-d, but in a G-d who communicates with people and to whom one may pray "in expectation of receiving an answer."

The debate has recently taken on new dimensions as the battle is being fought in school boards and courts across the country whether evolution should be taught side by side with "creationism"; should evolution be qualified as a theory with flaws; should it be taught at all.

And thus, the war spills over into the seemingly never-ending conflict between science and religion, and between church and state.

Both sides are digging in, with no end in sight.

But what really lies behind this clash?

When we were younger we may have thought that debates like these were primarily ideological. Yet, when you see the emotions surging from both sides of the aisle, it becomes obvious that there is more at stake than mere intellectual free inquiry. Pure conceptual arguments include tolerance for opinions other than our own. On the contrary, healthy intellectual inquiry demands brutal honesty. It compels us to, dispassionately analyze every possible theory, even ones that completely disagree with our initial premise. Indeed one of the key signs of a good theory, one that we can trust, is the process of thoroughness, that every angle was looked at and opposite extremes were weighed, all in the name of discovering truth.

When we see that a debate does not allow for rigorous discretion and becomes emotional to the point of evoking intolerance and even anger, then we know that the argument is precisely that: deeply personal and emotional.

And once it becomes emotional it

also becomes subjective, using intellectual arguments as smokescreens that mask the personal implications of the debate.

The evolution debate is undoubtedly a fascinating study in human nature. In itself it tells us perhaps more about the human condition than the actual theories themselves.

Both sides claim to know the exclusive truth. This may not be surprising coming from the religious perspective, which claims the Biblical account as absolute truth. But since when did science become dogma?!

Even from a skeptical perspective, it seems ludicrous to dismiss the religious view as dogmatic and intolerant, and in the same breath declare that a scientific theory is equally absolute. In this skeptical view the argument would go like this: We don't expect more from the "religious" person who is after all being irrational. But we must expect more from scientists, who after all are the more rational and less subjective ones.

So what can one say when the so-called scientist becomes as adamant as his religious adversary?

The so-called scientific justification for rejecting the Biblical account that man was created by G-d in the Divine image is because it is an assault on a basic principle of the Enlightenment, that science must explain nature through natural causes. "Intelligent design is predicated on a supernatural creator," says a lawyer with the American Civil Liberties Union. "That's not science, it's religion."

But who defines what "science" is? Where does science end and religion begin? Just as faith cannot dismiss science, science cannot dismiss G-d. Science can say that according to our man-made

parameters of science, science includes only that which is empirically provable or disprovable. The statement "G-d exists" or does "not exist" is not science, because it can't be proved or disproved (as Karl Popper, the Austrian-British philosopher of science, writes).

If both religion and science are part of the search for truth, then



Photo: Ron Agam

Anyone with a clear understanding of faith knows that faith also demands absolute vigor in intellectual inquiry, perhaps even more than the scientist.

they complement each other and both are necessary. If there is a G-d (I say "if" only to satisfy the skeptic), then how can one argue that "science" should determine the rules, not G-d. If science, for instance, is the search for truth based on our human tools, why is it not part of the spiritual journey of understanding G-d's mind and the

rules that He chose to create and run the universe with?

To be sure, anyone with a clear understanding of faith knows that faith also demands absolute vigor in intellectual inquiry, perhaps even more than the scientist. After all, it is G-d who created the universe with brilliant design. This compels us to study the laws of nature, because understanding its intricate design helps us understand G-d and G-d's mind. In religion, scientific inquiry takes on a spiritual personality and is part of a Divine experience.

As this week's Torah portion [i.e., Parshas Mishpatim] makes abundantly clear, that logic itself is rooted in the supralogical. Rational thinking is driven by Sinai. See a previous article: Is Logic Logical?

So the question stands: Why does the argument whether the universe is a product of intelligent design or random circumstances go beyond pure intellectual inquiry and extend into the personal and emotional realm – on both sides of the debate?

Allow me to submit that the root of the conflict is actually about the role of G-d in our lives, which can be traced to the earliest development of the battle between science and religion.

Prior to the scientific revolution, which some have conveniently folded into the more general name "The Enlightenment," monarchs and church authorities ruled. G-d and religion was imposed on all the people. Science came along with – or some say, came as a result of – the repression caused by religious dogma. Understandably therefore, science was heralded as the new savior; one that would redeem us from religious oppression.

Thus science evolved into the barometer of truth, replacing the old barometer of religion and its so-called authorities. Scientists became

the new clergy.

But with one “minor” – or major – caveat. Science is not about absolutes. It does not claim a monopoly on absolute truth. As Karl Popper writes: “Science is not a system of certain, or well-established, statements; nor is it a system which steadily advances towards a state of finality. Our science is not knowledge: it can never claim to have attained truth, or even a substitute for it....*We do not know: we can only guess.* And our guesses are guided by the unscientific, the metaphysical (though biologically explicable) faith in laws, in regularities we can uncover/discover...The old scientific ideal of *episteme*—of absolutely certain, demonstrable knowledge—has proved to be an idol. The demand for scientific objectivity makes it inevitable that every scientific statement must remain *tentative for ever.*”

Yet many of today’s proponents of scientific truth argue its truth as absolute – as adamantly and dogmatically as religious authorities argue their case. Take Richard Dawkins who actually likens religion to a... disease.

Where does this arrogance come from? Is this too a result of human evolution?

The answer, I suggest, lies at the heart of the issue: Intelligent design means purpose. Purpose implies responsibility – responsibility and accountability to the Designer. And therein lies the problem.

Many years ago, at the opening of one of my classes, a young gentleman said that before we begin he would like to ask me a question. “Do you believe,” he asked, “that the universe is a few thousand years old, and that man was created by G-d in the Divine image and did not evolve from lower species?”

“I ask this question of you,” he continued, “because if you do believe this nonsense, which denies contemporary science, I have no interest in listening to your class. I don’t want to be part of a narrow minded discussion of primitive thinkers.”

“Very welcoming question,” I thought to myself.

I answered him: “Listen. I didn’t ask you where you stand on various issues. And I didn’t make any conditions whether you should be

Perfectly logical. As long as it does not demand anything of us. If however, this conclusion means that we are accountable to the Author, then science suddenly can become a weapon to protect us from the implications of design.

allowed to participate in this class. Why don’t we just study together and you’ll judge for yourself, on the merit of the subject, whether this is for you.

“Regarding the issue of the age of the universe and the nature of man, let me say this. Frankly, I have no interest in convincing you of the Biblical account. Yes, according to the Bible the universe has a certain age (far less than the age science claims), and man was created in the Divine Image. However, this is not

one of the 13 principles of faith. G-d could have chosen to create the universe at any point. So I don’t find it necessary to get into a debate on the topic.

“The real question is not the age of the universe, but whether we have a relationship with G-d, whether we are responsible to the Cosmic Designer? If you tell me that you believe we have today a personal, dynamic relationship with G-d, than, as I said, I don’t really care for now whether you think the universe is billions of years old.

“But if you tell me that with the universe being billions of years old, the Creator is so far removed from us that He is no longer relevant, than I will take issue with you.”

In other words, don’t use science as a “cover” to show how G-d is irrelevant in our lives.

The bottom line in the Biblical account of creation is human responsibility. The practical significance of the universe being created with design and purpose and the human being created in the Divine Image, is to tell us that our lives have true meaning and we carry responsibility to the Grand Author to fulfill our calling, the purpose for which we here put here in the first place.

I wonder if the argument would still rage if there were no personal implications in a deliberately designed universe. After all, every book has an author. Which would seem to dictate that the greatest book of all – our elegant universe – has the greatest Author of them all.

Perfectly logical. As long as it does not demand anything of us. If however, this conclusion means that we are accountable to the Author, then science suddenly can become a weapon to protect us from the implications of design.

I would love to meet a scientist

who would actually acknowledge that.

It's one thing to use science as a tool of open-minded inquiry. It's another when this tool spills over to determine ethics and personal responsibility. Healthy science is like a computer – amoral and neutral. Simply a resource. When science is used as an excuse to alleviate our conscience, as Dawkins wrote that Darwin's theory "made it possible to be an intellectually fulfilled atheist," than science has crossed a serious boundary.

Don't get me wrong. As you know from my writing, I believe that religion today in many circles has assumed all sorts of distortions. As it has wandered away from its authentic roots, religion often becomes mechanical, dogmatic, fear-driven – another smokescreen crutch for human insecurity. Religion too can become a mask and an escape from our true responsibilities. How often

do people behave selfishly, how often do they hurt others in the name of so-called faith?

I would love to meet a religious person who would actually acknowledge that.

Faith and reason, religion and science, at their healthiest are both driven by honesty and humility. Not as "fronts" for our frailties.

Being created in the Divine Image means that we need to rise to our higher calling, and not drag it down into our shortcomings. Our Divine nature behooves us to use all our resources, including our minds and curiosity, to probe, explore, analyze and understand the mysteries of the universe, with open mindedness and sober introspection.

There's something inside of us humans that senses with resonating certainty, that, as much as contemporary science argues otherwise, we are not merely billion

year old bacteria, which have randomly evolved into the intelligent creatures that we are. We sense that we have a soul and a higher calling. We feel, some times more than others, that there is purpose to our lives, and we understand that our book has an Author.

Ironically, it may be true faith that will help us all get back to objective inquiry, with no dogma and obstinacy.

Yes, the debate rages on, "dressed up" in either "scientific inquiry" or "irrational faith."

Perhaps the time has come to be honest, and rephrase the debate so that it accurately reflects the real issue:

Are we or are we not responsible to a Creator?

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A TISHA B'AV BAR MITZVA IN WEXFORD, IRELAND

*A touching story about bachurim encountering a Jewish family
in the far reaches of the earth*

BY SHNEUR ZALMAN LEVIN
AS RELATED BY RABBI Y.Y. JACOBSON DURING A FARBRENGEN IN LONDON, ENGLAND

IN THE CHABAD PEACE CORPS

I'd like to share with you what happened to my friend, Rabbi Mendy Harlig (today a shliach in Nevada) and myself when we went on Merkaz Shlichus to Ireland, in the summer of 1996. As you know, every Tamim who can, uses his summer break to join the Rebbe's Peace Corps, to go

to those areas of the world that don't have a shlichus presence. Despite the limited time available to the bachurim, the Peace Corps outreach work ignites Jewish neshamos. The Rebbe said that sometimes the T'mimim themselves remain unaware of the impact they make with their brief encounters (see *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 2, Parshas VaEschanan p. 369).

Mendy and I spent five weeks in Ireland, in the course of which we visited Jewish communities from north to south, and east to west. It was an incredible experience and will remain with us forever.

Among the many encounters and experiences we had, one stands out as very special and unforgettable.

* * *



“Can we have their phone number,” I asked.

“They don’t have one,” she answered.

“They live in a rural area and the people there don’t have phones.”

“So how will we know if we can visit her and if it’s a good time for them?”

“It’s not a problem. Take the address and go, then ring the doorbell and walk in. I know they’ll be thrilled to meet you.”

Our base was in Dublin, the capitol of Ireland. We stayed at a hotel called the Orwell Lodge Hotel. One day, the manageress of the hotel, an elderly Catholic woman, said to us, “Are you the rabbis who are here in Ireland for the purpose of finding Jews disconnected from their Judaism? Are you the young rabbis referred to in the article in the newspaper?”

She was referring to *The Irish Times*, the most prestigious newspaper in Ireland, which ran a beautiful article about us on page 3. It said that two Chabad rabbis from Brooklyn, Rabbis Harlig and Jacobson, were visiting Ireland in order to connect “lost” Jews with their Jewish roots. The article stated that we were not proselytizing non-Jews, only giving our fellow Jews an opportunity to learn of their tradition and to experience their Jewishness.

I told her the article was indeed about us. We had been interviewed about the purpose of our visit and

had been asked where we would stay, where we would visit, and why we, two American rabbis, had made the effort to go all the way to Ireland.

“Marvelous,” she said, “I hope you will also visit my cousin Tony who lives in Wexford. Tony is married to a Jewish woman named Roselyn and they have three lovely children.” She wrote down their address for us.

“Can we have their phone number,” I asked.

“They don’t have one,” she answered. “They live in a rural area and the people there don’t have phones.”

“So how will we know if we can visit her and if it’s a good time for them?”

“It’s not a problem. Take the address and go, then ring the doorbell and walk in. I know they’ll be thrilled to meet you.”

Okay. We had our job cut out for us. This was on Thursday.



We got into our car and drove to the south-east tip of Ireland. It was a hard and long trip, 142 kilometers south of Dublin. We got lost a few times on the winding roads of Wexford, but finally got to the place, hungry and thirsty, and suffering from the oppressive summer heat.

You must be wondering, why were we hungry and thirsty? As good Jews we could have certainly stocked some food in the car?

And the answer is simple. It was Tisha B'Av and we were, of course, fasting.

The woman who opened the door stared in astonishment. She was startled. I can't blame her! Picture the scene: two rabbis with black yarmulkes and beards, threads sticking out of their pants (and the strangest thing of all, our slippers, since it was Tisha B'Av) had landed on her doorstep in this little village in Ireland, with no prior warning.

"The last thing I would have expected in a place like this, would be to meet fellows like you!" is what she said when she had recovered somewhat. We couldn't have agreed with her more.

A few minutes later we were seated comfortably around her kitchen table and schmoozing. We met her three children: 22-year-old Rebecca, 19-year-old Aaron (by the way, his childhood teddy bear's name was Moses), and 15-year-old Sara. They all felt very Jewish but had no way of expressing their Jewish feelings in any area of their lives.

Roselyn told us her story, which was sad but typical. She had arrived in Wexford 25 years earlier, and since then, had almost never met a Jew. Interestingly, her children had suffered from anti-Semitism even though they didn't tell anybody about their being Jewish, and even though their father wasn't Jewish. It was amazing to discover how

strongly they felt about being Jewish despite their utter disconnect from Jews and Judaism.

Roselyn and her children took the rare opportunity of our visit to ask us questions they had had for years, and even generations, for they did not have grandparents who could give them a basic Jewish education.

Roselyn wanted to know the laws of a *bas-Kohen*, because one of the things she knew was that her father, Henry, had been a Kohen, and she knew a Kohen could not visit a cemetery. Her father had died the year before in Cork, and she wanted to visit his grave but refrained from doing so... We told her that it was actually permissible for a *bas-Kohen* to go to a cemetery.

Their big question was: Why do rabbis like you visit people like us, people disconnected from Judaism? Why did you two young men make such an effort to visit a family you don't even know?

I explained to them that every Jew, no matter his or her connection to a Jewish community, level of knowledge, and fulfillment of Jewish law, has a Jewish soul which is connected, with an inviolable connection, to G-d. The Jew is intrinsically and innately part of a covenantal relationship with G-d that began 3300 years ago and has not ceased since, a covenant in which the Alm-ghty has conferred upon each Jew the status of being a member of a "Kingdom of priests and a holy nation." Our challenge in life is to express this holiness and G-dliness in our daily schedules and interactions.

"The very fact that you and your family have aroused anti-Semitic sentiments, proves that a Jew remains a Jew, and it makes no difference whether they live in Boro Park, Williamsburg, London, or

Djakarta. Every Jew has a 'literal portion of G-d above' within him or her."

I went on to explain to her how the Rebbe entrusted us with the monumental mission of reaching out to every single Jew on the planet. The Rebbe said that every Jew is a Divine diamond, and this is why we came to see her and the children.

Mendy and I schmoozed with the family for a long time. By now, the day was reaching a close and we were exhausted. At the end of the visit, when we exchanged addresses, and were saying goodbye, a thought popped into my head.

I asked, "Did Aaron have a bar mitzva?"

"No," said Roselyn. "There are no bar mitzva classes in Wexford," she added with an apologetic smile.

"Maybe we can celebrate Aaron's bar mitzva right now?" I suggested. "Although we can't have lox and other delicacies since today is a fast day, the main part of the bar mitzva – putting on t'fillin and praying to G-d in accepting the yoke of Heaven – can be done now."

As you recall, it was Tisha B'Av afternoon and it is permissible to put t'fillin on then. As if by coincidence, Aaron hadn't eaten anything until then, as though subconsciously, he was preparing for his bar mitzvah in the proper fashion.

My colleague Mendy Harlig brought t'fillin from the car, and Rebecca and Sara brought a camera to record the historic moment. A bar mitzva in Wexford! Who would have believed it?

Aaron disappeared for a few minutes and then returned, wearing a green yarmulke which he found in a drawer upstairs. Everybody felt the momentousness of the occasion – the first bar mitzva – and maybe the last – being celebrated in Wexford,

That's when the dam broke. The mother began weeping profusely. The tears were flowing like water. Her daughters followed along, sobbing like children. Emotions that had been pent-up for ages broke through. Roselyn went over to her only son to hug him. Mendy and I stood there silently and humbly as we witnessed the spiritual storm overtaking this "disconnected" Jewish family.

Ireland.

The family watched in awe as Mendy put t'fillin on Aaron's arm, for the first time in Aaron's life. As Roselyn counted the seven times the t'fillin were wrapped on his arm, she asked whether this symbolized the seven relatives for whom a Kohen is allowed to become impure!

I explained that they symbolize the seven emotions contained by every soul, since the main point of t'fillin is to make the heart and mind subordinate to a Higher Power, i.e., to G-d. I discussed the seven middos in a way she and the children could understand, and told them that the point of the mitzva of t'fillin is to connect and unite man's two components – the intellect and the emotions – with G-d. This is the reason why we put the head t'fillin over the brain and the arm t'fillin opposite the heart, winding the straps seven times. It takes all of man's powers and all aspects of his personality, and devotes them to G-d.

By the time I finished my mini-lecture, Aaron was already wearing t'fillin. He began to say the Shma, repeating it word by word after Mendy. And that's when the dam broke. The mother began weeping profusely. The tears were flowing like water. Her daughters followed along, sobbing like children. Emotions that had been pent-up for ages broke through. Roselyn went over to her only son to hug him. Mendy and I stood there silently and humbly as we witnessed the spiritual storm overtaking this "disconnected" Jewish family.

We watched four "diamonds" return to their source, to who they truly are.

We gave Rebecca and Sara a candlestick for each of them, and they promised to join millions of Jewish women and girls every Friday

in lighting the Shabbos candles before sunset.

When we finally said goodbye, the entire family walked us out to the street in order to wish us a successful trip. I thought about how just three and a half hours ago we were strangers, and now we were parting from brother and sisters.

It was a very emotional visit, and it was only the next day that I began reviewing the events in my mind as the import began to register on me. I was reviewing with Mendy what had happened and was left with this question: What had happened in that moment when Aaron began saying the Shma? What made the family burst into tears? It certainly wasn't nostalgia, because they had no memories of anything like this in their younger years. They were raised in Wexford without any family or community. They had no grandfather to teach them the Shma, and they hadn't seen any relative wearing t'fillin. What, then, caused this outburst of emotion?

What had happened was that for the first time in their lives, they were given the opportunity to connect to their inner souls, to their Divine spark, to their *pintele Yid* which was always there but lay dormant.

When Aaron, wearing t'fillin, said the Shma, the *pintele Yid* of each of them ignited. There was no need to create or invent something new. All that was needed was to reveal that which was always present.

As Chassidim of the Rebbe, it is our privilege and obligation to reach every Jew in the world and to help them access their G-dly soul. The Rebbe empowered us to revolutionize the landscape of planet earth.

"Fortunate are we and how good is our portion" to be Chassidim, and "how pleasant is our lot" to be shluchim of the Rebbe!

A BIG LEAGUE WIN FOR MOSHIACH

BY MENDEL TZFASMAN
TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY

*R. Gershon Fried, a gentle and quiet man, has succeeded in reaching the biggest sports stadiums and arenas in Eretz Yisroel to spread the announcement of the Redemption. He comes to the teams' general managers and assures them of victories on three conditions: requesting the Rebbe's bracha; publicizing the Redemption; adding in good deeds to hasten the Redemption. He then makes one final request: publicize in what merit they achieved victory... * Franchise coaches and general managers are very sharp businessmen, and they feverishly pursue the service of R. Gershon Fried of Tzfas.*

The name of R. **Gershon Fried** of Tzfas has become an integral part of Israeli sport. In a practical sense, he serves as the Rebbe MH"M's shliach in the sports world. We turned to him to get a little more background on what preceded the media storm that took place last Erev Rosh HaShana.

Surprisingly, Gershon Fried is a gentle and introverted Jew – not the

type I would associate with one who takes on professional athletes and whole sports franchises. "The truth is," says Fried, "I shun anything of an official nature. Still, in connection with my shlichus in sports, I have achieved success on a national scale. I clearly feel that I am working with the strength of the Rebbe MH"M."

How did Gershon Fried, who didn't have the slightest

understanding of sports, turn into the "sports shliach"?

Everything essentially began during Chanuka 5752. I was in 770 at the time, and the Rebbe was distributing Chanuka gelt to everyone. When the Rebbe finished, I was suddenly overcome with a strong desire to see him again. I immediately ran to the area behind the elevator, and I waited for the Rebbe to come. There was no one else standing there when the Rebbe suddenly arrived and passed by me. A moment before he entered his room, the Rebbe turned in my direction, looked at me with his holy eyes, and made a strong gesture of encouragement with his hand. I felt as if I was in the clouds at that moment. The Rebbe instilled within me special strength, though I didn't know yet for what purpose.

A little more than a year later (Adar 5753), I was listening to the radio about a key basketball game due to take place between HaPoel Galil Elyon and Maccabbi Tel Aviv on Motzaei Shushan Purim. At that time, R. **Shabtai Bloch**, R. **Betzalel Kupchik**, and myself, used to go to sports arenas throughout northern Israel and put t'fillin on the fans. When I heard on the radio about this upcoming event, I recalled the unique encouragement I had received and the Rebbe's instructions



R. Gershon Fried with Pini Gershon

for every Jew to prepare himself, his family, and all those around him to greet Moshiach Tzidkeinu. I decided to get in touch directly with **Pini Gershon**, who was HaPoel Galil Elyon's head coach at the time. In our conversation, I suggested that he write a letter to the Rebbe in which the team's management would agree to publicize the announcement of the Redemption at the arena during their games, which they did.

The eventual result was that this virtually unknown basketball team won the league championship! One of the most amazing aspects of this achievement was its 88-80 semi-final victory over Maccabbi Tel Aviv, the perennial champion that had won the national title for twenty-three consecutive years! It was a tremendous victory that no one had ever dreamed possible.



Not long afterwards, when R. Betzalel Kupchik traveled to the Rebbe, he brought a videocassette showing portions of our widespread activities with general managers, coaches, players, and fans, and submitted it to the Rebbe. At that time, a medical staff of doctors and attendants was kept on regular watch near the Rebbe's room. One of the non-Jewish attendants came out when the Rebbe was watching the video, walked over to R. Betzalel, and said enthusiastically, "I've never seen the rabbi's face so happy and shining..."

* * *

Fried didn't wait for customers to come to him. Like a true merchant, he took the initiative and went to the general managers of other teams and offered them the secret to success: publicize the prophecies of the Rebbe MH" M. He used the tools of their trade by following newspaper reports on upcoming games, and with help from Above, he made his way to the big names in Israeli sport.

Can you give us some additional examples of success?

"The most famous story is the championship season of HaPoel Galil Elyon twelve years ago. There have been additional successes with HaPoel Tzfas and Maccabbi Kiryat Motzkin, two teams that advanced to Israeli basketball's national league. Afterwards, when HaPoel Beersheva had a match-up against Cyprus, I went with my friend, R. **Avrohom Bar-Oner**, to speak with the team's general manager, Mr. Yossi Ora, two days before the game. He invited us to the hotel where the team was staying, and asked us to speak before the players. When I finished speaking, everyone went back to their rooms and then returned with money as a donation to charity. The team then sat down and wrote a letter to the Rebbe, signed by all the players. The letter stated that they

would all accept upon themselves, *bli neider*, each one according to his ability, to increase in giving charity and doing good deeds to hasten the Redemption, particularly by publicizing the Lubavitcher Rebbe MH" M's prophecy of 'Hineh Hineh Moshiach Ba' and 'The time of the Redemption has arrived.' Eventually, they won the tournament final against Maccabbi Tel Aviv!

"Around this same time, I made contact with **David Benshimul**, who was then a reporter with the local Galilee newspaper *Kol HaEmek V'HaGalil*. Benshimul is a warm-hearted Jew who has great

As I read all this, I recall the famous saying of the Rebbe Rayatz, "When Moshiach comes, it will be printed in the papers." This illustrates the fact more than anything else.

admiration and respect for the Rebbe MH" M. With every victory, he reported in his unique journalistic manner how the win was in the merit of the Rebbe. As in the case of sports team general managers, I faithfully promised him that if he will utilize his work to spread the announcement of the Redemption, he would have great success. He took up the challenge, and asked me to send additional material on the subject."

Benshimul really did have great success in his work: A junior

reporter with a regional weekly became the head sportswriter with Israel's national daily newspaper, *Yediot HaAcharanot*.

Perusing through R. Gershon's archives, I see some truly *Geula'dike* headlines in the sports editions: "BEERSHEVA WINS THE CUP WITH THE REBBE'S SPECIAL ASSISTANCE"; "GALIL TURNS TO THE MOSHIACH FOR HELP." There's another interesting headline that particularly catches the eye: "**THE CUP IS ALSO MOSHIACH'S** – HaPoel Beersheva didn't just rely upon its professional abilities leading up to the national Cup final. Team president Eli Lahav, the management, and the players turned to the court – of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, in request of his blessing in preparation for their historic game in Ramat Gan. They even accepted upon themselves (*bli neider*, of course) to increase in charity and good deeds to hasten the Redemption, particularly in publicizing the Rebbe's prophecy. Even pros like Eli Gutman signed the letter. What's certain is certain..."

As I read all this, I recall the famous saying of the Rebbe Rayatz, "When Moshiach comes, it will be printed in the papers." This illustrates the fact more than anything else.

What makes this shlichus so unique?

This is an entirely different style of shlichus, and I'll give you three examples. 1) In all other types of shlichus, the shliach has to raise huge sums of money for his activities. In contrast, the team's own management pays for all the signs that are placed around the arena at considerable expense. 2) We attain very wide media coverage. Tens of thousands of people in attendance are exposed to the announcement of the Redemption, while hundreds of thousands more see the *Geula'dike* message in their homes via television. 3) The Rebbe is revealed

with great publicity even in the most famous places, and we see clearly that whoever goes with the Rebbe meets with great success.

In addition to the tremendous exposure these activities bring to the spectators, I make certain to update the journalists about how the victories are due to the Rebbe. It's hard to believe how much the subject of the Redemption has been instilled in the world. The world of sports, which waves the flag with the motto "My strength and the power of my hands have made this success for me," asks for a bracha from the Rebbe for success, increases in mitzvos towards that end (dozens of *karkaftas* have put on t'fillin since these activities began), and after each victory, they proclaim to everyone that it's all thanks to the Rebbe MH" M...

What are the methods that you put into action?

I have a book filled with details on all of Israel's sports franchises. I get in touch with the teams' general managers, presenting myself as a chassid of the Lubavitcher Rebbe MH" M who wants to help the team succeed. The conditions to achieving this success are writing a letter to the Rebbe on the team's official stationery in request of a bracha and agreeing to publicize Moshiach at the arena.

By the way, there was once a case where a certain general manager was so excited about the idea, he sent me a letter requesting a bracha, contacted an advertising agency, ordered the sign, and paid for it himself – all without meeting with me even once.

Similarly, I keep track of the advertisements and articles that

appear in the sports pages, which enable me to reach everywhere.

One day towards the end of Tammuz last year, I saw the following headlines in the papers: "President of Israel Greets Israeli Olympic Delegation." I then came across the name of **Zvi Varshaviak**, President of the Olympic Committee of Israel, and in practical terms, the #1 sports person in Eretz Yisroel.

Since I was unaware at the time of the Rebbe's position against Chabad activities connected with the Olympics, I asked to use these games as an opportunity to publicize the

see great success. In addition, I sent a personal letter to all the athletes, suggesting that each one of them ask for a bracha from the Rebbe MH" M.

I received many responses as a result of this appeal. An athlete named **Gal Friedman**, Israel's representative in the windsurfing competition, asked for a bracha to return home safely from the Games, and to win a gold medal. Even the mother of athlete **Arik Zeevi** submitted a letter to the Rebbe.

Personally, I was not a bit surprised when Israel won its first-ever gold medal in Olympic competition during these Games. The whole country was elated. Olympic champion Gal Friedman's mother stated in a radio interview that her son's victory was due to the Rebbe's bracha.

As a follow-up to this interview, I faxed the letter the athletes had written to the Rebbe directly to the studio. Suddenly, I heard the program's host, **Raz Barakai**, say, "We have just received a fax from Rabbi Gershon Fried of Tzfas...", and he read the letter to the Rebbe over the radio – live.



Journalists quote requests for brachos from the Rebbe MH" M

announcement of the Redemption.

One way or another, I got in touch with Zvi Varshaviak and requested a meeting with him. I arrived for the meeting equipped with a volume of *Igros Kodesh*. He asked for a bracha that the Israeli delegation should win a gold medal, something that had never happened in the fifty-two years of Israeli participation in the Olympics. In the response he received via *Igros Kodesh*, the Rebbe wrote that one must act with faith and trust, and even if they don't see success, they must continue to believe, and eventually they will

In the course of the program, I was interviewed and asked about the way Chabad chassidim connect to the Rebbe today. I used the media opportunity that had been given me and spent several minutes telling about various wonders and miracles that had occurred through *Igros Kodesh*.

Even the Israeli daily, *HaAretz*, known for its left-wing ideology, printed a positive and supportive article on its front page about the letters to the Rebbe from the athletes and the committee president. The article also mentioned the "protective

kits” that the athletes had received, including a seifer T’hillim, a book of miracle stories on the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach stickers, and the possibility of sending a request for a bracha from the Rebbe for personal success.

However, these activities soon came to an end. As soon as I read the article in *Beis Moshiach* and I learned about the Rebbe’s negative position on the Olympics, which are based on *avoda zara*, and his objection to any Chabad activities with the Games – I cut off all connection to the matter!

* * *

R. Gershon was apparently rewarded for his withdrawal, and not long afterwards, he was given the opportunity to publicize the Rebbe MH”M’s announcement of the Redemption on a full nationwide scale. Preparations were underway for the famed World Cup soccer tournament, where each country sends its most outstanding squad to represent it as the national team, established after internal competition. Leading up to the actual tournament, various qualifying matches are held throughout the world to determine which thirty-two teams will reach the final rounds in the battle for soccer’s most prestigious trophy.

Together with R. Avrohom Bar-Oner, R. Gershon Fried met with Yisroel Tchutchinsky, director of the Israeli national soccer team. Bar-Oner presented Tchutchinsky with a dollar from the Rebbe, and then R. Gershon made a proposal: Publicize the Rebbe’s announcement of the Redemption, and you’ll merit great success. Tchutchinsky replied that **Itche Menachem**, president of the Israel Football Association, is the only one who can make decisions on the placing of signs. Undaunted, they went to Itche Menachem. “With G-d’s help,” Fried told him, “if you

put up signs on Moshiach and the Redemption, you’ll advance to the finals.” Menachem responded that with things as they are, he’s prepared to do anything that will help.

At the conclusion of the meeting, R. Gershon left the office holding an official letter on Israel Football Association stationery in which Menachem requested a bracha from the Rebbe for success in reaching the World Cup finals, and resolving to publicize the Redemption with the Rebbe MH”M’s picture at Ramat Gan Stadium.

A few days passed, and the Israeli media was projecting a crushing defeat for the national soccer team at its game in Paris. Even the players themselves were not all that optimistic, hoping that the loss shouldn’t be too humiliating. As a result, they made certain not to broadcast the match live on Israeli radio and television. In contrast, Fried was calm, and the answer from the Rebbe spoke of much success: “*Vi m’shtelt zich avek azoi geit...*” For R. Gershon, the message was clear: If they honor their commitments, everything will go smoothly.

The match was scheduled for Motzaei Shabbos, and R. Gershon immediately contacted the Chabad House in Concorde Hotel. R. **Dovid Tourgeman** from Aubervilliers, together with **Elazar Peretz** and **Yonatan**

Kahana, who were there by Divine providence, went to the hotel. They put t’fillin on the players and coaches, blew the shofar (the game took place during Elul), and strengthened the spirit of the team and management, who made certain to complete their final training session – thirty minutes before Shabbos!

R. Gershon then got in touch with his old friend, David Benschimul, and asked him to be sure to give proper publicity to Itche Menachem’s letter to the Rebbe. Benschimul had not forgotten his benefactor, and immediately directed him to **Gidi Lipkin**, chief reporter on Israel’s national team, who gave his conditional approval: “If the letter is not leaked to our competition, I’ll publicize Moshiach tomorrow.” Fried gave his word, and the next day, the front page of the *Yediot HaAcharanot* sports section carried a most positive article reviewing the Chabad



The HaAretz daily provides a front-page report on Fried’s activities

פריד מצפת: "מוצקין עלתה ללאומית א' בזכות המשיח"

סוער שקבוצת הכדורסל של גליל עליו נכשלה העונה בגלל שנפרדה מחסידי חב"ד



מאת דוד בנשימוול
 גישה פריד בצפת, פעיל מרכזי בחב"ד באזור הצפת, סוער שקבוצת הכדורסל מבני קריית סבצקן העלתה לעילת ללאומית א' בזכות קשריו הטובים עם קבוצת הכדורסל של האוהדים, הדנהלה, המאכנים והמחנכים פריד אמר, כי בנסתחים האחרונות לוח חסידו מבכיר יזרע את מוצקין והמבנה יזנה לזמורה רבת הפילה להי גמר בעיני המדינה עם גובה מיל מבני חל אביב המלחה לעילת ללאומית א' פריד אמר עוד, שנערכה קבוצת גליל עליו פנויה לא עם מנהל קבוצת חב"ד ולא העלתה לעילת את העונת הקודמת למחויבות מרבית עם קבוצת חב"ד שהעלתה קלא לאפשר המשיח בשיח בחד המטה. פריד "גליל עליו נכשלה בשבוע אחריו שחבבנו

בבניו בחניניה לראשית המסלול קדים לב סייע להם בעזר ענות, והקבוצה זכתה במלחה רבות ולקחה גם אליפות המסורת. המנהל חתם במלל יודיה סלילת בלינת, במניע מאורחה בעמדת המספר פעילת חב"ד המשיח. לרבות, לא ימנה לגליל במעמד לשיח והאלמה הם יחדיו גנייה אל המלח, יסוק אתה אביב חב"ד. לשולה מדע קבוצת דונעל עם בנדוריל המספר פעילה בשנת החודש בלאומית א', למינה המליץ של אביב חב"ד, אבי פרידו "אזמנו הם עלו ללאומית א', אבל אני לא יכול להיות חב"ד של הקודם פריד וא למשל בעקבות מספרים ובאמת סיום לקבוצה אצטו המעשים רוחנית והמסורת בעקבות המסורת. פריד אמר, כי קבוצת חסידים שישישם את המשיח עם חב"ד יזמו לזמורה רבת אמנה קודרת לפתקנים

המשיח את מטיחותיהם והלומיות, בעזרת המשיח במצוק, כל מי שישישם את המשיח בארץ ובקולם, יזנה מלך המשיח לזמור חב"ד, ציוק חודש, שחלה אותה ללאומית א' ציוק חודש, שחלה אותה ללאומית א'

Reporter David Benshimul on the successes due to Melech HaMoshiach

you should have the team members run regularly to the gravesites of tzaddikim," the veteran left-wing politician wrote.

Radio personality Jojo Abutbul echoed these sentiments. "When there are rabbis, who needs coaches?" he wrote in his own letter to Itche Menachem, suggesting that each training session should open with all the players putting on t'fillin.

Others responded quite differently. "The deep hatred of a number of Knesset Members for their religion has made them lose their senses. Players kiss a mezuzah, others pray at the Kotel, Itche Menachem agrees to accept a bracha. So what?!" The religious-secular status quo prevailed, as the question of all questions remained unanswered: "What will he do if tomorrow they come and tell him not to play on Shabbos, and in exchange, the team will win?"

With no alternative and under orders "from above," Menachem apologetically informed R. Gershon that he would be unable to put up the signs at home games as agreed upon. In a comment to a reporter, R. Gershon replied, "In my opinion, those who are fighting against the matter don't want Israel to reach the World Cup, out of a fear that the victory will be attributed to the Rebbe."

Fried mentioned two instances to prove the validity of these activities: "In the past, we were with Pini Gershon, who went along with the agreements we made right down to the end, and against all the odds, he coached his team to the Israeli professional basketball league championship. In contrast, we had reached an agreement last year with HaPoel Haifa that it would publicize the announcement of the Redemption at its soccer matches. Prior to the Cup final, the team's



מסלים בין הצינים, אולי להב (במרכז) גלילה אבי מנחם

הגביע הוא גם של המשיח

דוגל באר עמק לא סמכה דע על חיובם המקצועית עילת לקראת שוחת נמו בניו המדינה, חב"ד המנהלה וההתקנים, על למד דרכו מלבב, וביקשו את כרתה לקראת המסוק החודשי ברפת הן. הם אף קיסם על נאמת, בלי סדר, במנן, לחופי בדרקה ובמספרים טובים לקרינת הנאולה, ובמיוחד לקראת את נבואתו של חב"ד. גם התקנתו אלו נעמן חתם על המכתב, לה ישכוחו, כחור

Writers understand that the success is in the merit of the Rebbe MH"M

activities with players and fans, including a picture of the head coach putting on t'fillin. The letter to the Rebbe appeared on the paper's front page in full, and the Ynet news website brought the entire article with a picture of the Rebbe MH"M spread over half the screen.

The following day, the country was in an uproar.irate letters from "the purest and most refined" of

"Israel's elite" filled Itche Menachem's mailbox. Knesset Member Yossi Sarid attacked: "Soccer in Israel is really in a desperate state if you considered it appropriate to turn to the Lubavitcher Rebbe in request of a blessing. I suggest that you also turn to the Baba Sali, so not to leave an impression that you distinguish, *chalila*, between Ashkenazim and Mizrachim. Along with the intensive drills you like to conduct, perhaps

president, Avi Kaufman, promised that he would hang up Moshiach signs at Ramat Gan Stadium. In the end, he did not keep his word, and HaPoel Haifa lost to B'nei Sachnin. Afterwards, he placed the signs prior to their final match against HaPoel Ramat Gan, and they won, advancing to league competition.”

So what? Doesn't every good thing have its opposition?

Yes. This is such an important matter that not only is the *kli*pa of sports in our times not opposed to holiness, it spreads the message of the Redemption on its own. It's no wonder that the opposing forces from within and without do not relent, vainly trying to prevent the wondrous revelation.

What were the results of the match in France, where the national team management didn't honor its agreements?

Symbolically, the game ended in a scoreless tie.

Are you a bit disappointed about the media exposure that proved detrimental in this case?

G-d forbid – I'm quite happy. In the case of HaPoel Galil Elyon's basketball title twelve years ago, despite the miraculous victory and tremendous exposure among the spectators at the arena and in their living rooms, the matter did not



The sports edition that rocked the country

receive such wide media feedback. Today, however, the journalists themselves are talking about great success coming from writing to the Rebbe MH”M and publicizing the announcement of the Redemption, connecting more and more Jews to the Rebbe. Today, the writers have taken the initiative, calling up and asking for more material to publicize.

* * *

We all recall the famous sicha when the Rebbe screamed from the depths of his heart, “*Ker a velt haint!*” (Turn the world over today!), and I think to myself: Here's an example of a solitary individual who has succeeded in turning over an entire country in preparation for the complete revelation of the Rebbe MH”M.

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FEAR NO ONE AND NOTHING - ONLY G-D!

BY ROCHEL SHAVI

It's easier to raise fearful children, children who are afraid of punishment, afraid of a look, afraid of a bad mark, of parents, teachers, peers, of what people will say or think of them. Fearful children are well behaved. But there's a price to pay!

Chinuch. A ponderous word. What hasn't already been said or written about chinuch? Today we will be brief because there is no time and no head for it. Also, because everything was said already and we need the bottom line. Nowadays, you can find it everywhere: the bottom line. That says it all on one foot. A pithy line that strikes home.

Special individuals understood this long ago. Tanach and Chazal are full of "one-liners":

*Shma Yisroel Hashem Elokeinu
Hashem Echad*

Anochi Hashem Elokecha ...

V'Ahavta L'Reiacha Kamocho

Mi L'Hashem Eilai

Yechi HaMelech!

R' Eliezer, the hidden tzaddik, tried to compress all of chinuch into one

word and to present it to his young son in a way that would be understandable to a five-year-old (and some say a year-and-a-half old). Giving him his entire chinuch in the few moments remaining to him before he passed away, he said as follows:

"Yisroelik, my son. Do not fear anyone or anything in the world. Fear only the one G-d."

What was that? "Fear only Hashem Echad."

(And then, naturally, you will love Him and those whom He loves, with all your heart.)

Don't be afraid.

That is the entire Torah on one foot.

It's not hard to see how all of Chassidus is the fulfillment of this last will and testament: Don't be afraid.

How does this fit with fear of parents and teachers, with the fear of the strap the Rambam talks about? Apparently, you have to transform it into G-dly terms, because when it comes down to it, even parents and teachers are really only G-dliness, right?

As with all things, the Baal Shem Tov said *what* to do, and the Alter Rebbe said *how* to do it, how to fear Hashem and not yourself or anybody else. It's simple.

Think about how Hashem fills the world and encompasses the world, and all of existence is nothing.

It means that, "Come sweetie, sit next to Mommy. Let's think about how Hashem watches over you and sees everything, and everybody knows how there is nothing in the world that He doesn't see, including what happened to you today... Hashem knows. And how much He loves you. Because you are so special to him, so loved.

"So what do you have to fear when you have such a great Father in heaven, Who does everything for you? Who is ... that you should be frightened of him? What can he do? Nothing! Nobody can do anything. Anything! Only what Hashem allows them to do. In order to hint to you that...so that you pay attention to... Do

you understand? Because when you learn that...you will be wiser and better. Understand?"

Of course, he understands. Because it's true. He understands because he heard this many times before, and will continue to hear it, with many examples to illustrate it.

It's much easier to raise fearful children.

Children who are used to being afraid. Who know that if they don't...then...

They are afraid of being punished, afraid of a look, afraid of a bad mark, of parents, teachers and peers, of what people will say or think of them. Of what will become of them and in general, what will be; of what will happen if they're not ...

It's very easy to frighten children.

Frightened children are very obedient. They are more amenable to their environment at home and in school.

However, there is a price.

No, I'm not referring to stuttering or twitches. And not about bedwetting at night. That's brutality, and we are gentle people.

Gentle people pay a gentle price, i.e. a price that you can live with. It's simple: a fearful person cannot be a Chassid. Not a real Chassid. Never, and certainly not nowadays, in the era when matters are *yisbareru v'yislabnu* (purified and clarified).

* * *

Why is it so important to teach a child not to be afraid?

Because a *nisayon*, any test, is an illusion.

It's the fear of losing something, whether love, confidence, health, one's life, desires, pleasure, peer approval.

The fear of losing who knows what that awaits me there, outside, beyond this troublesome choice.



How can one raised to live or work out of fear withstand *nisyonos*? (Perhaps this is why it's the lowest of the low who withstand tests better than those who should know better, because they are simply less educated for the most part...)

* * *

400 years ago, on a wintry night, there was a knock at the door of a very simple Jew who lived in the city of Tzfas. The simple Jew opened the door

and in walked Eliyahu HaNavi.

"I've come to tell you when Moshiach will come!" announced Eliyahu happily. "Before we begin to learn, just tell me what you did on the day of your bar mitzva for which you merited that I was sent to you in order to reveal this deepest of secrets."

The simple Jew told Eliyahu that he was taught that Jews do mitzvos for the sake of Heaven, and not for honor, even if it means foregoing a revelation

like this. In short, the simple Jew said no thank you to Eliyahu, and Eliyahu left.

Achiya HaShiloni told this story to Rabbi Adam Baal Shem.

Achiya HaShiloni was the reincarnation of Avrohom Avinu, who did not fear Nimrod or anything at all. The entire world was on one side, and Avrohom was on the other side. This so characterized him that he was called “Halvri.” The one who is different. The one who is always on the other side, alone, standing up for what he believes in – not swayed by anyone, even the masses.

Achiya HaShiloni was the teacher of Eliyahu HaNavi, who was not afraid of the wicked and powerful Queen Izevel and King Achav. Eliyahu was not afraid of their 400 false prophets.

Rather than fear, he was zealous, zealous for G-d. Even if he was the only one, and all the strong ones were on the other side, in addition to a very large group of fence sitters who waited to see how things would work out.

Eliyahu was the teacher of Rashbi (who was the reincarnation of Achiya, who was the reincarnation of Avrohom). During the dark and oppressive era under cruel Roman rule, Rashbi was the only one who wasn't afraid to say it the way it was – that even the good things that the Romans did, they did for themselves. This is precisely how the Alter Rebbe ends the first chapter of his life's work, the *Tanya*.

Needless to say, they both paid dearly for this line.

But so what? It's the truth!

* * *

The simply Jew of Tzfas was a previous incarnation of the Baal Shem Tov. And this characteristic, to choose the *ikar*, the main thing and not any side benefits, no matter how wonderful they are; the courage to forego the *giluyim*, the prizes, and not to fear

losing even... This characteristic is what Yisroelik, who later became the Baal Shem Tov, was all about. His father identified it and commanded him to bring it out into the open.

How do we remain loyal to the truth? How do we make the right choices? Always choose the *ikar*! Even in the midst of a terrible test – not to fear the *tafel* (that which is secondary)? How do you do that?

By fearing (only) Hashem. Always.

This is what the Rebbe told us to tell children.

Yet, there is a higher probability that when the moment comes, and they are faced with a test with sharp teeth and loud barking and/or a big box of candy, that they will remember that there is the ikar, and the rest is tafel.

“V’Hinei Hashem nitzav alav” (Behold, Hashem stands over him – over you). “And fills the entire world with His glory” (He doesn't care about the entire world, just about you!). “And watches him” (a very focused look because of His great love for you). “And examines kidneys and heart” (He pays attention to nothing, for aside from you and Him, nothing else exists). To see, “if you serve Him properly” – to see if you do not fear any nonsense, including your Evil Inclination and its foolishness, and you succeed in not getting dragged along

after trivialities. To see that you only consider Him, Whom you serve, meaning that you are going right now to do a mitzva for Him.

Children who internalize this verse can be difficult children. They do not fear the king's viceroy. They identify the smallest flaw, which makes every distinguished person – every second to the king and every king – into the second to the king Achashverosh. Then, they “don't kneel or bow down.” No wonder parents are called down to the school...and it's not pleasant. Because it's a childish “not kneeling.” It's not mature, not seemly.

This leads to the desire, for chinuch reasons, to rid them of this, to frighten them.

That will give you a few months of quiet.

However, you can also sit down with them and teach them *Tanya*. Explain that each of us has a yetzer ha'ra and we don't always overcome it. Not even the adults. *Halevai a beinoni*.

Your job is to work on yourself. I want to see you succeed, my little warrior.

As the Alter Rebbe writes in the introduction to *Tanya*: this is the long route! Results are not immediate.

Yet, there is a higher probability that when the moment comes, and they are faced with a test with sharp teeth and loud barking and/or a big box of candy, that they will remember that there is the *ikar*, and the rest is *tafel*.

And they will remember that the dog is being held by someone with a strong leash, and he won't allow it to do anything to you, because it's only a test. They will swallow their fear and take the risk, forego the candy and choose the king.

And choose the king, and choose the king l'olam va'ed.

Yechi HaMelech!

THE ADMUR REB AVROHOM YEHOSHUA HESCHEL ZATZAL OF KOPISHNITZ

From Shemen Sasson Meichaveirecha

BY REB SHALOM BER WOLPO
TRANSLATED BY ALEXANDER ZUSHE KOHN



Reb Avrohom Yehoshua Heschel was born Husiatin in 5648 (1887-88), to his father, the *Admur* Reb Yitzchak Meir *zatzal*, a fourth generation direct descendant of the Ohev Yisroel of Apte *zatzal*. Reb Avrohom Yehoshua's mother was the daughter of the holy Reb Mordechai Feivish of Husiatin, youngest son of the holy *Admur*, Reb Yisroel of Ruzhin. In 5669 (1908-09), Reb Avrohom Yehoshua married the daughter of his uncle, the *Admur* Reb Moshe Mordechai Heschel of Mezhibuz-Warsaw.

With the outbreak World War I, Reb Avrohom Yehoshua moved to Vienna. There, the doors of his home were open to Jews visiting the city for medical treatment. After his father's passing on Rosh HaShana, 5696 (1935-36), Reb Avrohom Yehoshua assumed the mantle of leadership. He served G-d with self-sacrifice, loved his fellow Jew with all his heart, and excelled to an incredible degree in the performance of the mitzvah of *tz'daka*.

When the winds of Anti-Semitism began blowing in Europe in the period leading up to the Second World War, the *Admur* suffered great persecution at the hands of the Nazis

in Austria. They threw him in jail, and took all his possessions. The story is told that when the Nazis wanted to shave his beard, he stuck his hands out toward them, and said, "Cut my fingers, but do not touch my beard." The Nazis were so taken aback by his courage, they left him alone.

The *Admur* was saved from the Nazis, and in 5699 (1938-39), arrived in the United States of America. He founded Beis Midrash Beis Avraham on Manhattan's East Side, from where he spread Torah and Chassidus, and performed extraordinary deeds of kindness and charity. Despite his frail health, he accepted upon himself various practices of self-mortification for the duration of the war, as a means of arousing G-d to have mercy on the remnant of his people.

In 5706 (1945-46), immediately after the war, the *Admur* established Beis Avraham in Petach Tikva, Israel, which is still functional today. At the end of 5724 (1963-64), he established his *beis midrash* in the Boro Park section of Brooklyn.

The *Admur* returned his soul to his Maker on the sixteenth of Tammuz, 5727 (July 24 1967), at the age of eighty. He is interred in

Tiberius.

THE REBBE ENCOURAGE HIM TO ACCEPT THE MANTLE OF LEADERSHIP

The *Admur* of Kopishnitz kept a strong connection with the Rebbe Rayatz, consulting him on both his personal matters and his activities on behalf of the public. When he was still living in Vienna, which, at one point, was the medical center of the world, he tended to the needs of the *Admurim* — including the Rebbe Rayatz — who came to the city for medical treatment. The *Admur* lent the Rebbe Rayatz *s'farim*, sent him meals prepared in his own kitchen, and arranged a *minyán* for him in the place where he was staying.

The connection between the *Admur* and the Rebbe Rayatz is evident in the Rebbe Rayatz's *Igros Kodesh*. For example, when the *Admur's* father passed away, the Rebbe Rayatz, then in Otivotzk, sent him a letter.¹ Dated 5 Kislev, 5696 (December 1, 1935), the letter says as follows:

"I was shocked to hear of the terrible tragedy of the passing of your holy father... may his soul be bound in the bundle of life. May the

Omnipresent comfort you among the mourners of Tzion and Yerushalayim. Surely, your honor will accept the holy burden — thereby continuing the legacy of your holy ancestors — of shepherding the holy following of your father, the *tzaddik*, on the pastures (?) of wisdom.... May G-d, in His benevolence, bestow upon you life and abundant blessing, and may He fulfill your advice and blessings, and may you be wise and successful in all your endeavors, and may you be among those who benefit your holy following and bestow upon them an abundance of material and spiritual good, among the rest of Jewish people.

**THE RUZHINER REBBE'S
T'HILLIM ON THE HOLY
SHABBOS**

In a letter dated 24 Elul, 5696 (September 11, 1936), the Rebbe

When the Nazis wanted to shave his beard, he stuck his hands out toward them, and said, "Cut my fingers, but do not touch my beard."

Rayatz asks the *Admur* to establish among his followers the practice of reciting the daily portion of T'hillim after *davening*, as well as the entire book of T'hillim on Shabbos Mevarchim. He also requests that the *Admur* influence other *Admurim* to do likewise. In a letter dated 28 Mar-Cheshvan, 5697 (October 13, 1936),

the Rebbe Rayatz thanks him "for corresponding with the *Admurim* concerning the establishing of the public recitation of T'hillim every day after the Shacharis prayers." The Rebbe proceeds to describe his "utter amazement" at the *Admur's* statement that according to a tradition going back to the Ruzhiner Rebbe one should not recite T'hillim on Shabbos. The Rebbe quotes for him the words of the Tzemach Tzedek: "When the holy *tzaddik* of Ruzhin says T'hillim, the entire world is open before him, and when he recites T'hillim on Shabbos, he sees the spiritual source of everything in the world, and becomes empowered thereby to rectify things at their source, which brings about the automatic removal and nullification of [harsh] decrees." The Rebbe then relates in detail an incredible story that took place in this regard. The Rebbe also asks the



With the Rebbe at the wedding of wedding of Rav Chitrik

Admur if he did anything “with regard to establishing fixed study classes for the young students, as we discussed when we saw each other?”

RESCUE

When the *Admur* left Vienna in 5699 (1938-39), he traveled to New York via Paris, making a number of brief stops on the way. In each place, he was greeted by a contingent of Chabad Chassidim, sent by the Rebbe Rayatz to welcome him.

On sixteen Adar, 5700 (February 25, 1939), while fleeing WWII, the Rebbe Rayatz, then in Riga, sent the *Admur* a letter thanking him for the *mazel tov* he sent the Rebbe on his escape from Warsaw and his arrival in Riga. The Rebbe then gives him a *mazel tov* on the marriage of his daughter, Chava, to “my friend, the honored student Reb Sh. Z.” (Rav Schneur Zalman Gurary z”l.)

In a letter dated fifteen Kislev, 5701 (December 15, 1940), the Rebbe asks the chassid, Reb Moshe Zalman Feiglin z”l, of Australia, about “the honorable young man, Yisroel Heschel, son of the *Admur* of Kopishnitz *shlita*, and brother-in-law of Rav Sh. Z. Gurary...who is currently in Sidney...he is a refugee from Ostrich, and because he is of Ashkenaz (German) origin, he is being held in a camp there, and I do not know if he has kosher food there, or if he even has enough money to live on.” The Rebbe mentions this again in a letter to Reb Moshe Zalman dated 15 Teives, 5700 (December 27, 1939). On 24 Nissan, 5701 (April 21, 1941), the Rebbe Rayatz



With the *Amdur* of Vasloy

writes to the *Admur* of Kopishnitz “concerning the rescue of the holy tzaddik (Reb Aharon) of Belze *shlita*, who is suffering great pain, and persecution.

REMOVING THE BLACK STAIN

On seven Elul, 5703 (September 7, 1943), the *Admur* participated in a rabbinical conference that took place in the home of the Rebbe Rayatz, to find “ways of rescuing the refugee children in the land

of Israel from those who are making them discard the Jewish religion.” The view the *Admur* presented at the conference is summarized in [*Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayatz*], letter 2147: “The main thing is to unite the efforts, and that the heads of the [rabbinical] unions should influence the other rabbis [of their unions] to dedicate themselves to this with self-sacrifice and absolute devotion, and to come out with a loud, united condemnation. The rabbis should also address their congregations, and urge them to increase public awareness [on this], especially now, before the Days of Awe.” The Rebbe Rayatz concluded the conference with the following prayer: “May G-d grant us the merit of removing the black stain and terrible sin that the Joint² has brought upon the Jewish people and nation through making Jewish children discard their religion.

NOTES:

- 1 *Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayatz*, letter 817.
- 2 Organization that helped Jewish refugees but forced and brainwashed Jewish children to discard their Judaism.



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BY SHAI GEFEN

NURNBERG LAWS OF 2005

What terrifying information has been released in recent days! The following is taken from the official security plans of our security forces (what irony) as they prepare for the expulsion of Jews from Gush Katif. Let the world see what crimes Sharon plans on perpetrating.

These are excerpts from an internal military document that was publicized in order to let those who are still naive see what's really in the works.

"...every house that will be evacuated will immediately be destroyed by bulldozers or supervised explosion.

"At the beginning of the forced evacuation, the electrical, water, and communications lines will be severed from the houses and living areas, from public buildings and shuls.

"Shooting will be carried out by snipers, aiming at foot, body, and head, as necessary, for the purpose of silencing any attempt by settlers to open fire at any price.

"Possibility of suicide on the part of settlers should be taken into account.

"...an order will be given to

break into homes under fire, via bulldozers and supervised artillery fire at clearly defined targets.

"Local radio and television stations will be under blackout restrictions.

"Shuls and battei midrashos will be destroyed along with other buildings...the electrical, water, and communications infrastructure connected with the P.A. will not be affected.

"All Evacuees will be transferred to the interior: women and children will be transferred to community centers or psychological and medical treatment in various yishuvim in the south of the country.

"The men will be transferred to camps for sorting and identification pursuant to any participation in disturbances against security forces.

"The Israeli police and Prison Authority will be responsible for preparing the resources to incarcerate and investigate those involved in disturbances, murderers and inciters of rebellion among the settlers.

"Soldiers and officers who suffer from traumatic disturbances

will be removed from the area under the responsibility of the Medical Corps.

"According to our forecasts, it will be necessary to impose a state of emergency across the entire country on the eve of the evacuation."

Our Father, our King, annul these cruel decrees!

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

Many people want to know, so what if Jews are forced to leave Gush Katif? This isn't a war for our lives, but about houses and territory!

The Chassid, Rabbi Efraim Eliezer Yolles z"l, raised this very question on the eve of the withdrawal from Chevel Yamit. The following dialogue took place on Chol HaMoed Pesach 5742.

Rabbi Yolles asked: Why the big commotion over returning Yamit? It is not like the oil fields and strategic territories that affected our security.

The Rebbe:

In Yamit live Jews just as it was in Nahardaa. Nahardaa was a city outside Eretz Yisroel where Jews lived. Both Jews and gentiles lived



there. The din is the same for Brooklyn. If G-d forbid, gentiles would come and “ask for hay and straw,” if by giving it to them “the land will be open before them,” the p’sak din is, “you go out against them with weapons, even on Shabbos!”

We are talking about Yamit, where only Jews live, and they want to expel them from there and give the city to the Egyptians, as they, the Egyptians, explicitly say that they want not (only) hay and straw, but that the “land be opened before them”!

I am not talking from the aspect of the holiness of our land. The problem in Yamit is solely about pikuach nefesh of 3 million Jews!

They maintain that this is about peace. Have you ever seen anything like this before? Two countries make peace, one side gives everything and the other side gives nothing; not that it doesn’t give enough, but that they give nothing! The only thing that will change is that you will be able to travel to Egypt and see the pyramids. Have you ever seen an “achievement” like this?!

The Egyptians don’t have peaceful intentions. What happened is that after fighting for decades and being unsuccessful in taking the territories, they decided to take the territories by making “peace,” and in this same “peace” contract, which was signed at Camp David, Begin himself signed that within five years they have to arrive at an agreement with the Palestinians!

Those who maintain that this is about peace, take on the responsibility for the security of 3 million Jews, especially those who connect this with Torah, because by doing so they get more money for yeshivos...

(When Rav Yolles tried to say something in defense, the Rebbe said: Rav Yolles, true you are a Kohen and you must find a z’chus, however, this is precisely the way things are!)

I never understood the Gemara, ‘one claims [a debt of] wheat and the other admits to barley.’ This is odd! They are in beis din and one demands “wheat” while the other says “barley”?!

Now we see this clearly. They maintain that this is peace, while they themselves say that afterwards they will make peace with other Arabs...they agreed explicitly that after giving away the land, no soldiers will be there, and the reality is that 24 hours later they [the Egyptians] brought soldiers there and when they were asked about this they answered that they were wearing civilian clothing! They gave this answer to intelligent ministers when this response is a good excuse for little children...

And then the Egyptians go to the U.S. and ask Reagan for more weapons than Israel gets. When they are asked, ‘what about peace and what do you need the weapons for,’ they answer that they need weapons in order to fight Libya.

All this demonstrates that the situation is frightful!

...by giving away Yamit, the Arabs come another 10 kilometers closer to Tel Aviv, B’nei Brak, and Kfar Chabad.

A few weeks ago, Begin expressed surprise over the tumult over Yamit when Yamit isn’t even part of Eretz Yisroel. But, as I emphasized, this is not about the holiness of Eretz Yisroel. This is about pikuach nefesh! And this is the clear p’sak din in halacha that it is forbidden to give away this land! Furthermore, when it comes to

I am not talking from the aspect of the holiness of our land. The problem in Yamit is solely about pikuach nefesh of 3 million Jews! They maintain that this is about peace. Have you ever seen anything like this before? Two countries make peace, one side gives everything and the other side gives nothing; not that it doesn’t give enough, but that they give nothing!

pikuach nefesh there is a rule that “he who is consulted is disgraceful – and he is even called a “murderer.” [I.e., a rabbi who is asked a question by his followers regarding a situation of pikuach nefesh, thus causing even the slightest delay in saving the one in danger, is considered to blame for not having properly educated the people in the urgency of saving Jewish lives.]

SILENCE MEANS AGREEMENT

The silence on the part of public figures and rabbanim is shocking. Distinguished rabbanim, including our own, are quiet when it comes to shleimus ha’Aretz. They are prepared to send out a prescription for medication every so often in order to calm some Jews, but nothing more than that. With their silence, they are allowing the plan to proceed, to gain legitimacy, and to be honest, it’s because of money for yeshivos.

There is no other explanation. As soon as Sharon released the budget, we saw full cooperation. Some of them were ashamed and did it clandestinely, while others did it openly. The common denominator is that all of them are taking part in the Disengagement Plan.

When it comes to pikuach nefesh, there is no difference between someone who is silent, thus expressing his agreement, and someone who actively cooperates. All are included in the same category of collaborators to a sinful activity. No excuse will help on judgment day, when those rabbanim and askanim will be asked where they were. For ten months they were begged to do something in order to save the situation, and we Lubavitcher Chassidim know exactly how painful this is to the Rebbe, and how dangerous this is,

and so why the silence?

The original Disengagement Plan against the Jews was carried out by Pharaoh. At that time, the Disengagement was in the form of hard labor and throwing babies in the Nile. Whoever thinks that Pharaoh made decisions as an unfettered dictator is mistaken. Pharaoh had a cabinet and they made the decision.

Three senior members of the cabinet sat with Pharaoh: Bilam, Yisro, and Iyov (Job). Yisro opposed the Disengagement and was forced to flee to Midyan. Iyov kept quiet, thinking that this way he could do both, oppose and support the plan. Iyov suffered terribly for his silence, what is known today as the “suffering of Iyov.”

Silence doesn’t mean neutrality or standing off to the side, but silent agreement! Whoever is quiet cooperates!

What remains for us, “soldiers of the house of Dovid,” to do is to take action, not remain silent. There is no time to chase after askanim and to plead with them to do something. Whoever takes action, it’s to his credit, and by doing so he removes himself from the terrible sins of pikuach nefesh and chilul Hashem. Everybody must take part in the fight, by giving out material and bringing the “d’var Hashem zu halacha” to all sectors of the population.

We ask that every one of Anash dedicate at least a few hours a week, to take part in protest activities. To stand at junctions, to give out material, all for the purpose of openly expressing our opposition to the government’s insane and dangerous plan.

WITHDRAWAL FROM THE STATE

Sadly, we are hearing the voices

of the politically correct in the “nationalist” camp, who protest the call to refuse evacuation orders. Their position is, “we will evacuate and cry with the settlers.” It’s like someone who decided to eat bacon while simultaneously doing t’shuva for doing so.

As time goes by, we see how the collaborators on all levels are from the camp of those “nationalists” who turned the state into something “holy” and “redemptive.” It’s happening now with the man who was the Yesha council spokesman, who, in a stunning flip-flop, has become the spokesman on behalf of Disengagement in the Foreign Ministry. Ditto for some of the former Yesha council leaders, who are today in favor of a Palestinian state and against refusing orders. There are also rabbanim, sad to say, who are collaborating with Sharon.

The only explanation for this shocking phenomenon is their belief and worship of the “medina,” as though its advent was the is’chalta d’Geula.

In a sicha on Shabbos Parshas VaYeitzei 5729, the Rebbe said the following shocking words:

... Despite all this...they say it’s not like that and there is no longer any Galus – to the point that it’s possible to say that the reason that the Sh’china is still in exile and Israel is in Galus is because of this reasoning. In other words, the reason why there are punishments and terrible tzaros from the gentiles (not only outside Eretz Yisroel but especially in Eretz Yisroel) is in order to demonstrate that this is still not the Geula.

We have never been in such a lowly state, as it is now among Jews, when it is so important to them what the goy says. And despite getting punished for it, it

doesn't help. And then, when they are struck, that doesn't help either! If they understood why they were struck, they wouldn't be struck... If they knew that this isn't yet the Geula, there wouldn't be tzaros!

Not only that, but they bring proofs according to Torah about how we are in Geula. If there wasn't a weakness in emuna on the part of the believers, there wouldn't be "those who don't believe." Since in matters of holiness there is no "jumping" (whether in ascending – except for t'shuva – or in descending), it is not possible that there would be such unbelievers like these if the believers weren't weak in their emuna. And if among the believers in the coming of Moshiach they are saying that this is the is'chalta d'Geula, it results in there being people who don't believe at all!

We must know that it is only with the power of the *Shulchan Aruch*, with halacha that is unchanging, that we will succeed. This is the only way to prevent the threatened Disengagement.

We, Chabad Chassidim, who are mekusharim heart and soul to the Rebbe, have the privilege and obligation to quote the halacha and what the Rebbe said; to shake up the world until the decree is annulled.

NEVER AGAIN? REALLY?

60 years, after the enlightened, modern world allowed the genocide of the Jews to take place, dozens of heads of state stood at the crematoria in Auschwitz and declared, "never again." Even Israel's Foreign Minister, Sylvan Shalom, said "never again" at a U.N. gathering.

Back then, Hitler didn't bother them, and they said he was just a big talker and agitator. But they

should have read the writing on the wall. Those who read it, knew what would happen.

Today as well, it's all written on the wall, but everybody is closing their eyes. The enlightened world is once again closing its eyes. Anti-Semitism is rampant. Terrorists – who only want to kill – are recognized by the West as "freedom fighters."

The *Shulchan Aruch*, Orach Chaim, siman 329 says that we do not rely on the goy even if he is nice to us. We don't forego safe borders.

Unfortunately, the State of Israel is collaborating with Nazis. Abu

The only explanation for this shocking phenomenon is their belief and worship of the "medina," as though its advent was the is'chalta d'Geula.

Mazen received a doctorate for work in which he denied the Holocaust, and Israel is entrusting our security to this man! All those impressive and glittering ceremonies that took place to mark 60 years since the Holocaust, are worthless if the Israeli government itself is leading us towards a Holocaust, G-d forbid. The idea of expelling Jews from their homes just for being Jews wasn't invented by Sharon...

True, the Rebbe said a number of times that "the tzara will not come to pass twice," yet the Rebbe also said that the government's

tactics lead to bloodshed and the endangering of millions of Jewish lives.

THE NATION DECIDED!

The slogan, "let the nation decide," is not only wrong-headed, but is also based on a false premise. In our case, **the nation already decided against the Disengagement, and Sharon betrayed the mandate he received.**

In the previous elections, Amram Mitzna's platform was to uproot Gush Katif. Sharon declared that Netzarim is like Tel Aviv. A third of the country's citizens, representing 40 parliamentary seats, more than double the votes Mitzna got, declared: Gush Katif is indeed like Tel Aviv, but Sharon fooled the people and stole their votes.

Sharon announced a Likud referendum and obligated himself to accept the voters' decision, and he lost. Not accepting a democratic referendum of a party destroys democracy in Israel, especially when Sharon said he would accept the Likud referendum vote.

Sharon went on to fire the ministers who supported Gush Katif, before the fateful vote, in order to create an artificial majority in the government. Firing ministers before a vote is a dangerous and illegal precedent, and is a tremendous undermining of governmental authority. Since when is a minister fired for his views? A minister can be fired if he works against government decisions after they are made, but to fire ministers just because their views are different? Then why do we need ministers? Who needs a government?

The nation decided. Sharon betrayed the nation. Now we must topple Sharon, the sooner the better!

NEW LEASE ON LIFE

BY SHNEUR ZALMAN BERGER

*Chaim Rotem Sharabi was on the brink of death a number of times. The doctors fought for his life but there were moments when even they threw up their hands in despair and said it was only a matter of hours. * A series of answers in the Igros Kodesh that his father, Yoram got, gave them hope, and baruch Hashem, a Seudas hodaa was celebrated on Rosh Chodesh Shvat last year.*

It was midnight Friday night at the beautiful Hyatt Hotel in Yerushalayim, where groups of Chassidim were farbrenging. Mashpiim such as Rabbi Zev Kesselman, Rabbi L.Y. Ginsberg, Rabbi Avrohom Meizlich, Rabbi Yisroel Halperin, Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Levkivker, Rabbi Chaim Tzvi Groner, and others were there.

I noticed a small group sitting around a young bachur. He wore a large knitted yarmulke with “Yechi” on it. The bachur was speaking and everybody was listening silently. When he finished speaking, they sang “Ashreinu.”

When I moved into the group, it was already towards the end. When everybody dispersed, I went over to the bachur and asked him what he had been talking about that had so fascinated his audience.

“You have to tell miracle stories again and again,” he said. “It’s our

way of expressing thanks to Hashem.

“My name is Chaim Rotem Sharabi,” he said. “You probably know my father, Yoram Sharabi of Chevron. Last year I was in critical condition a number of times. I got many brachos from the Rebbe through the *Igros Kodesh* and now, I’m able to function without machines and without oxygen. That’s the story, in short.”

I asked him to tell me the whole story so we could print it in *Beis Moshiach*. Chaim said, “My father has diaries that he wrote at that time. He can give you all the amazing details of the story that took place over the course of an entire year.”

Yoram, the father, was happy to tell me the whole story. He went over his diaries, which were written intermittently between medical treatment and saying T’hillim,

between learning Chassidus and Mivtza T’fillin in the ward. Yoram’s story is moving and terrifying, and is an amazing miracle story of the Rebbe.

Rosh HaShana 5743: Yoram and Tzivya Sharabi, of Kibbutz Mishmar HaSharon, rejoiced over the birth of a son. They named him Rotem, and they had much nachas from him.

Rotem was a sweet baby but when he began smiling his first smiles at two months, he became sick with the flu. He was given medicine, but within a few days there were complications, and the flu had turned into a bad case of bronchitis. The baby, that had just left the hospital for a new world, was hospitalized.

When Rotem recovered he was released from the hospital, but within a few days he was suffering from a bad cough along with a high temperature. That winter, Rotem returned to the hospital a few times. Neither his parents nor the doctors could figure out what was the cause of his recurring illness.

Rotem was sent for thorough examinations. It was discovered that the baby had Cystic Fibrosis, or CF for short. CF is an incurable hereditary disorder that causes the body to secrete an abnormally thick, sticky mucus that clogs the pancreas and the lungs, leading to problems with breathing and digestion, infection, and ultimately death. There is no known cure for CF. (Similar to Tay-Sachs, in that

only if both parents are carriers can a child inherit this disease. The organization Dor Yesharim, started by a parent who lost a number of children to Tay-Sachs, tests prospective chassanim and kallos for these and other diseases.)

In Israel, there are currently 380 people diagnosed with CF. Many die of CF in early childhood, and some need lung transplants.

Yoram is known as an exceptionally happy Chassid, but when he recalls his son's medical difficulties, his voice trembles. "The doctor told me, you have to know that throughout his life, Rotem will need antibiotics. He may live until age 15.

"I got angry and said, 'You have no right to say how long my son will live. He'll be healthy. I can't give him antibiotics his entire life!'

"Then I took Rotem out of Belinson Hospital in Petach Tikva and took him home, but we didn't

know what to do next. I went out driving in my truck, which I drove in those days. I drove and my thoughts were in a turmoil. What would be with Rotem? He was so cute and I loved him. At that time, we were not religious, but I felt that only Hashem could help me. I began crying out, 'Hashem, make Rotem healthy! Help!' It was a t'filla from the depths of my heart after years without praying.

"We decided to go to a homeopath. He checked Rotem, and after prolonged treatment, the baby began to breathe properly and the inflammations didn't come back for ten years. This decision saved our son.

"When Rotem entered sixth grade, he started coughing again and had some difficulty breathing. He managed for a while, but as the years went by, breathing became more difficult and it was hard for him to exert himself, even for walking. We ran from one

homeopath to another, but they couldn't help him.

"Over the years, we had become baalei t'shuva and had become close to Chabad. We moved to Chevron, where we lived in an atmosphere of devotion for one another. No wonder that when Rotem became of draft age, he decided to join the army. He was able to overcome all the difficulties resulting from his illness during his army duty but at a certain point he needed a special diet with foods prepared for him at home. He was sent for a check-up and they found out that his respiratory system was in bad shape. He was hospitalized immediately and that ended his military service."

When Rotem was released from the hospital, he went to the Chabad yeshiva in Tzfas, where he learned for three months. He didn't leave the yeshiva throughout the day since steps were hard for him. The yeshiva's staff and talmidim helped Rotem a lot. Doctor visits, medication, treatments, were all part of a routine day, but the situation was manageable and Rotem decided to help his widowed sister Dalia Har-Sinai.

Her husband, Yair (may Hashem avenge his blood), had established his home in the fields near the yishuv Sussia, where he shepherded his sheep. One day, Arabs murdered him. His wife Dalia raised her nine orphans, and Rotem, despite his illness, helped his sister raise the orphans and even took care of his brother-in-law's sheep.

This period ended when a persistent infection entered Rotem's lungs and wreaked havoc there.

"It was 1 Shvat two years ago," continues Yoram, "when we saw that his condition had worsened. I connected Rotem to the oxygen



Heartfelt davening in the hospital

tank and took him to a doctor in Yerushalayim. The doctor said Rotem should be hospitalized. We went home to prepare for a long hospitalization when suddenly, on the road, Rotem said in a panic that the oxygen tank was almost empty.

“Abba, it’s hard for me to breathe,” he whispered. ‘I can’t breathe, I can’t breathe!’

“I put on the speed and he said once more, ‘Abba, I can’t breathe,’ and stopped and turned blue. We were half an hour from Chevron in a dangerous area. I immediately called for an ambulance from Chevron and said it was an emergency.

“I drove as fast as I could go. Many years earlier, I had been a driver of an ambulance, so I knew how to drive fast with relative safety. I anxiously looked out for the ambulance but didn’t see it. I began to yell ‘Yechi,’ and ‘Rebbe, help me! Rebbe, save Rotem! Rebbe, I want Rotem to live!’

“I arrived home and connected Rotem to an oxygen tank and immediately left for Shaarei Tzedek hospital. Rotem underwent an exam and I wrote a letter to the Rebbe and asked him to save Rotem. The answer I opened to in the *Igros Kodesh* was *refua shleima b’karov* (a speedy recovery).

“12 hours later, the doctors said the situation was very bad. Even worse than that, the infection had attacked the cysts, which the illness creates. A healthy person can fight these germs with antibiotics, but in Rotem’s case, the germs had gotten into the cysts and it was hard to fight.

“The doctors couldn’t get Rotem’s breathing under control and had to put him on a respirator. He was taken in critical condition for emergency treatment, unconscious and on a respirator. The doctors made it clear, ‘Prepare for the worst within a short period of time.’ I informed my friends in Chevron and asked them to daven for Rotem’s recovery.

“It was an extremely difficult time. The family, friends, and acquaintances davened for Rotem, but he remained in critical condition. We wrote to the Rebbe



At the hospital

numerous times and in the answers it spoke about simcha and health. Twice, the Rebbe wrote about checking mezuzos, and twice we found them to be pasul. The Rebbe said to give tz’daka to the yeshiva where Rotem learned, and I gave a nice donation to the Chabad yeshiva in Tzfas. Then I got an answer about t’fillin, and I ran and bought Rotem Rashi and Rabbeinu Tam t’fillin with the k’sav of the Alter Rebbe, the finest t’fillin, which cost a fortune, the main thing being to fulfill the Rebbe’s instructions.

“Throughout this time, we took heart from the Rebbe’s answer that the doctors are only Hashem’s emissaries, and they work within nature, and Hashem will send a supernatural recovery. I also opened to a letter, which said to listen to the doctors.

“Rotem continued to remain in critical condition, and a family member was with him at all times. My wife spent days and nights at his bedside and took care of him devotedly.

“We said T’hillim every day at Rotem’s bedside. Although he was unconscious, his neshama heard. I did mitzvaim with other patients and their families, putting t’fillin on with them and giving them moral support.

“We considered adding a name. I asked Rav Zimroni Tzik, shliach in Bat-Yam, and he said that in such a serious situation a name could be added. He suggested that we add the name “Chaim” or “Refael.” I said we would add the name Chaim and I asked whether the name



Yoram Sharabi thanking Hashem

should be “Chaim Rotem” or “Rotem Chaim.”

“R’ Tzik said he would ask the Rebbe in the *Igros Kodesh*. In the letter he opened to, it mentioned the name of Minister Chaim Moshe Shapiro. R’ Tzik remembered that this minister’s name had been just Moshe, but when a grenade was thrown (in 5717/1957) into the hall during a full session of the Knesset and he was seriously wounded, the name Chaim was added... During the next Krias ha’Torah opportunity, I added the name Chaim and my son’s name became Chaim Rotem.

“Over a month had gone by and the medical situation improved somewhat, and they decided to wake Rotem up. Within a relatively short period of time there was a significant improvement and the doctors were amazed. Rotem chimed in and said, ‘At the worst time, I got oxygen at the rate of 20 liters a minute, and within a short amount of time after I became conscious, they lowered the rate to 2 liters a minute! That’s considered a tremendous improvement.’”

The doctors concluded that Rotem could be released from the hospital and undergo rehabilitation. He went from Shaarei Tzedek hospital to a rehab center for respiratory conditions.

The Jewish community in Chevron was thrilled when Rotem came home for Shabbos for the first time. He was connected to an oxygen tank, but was happy and hopeful that in a little while he would return home for good, and wouldn’t need to visit medical centers anymore.

His condition was relatively okay and Yoram wrote to the Rebbe again and got this special answer:

...as far as what you write about health...they have found some

medications for the illness you mention in your letter. When it is taken at times established by a top doctor, then they don’t suffer from this illness, and after a while they are healed. Though, it’s surprising that they don’t know about this. Maybe you have yet to find top doctors in this field. They are surely to be found in a big city...
(vol. 21, p. 341)

“I drove as fast as I could go. Many years earlier, I had been a driver of an ambulance, so I knew how to drive fast with relative safety. I anxiously looked out for the ambulance but didn’t see it. I began to yell ‘Yechi,’ and ‘Rebbe, help me! Rebbe, save Rotem! Rebbe, I want Rotem to live!’”

“I went to the doctor on call at the rehab center and asked him if he knew doctors who were expert in CF. He recommended a doctor, Eitan Kerem, the director of the CF department in Hadassah Har HaTzofim.

“Yes, I thought to myself, that’s just what the Rebbe said, to find one in a big city, i.e., Yerushalayim.

“We went to Dr. Kerem, and after he examined Rotem he said, ‘There’s a lot of work, but you’ll make it. You’ll be able to function like everybody else.’ This view opposed that of all the doctors who sowed despair and scared us with black prognostications of Rotem’s future. This top doctor had not only agreed to treat Rotem, but was very positive.

“I must mention the mashpia in the yeshivas Chabad in Tzfas, Rabbi Moshe Orenstein, who sent bachurim from the yeshiva to visit Rotem, to learn and talk with him. The mashpia Rabbi L.Y. Ginsberg also came often in order to learn the D’var Malchus with Rotem, learning that encouraged Rotem and me.

“But this relatively better period didn’t last long. Medical complications set in and Rotem was hospitalized in the ICU at Bikkur Cholim hospital in Yerushalayim for five days. Dr. Kerem helped in the complicated treatment. From Bikkur Cholim he went back to rehab, but a few days later he took a turn for the worse, and he was hospitalized in Hadassah, where Dr. Kerem headed the CF department. Rotem was in critical condition. We went through the treatments and medication all over again. It took a long time before his condition stabilized. When the doctors saw they couldn’t do much to improve his situation, they told us that Rotem could be released but he had to get in line for a lung transplant!

“They constantly told us that Rotem would ultimately need a lung transplant. It’s a complicated procedure, which often doesn’t work out, but the doctors made it clear that Rotem’s lungs were barely working and he had to have two new lungs.

“There was a long line and Rotem was given a date for the

operation four years later! Then they shortened it to two years. Dr. Kerem, who had devotedly treated Rotem, introduced us to Dr. Mordechai Kramer, the director of the pulmonary department at the Rabin medical center in Petach Tikva, the only medical center in the country where lung transplants are done.

“Dr. Kramer welcomed us and gave us hope, saying that within two years they would be able to get two suitable lungs. He explained the process to us, and said that as soon as a donor was found, we would have to be at the medical center within three hours.

“We went home, happy on the one hand that the experts were working with us, but anxious over having to wait two years! Rotem was optimistic and expressed his hope that the lungs would be found much faster than that. On Rosh HaShana 5764, Rotem was extremely happy. ‘I got many answers from the Rebbe about health and simcha,’ he said with complete bitachon, ‘and I’m sure they’ll find two lungs for me soon.’”

18 Tishrei 5764, Chol HaMoed Sukkos. The phone rang at the Sharabi house and it was Dr. Kramer on the line. He said, “There are two lungs, please come to the medical center immediately.” They called for an ambulance and Rotem was quickly taken to the Rabin medical center.

They were told that the donor was a 28-year-old Arab who had been killed in car accident. “We were glad the donor wasn’t Jewish, even though we had asked rabbanim, such as Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu, who had said we could do the transplant even if the lungs came from a Jew.”

Throughout this time, Yoram received answers from the Rebbe about Yud-Tes Kislev in the month of Geula, Kislev, and Chanuka. Rotem was examined and Dr. Kramer was pleased, saying, “The lungs are a terrific match!”

Preparations for the operation were made and Rotem’s parents parted from him with tears in their eyes. The operation took twelve hours and was done by the best doctors, led by Dr. Kramer. Dr. Kramer came out of the operating theater every so often to report to the worried parents how their son was doing.

The operation was a success, but Rotem was still in critical



Rabbi L.Y. Ginsberg visiting the hospital

condition. He was on a respirator and remained unconscious for days. After a few days, there was a localized infection, which signaled the beginning of the rejection of the transplant.

Rotem lay unconscious for three weeks in the ICU. Three times, he was in danger of rejecting the transplant, but the doctors fought for his life. There were moments when even the doctors threw up their hands and said it was only a matter of hours...

Yoram didn’t stop writing to the Rebbe, and he carefully fulfilled every instruction he received. When the letter was about Melaveh

Malka, he made a Melaveh Malka in Chevron for dozens of people. When the Rebbe said we need to purify the air by learning *Tanya* and saying T’hillim, he began saying a lot of T’hillim and learning *Tanya*.

One day, he got this answer:

“And he should ... be punctilious about fulfilling the laws of mikva and family purity, by immersing in a mikva of rainwater or a spring, and not in municipal water, which is drawn through pipes and various machines, for this will especially give increased health to his children.” (vol. 21 p. 280)

In an area under Palestinian control, near Beit Romano, there is a spring called Avrohom’s Spring. Yoram went with an armed friend to immerse in this spring. It was freezing at that time of year, but if the Rebbe said to do it, Yoram did it!

There were still more complications. On 2 Cheshvan, two weeks after the transplant, the doctors said there was a swelling in the lungs and Rotem had nearly stopped breathing.

Yoram turned to the Rebbe and pleaded that Rotem be given the strength to breathe. The answer Yoram opened to was encouraging:

“Thank you for the good news about the improved health of ... and I hope that by the time you receive my letter his condition will improve even more, and you will inform me of good news.”

Three weeks after the transplant, Rotem woke up. “I couldn’t move except for my eyelids. Slowly, I began to move my body, after much devoted medical attention.”

Rotem’s health had its ups and downs. New medical problems kept

cropping up. One day, his intestines were blocked and the doctors said this necessitated an operation. Yoram wrote to the Rebbe and received this unusual answer:

“In your letter you write that you suffer from an ailment, and you don’t write what the ailment is, but that you’re liable to have a serious heart attack at any moment, G-d forbid (though I don’t think so, and you are exaggerating – pardon me for saying so)...surely you too know yourself that it’s nothing but your imagination...”

The Rebbe wrote about exaggeration and imagination and a few days later the intestinal problem disappeared without an operation. At the end of Cheshvan, Rotem was taken to the rehab center at Tel HaShomer. There too, he experienced peaks and valleys when some times his condition became life threatening. But the Rebbe’s answers continued to encourage the family.

As mentioned before, many of the Rebbe’s answers were about miracles that happened in the month of Kislev, on Yud-Tes Kislev and Chanuka. On 24 Kislev, Erev Chanuka 5764, Rotem was released from the hospital and went home to Chevron, to everyone’s delight.

In conclusion, Rotem wanted to



At the Seudas hodaa in Chevron

*Sitting from right to left: Chaim Rotem, Rabbi Shmuel Elozor Halperin, Rabbi Moshe Levinger, R' Boruch Marzel
Standing: Yoram Sharabi and Rabbi Daniel Cohen, shliach in Chevron*

say a few words:

“We constantly received answers from the Rebbe about miracles connected with Kislev and Chanuka, and baruch Hashem, I lit the menorah at home. After regaining consciousness following the operation and transplant, the doctors said it would take a year and a half until I would walk! Four month later, I was able to run!

“Medical statistics say that a year after the transplant, the lungs work at 60% capacity, but with me, four months later, the lungs are already working at 50% capacity. I am certain that in the merit of the Rebbe’s brachos, I have received the gift of a new life.”

On Rosh Chodesh Shvat of a

year ago, it was one year since the infection was discovered, which shut down the proper functioning of the lungs. On this day, they celebrated with a Seudas hodaa in Chevron. Many residents of Chevron, Kiryat Arba, and friends of the family came to celebrate the miracle and to acknowledge the Rebbe’s brachos. Yoram briefly went through the history of the illness, and thanked everyone for their prayers and moral support. Everybody felt that the Rebbe is the one who saved Chaim Rotem’s life.

This feeling was expressed in joyous singing and dancing of “Yechi,” and who could see Yoram and Rotem dancing without joining in?



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