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**BEIS MOSHIACH**

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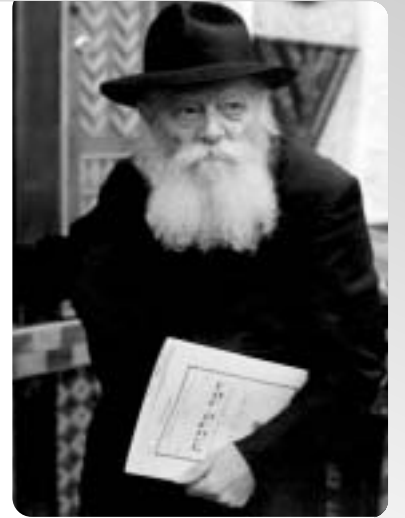
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# THE SPIES' ONE MISTAKE

SICHOS IN ENGLISH

## SHABBOS PARSHAS SHLACH; 28TH DAY OF SIVAN, 5749

1. The central topic of this week's Torah portion is the sending of the spies. The very fact that they were sent on this mission raises questions. Noting that the Torah states, "You send," Rashi comments that G-d did not order Moshe to send the spies. Rather, the Jews came to Moshe and requested that spies be sent. Moshe consulted G-d, who consented to such a possibility, but left the decision up to Moshe.

This represents a departure from the established precedent. Previously, Moshe had brought several matters suggested by the Jews to G-d, e.g., the offering of the second Paschal sacrifice, the offering of the sacrifices of the princes. In all these instances, he did not act until he received specific instructions from G-d. In this instance, the fact that he did not receive explicit instructions of this nature should have raised doubts in his mind. If so, why did he, nevertheless, decide to send the spies? Since G-d had already

promised the Jews that Eretz Yisroel was a good land and ordered them to enter it immediately, why was it necessary to send spies? Sending them opened up the possibility – as ultimately transpired – for the Jews to err and not to desire to enter Eretz Yisroel.

Furthermore, we find that Moshe, himself, had doubts about the success of the mission and prayed for Yehoshua, "May G-d save you from the counsel of the spies." Despite the fact that at the outset the people he chose for the mission were righteous and leaders of the people, he, nevertheless, felt it necessary to pray on behalf of Yehoshua. If so, why did he send the spies?[20]

The concept can be explained as follows: By leaving the matter up to Moshe's choice, G-d opened up a new realm of service, the possibility of serving Him even when no direct command is involved. A person must decide how to behave, hoping that he is acting in a manner where his individual will reflects G-d's will despite the fact that G-d has not given him any explicit instructions.

To elaborate: There are two types of service of G-d: a) The fulfillment of His commands. This reflects the nullification of our minds and wills to fulfill His desires. To quote Pirkei Avos: "Negate your will before His." b) Service in the realm of reshus, where there is no explicit Divine command. There a person's service involves working on his mind and his will until they reflect G-d's will. To refer to the above Mishna: "Make your will as His will."

The fulfillment of the latter service requires the granting of a special Divine potential. Thus, the Rambam writes concerning free choice:

Freedom of choice is granted to every man. If he desires to tend to a positive path..., the potential is his... There is nothing holding him back... This concept is a fundamental principle. It is a pillar of Torah and mitzvos.

Though we also have free choice whether to fulfill mitzvos or not, the very fact that G-d has commanded us to perform these acts influences our choice since, by nature, every Jew desires to fulfill

G-d's will. It is in the areas where there is no explicit command and yet man chooses to do good, that our potential for choice is expressed in the most complete manner.

In particular, the potential to choose is twofold: a) The very potential to choose, the ability to act independently, is itself a unique power. The natural state of creation precludes that man be under the dominion of his Creator. It is only because of G-d's gift that he has the potential to choose. b) G-d grants choice through the Torah's command, "And you shall choose life." This implies that G-d gives us the potential to choose good.

Both of these aspects are more clearly expressed in those areas where there is no explicit Divine command. When there is a Divine command to fulfill a particular mitzvah, man's choice is influenced and his fulfillment of the command depends on the infinite power of He who gave these commandments. However, in those areas where there is no explicit command, man has a challenge, to use his limited potential to make the correct choice. Even in these areas, the potential to do so is granted to him.

Based on the above, we can understand why Moshe sent the spies: When G-d did not tell Moshe whether or not to send the spies, Moshe rejoiced at the opportunity for acting with free choice, without being "forced" by G-d's command,[21] rather man's own free will could parallel G-d's desires.

On this basis, we can also understand why it was this matter, the sending of the spies, which G-d left up to the Jews' free choice. Sending the spies was a preparatory step for the entry into Eretz Yisroel.

The settlement of Eretz Yisroel was the ultimate goal of the exodus from Egypt and the giving of the Torah, for it allows for the establishment of a dwelling for G-d in the lower worlds.[22] For this reason, the manner in which the Jews approached the conquest of Eretz Yisroel was intended to be carried out in a natural manner, through war. Therefore, it was proper to follow the natural course of behavior that any army would take when approaching a foreign land, sending spies.

The spies, however, made one mistake. They interpreted their

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mission as also leaving up to man's discretion whether to enter into Eretz Yisroel or not. This error caused their entire mission to be ill-fated. However, at the outset, their mission was intended to assist in the transformation of Eretz Yisroel into a dwelling place for G-d.

For this reason, the individuals Moshe chose were righteous and fit to receive the extra Divine potential that is associated with a mission that involves free choice. Although Moshe prayed for Yehoshua, he did so without any premonition of evil.

Had he any negative suspicions, he would have surely prayed for the entire company. The fact he did not, indicates that this was a special measure of favor intended only for Yehoshua who was "a servant who never left the tent" of his master.[23]

A similar concept is also emphasized by the conclusion of the portion, the passage dealing with tzitzis. Tzitzis has an advantage over other mitzvos because it leads to the fulfillment of all the mitzvos as the verse states: "And you shall see it and you shall remember all the mitzvos and perform them." To quote our Sages, "the Torah considers [tzitzis] equal to all the other mitzvos and makes their [fulfillment] dependent upon it." Despite this unique importance, according to Torah law, "a person is not obligated to buy a tallis and wrap himself in it." Rather, he can wear a garment which does not require tzitzis.

It is possible to explain that G-d desired to leave the fulfillment of this mitzvah up to a person himself. He must desire to perform this commandment which will lead him to the fulfillment of all the other mitzvos.

There is also a connection between the above and the portion of the Mishneh Torah associated with the present day, the conclusion of Hilchos T'mura. There the Rambam states:

Even though all of the Torah's statutes are [Divine] decrees..., it is fit to meditate upon them. Whenever it is possible to explain them rationally, one should do so.

Thus, man must try to establish a connection with the mitzvos in terms which he can relate to. This approach must also be carried into the realm of reshus, areas of life where there is no explicit Torah

command regarding what to do and what not to do. In this realm where the decision of how to serve G-d and how to refine the world is left to man's choice and decision, man has the obligation to try to have his own personal desires conform to G-d's. This is a service which parallels the sending of the spies to discover the proper path of conquering Eretz Yisroel.[24]

May this service lead to the time when we will "Arise, go up, and take possession of it." This mentions two ascents, one associated with the redemption from Egypt and one with the Messianic redemption. At that time, we will fulfill all the mitzvos (as alluded to in the mitzvah of Tzitzis)[25] and their performance will be permeated by a direct perception of G-dliness. "Your Master will no longer be concealed and your eyes will perceive your Master." "The glory of G-d will be revealed..." May it come immediately, now.

2. This Shabbos is the 28th (ko'ach) of Sivan. The word "ko'ach" means "power," and thus, today is associated with the "power of Sivan," the third month, which is distinguished by the giving of the Torah. Thus, the 28th of Sivan relates to the "the power of Torah."

The 28th of Sivan falls within three days of Rosh Chodesh Tammuz, the fourth month. One of the distinctions between the third and the fourth months is that the third month is associated with drawing down influence from above, while the fourth month is associated with the service of the lower realm on its own initiative. ko'ach Sivan draws down added power to facilitate this service, not only in regard to the service of Torah and mitzvos which we were commanded to fulfill by the giving of the Torah, but also service in the

realm of reshus, the area of our behavior where we have no specific command from G-d to guide us. The latter service is related to the concept of free choice described above.[26]

Carrying out this service requires an additional gift of power from G-d. This power is granted on the 28th of Sivan, the day which expresses "the power of Sivan," the power of Torah, and prepares us for the service of the month of Tammuz.

There is an added dimension to

*The redemption of the Previous Rebbe on Yud-Beis Tammuz is a foretaste of how ultimately the entire month, including the 17th of Tammuz, will be transformed into a "month of redemption."*

the above concept. Moshe's prayer (recorded in this week's Torah portion), "And now, may the power of G-d be increased" is associated with the concept of t'shuva. The service of t'shuva reflects man's potential to serve G-d on his own initiative in an even deeper manner than the concept of free choice.

A baal t'shuva must transform his heart and break through the barriers created by his negative deeds. This requires drawing down influence from a level of G-dliness that transcends the Torah. This level is, nevertheless, revealed by

the Torah. Indeed, it was when Moshe ascended to receive the Torah that he became conscious of the potential for t'shuva.

The concept of transformation is emphasized by the coming month, the month of Tammuz. Indeed, the very use of the name, Tammuz, as the name of a Jewish month, reflects a transformation since the name is derived from that of a Mesopotamian deity. This concept is also underscored by the fact that this month contains one of the four communal fasts which the Rambam explains will ultimately "be transformed into festivals and days of rejoicing."

The awareness of this concept is more powerful in the present age, after we have witnessed the redemption of the Previous Rebbe on Yud-Beis Tammuz. This redemption is a foretaste of how ultimately the entire month, including the 17th of Tammuz, will be transformed into "a month of redemption."

The redemption of Yud-Beis Tammuz is also related to the 28th of Sivan. One of the results of the Previous Rebbe's redemption was his coming and settling in America. America was referred to as "the lower half of the world," a place where, according to our Sages, "the Torah was not given." Thus, bringing the Torah to America is associated with service on our initiative, drawing the Torah into the lowest levels of our world.

That service was given added power on the 28th of Sivan[27] when the Previous Rebbe injected new energy into the efforts of spreading Yiddishkeit and Chassidus by founding the institutions, Machne Israel, Kehos and Merkos L'Inyanei Chinuch. The activities of these institutions have continued even after his passing

and receive new energy this year, the fortieth year following that event.

The above concepts must be brought down into deed, for "deed is most essential." The 28th of Sivan should be set aside for a day of farbrengens. (Indeed, we have seen the positive results of these farbrengens for more than three years running.) These efforts should inspire us to apply more effort in the mission with which we were charged by the Previous Rebbe, spreading Yiddishkeit and spreading the wellsprings of Chassidus outward. In particular, emphasis should be placed on using the summer months to involve children in programs of Torah education in which for all twenty four hours of the day, they are found in a Torah environment.

May these activities hasten Moshiach's coming and may he arrive even before the beginning of the month of Tammuz.

NOTES:

20. The question is further reinforced

by the behavior of Yehoshua himself, who was saved only because of Moshe's prayer and saw the negative repercussions that resulted from the spies Moshe sent. He, nevertheless, also sent spies before conquering Jericho even though G-d did not command him to do so.

21. An allusion to this is found in Rashi's commentary which quotes G-d as telling Moshe: "I am not commanding you. If you want to, send them." Rashi's use of the negative implies that G-d did not pressure Moshe at all and left the matter totally up to his choice.

22. For this reason, the Torah refers to Eretz Yisroel, Eretz Canaan. The Canaanites were the most depraved of all the nations. Since the dwelling for G-d is to be established "in the lower worlds," the nation which the Jews were to conquer was the lowest of the human race.

23. On a deeper level, it can be explained that Moshe's prayer was "a prophecy uttered without the realization that it was a prophecy." Ultimately, it was Yehoshua who was to lead the people into Eretz Yisroel. Hence, he was to need the special influence of Moshe's prayer.

24. As mentioned above, there should not have been a question regarding the entry into Eretz Yisroel, the question left to the spies was how to enter Eretz Yisroel. Similarly, a person's obligation to carry out the essential service of refining the world and spreading the wellsprings of Chassidus is a given. What is left to his own thinking processes is the manner in which to carry out these services.

25. The mitzvah of tzitzis is also connected to the concept of redemption. The four corners of the tzitzis are related to the four prophecies of redemption found in the Torah. Similarly, Yechezkel's vision of Jerusalem begins by his describing how G-d "took him by the tzitzis of his hair." Also the Moshiach is described as "peering (meitzitz) through the lattice."

26. The interrelation of these concepts is further emphasized by our Sages' statement that the spies were sent out on the 29th of Sivan. After receiving the power for independent service on the 28th of Sivan, Moshe felt the spies were ready to undertake their mission.

27. Translator's Note: The 28th of Sivan was the day on which the Rebbe Shlita and the Rebbetzin arrived in the United States in 1941.

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# LETTERS TO A SCIENTIST\*

## PART 8

By the Grace of G-d  
25<sup>th</sup> of Adar I, 5730  
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Dr. Zeev Greene  
c/o Lubavitch House  
109-115 Stamford Hill  
London N.16, England

Greetings and Blessing:

I duly received your letters, as well as your inquiry through Rabbi Hodakov in regard to a visit in Eretz Yisroel. No doubt you promptly received my reply, but for the record I will repeat it here. It is that in general it is a very good thing to do, and if it is possible for you to arrange properly for your children to remain in London during your visit to Eretz Yisroel, it would be advisable to do so, so as not to disrupt their studies, etc. But if this is not possible, then you will of course take them with you. However, I trust that you will be able to arrange this, since this arrangement, in my opinion, would be preferable. I further trust that your visit in Eretz Yisroel will not be a hurried one.

I do not know the schedule of President Shazar, and cannot therefore say it with certainty, but I trust that for various reasons, President Shazar will be pleased to meet with you and Mrs. Greene. I suggest, therefore, that when you arrive, you should get in touch with Rabbi Shlomo Yosef Zevin (Yona St. 5 in Jerusalem). I believe that Rabbi Zevin will be able to find out about the possibility of your meeting with the President, and I trust that despite the undoubtedly full presidential schedule, there would be an opportunity for you to get acquainted and visit with the President. Mr Shazar speaks English as well as Yiddish, while with Rabbi Zevin you will have no problem to converse in Yiddish.

Last but not least, I want to express my very profound gratification on the report of your various public appearances in England, and the impact which they have had. I am confident that the impressions and benefits will be lasting.

I am also very gratified to note from your correspondence that you have found the visit in England very useful from your personal aspects and your scientific work. As I had occasion to mention before, this area is also related to your spiritual work, inasmuch as your scientific successes obviously will increase also your influence in the area of spreading Torah-Yiddishkeit.

Please convey my personal regards and appreciation also to Mrs. Greene. I have heard that she has contributed in no small measure to the general success of your visit in London.

With prayerful wishes for continued and growing Hatzlocho, and

With blessing, /signature

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# WOMEN'S LEARNING

INTERVIEW BY DAFNA CHAIM

*An interview with Rebbetzin Malka Wilschansky of Tzfas about women and Torah study and how to instill a love for learning in our children.*

For generations, women knew that their connection to Torah was primarily through their encouraging and supporting their husbands and sons in their Torah study. In recent times, however, with the encouragement of the Rebbe Rayatz and then the Rebbe MH"M, Torah study has become an important part of women's lives. Why did this change?

The obligation for women to learn the halachos that pertain to them, as well as Chassidus, in order to love and fear Hashem (which are constant mitzvos that women are also obligated in), was paskened l'halacha by the Alter Rebbe.

In our generation, this has been expanded, thanks to the Rebbe, who supported this phenomenon both in regard to mitzvaim and in regard to learning. In the past, the emphasis was placed on, "the honor of the king's daughter is within," and women generally stayed home. Nowadays, many women are out of the house. The enticements and darkness in the streets have grown, and we must bring in more light and holiness. This is why Torah study for women nowadays is vital.

It's interesting to observe the

development in regard to women's learning. At first, they mostly studied Chassidus and pertinent halachos. When the Rebbe came out with the idea of studying Rambam, he included women. And then, the Rebbe even encouraged the learning of Gemara for women. The latter was unprecedented because of the statement in the Gemara that says that this is "like teaching her foolishness."

The Rebbe explains in a sicha the reason for the change: so that women can test their children in Gemara (*Seifer HaSichos* 5750, vol. 2, p. 455 and *Shaarei Halacha U'Minhag, Yoreh Dei'a* s'if 63). Here at Beis Chana in Tzfas, the girls learn Gemara and many girls enjoy the back-and-forth of the learning.

**How are mothers of large families, who in addition to household responsibilities are involved in mitzvaim, chesed, etc., supposed to find the time to do what the Rebbe asked?**

My maternal great-grandmother would say: When the children were little, the mothers had to close the siddur; when they grew older, they opened it up again.

We can say the same thing about

learning Torah. As long as a woman is occupied with little children, she has to devote herself to them. This is her first priority. At the same time though, she ought to yearn for the time when she can learn, and when an opportunity presents itself, she should grab it.

It reminds me of a story about the Rebbe Rashab, who once told his son, the Rebbe Rayatz: Today I had two Chassidim in yechidus. One caused me anguish and the other gave me great nachas. The first man is a rav and scholar and a Chassid who davens at length. He described his daily schedule to me:

"I get up at three in the morning, learn for a few hours, and then daven at length. After a quick breakfast, I receive people and have a few shiurim in Nigleh and Chassidus. Late at night, I finally have a chance to breathe and to drink a cup of tea and rest a bit."

What this rav and Chassid said, caused me great sorrow. Here's a Jew who puts so much effort into his avodas Hashem, into his learning, his davening, and in helping others, and what does he look forward to? Where is all his avoda leading him? To those few minutes of peace and quiet when he drinks tea and relaxes.

The other man was a simple Chassid. He also gets up at three in the morning, yet he doesn't go to shul but works to support his family. All day he deals with gentiles, and he davens Shacharis in the home of one of the gentiles. You can just imagine

*Rabbi Parnach said that Rabbi Yochanan said, "Whoever is a Torah scholar and his son is a Torah scholar and his grandson is a Torah scholar, Torah will never cease from his children. As it says, 'it will not depart from your mouth and the mouth of your children and the mouth of your children's children, says Hashem, from now and forever.' What did Hashem say? Hashem says, 'I guarantee it.' What does it mean, from now and forever? Rabbi Yirmiya says, 'From here-on-in, Torah keeps on returning to its host.'"*

what kind of davening it is. When it gets dark and he arrives home, tired, he is busy with his children.

"It's only late at night," he told me, "that I find some time to open a *Tanya* and try to learn, and when I get to the words, 'and the second soul in Israel is literally a portion of G-d from above,' I remember that I too have a neshama, but where am I and where is my neshama?"

At this point, the Chassid burst into tears, and I couldn't restrain myself; I cried along with him. We cried together for a while. I had true nachas from that Chassid. He's a Jew who is busy all day and doesn't find time to learn or daven, and what does he yearn for all day? For those few minutes in which he thinks about his G-dly soul which is a "literally a portion of G-d above."

That is the yearning with which we should end the day, and it ought to be what we crave on days that are hectic. And when the children are grown and there's more time, that's when we can open the s'farim once again.

Lately, women here [in Eretz Yisroel] have been going to all kinds of classes and courses. It would be proper to make learning Torah and Chassidus our priority.

Baruch Hashem, in Chabad, women learn. In many other circles, women who are not in chinuch, barely open a seifer after they finish seminary. Sometimes, women tell me, "It's known that in Chabad the women are knowledgeable."

In Chabad, you can find homemakers who are not teachers, who can easily learn through a sicha, or girls who sit with chavrusas and learn Chassidus in their free time. And not only Chassidus. Take for example the Hilchos Beis HaBechira that are studied during the Three Weeks. Women and girls sit and learn the measurements of the

Mikdash, the structure of the Mikdash, and the service done there. We definitely stand above the rest in this area.

I heard a humorous vort in the name of a famous shadchan who said, "It used to be that when a bachur met a girl for a shidduch, he would review a sicha of the Rebbe and she would listen. As the years went by, the situation reversed itself and now the girl reviews the sicha and the bachur listens. Nowadays, he reviews the sicha and she points out comments from the footnotes!"

It's important to stress that the time to pack it all in is before a girl marries. She takes what she learned then with her throughout her life. Rabbi Betzalel Wilschansky once said that when the Rebbe Rayatz was the acting director of the yeshiva, one of the supporters came to visit the yeshiva and saw the bachurim learning with great enthusiasm and davening with warmth and at length. He said to the Rebbe Rayatz that he thought it was "too warm."

The Rebbe answered with a mashal from life in Russia at that time. The oven that used to heat the house was the same oven that was used to cook the chulent and to heat up water, etc. On Shabbos, they couldn't light the oven, and so the evening before, Thursday night, they heated the oven to a very high temperature so that the heat would last until after Shabbos.

In yeshiva, we instill the bachurim with Chassidic warmth and fervor so that they will have what to live with when they leave the yeshiva. The same applies to girls.

**We live in a time when shlichus is "it," and sometimes when a bachur wants to learn or teach, the girls consider this second rate. What do you tell a girl who turns down a shidduch because of this?**

***What this rav and Chassid said, caused me great sorrow. Here's a Jew who puts so much effort into his avodas Hashem, into his learning, his davening, and in helping others, and what does he look forward to? Where is all his avoda leading him? To those few minutes of peace and quiet when he drinks tea and relaxes...***

I've dealt with this question and have spoken with girls who express their disappointment over a shidduch like this. First of all, they have to know that being involved in chinuch, or learning in order to be able to teach is definitely shlichus. The proof is that the Rebbe included all the schools and yeshivos in the Shluchim Albums.

When Lubavitchers learn, it's not about sitting in their corner and learning (which is extolled in other circles). Their learning is in a way of hafatza, learning in order to teach. This is part of shlichus.

In 5736, when the Rebbe asked for volunteers to go on shlichus to Eretz Yisroel, we were in the first group that went to Tzfas. The Rebbe referred to it as the "holy congregation." The Rebbe said the men should sit and learn for two

years, and in their free time they should be involved in mitvtzaim (and the Rebbe even said that this would add to the security in Eretz Yisroel).

After the two years were up, the Rebbe said to begin looking into shlichus opportunities, with the order of preference as follows: First, rabbanus or dayanus, and then being involved in the existing Chabad institutions, and founding new mosdos in suitable places.

That's when the shluchim scattered around the country. We remained in Tzfas since my husband had already begun working on the yeshiva since its inception.

I was happy that my husband got the yeshiva. I was always drawn towards learning or chinuch, and baruch Hashem, we have much nachas from our shlichus. There's an interesting answer from the Rebbe to a Chassid who was in chinuch and apparently didn't have it easy, and he complained to the Rebbe about the hardships and about his money problems. The Rebbe told him to thank Hashem Who gave him a good portion in his parnasa.

By the same token, I can say that I thank Hashem who gave us this good portion in shlichus. After all is said and done, from the fruit of our labor go forth rabbanim, roshei yeshivos, and shluchim. It's certainly a reason for great satisfaction.

**How do you create an atmosphere of learning at home? With all the distractions of the computer, etc., today more than ever it's hard to sit and learn.**

In chinuch, there are two channels: direct and indirect. Direct chinuch includes learning, instruction, and guidance. Indirect chinuch is absorbed from the atmosphere in the home, from personal example. Indirect chinuch is much more significant, and therefore, the first thing that must be

done is to create an atmosphere of learning, of love for Torah, in the home.

It's important that a child sees his father sitting and learning at home, that his father goes to farbrengens and shiurim. If it's important to the father, the child will sense that. I remember falling asleep as a child to the sound of my father's singsong learning of the Gemara every night. This is engraved in my soul for life.

Here is where the woman comes into the picture. The woman's role is to use the extra measure of bina she was endowed with and, in a pleasant manner – and it's important to emphasize that it must be in a pleasant manner – she needs to encourage her husband and support his learning. And sometimes it might be at her expense. In a Chassidic home, the children are taught that

***I couldn't restrain myself; I cried along with him. I had true nachas from that Chassid. He's a Jew who is busy all day and doesn't find time to learn or daven, and what does he yearn for all day? For those few minutes in which he thinks about his G-dly soul which is a "literally a portion of G-d above."***



when their father is sitting and learning, he cannot be disturbed. This is how a child absorbs the fact that Torah study is a supreme value.

Not only the children shouldn't disturb him, but the wife shouldn't bother him either! On Erev Pesach, for example, when extra help is needed, I tried very hard not to ask my sons for help when they were learning, despite my exhaustion.

When a child sees that his learning is important to his mother, that she values it and takes pleasure in his learning, it says more than a thousand words.

I don't mean that you shouldn't say anything! When a child goes off

to yeshiva, you can and must encourage him and make a big deal about it. When he returns, his father should inquire about what he learned and about the farbrengens.

I once traveled in the same car as another family from Tzfas to a wedding in Kfar Chabad. On the way, we passed the yeshiva in Netanya to pick up their son, and throughout the trip (going and coming), the father and son talked in learning. That's chinuch for ahavas ha'Torah.

This is appropriate for younger children too. When a boy returns from yeshiva and wants to share his experiences with his mother,

naturally, she must listen to him and hear how his day went. But if the mother will display more interest in what he learned and when he reviews what he learned she shows that she enjoys it, the child absorbs this. Her interest will spur him on to learn even better (though you should not do this in a pressured way like a teacher testing a student).

Another point to think about is the bookcases. Sometimes, when you walk into a Lubavitcher home, you don't see too many s'farim. There are homes where you don't see a Shas and sometimes the Shas is stuck away somewhere. The Rebbe wants a Chassidic home to be full of s'farim. That means not that the house has

s'farim, but that the house is full of s'farim! A house has many components and every component is impacted upon by the s'farim. A child surrounded by s'farim is influenced by it. It creates an atmosphere in the house.

In one of our first years in Tzfas, I went to the home of a Chassidish man who did not serve in a rabbinical position and was not in chinuch (afterwards I discovered that he was a knowledgeable person) and he had an enormous amount of s'farim. I remembered being amazed by it.

Often, before getting married, chassanim ask my husband which s'farim they should buy in addition to the basics. It's important to start off married life with many s'farim.

Another way of arousing love for Torah in children is through songs and stories. The Rebbe said that Jewish women would put their children to sleep and sing lullabies about the value of Torah, like the Yiddish song, "Torah is the best merchandise." You can also tell children stories that illustrate the importance of Torah study or about mesirus nefesh for Torah.

Today, one of my students in seminary gave a model lesson to children in the third grade. The topic was mesirus nefesh for Torah study and she told two stories about it, one about Hillel and the other about a little boy. At the end of the lesson, she had a quiz and had many sayings on the topic.

This is something that should be developed more in our schools. It's important for children to grow up with stories about mesirus nefesh for Torah study.

**How do you get a child to learn *Tanya* or Mishnayos by heart?**

The usual way is with prizes, though as the children grow older, the inyan of the reward for a mitzva

***She needs to encourage her husband and support his learning. And sometimes it might be at her expense...***

being the mitzva itself should be stressed.

As far as learning things by heart, there are two important points. There are bright children who find learning things by heart easy. With these children, you have to make sure that their learning isn't mechanical and lifeless.

Then there are children who find it harder to learn things by heart, and their efforts must be acknowledged, with the learning itself being valued. These children can be given a prize for the amount of time they put into it. This applies to learning in general – that the emphasis ought to be on the effort involved and less on the results.

You also have to watch out that it

doesn't turn into a business deal or to in insufferable burden. In my home, I didn't emphasize learning by heart in particular, but learning in general. Each child did things according to his abilities.

But there's the story of the Rebbe Rashab, who encouraged his son, the Rebbe Rayatz, to learn Mishnayos by heart, and years later, after he sat in jail, the Rebbe Rayatz said that those Mishnayos strengthened him while he was in jail. A similar story is told about R' Mendel Futerfas – that he said that the *Tanya* that he learned by heart protected him throughout his captivity in Russia.

\* \* \*

The Rebbe said in a sicha that you go towards Kabbalas HaTorah with simcha, and the simcha itself is the preparation for kabbalas ha'Torah p'nimius. P'nimius is when the Torah permeates every part of your being, every moment of your life, wherever you are, in all situations.

That is the chiddush of Mattan Torah – that Torah permeates the physical world. May we all receive and learn, love, and rejoice in the Torah, and take it in p'nimius.



Shvat 5736 – the shluchim pass by the Rebbe to receive his bracha and to receive a volume of *Likkutei Sichos* (for the shluchim) and a siddur (for the shluchos)

# SACRIFICES AND FALLEN SOLDIERS: WHY?

*Portion of a letter from the Rebbe to the Gaon Reb Shlomo Yosef Zevin z"l. \* Fifth day of Chanuka, 5729 (December 20, 1968)<sup>1</sup>*

TRANSLATED BY ALEXANDER ZUSHE KOHN

As with all of their teachings, the Sages were astonishingly accurate when they said, “Whoever adds [to the Torah] subtracts from it,” an insight that helps us appreciate why the Torah stated the two commandments, “Do not add,” and, “Do not subtract,” in the same verse and the same breath.<sup>2</sup>

{I am referring to the following}: There are those who insist that there is a new mitzvah nowadays (i.e., to move to the Holy Land. And they included it among the 613 commandments, no less, contrary to the opinion of Maimonides). Among them are some who add that the fulfillment of the entire Torah, and the existence of the Jewish people and the land of Israel are entirely dependent on the fulfillment of this mitzvah, and therefore [one may even travel to Israel on boats that cause the public desecration of Shabbos, for] this mitzvah supersedes all others, [and most definitely those of lesser severity than transgressing Shabbos]. Then they went even further, publicly proclaiming that we are now in the midst of the Redemption’s beginning, contrary to the explicit ruling of Maimonides<sup>3</sup> [who was certainly aware of the teachings in the Jerusalem Talmud and the teachings that serve as the

basis for Nachmanides’ comment in Shir HaShirim,<sup>4</sup> and the discussions in Tractate Sanhedrin and elsewhere {which the abovementioned individuals cite in support of their claim}]. Of all people, it is precisely among the aforementioned ones that we find many who wish to return the {liberated} territories, or portions thereof, and so on and so forth.

I do not wish to elaborate on this, as I am wary of intruding on Your Honor’s point of view. [Especially since I heard from our common friend<sup>5</sup> that in your encounters with people you always strive to find the shared beliefs and common denominators that unite you with the other party, rather than those aspects that divide, separate, or even differentiate between you. It should be obvious that I relate to you in the same manner, and I hope that it is in the spirit of the verse, “*As water reflects a face to a face shown...*”]. Even with regard to the current situation, I would not have written the abovementioned if I did not see this – the proclamation that the Redemption has begun – as a dangerous matter. Indeed, this {proclamation} is the only explanation I have found (thus far) for the sacrifices and fallen soldiers in the Holy Land, among them even some

<sup>1</sup> Footnotes are a combination of the Rebbe’s original and translator’s additions.

Brackets and parenthesis are the Rebbe’s original; “{}” are translator’s insertions.

<sup>2</sup> Deuteronomy 4:2; 13:1.

<sup>3</sup> Laws of Kings 11:4: “If a king will arise from the House of David, who is

steeped in Torah and preoccupied with mitzvahs...like David his ancestor, and he will impel all of the Jewish people to walk in the Torah’s ways and to strengthen the breaches in its observance, and he will fight the battles of G-d, he is presumed to be Moshiach. If he succeeds in [these endeavors] and

proceeds to build the Holy Temple in its place and to gather the dispersed Jewish people [to the land of Israel], he is definitely Moshiach.”

<sup>4</sup> Song of Songs.

<sup>5</sup> Mr. Zalman Shazar, then President of Israel.

who survived the Holocaust through open miracles, only to fall in the Holy Land in a similarly unnatural manner, may G-d avenge their blood.

To explain: We have seen in the past that whenever there arose a false Messiah who enticed people and attracted them to follow him it resulted in sacrifices, may G-d protect us. It is the same with regard to this notion that the Redemption has already begun. [While it is true that the situation<sup>6</sup> is a **tremendous miracle and haven**<sup>7</sup> for millions of Jews, it is not the redemption from this fourth<sup>8</sup> exile. Quite the contrary: all indications are that it is yet a further descent into the doubled and redoubled darkness of the current exile, to a level where people refer to darkness as light, and so on]. Israel's fallen soldiers, and the sacrifices in the Holy Land, may G-d avenge their blood, are the bitter punishment for this.

“Parenthetically,” I have been informed that the Israeli government's response to my argument – which they discussed – concerning the danger of ceding any territory, was to declare that they would give no consideration to arguments and proofs...put forth by a man who never visited the Holy Land – notwithstanding the fact that my argument concerns the danger this will bring to million of Jews in the Holy Land, and has nothing to do with me personally. They should accept the truth from whoever speaks it.

I received a similar response with regard to the matter of “the beginning of Redemption.” In answer to my argument that such a claim is contrary to the ruling of Maimonides, who was certainly aware of all the sources they quote to support their claim, they cited the Torah interpretations and explanations of various people, but never responded, nor even made reference to, Maimonides. Moreover, some of the individuals who provided this response are people who

know that actual halacha follows neither the Midrash nor Talmud, but only the codes of Jewish law,<sup>9</sup> compiled by later sages, whose light guides us until the coming of our righteous Moshiach.

By the way, one very bizarre ‘argument’ and ‘proof’ I received from them was that there are certain places {in the Midrash and Talmud} where the term “beginning of redemption” and the like is stated {in reference to a particular situation}, or clearly implied. The problem is, however, that the meaning of the term as it appears in those places has absolutely no connection with the current situation! Rather, it was meant to be understood in the spirit of the story recorded in Eicha Rabba<sup>10</sup>:

At the time of the Holy Temple's destruction, the cow of a certain Jew lowed. An Arab<sup>11</sup> told him that [the low indicates that] the Temple was just destroyed. The cow immediately lowed a second time, and the Arab that [the second low indicates that] the savior and redeemer of the Jewish people was just born – i.e., the redemption had begun.<sup>12</sup>

Moreover, there is a wondrous teaching of the Alter Rebbe that before lofty souls like Rabbi Shimon<sup>13</sup> bar Yochai,<sup>14</sup> the Holy Temple was not destroyed at all.<sup>15</sup> The Alter Rebbe was certainly aware that Rashbi hid in a

cave for thirteen years on account of the Romans' decrees [against Torah].<sup>16</sup>

Because of the importance of this matter, I reiterate: Why does it bother me that Jews have talked it into themselves that the Redemption has begun? After all, it makes their hearts happy, and the Torah – especially the teachings of Chassidus – have high regard for the happiness of the Jewish people? The answer, as I stated above, is that the punishment for this is, to say the least, severe. Enough said.

***“Notwithstanding the fact that my argument concerns the danger this will bring to million of Jews in the Holy Land, and has nothing to do with me personally. They should accept the truth from whoever speaks it.”***

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6 The current existence of an Israel governed by Jews.

7 Bold in Rebbe's original.

8 The current, “Edomite,” exile is the last of four major exiles.

9 The Poskim.

10 1:51

11 Apparently a sorcerer.

12 In other words, in a certain distant, spiritual sense, an element of

redemption had been created.

13 Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai, (“Rashbi”) was one of the greatest Talmudic sages and the author of the Zohar.

14 In the Rebbe's original, the following words appear here: The version recorded in Chana Ariel\* reads, [the Temple was not destroyed at all before] the Tanaim, Amoraim, and great Tzaddikim.

\* By the gaon Reb Yitzchak Isaac HaLevi Epshtein of Homil: Toldos 47b.

\* According to this version the phenomenon was not limited only to tzaddikim of Rashbi's stature.

15 Pelach HaRimon, beg. Shmos, p. 7.

16 In other words, the fact that the Temple was not destroyed vis-à-vis Rashbi does not mean that in the world at large the Redemption was a reality.



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# Sivan 28 - Gimmel Tammuz Magbis

B.H. Sivan 12, 5765

**To all Anash, Men and Women, G-d bless you.**

We are soon approaching the very auspicious day, Gimmel Tammuz. This day comes in close proximity with Sivan 28, the auspicious day that the Rebbe MH"M and the Rebbetzin arrived in the United States.

Obviously, these are very opportune days, especially when it is connected to the number ten, when one should again evaluate his or her "Hiskashrus" (connection) with the Rebbe, and more important, to utilize these special days to 'strengthen' the Hiskashrus to the Rebbe.

**"KUPAS RABBEINU," was established with the full consent and blessing of the Rebbe, with its purpose and goal to make every effort that all of the Rebbe's activities, institutions etc. continue unchanged. By supporting Kupas Rabbeinu, one is actually participating in many of the Rebbe's activities, and thus strengthening their *Hiskashrus* to the Rebbe.**

**With this in mind, we therefore urge each and everyone of anash, men and women to support Kupas Rabbeinu in every possible way.**

In this merit may we be "zoiche" that much before Gimmel Tammuz, the Rebbe will be revealed as Melech Hamoshiach and redeem us from this deep and bitter Golus and lead us all to the true and final Geulo, NOW MAMAOSH.

VAAD KUPAS RABBEINU

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# A RAV IS A SHLIACH OF THE REBBE

INTERVIEW BY RABBI SHOLOM YAAKOV CHAZAN

*An interview with Rabbi Shmuel Pesach Bogomilsky, rav of K'hillas Har Sinai in Ivy Hill, Newark, New Jersey for over forty years.*

Few Chabad Chassidim were sent on so many missions by the Rebbe as Rabbi Shmuel Pesach Bogomilsky. He made dozens of trips to countries around the world, on the Rebbe's shlichus, breathing life into forsaken communities from South America and the Caribbean islands to distant Afghanistan. In the course of his shlichus, he was mekasher hundreds of Jews to the Nasi HaDor, some of whom corresponded with the Rebbe.

Even after Rabbi Bogomilsky married, when he was appointed rav of K'hillas Har Sinai in Ivy Hill, Newark, New Jersey, he received many horaos from the Rebbe. Rabbi Bogomilsky is one of the distinguished Chabad rabbanim in the U.S. and is known as a tremendous talmid chacham. His chiddushei Torah have been publicized in scholarly kovtzim and he received comments from the Rebbe on some of them.

We spoke to Rabbi Bogomilsky about combining rabbanus and shlichus.

**Among the thousands of**

**shluchim scattered around the world, hundreds serve a dual role of shliach and rav. As a rav of a k'hilla who is also a shliach, what can you tell us about this dual role?**

In our generation, since the Rebbe demanded that every Chassid be a shliach, when a Chabad Chassid is appointed as rav of a k'hilla, that is his shlichus with all the privileges and responsibilities of a shliach. He has all the kochos of the Rebbe, and he has to be twice as careful with what he does because he represents Lubavitch.

As a Chabad rav, I don't wait for people to ask me questions. I make house calls and do programs for the holidays, doing what every shliach does. Many ideas that I conceived while on Merkos Shlichus, I use now with my k'hilla. For example, when I was on Merkos Shlichus in far-off places, I ordered kosher meat and sold it cheaply to members of the community. The Rebbe strongly encouraged this project, and once even paid for the meat that I sent.

I implemented this idea in my own k'hilla, and once a week I sell

kosher meat at the shul at a subsidized price. People understand that this is not a profit-making business, because I lose on it. It's simply Mivtza Kashrus.

I once asked Rabbi Chadakov if I was considered a shliach of the Rebbe to my k'hilla. He didn't understand the question and said, "One hundred is included in 200," i.e., if you are a rav, then of course you are a shliach! Rabbi Chadakov said that this is why shluchim were not sent to places where there were Chabad rabbanim, because those rabbanim are shluchim.

Since most shluchim operate in communities where there are no rabbis, the people in these communities look to the shliach as their rabbi. They ask him halachic questions and he is asked to officiate at both weddings and funerals.

**Is there any difference then between a rav-shliach and a shliach-rav?**

There are differences, and I'll discuss some of them as I understood it from the Rebbe's answers.

At the end of the 70's, when many Jews came out of Russia, and many came to live in my area, I found it hard to manage the work all on my own. I wrote to the Rebbe

about bringing another shliach to work for me and that I would pay his salary. I did not receive an answer to my first letter. Only a year later, when I brought up the idea again, did I get an answer. The Rebbe wrote: In general, it is worthwhile, obviously, but it depends on being able to get a salary, and perhaps, getting a large portion of it from the Federation.

I invited a talented young man to work with us and I wrote to the Rebbe about this. I described my fundraising plan for the new project and the brochure I would give out to the members of the community, which would explain the importance of the work and the need for additional salary.

***Your job, he told me, is to be a rav, and a rav gives shiurim and runs programs, but he doesn't fundraise!***

To my surprise, the Rebbe wrote: Consult with Rabbanei Anash whether it is worthwhile.

I often consulted with Rabbi Zalman Shimon Dvorkin a"h, who was the rav of Crown Heights. When I told him the Rebbe's answer he said he didn't understand what the problem was, but I should speak with Rabbi Yitzchok Dov Ushpal,

who was a rav and also active among Russian Jews. Perhaps he would know what the Rebbe meant.

When I spoke with Rabbi Ushpal, he immediately said that he didn't think the Rebbe wanted me to bring out a shliach if I had to worry about his salary. Your job, he told me, is to be a rav, and a rav gives shiurim and runs programs, but he doesn't fundraise!

That is one of the differences between someone whose official job is rav of a k'hilla, and someone whose official job is shliach of the Rebbe. There are things that a rav can do that not every shliach can do, like siddur kiddushin (officiating at weddings), for example.

As I said earlier, in many communities the shliach serves as unofficial rav, but the shliach has to know that siddur kiddushin nowadays is very complicated. Only an official rav, who learned all the halachos and is regularly involved in this, can take the responsibility.

Before I address the enormous problem of siddur kiddushin in our generation, I will tell you an interesting instruction I received from the Rebbe in connection with siddur kiddushin.

While on shlichus in South America, in Surinam, I met a Jewish businessman, who lived half a year in Surinam and half a year in New York. One day he informed me that his daughter was engaged and he wanted me to be the mesader kiddushin. I was a young bachur at the time and didn't know how to respond to his request.

In addition, his family lived in New York and davened by a certain rav who would certainly be invited to the wedding. How would it look if that rav stood off to the side while a bachur was mesader kiddushin? But he insisted that I be



the mesader kiddushin.

I wrote to the Rebbe and the Rebbe's answer was positive, but on condition that I learn and receive smicha for rabbanus before the wedding. Parenthetically, that Jewish businessman received letters from the Rebbe over the years through me, and all his grandchildren from that daughter are Lubavitcher Chassidim.

From this instruction I got from the Rebbe you can see that the Rebbe held that in order to be mesader kiddushin you have to have smicha for rabbanus. If this is the case with weddings in general, it is all the more true nowadays when the risk of complications is high. Those who aren't practicing rabbanim are unfamiliar with the things that can go wrong, and can inadvertently err with the most severe prohibitions.

#### **For example?**

An important person in the community lost his wife, and after some time became engaged to a widow. He asked me to be the mesader kiddushin at the wedding. At first, the problem was that he wanted to get married in the Three Weeks. I told him that according to halacha it was forbidden to get married at that time, but he didn't want to postpone the wedding. I told him that in that case I could not be the mesader kiddushin.

A week later, he told me he had decided to postpone the wedding so that I could be the mesader kiddushin. I began to inquire about his fiancée and everything sounded fine. She was definitely Jewish, so what problem could there be? I asked him whether she had children from her previous marriage and was told that she didn't.

I asked him to find out whether the husband had a brother. When I learned that there was indeed a

living brother, I explained that they could not get married until the woman received chalitzah from her brother-in-law.

He was unhappy by this unexpected complication and tried to get out of it by saying that the brother would not want to do chalitzah, and neither would she. I told him that as long as the widow did not receive chalitzah, I could not be mesader kiddushin. I couldn't convince him to have the chalitzah ceremony performed and he left.

Some months later he told me that he gets a mazal tov. He had married the widow. At first, I thought he had gotten married through a Reform or Conservative

### ***That's why I repeat, a shliach who does not serve as a rav moreh horaa should not get involved in gittin and kiddushin!***

rabbi, but he told me that, in fact, an Orthodox rabbi had married them off. I wondered how the Orthodox rabbi had agreed to be mesader kiddushin and he told me, "He didn't ask me too many questions."

Perhaps that's not such a common scenario, but the next story I'll tell you happens quite regularly:

A woman in our neighborhood, who had moved to Florida, called me and invited me to be the mesader kiddushin at her son's wedding. She said that since I had arranged his bar mitzva, she wanted me to officiate at his wedding too.

I inquired about the kalla and was told that she was an orphan and she was religious. Since the death of her mother, she had been raised by foster families and had even been in a Lubavitch home for a while. I asked whether her mother had ever been married to someone else. I was told that in 1937, her mother married for the first time in Baltimore; the kalla was born from a second marriage, which took place in Miami in 1945.

I asked the chassan's mother to find out whether the kalla's mother had received a get from her first husband. She said that when she saw the wedding album of the kalla's mother's it looked as though a Reform rabbi officiated at the wedding. That was a red light for me.

We inquired further and spoke with the kalla's maternal grandmother. She said that as far as she knew, her daughter had not received a get from her first husband, which is why a Reform rabbi had done the second wedding.

We continued to inquire and managed to locate the first husband. He said he had never given the woman a get. In short, the kalla was a mamzeres since her mother had given birth to her while she was still married to her first husband, and a mamzeres cannot marry a Jew (except for a mamzer or a ger).

I asked Rabbi Zalman Shimon Dvorkin what to do and he referred me to Rabbi Moshe Feinstein a"h. R' Moshe's approach to these situations was to try to invalidate the first marriage. If the first marriage was invalid, then there was no problem with adultery and the children of the second marriage were not mamzerim.

R' Moshe asked me to find out who had officiated at the first marriage. Since the wedding took

place in Baltimore, I asked Rabbi Mendel Feldman, who lives in Baltimore to help me. He said that at the time of that wedding there were only Orthodox rabbis in that area. R' Moshe suggested that I inquire at the city clerk's office, where I could find out precisely who was mesader kiddushin.

By Divine Providence, one of Rabbi Feldman's friends worked in that department of the city, and he found out that the mesader kiddushin was a G-d fearing man who was still alive. It turned out that the first marriage was 100% fine, and therefore, if we didn't know for sure that the mother had received a get, she was considered a married woman and the child of her second marriage was a mamzeres.

I told the chassan's mother that the couple could not get married. The mother, a simple woman, thought another rabbi could solve the problem. She went to Rabbi Avrohom Korf, shliach in Florida, and told him the whole story and asked him to find a solution. After hearing all the details, he realized it was hopeless and told her there was no solution.

Some months later, the mother called me and said she got a mazal tov. Her son had gotten married. I was very curious as to how a rabbi had allowed such a serious transgression to take place, and asked his name. She gave me all the details and I tried calling him.

When I finally reached him, I asked him what his source was for permitting this wedding to take place. He mentioned the name of a famous rabbi and said that the rabbi had allowed it saying that as long as we didn't know for sure that she hadn't received a get, the daughter was only possibly a mamzeres.

I told him that R' Moshe had paskened that since the first

marriage was in order, the mother was definitely considered a married woman, and without any proof that she had received a get, her daughter was a mamzeres. He replied: I also spoke to R' Moshe.

I asked: And what did he say? That's when the rabbi got upset and hung up the phone. (He reminded me of the story of the person who ate on Tisha B'Av and when he was asked how he could do so, he said: What do you want from me? I asked a rabbi. But what the rabbi had

havoc within the Jewish nation, including the most sensitive areas, i.e., the Jewish family. That's why I repeat, a shliach who does not serve as a rav *moreh horaa* should not get involved in gittin and kiddushin!

It is very complicated and problematic and only a rav *moreh horaa* can handle it, and even he needs lots of *siyata d'Shmaya*.

It says in s'farim that a rav *moreh horaa* has special *siyata d'Shmaya*. Sometimes, even without investigating, important things



said, he didn't want to say...).

I was very upset over what had happened and wrote it all up, including the name of the rabbi who was mesader kiddushin for a mamzeres, for the *Algemeiner Journal*. The article made waves and I received feedback from dozens of rabbis.

**So today's rabbis must do their homework!**

Absolutely! The Reform and Conservative rabbis are wreaking

emerge. Someone in the community wanted to divorce his wife, but she had joined a Reform community and refused to accept a get. He asked me to convince her to accept a get. I spoke to her and she finally agreed to come to a beis din and to receive a get.

I took her in my car, and on the way, I told her that the get was for her own good because without it, she could not remarry. She maintained that this wasn't true and

her proof was that her mother had not received a get from her first husband yet she had no problem remarrying. She was a child of the second marriage.

The woman didn't realize that in telling me this, she was informing me that she was a mamzeres. When we got to the beis din, I told the rav what she had told me and he said that since this involved only a non-death-penalty prohibition, her kiddushin was valid and she needed a get, but when he wrote her the get, he noted that the woman was a mamzeres.

I repeat: *a shliach who is not a moreh horaa and is unfamiliar with the ins and outs of gittin and kiddushin, should not get involved in these things!* I heard the following from a relative of mine. He was a witness for a k'suba at a wedding officiated at by a Chabad shliach. When the shliach wrote the k'suba my relative was shocked to see that he wrote in the names of the witnesses himself, and didn't ask the witnesses to write their names. The shliach thought that just as he wrote the names of the chassan and kalla and the city where the k'suba was being written, he could also write the names of the witnesses. The fact of the matter is, however, that without the signatures of the witnesses on the k'suba, it's a k'suba without witnesses!

### **Your congregation isn't Lubavitch. How did you become their rav?**

It's an interesting story that began back in the beginning of the 60's. Yeshiva University rabbis had served there, and since they weren't familiar with the idea of shlichus, they didn't last more than a year or two. One of the members of the community had a brother who lived in Crown Heights. Those who lived in Crown Heights in those days remember that the wedding hall at

Oholei Torah was called the Spot Hall, as that was his name.

One day, Spot of Newark asked his brother whether he knew of any other yeshiva, aside from YU, that could send a rabbi to their community. His brother told him that right across the street was a yeshiva belonging to Lubavitch and he would get the phone number.

The yeshiva was located on Bedford and only older bachurim learned in 770. The yeshiva's office was on Bedford and 770 had only a public phone. The man gave his brother the number of the public phone.

The brother from Newark called the number and, by Divine Providence, a bachur from Newark answered the phone. When he heard that a congregation in Newark was looking for a rabbi, he took the information and promised to help. I was a chassan at the time. That bachur approached me, told me about the phone call, and suggested that I try to get the position.

I called up and the man wanted to hear about my experience. After I told him some of the shlichuyos I did in various countries, he said it sounded good to him and that he needed to call a meeting of the shul committee.

A few weeks later, he called me back and said the meeting had been held and they were interested in my coming to meet them. I went with my kalla so she could see the place we'd be living in (I told her we'd try it out for a year, but the year turned into forty years!). I told them about the experience I had accrued over nine years on Merkos Shlichus and they told me they were interested in having me serve as their rabbi.

I wrote to the Rebbe and described the running of the shul up until that point. The Rebbe gave his bracha on condition that the

board would agree to commit to having a mechitza the height of a man, and having the bima for Krias ha'Torah in the center of the shul, where the Shulchan Aruch says it should be.

The Rebbe said that if they arranged a row of people to sit between the bima and the Aron Kodesh, it would be enough for the bima to be considered in the center.

In a conversation with the president of the congregation, I told him my conditions and he said he would arrange it and there was nothing to worry about. He invited me for Shabbos so that the members of the shul could meet the new rabbi.

### **How did the president manage to arrange the mechitza?**

He discovered that the synagogue's bylaws stated that the rav was the person who was exclusively responsible for religious matters at the shul. He put a similar clause in my contract, and when I presented my demands he explained to the members of the board that they had no choice but to accede to my demands, for if not, they were violating the bylaws of the synagogue and would be in violation of a signed contract.

Despite all that, it didn't go easily. Some members of the board had prepared a petition for the purpose of turning the shul into a Conservative synagogue. When I heard that, I thought that perhaps in order to save them from this course of action, which would ruin the Yiddishkeit of the community, I should accept the rabbinic position while temporarily conceding on my demands. With time, I could prevail upon them to put up a proper mechitza. I asked Rabbi Moshe Dovber Rivkin and he said this was a spiritual question and only the Rebbe could answer it.

When I wrote to the Rebbe, the Rebbe completely negated the possibility of accepting the rabbanus in the hopes that the situation would improve. The Rebbe wrote, “This is not your matter at all, and in general, it demands great study as to whether it is permissible according to halacha.”

The Rebbe also explained that although the shul bylaws stated that

matters.”

The Rebbe also wrote that after it would become known that those who were opposed to the mechitza wanted to turn the shul into a Conservative shul, my chances at convincing the other members of the congregation to support my position on the mechitza would improve. Everybody would see that the war over the mechitza was a war



I was the one in charge of making the spiritual decisions, they could always collect signatures and change the law. This is why I had to fight to arrange everything before I took the position. If I accepted it while matters were still up in the air, “Then you won’t be able to oppose them strongly since by accepting the position you conceded that they are the ones to decide spiritual

about the Orthodox character of the shul, “and it will be understood that all those who believe that the Torah comes from Heaven (unlike the Conservative Jews) have to fight on behalf of a mechitza.”

There were problems with the second condition too. They didn’t want too many changes in the shul and they suggested that we leave a space, the size of a row of

worshippers, but that people wouldn’t actually sit there. The Rebbe negated this and wrote, “It will necessitate great analysis as to whether the space will last.”

In the end, after I spoke with some members of the congregation and explained to them what the Rebbe had said — that this was a war about the Orthodox character of the shul — and after the president of the shul threatened to resign if my conditions weren’t met, they agreed to all the conditions. I was accepted as rav of the k’hilla (the Rebbe’s horaos are printed in *Igros Kodesh* volume 23).

(Some years later, the president joked, “Between you and me, nobody needs the mechitza here. The only one who needs it is you. I have an idea – we’ll make the mechitza around you!”)

#### **Did you continue to receive guidance from the Rebbe?**

Boruch Hashem, I received many answers to questions that arose during my first years as rav. The Rebbe expressed an interest in the smallest details.

In my first year as rav, some members suggested that we have Bingo at the shul with all the proceeds to benefit the shul. This was a popular idea at Jewish shuls at the time and was a great source of income. I wrote to the Rebbe and the answer was no! “To permit Bingo is obviously impossible (and even the Conservatives negated and prohibited it).”

In one of the early years, the Rebbe told me in yechidus to make sure to end the t’filla of N’ila as soon as the fast was over so as not to burden the congregation.

In another yechidus, the Rebbe asked me what I had spoken about on Rosh HaShana. When I said I had reviewed the Rebbe’s “general letter” for Rosh HaShana, the Rebbe

asked in surprise: The letter? It pertains to people like them?

I told the Rebbe that I had taken the points of the letter and spoke about them as befitted the level of my congregants. The Rebbe was very pleased with this.

The following story can also teach us the difference between someone who serves in the official capacity of rav and someone who is officially a shliach. The members of the community wanted to start an afternoon Talmud Torah and they asked me to be the teacher.

When I asked the Rebbe about this, the Rebbe negated the idea and said: A rav is not an Ivris teacher, even if the subject is Chumash with Rashi.

Apparently, out of respect for the rabbanus, there are things that a shliach can do but a rav cannot. I explained to the members of the congregation that it wasn't fitting for the rav to be the Ivris teacher and I said they would be better off sending their children to yeshivos where they would get a proper Jewish education.

Boruch Hashem, some of them went to yeshiva and a few of the children became Lubavitchers. One of them is the son of the president of the shul who waged the war on my behalf in favor of the mechitza, and received his reward with a son a Lubavitcher Chassid!

After the mass emigration from Russia at the end of the 70's, I wrote to the Rebbe that we would be having a public seider on Pesach. The Rebbe added the letter beis to indicate that I should make two s'darim, one on each night of Pesach.

In 5740, when the Rebbe spoke about Lag B'Omer parades, I organized a parade. I wrote to the Rebbe about our plans and said that since our community was on the

last street in Newark and the next street belonged to Maplewood, we would march to the next street too and this way, our parade would take place in two cities.

The Rebbe's answer was: If there is no problem in doing so (because of gentiles etc.). If there's a doubt, it's not worthwhile.

I checked out the situation and after concluding that there was no

*The Rebbe also wrote that after it would become known that those who were opposed to the mechitza wanted to turn the shul into a Conservative shul, my chances at convincing the other members of the congregation to support my position on the mechitza would improve.*

problem with the gentiles, we marched on the next street too and held the parade in two cities.

In general, the existence of my k'hilla is one big bracha from the Rebbe. In the 50's there were 70,000 Jews in Newark, with over fifty shuls. It was the seventh largest Jewish area in the United States! However, the population changed over the years and a mass migration

of Jews began.

In our neighborhood too, many Jews left at the end of the 70's, but that's just when the Russian Jews came, and after I used my connections at the Jewish Federation, they sent many Russian immigrants to our neighborhood. Today we are the only Jewish k'hilla in Newark, despite the changing demographics of the area. The only explanation I have is that the Rebbe sent me here and the Rebbe is protecting my k'hilla.

The Rebbe's brachos accompany me every step of the way. My wife and I once had a yechidus and the Rebbe said with a smile: He learned to be a rav but where did you learn to be a rebbetzin?

Similarly I ask, it's one thing that we, who received so many kiruvim from the Rebbe, remained with our Chassidishkait intact despite our not living in a Chabad community, but where did our children get the kochos? When I think about it, I am reminded of a story I heard from the Rebbe's secretary, Rabbi Moshe Leib Rothstein, when I was still a bachur in yeshiva in 770. He usually did not repeat anything he heard from the Rebbe, but one time, he told us excitedly that a few minutes earlier he had been in the Rebbe's room and the Rebbe read him an answer to a shliach who wanted to leave his shlichus because of his fears for his children. The Rebbe's answer was: In the merit of your watching over Hashem's children, Hashem will watch over your children!

**As a rav of a k'hilla where the people are not all observant, did you ever have to use rabbinic clout to implement a halachic matter?**

Whatever a rav has to deal with, he has to use some of his rabbinic authority. People do not know what the halacha entails, and I often have





## *Today, it is easier than ever to publicize the besuras ha'Geula.*

to explain that they can't do something or other because it's against halacha. I think that the only religious ceremony that entails no problems is putting up a gravestone!

In my first year as rav, a member of the k'hilla asked me to marry off his daughter, but he said that his daughter would not agree to follow the laws of Family Purity even minimally. At first, I wasn't sure what to answer. On the one hand, how could I be mesader kiddushin if the married couple would not be abiding by the laws of the Torah? On the other hand, if I didn't marry them, they were likely to turn to the Reform.

I wrote to the Rebbe and the answer I got was: It's a question for a rav. I asked Rabbi Zalman Shimon Dvorkin and he paskened that I

could not do the kiddushin.

Hashem helped and before I could tell them that I couldn't be the mesader kiddushin, the father called me and said he had bad news, the wedding was off.

Another area where I was spared having to exert my rabbinic authority was the davening on 5 Iyar, Israel's Independence Day. The first year, I wrote to the Rebbe. I did not get a written answer, but I see the Rebbe's bracha every year when for over forty years I managed to avoid any extraneous mentions or prayers. The only time it became an issue was when the president of Agudas HaMizrachi in New York davened in our shul on 5 Iyar and then sent an angry letter saying that he was cutting all ties with our shul. He said he preferred cutting his ties with us from cutting his ties with Eretz Yisroel.

I answered him saying that we are connected to Eretz Yisroel, which we received from Hashem over 3000 years ago. To us, Eretz Yisroel of 4 Iyar is the same Eretz Yisroel of 5 Iyar. This year, I repeated this idea in my weekly shiur, which is attended by Conservative rabbis too, and they accepted this reply.

One time I needed to exert a strong show of authority. One of the most important families in the k'hilla made a bar mitzva and the mother decided to buy all the baked goods from a non-kosher bakery. When I heard about this, I spoke to her and suggested that she buy it all in Brooklyn. I even offered to pay the difference in price if it was more expensive in Brooklyn. She didn't agree and purposely made the purchase in a bakery that had no hashgacha. She prepared for a big kiddush at the shul.

When I got up for the weekly drasha, there was utter silence.

Everybody knew I would refer to the topic and they all wanted to see my reaction. I began my drasha by wishing mazal tov to the bar mitzva boy, and said that since his grandfather was one of the founders of the shul, it would be appropriate to read some excerpts from his grandfather's letters.

Nobody knew what letters I was talking about. They didn't know about the grandfather's chiddushei Torah... I took out a photocopy of the shul's bylaws and showed how the bar mitzva boy's grandfather was the one who wrote up the bylaws. When I began reading the relevant paragraphs about how the shul was founded in the Orthodox spirit for the purpose of strengthening religion, and how the worshippers were obligated to listen to the rabbi when it came to religious matters, the mother couldn't take it anymore and she began shouting and trying to stop the drasha. In short, it was chaos. Needless to say, the kiddush did not take place.

After Shabbos, the family tried to wield its influence over the members of the k'hilla and some of them met and decided to take steps to fire me, and to make changes in the shul's bylaws. I wrote to the Rebbe and was told to hire a lawyer who would make it clear to them that any attempt to fire me in violation of the contract would drag the k'hilla into court.

I hired a lawyer and after informing them that from a legal standpoint they didn't stand much of a chance of success, they retreated. In the end, they calmed down and realized that I had nothing personal against them and only meant well. Over the years, they became my best friends.

**The Rebbe said that the main shlichus today is to bring Moshiach. How are you going about doing this?**

Today, it is easier than ever to publicize the besuras ha'Geula. In light of the world situation, particularly in Eretz Yisroel, people yearn to hear about a better world, a world of Geula. When I talk to people in the k'hilla about the imminent hisgalus of the Rebbe, it invigorates them spiritually.

Naturally, as a rav, my emphasis is on the practical end of adding in mitzvos and good deeds to hasten the Geula. In the *Igros Kodesh* (vol. 22 p. 145) there is a letter from the Rebbe to a Jew in Barbados who was in touch with me through Merkos Shlichus, in which the Rebbe spoke about preparing to greet Moshiach:

"I was especially happy to read at the end of your letter about kabbalas p'nei Moshiach Tzidkeinu b'karov, which gives me strong hope

*I answered him saying that... to us, Eretz Yisroel of 4 Iyar is the same Eretz Yisroel of 5 Iyar. This year, I repeated this idea in my weekly shiur, which is attended by Conservative rabbis too, and they accepted this reply.*

that you are ready and are working, in the proper manner, to greet Moshiach.

"Obviously, it won't make much difference to Moshiach how many dollars are in your pocket, or how many homes will be left in galus. What will matter is the Jewish heart and the Jewish head and hands; in other words, that the brain in the head is permeated with Torah study, heartfelt Jewish feelings for Torah and Judaism, and action in daily life in the spirit and in accordance with the Torah, the Torah of life.

"We see clearly that when we decide to behave in accordance with what was said above, with true strength, then it is much easier than what was estimated at first. Furthermore, it can be done with good health, good spirits and simcha."

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# “I AM HASHEM YOUR HEALER!”

17 years had passed, but Yossi and Sari (daughter of mashpia R' Reuven Dunin a"h) Mockin of Montreal still had no children. For the most part they kept their sorrow to themselves, and appeared happy and radiating love to those around them. The children in their neighborhood loved visiting their home and enjoyed the goodies that were always awaiting them there. Yossi's brothers, also living in Montreal, could always leave their children with Yossi and Sari, confident that they'd receive the best of care.

Yossi and Sari's friends and relatives prayed for them, and used various segulos, but it was all done quietly and modestly.

Sari is a teacher in a modern, Zionist school called *Midreshet Ivrit*. One of the things Sari taught her students was to say the chapter of T'hilim that corresponds to their age after davening, as well as chapter 6 as a segula for a refua shleima. The latter was initiated when there were numerous attacks in Eretz Yisroel, and they continued it when any student had a relative who needed a refua shleima. The student would tell Sari the name of the sick person and his/her mother's name, and the class would dedicate chapter 6 as a refua for the person.

For many years, Sari visited the families of sick people, at home or in the hospital, in order to cheer them up. One day, a student asked Sari to

dedicate chapter 6 to her grandmother who was in critical condition in the hospital. Sari knew her student's mother well, and she went to visit the sick grandmother in the hospital.

The grandmother needed bypass surgery, but during the operation they discovered that her condition was far more serious than they thought, and they had to keep her under anesthesia. The operation took nine and a half hours after which she was put into ICU, where she remained unconscious.

## *Sari taught her class the Rebbe's sicha about the month of Iyar being a segula for refua.*

When the grandmother became conscious, she had to put her under anesthesia again because of the pain. Because of the complicated treatment and the tubes, her vocal chords were affected and the doctors eventually told the family that she wouldn't be able to talk anymore.

Days turned into weeks and weeks into months, and the grandmother was still in terrible shape. In the meantime, the month of Iyar came around and Sari taught her class the

Rebbe's sicha about the month of Iyar being a segula for refua, as alluded to in the name

Iyar (Ani Hashem Rofecha, with the two Yuds representing the name of Hashem). Her student, the granddaughter of the sick woman, happily informed her mother that her grandmother would recover.

When Sari went to visit, her student's mother asked her to repeat what the Rebbe said about the month of Iyar. She had already despaired of her mother's recovering, and told Sari:

“I don't believe that my mother will ever leave the hospital. I just want her to leave the ICU for a regular ward.”

Sari gently reprimanded her and encouraged her, saying, “G-d forbid to speak that way. The Rebbe explains that the Healer of all flesh can heal as though there was no sickness to begin with, and you should hope and pray that your mother leaves the hospital fully recovered!”

Sari left the hospital and thought of the dollars from the Rebbe she had in her possession. Perhaps she should give one of the dollars to the grandmother and in its merit the elderly woman would experience a miracle?

Sari had never thought of doing anything like this, and she was suddenly plagued by doubt. Should I give away a dollar that the Rebbe gave me? And what if the grandmother and

the family don't appreciate it?

When Sari arrived home, she sat down and wrote a letter to the Rebbe in which she described her idea and her doubts. In the letter that she opened to, the Rebbe wrote that every Jew is obligated to help another regardless of the other's background.

The answer was clear. She had to give them one of the Rebbe's dollars. But she still found it hard to do and she vacillated for several days. On Monday, 6 Iyar 5764, Sari looked through her pile of dollars and chose a dollar that the Rebbe had given her on 21 Iyar.

When Sari got to the hospital and met the sick woman's daughter, she burst into tears. "Take this dollar," said Sari emotionally, giving her a picture of the Rebbe too, "and put it under your mother's pillow. Tell her that this is a dollar from the Lubavitcher Rebbe for her refua shleima. As the Rebbe promised, Hashem is the Healer of all flesh and He can make her illness disappear as though it never was. By 21 Iyar, your mother won't be in the hospital anymore."

Said Sari afterwards, "I don't know how I had the courage to talk like that! Who put those words into my mouth? I felt that it wasn't me talking. The words just came out on their own. Someone else was speaking from my throat."

The daughter, who consulted with her sister about whether they had the right to take the dollar, agreed that for the sake of their mother's health, they could take the dollar. The dollar was placed under the grandmother's pillow and she said what Sari had told her to say.

The next morning, when the nurse came to change and clean the tubes as she did every morning, she nearly fainted along with the sick woman's daughter. The grandmother was awake. She began talking: "Where is

the money?"

"What money?" wondered her daughter. Maybe, after all this time, her mother was confused? Did she have a bad dream?

But there was no room for doubt when her mother asked for the dollar that the Rebbe had sent her for a refua shleima.

That Friday, the daughter called Sari and said that her mother asked that Sari come and visit because she wanted to thank her for the dollar, and return it.

Sari was thrilled and hurried over to the hospital where she met the grandmother walking around. The grandmother thanked her and wanted to return the dollar, but Sari refused to

## *On 21 Iyar, the date written on the dollar, the grandmother was released from the hospital.*

take it saying, "The dollar isn't mine anymore."

On 21 Iyar, the date written on the dollar, the grandmother was released from the hospital. The doctors couldn't believe it. Sari sat down again to write to the Rebbe. This time, it was a letter of thanks for being the shliach to give the Rebbe's dollar and to merit to see an open miracle.

The Rebbe's answer was in volume 18, p. 377:

**"In answer to your letter of 6 Iyar... Your heart should be confident in the Healer of all flesh, Who does wonders, that, as the verse says, everything He did in its time..."**

**May the medical treatment be in the right time and with success, and**

**may you convey good news in good spirits in both personal and communal matters..."**

Sari resolved to see a fertility specialist and had faith that the Healer of all flesh would do the rest. Yossi and Sari consulted with a specialist in Canada who is very successful in his field. Although he examined their medical records and saw that it looked nearly hopeless, he agreed to treat them anyway.

However, when the doctor began the protocol and saw what the situation was about, he told them, "I recommend that you stop treatment. The treatment is very expensive and I don't think you should pursue it. Aside from the money, the pain and disappointment are not worth it."

Sari felt brokenhearted. She tearfully wrote the Rebbe a letter. Rebbe, what should I do? I did as you said and went for treatment but the doctor recommends that we stop because there's no hope that it will work. What now?

The Rebbe's answer was in volume 10, p. 88:

**"I finally received your letter with the good news about the bris mila of your son..."**

The letter also said:

**"Apparently, you don't want to remember what the doctors said to begin with, and how the pregnancy and birth were fulfilled in complete opposition to what they said..."**

The Mockins did not expect such a direct answer. They went back to the doctor and insisted on continuing the treatment. When the doctor suggested a less expensive and less difficult treatment, they wrote to the Rebbe again and received a clear answer, which said not to obtain something the easy way.

The doctor continued the treatment but pitied the couple. When the treatment was finished he was aware

that that it had not been successful, but in order to finalize matters, he had to take a blood test. Generally, after two and a half hours, patients receive an answer from the doctor. When hours went by and the phone still did not ring, Yossi explained to Sari that sometimes the Rebbe's bracha is spiritual.

Yossi has a weekly shiur he established after receiving a letter from the Rebbe about increasing his learning. He invites his four brothers and they learn together. The shiur took place that night and it was late when Yossi said goodbye to his brothers. That's when the phone rang. Sari was alone when she picked up the phone. It took her a few seconds to realize that it was the doctor on the line and it took even more time to absorb what he was telling her.

"Mrs. Mockin, you have received a gift from G-d."

"I don't believe it," cried Sari.

"Neither do I, and that's why I am calling you so late at night. When I got the first results, I couldn't believe it, so I ordered another test. I just got the results of the second test and the treatment was successful."

Sari didn't hear all the details because she had dropped the phone and was in tears. That's how Yossi found her. He was shocked to see his wife crying with the phone at her feet. He quickly picked up the phone, and the doctor, who had waited on the line, told him, "You have received a gift from G-d. Watch her carefully because this won't happen again!"

After the Mockins recovered somewhat, they resolved to follow the Rebbe's directive and not publicize news of the pregnancy until the fifth

month. Yossi and Sari kept the secret for four months until they couldn't hide the news any longer.

It's hard to describe in words the reaction of the family when they heard about the pregnancy. Now, all prayed that everything would go smoothly and easily.

When the news hit her school, all the members of the staff as well as the students visited Sari, and with hugs and kisses, tears and laughter, they tried to digest the wonderful news.



**Yossi Mockin with Menachem Mendel**

The phones worked overtime when news of Sari's pregnancy spread throughout Montreal and the world. The grandmother of her student, who had completely recovered, and her daughters, were thrilled to hear the good news, and they sent a bouquet of flowers with their heartfelt wishes to Sari.

Sari called to thank them and described for them the chain of events that had unfolded since her giving of the Rebbe's dollar to the grandmother.

The daughter was so touched and she exclaimed, "We always felt close to you, and now we are closer than ever!"

The story of the dollar continued to be publicized, with the grandmother and her daughters being the first to repeat what had happened. This caused a kiddush shem Chabad and the Rebbe.

The miracles didn't stop there. On 6 Iyar 5765, a year — to the day — after Sari had given away the Rebbe's dollar, which was also the date on the first letter from the Rebbe, the bris of Sari and Yossi Mockin took place. The baby was named Menachem Mendel.

All of Sari's sisters and brothers arrived from around the world for the bris. Dozens of people came by car and plane. Nobody had to be shown where the hall was because you simply had to follow the crowds that headed at 12:00 noon on Sunday to the shul. The owners of the hall and the caterers were none other than the family of the grandmother. They prepared the hall like it was the wedding of a wealthy heir.

In the middle of the meal, Yossi related the amazing story and added, "When we thought of what to name the baby, we were undecided. Sari's father, the celebrated mashpia R' Reuven Dunin, passed away less than three years ago. But when we pictured asking her father what to name the baby, we immediately decided that Reuven would have no doubt as to what the name should be..."

\* \* \*

May we go from simcha to simcha together with all Klal Yisroel, and to the ultimate simcha of the true and complete Geula!

# STAYING STRONG IN SOUTH AFRICA

BY CHANI NUSSBAUM

*Since the end of Apartheid in South Africa, a significant segment of the Jewish population left the country in fear. The shluchim did not leave, of course. One shlucha, Mrs. Chaya Heller of Johannesburg, raises her ten children while being mekarev others to Yiddishkait. \* In an interview with Beis Moshiach, she describes life in South Africa, about leaving her parents, and about her shlichus and the spreading of the besuras ha'Geula.*

Mrs. Chaya and Dovid Heller have been on shlichus in Johannesburg for 20 years now. It seems that if not for being born into a life of shlichus it would have been nearly impossible to face the challenges of life on shlichus in South Africa.

Chaya is the daughter of shliach Rabbi Yitzchok Dovid Groner, shliach in Melbourne. Her husband is originally from New York. His family became involved with Chabad and he learned in Chabad. Today, Rabbi Dovid Heller has joined the army of shluchim and is spreading the besuras ha'Geula. He is also active in the Beis Moshiach Shul.

**You are from Australia and your**

**husband is from New York, so how did you get to South Africa on shlichus?**

After finishing high school in Australia, I studied in a teacher's seminary in France for three years. Then I moved to New York, where I was a madricha in Machon Chana for a year. I met my husband in New York. After we married, he learned for a year in kollel and then we moved to Montreal, where my husband learned *shimush l'rabbanus*.

Four years after we married, we yearned to go on shlichus. We wrote to the Rebbe about two options: Montreal or Australia, and then added that there was also an offer for South

Africa. The Rebbe underlined "South Africa."

**Where is Johannesburg?**

Johannesburg isn't far from the capitol of South Africa, Pretoria. Johannesburg has the largest concentration of Jews in South Africa. Capetown, on the other side of South Africa, also has Jewish communities, but is much smaller. South Africa is spread out over more than 1,200,000 square kilometers.

The Jewish community in South Africa was founded in Capetown in 5601 (1841). Today, 85,000 Jews live throughout South Africa, with 50,000 Jews in Johannesburg and the rest in Capetown and other small towns.

When apartheid was annulled, the number of Jews here fell sharply from 140,000 to 85,000 because of the fear of crime, which has only increased. Many lost their jobs, because businesses previously run by white people and Jews were taken over.

Due to the political situation here, everybody must know how to drive a car, because it is not safe to walk here. The houses need sophisticated security systems on account of the increasing crime. In many places, you cannot walk alone even in the middle of the day. Public transportation isn't good, and is sometimes dangerous.

Despite all this, no one from the Lubavitch community left. This is

because of brachos and encouragement from the Rebbe to continue to stay, and therefore, there continues to be a strong k'hilla with many shuls and a strong beis din that sets the tone.

### **How many Lubavitcher families are there?**

About 80-100 families, including 25 families of shluchim who came here over the years.

\* \* \*

Chaya doesn't talk about the difficulties in chinuch or in obtaining kosher food, problems which many shluchim have. You won't hear her talk about the terrible assimilation rate. She talks about a lovely k'hilla comprised primarily of traditional Jews with warm feelings towards Yiddishkait.

"Even those Jews who don't keep Shabbos light candles and have Kiddush Friday night."

### **Can you tell us more about the Jewish community in Johannesburg?**

The Jewish community here includes the Lubavitchers. Some of them are shluchim and some are baalei t'shuva. There were many baalei t'shuva here even before we came. There is also the Litvish community, which has started two yeshivos for baalei t'shuva.

Of the traditional Jews, 97% fast on Yom Kippur. Most keep kosher and observe Rosh HaShana, Yom Kippur, Pesach, and even Sukkos. They have a school called King David, which has

mostly non-observant students, but many of them became baalei t'shuva through Chabad. Most of them participate in holiday programs, Lag B'Omer parades, etc.

Johannesburg also has many converts, who appear in droves in shul on Shabbos. Thankfully, conversions go through the beis din here and their conversions are recognized as real. Converts here are approved only after a year in which they prove their commitment to Torah and mitzvos.

### **What is your daily schedule like?**

We have a frum school here, where secular studies (math and English) begin at noon. Our children do not take the secular classes, and during that time, my husband provides them with a program of additional limudei kodesh with the help of bachurim from the mesivta here.

This might surprise you, but even here, with a flourishing Jewish community, you have to keep a close watch over the children.

I am a kindergarten teacher in a Chabad school. I also give shiurim twice a week to women and visit people in the



hospital. This is in addition to my active involvement in the local N'shei Chabad.

My husband teaches in the Chabad school and he runs the Beis Moshiach Shul programming. We started the shul ten years ago. This shul is in addition to the seven other Chabad houses in various sections of the city. Starting and maintaining the shul has been one big miracle (see box).

My husband also gives shiurim to seniors and he does Mivtza T'fillin, etc., in his free time or makes house calls to Jews who are getting involved in Judaism.

\* \* \*

Chaya has many stories to tell about their mekuravim. These stories are daily fare, and she mentions them briefly:

A couple once came here from Malawi after their child passed away. They came here because they wanted to sit Shiva among Jews, since there are hardly any Jews where they live (and this was despite their not being religious, which is typical of the traditional Jews here).

The father sat Shiva in the shul, and we took care of whatever he needed. Because he sat Shiva here, he began to get involved with Chabad. In Malawi, they dive for a living. Today, they dive in the sea of Chassidus and are themselves mekarev others to Judaism.

We had a doctor mekurav whose nephew was on the verge of blindness. He decided to take him to the Rebbe for Hoshana Rabba and get lekach from the Rebbe. This was 18 years ago. The nephew passed by the Rebbe with his uncle behind him. Before the uncle could say a word, the Rebbe gave the nephew lekach and said to him, "May you always learn with open eyes."

The bracha was fulfilled and his eyesight was restored. Today he lives in Crown Heights and is a Chassid.

*Before the uncle could say a word, the Rebbe gave the nephew lekach and said to him, "May you always learn with open eyes."*

This story made waves in South Africa and ignited many Yidden, who became mekuravim to Yiddishkait and Chabad.

There was once a couple living here where the husband was Israeli and she was South African. He worked in a bakery and my husband put t'fillin on with him. He began to take an interest in Judaism and he started joining farbrengens of Amichai every Thursday night (Amichai himself is a baal t'shuva). Despite his interest, his wife did not want to get involved.

On Shavuos, he came to us and learned with my husband all night. He did not return home until Motzaei Yom Tov because he did not want to drive on Yom Tov. As time went by, his

wife slowly began to take an interest. They started keeping kosher and family purity and moved to Eretz Yisroel, where they are observant, baruch Hashem.

Eight years ago, he spent Shavuos with us again. Along with him was a guest who saw him and couldn't get over the change.

This story has a postscript. The sister of the wife, a mother of three children, also became interested in Judaism, thanks to her sister, and she comes to us often on Shabbos. One time, her 24-year-old daughter insisted on staying the entire Shabbos because she did not want to be mechalel Shabbos.

She went to Machon Chana in Crown Heights, and her younger sister, 12 years old, comes to us every Shabbos. The entire family has become shomer Shabbos and kashrus.

\* \* \*

Chaya is also raising a family of ten children! They are not all at home though. The oldest children have attended school in Melbourne and Florida. It's not easy, especially when the economy isn't great.

"Being cut off from my parents in

## THE BEIS MOSHIACH SHUL

The founding of the shul by Rabbi Dovid Heller was accompanied by brachos from the Rebbe from the very start. There were challenging times, even moments of near despair, but there was always an answer from the Rebbe that gave him the energy to continue and expand the shul.

The 20-25 families who daven at the shul regularly have gotten greatly involved in Yiddishkait thanks to him. There were also families who did not have children after many years and when they visited the shul regularly, were blessed with children and were the talk of the town.

"Today, when people see that we are successfully reaching Jews for the sake of Heaven, nobody has doubts anymore over the founding of this shul. More recently, things have become a bit easier, baruch Hashem, from both the outside and the inside. The difficulties we experience are part of the darkness before the light of Geula."





Australia is rough," says Chaya. "Years go by and I don't see my family in Australia. It has been 27 years since I left Australia in the course of which I visited Australia only twice. Recently, we met at a wedding after years of not seeing one another. My children have hardly ever met their grandparents."

**How do you manage?**

We adjust and we manage. That is also the ko'ach of the meshaleiach.

**What are the positive aspects of living in Johannesburg?**

(Laughing) - You always see the sun, even in the winter. It's never really cold. That's just the way it is here, but it's definitely pleasant. This is the reason why Jews who left here for

*Despite all this, no one from the Lubavitch community left. This is because of brachos and encouragement from the Rebbe to continue to stay.*

England returned after a few months, because in England you hardly see the sun and a South African can't tolerate that.

Aside from the pleasant weather, there is a lot of chesed in this community. There is a large Chevra Kadisha organization whose function is not only to bury the dead but to also assist the living. If a person is in difficult straits and cannot pay his rent, they will help him. They also help with tuition, finding employment, etc. It's a wonderful organization, which has saved thousands of families. It is why many Jews remain here despite the political changes. The organization tries to see to it that the poor do not remain poor, and they support those who need it until they can stand on their own feet.

Generally speaking, the quality of life here is high. People have beautiful homes and a lot of help at home. Also, kosher food is available in stores.

**What are your plans for the future?**

Moshiach, quickly! There's no more time!

**What message would you like to convey to your sisters around the world?**

We must bring Moshiach. Galus is far too long. Over here, everybody cries out for Moshiach, so join us. Anyway, how can you have a message without Moshiach?

My four-year-old daughter said to me one day: How come Moshiach didn't come before you were born?

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# V'NIFLINU – WE ARE DIFFERENT FROM THE REST!

BY SHAI GEFEN

## “MANY WILL BE CLARIFIED, WHITENED, AND REFINED”

Many were surprised at the Supreme Court's decision in which eleven out of twelve Supreme Court Justices rejected twelve petitions from members of Jewish communities in Gaza and northern Shomron and ruled that the Disengagement Plan is acceptable. (In general, many people are surprised lately by what many good Jews are doing, including rabbanim, who change their minds from one extreme to another, and become – wittingly or unwittingly – collaborators with the expulsion plan). Not a day goes by in which you read the news and are not amazed and you ask yourself: Is this really the state of affairs?!

The depth of Galus and the resultant confusion demonstrate that we have reached the point that the prophet speaks about in which, “many will be clarified and whitened and refined.” This process has to be on the eve of the true and complete Redemption, when the darkness is so overwhelming. Since the darkness blinds and conceals, it's critical that we discern who is for G-d and who is for our enemies.

This refinement process is painful, particularly to frum Jews who see how truth is obscured. It says in Tanna D'Vei Eliyahu, “and the one who turns away from evil is crazy,” because before the Geula, whoever turns aside from evil is considered crazy.

It's difficult to watch as those bred on halacha are using it as a “spade to dig with.” It's frightening to see how the d'var Hashem zu halacha is being transformed into media fodder in the hands of corrupt people who lust for power and money, and to see how everything is built on bribes and narrow personal interests.

However, those bred on the Rebbe's approach, also see the positive in the situation. In the sicha of Purim 5747, the Rebbe explains that on the eve of Geula there is a process in which “many are clarified and whitened and refined.” This means that each person expresses the evil within himself, evil that would ordinarily not be displayed to the world. However, Hashem, in His mercy, so that we arrive ready for Geula, makes each person spit up and reveal the evil within, and by doing so, we can be cleansed and refined.

It's painful to see how the mighty have fallen, but we know that with Hashem's help, the great light of the Rebbe MH”M will break through the darkness.

## WHAT DO THEY THINK ABOUT THE DISENGAGEMENT?

A senior journalist, Ari Shavit, whose views are far from the Right, published a book about what senior security figures really think about the Disengagement Plan. The book reveals, shockingly enough (or maybe not), that there is barely a single person

who understands the repercussions of the Plan, and every single expert opposes it and anticipates that the Plan will bring a calamity upon us.

Even ardent Leftists have arrived at this conclusion. The quotes I chose from his book you won't read anywhere else. These views are being silenced!

### Ami Eilon – former head of the Shin-Bet

“The captain of the Disengagement is like a captain who takes his ship out of port into the stormy sea without knowing where he wants to go. Perhaps worse, he knows but he hides this from the crew who suffers the travails of the journey.”

“The withdrawal from Dugit, from Nisnit, and from Eli Sinai was a big mistake. It has no demographic or security justification and the price is not justified.”

“A withdrawal from Gaza with nothing in exchange is likely to be interpreted by a significant number of Arabs as surrender. The Disengagement Plan is liable to strengthen extremist forces among the Arabs.”

“It is quite likely that shortly after the Disengagement there will be renewed violence. The year 2006 is likely to be a year of another round of violent terror.”

### General (Res.) Eitan Ben Eliyahu – former Air Force commander



“There is no chance that the Disengagement will guarantee stability in the long run. The Plan, as it is, can only bring renewed terror.”

**General (Res.) Shlomo Gazit – former Army Intelligence chief**

“After September 2005 we are likely to discover that there is a ‘Super-Kassam,’ which can reach Ashkelon.”

“It is likely that in the near future we will be facing mortars and Kassams from the coast too. These bombs and missiles will hit Kfar Saba and might even reach Netanya.”

**General (Res.) Uzi Dayan – former active duty General and deputy Chief of Staff**

“Withdrawing from Nisnit, Dugit, and Eli Sinai was a double error. As far as security – it unnecessarily brought the threat of Kassam missiles to Ashkelon. As far as politics – it creates a dangerous precedent of unilateral withdrawal to the ‘67 lines, which strengthens the Arabs’ demand that we withdraw to the June 4<sup>th</sup> lines.”

“Conceding the Philadelphi Corridor is likely to undermine our relations with Egypt.”

**Efraim Halevy – former head of the Mosad**

“After the withdrawal, Israel will face a political crisis that we haven’t known in years.”

“We are likely to face a forced arrangement (with the Palestinians) as per the Clinton plan (that Barak agreed to at the time) by the end of 2008.”

**Shabsi Shavit – former head of the Mosad**

“The Disengagement Plan defeats itself. It creates a reality of instability. The plan does not create even a minimal perception of an even exchange, which would enable co-existence in the long run.”

“Immediately following the

Disengagement, Israel will find itself on a collision course with the United States.”

**General (Res.) Professor Yitzchok Ben Yisroel**

“The shooting of rockets into Israel is inevitable. The IDF has no answer to short-range rockets.”

“We can say with near certainty that in the next decade Israel will have no response to the ten kilometer-range rocket shootings. Israel will be unable to prevent shooting from Khan-Junis on Sderot and from Kalkilia to Kfar Saba.”

“The IDF will have to enter Arab territory to create ten kilometer security zones.”

\* \* \*

These quotes illustrate what tragedy awaits Israel if, G-d forbid, the expulsion plan is implemented, as well as the crime inherent in its implementation. The plan does absolutely nothing to improve Israel’s security, and will only make it worse.

It is clear that the plan must be fought! The plan is reminiscent of the story of the group of passengers on a boat where one passenger decides to drill a hole. Everybody knows what will happen if he drills the hole. Would any of the passengers hesitate to stop him? Wouldn’t they all yell at him to stop his madness?

In the future, nobody will be able to say they didn’t know or hadn’t heard. It’s all printed. At the beginning of the Oslo process, Rabin stood on the White House lawn and promised, “no more tears, no more bereavement,” in the hopes that it would really be true. Today we are being told that there will be tears and bereavement and it will be nothing compared to what we have already experienced.

Who can stand by silently?

**THEY ARE MIXING IN PERSONAL AGENDAS!**

*At the beginning of the Oslo process, Rabin stood on the White House lawn and promised, “no more tears, no more bereavement,” in the hopes that it would really be true. Today we are being told that there will be tears and bereavement and it will be nothing compared to what we have already experienced.*

In the past, they were afraid to talk about it. Government offices were considered holy and its leaders were considered priests who served the nation voluntarily. The public truly believed that what their leaders did was solely for the good of the nation and its security.

Today, everybody knows that Sharon hatched the Disengagement Plan because of personal reasons. What were his personal reasons? There are differences of opinion about that,

but nobody challenges the fact that this was a personal whim of Sharon.

19 years ago, the Rebbe warned that mixed into the plans were personal considerations, after which the public was told that it was all “pure political considerations.” This is what the Rebbe said about the situation then, which fits our situation today to a tee:

A person who has a question regarding the treatment of his diseased foot, even if he is not in danger, would not consider bringing his question to a vote of baalei-battim, even if they were the wisest people, even star-gazers. Anybody with a brain in his head knows and understands that when it comes to a medical situation concerning the foot, you consult with a doctor, and among the doctors you look for a doctor who is an expert in treating the foot, who is interested in healing the foot.

If this is so for a foot, then it's all the more true for the head, which entails actual danger to life, and all the more so when it entails danger to three million Jews. Then, certainly, you would not allow politicians to vote on this, for they have no idea about security, and even if they did, they mix in other considerations, political, party, or even personal considerations!

With a question like this, only experts in security can state an opinion because they respond solely from a security vantage point, without mixing in any other considerations.

Also from a political perspective, it is known and infamous to all what a negative impression those politicians made on the American politicians, even non-Jewish ones, because they signed the Camp David Accords. This was because everybody saw their ineptitude, their inferiority complexes, and the ease with which they conceded things that are vital to Israel's security and the nation that dwells therein, merely for a piece of

paper!

Every normal politician was shocked at how Israel handled the negotiations, in a way that led to concessions and a signature on such a pathetic agreement!

The amazement is even greater – to all politicians – after they all saw the triviality and worthlessness in the signing of the peace agreement, and how much the other side honors the agreement – and yet those “political experts” continue to announce their loyalty to that pathetic agreement. They say they will not take back anything they promised and they will continue to give more and more, including Yehuda and Shomron. This

*Wanting to present a  
“pretty Chabad,” a  
liberal movement that  
gives out candy,  
doughnuts, and does  
nice work with terror  
victims won't work!*

is what they call “political considerations.”

*(Parshas Chayei Sarah 5746.)*

### SILENCE OF SPEAKING UP?

Today there is no person in security (past or present) who fails to announce the dangers inherent in the Disengagement Plan. Those who don't speak up have personal reasons and have lost their security mindset.

Bogey Yaalon, retiring (pushed out) Chief of Staff has said some harsh things about the Plan. On the one hand, we're glad he has spoken up publicly. On the other hand, why didn't he say all this while in uniform when his view would have made a

greater impact on the public?

### TO STOP IT AT ANY COST

Whoever didn't know why the Disengagement Plan must be stopped at all costs, finally got it when they heard Minister of the Interior Ofir Pines say that the government is willing to consider evacuations of up to 100,000 Jews.

This was said when Sharon convened a meeting of ministers to discuss the Disengagement. As always, when politicians hide their true intentions, suddenly the right person at the right time says the truth. The plan is to dismantle all settlements in Yesha, to give it all back to the Arabs until we self-destruct, Heaven forbid.

Those on the Left, who know what the Disengagement will cost us, are ready to endanger their lives, the main thing being to see the hated settler suffer. They are drooling at the thought of seeing settlers expelled from their homes. It's a typical Jewish illness, which is a result of years of exile.

### WE ARE DIFFERENT!

The Rebbe constantly spoke about the concept of *v'niflinu*, which means that a Chabad Chassid is different than the rest of the world, and his goal is to fulfill the Rebbe's wishes without being fazed by what people will say. When we have the “Chassidic *v'niflinu*,” then we have the pride to throw ourselves into the Rebbe's work and to announce what the Rebbe has said. The Rebbe is our symbol of pride, and that is how we must act in Torah, mitzvos, and with the directions received from the Rebbe.

The situation today is one in which some prefer to lower their heads and act like other groups who fought the Rebbe for decades and said “that doesn't pertain to us,” and we shouldn't get involved in “political matters.”

This position, held by some

Lubavitchers, is the opposite of Lubavitch pride. It is the complete opposite of v'niflinu (and we are not talking about misplaced pride, which is not for the sake of Heaven).

Chabad does not try to copy any group or party. The Rebbe's horaos are clear. When it comes to shleimus ha'Aretz, the Rebbe stated his position in front of thousands of people and made sure it received wide media coverage. The Rebbe also said we should go out to protest and demonstrate.

Wanting to present a "pretty Chabad," a liberal movement that gives out candy, doughnuts, and does nice work with terror victims won't work! Chabad is the Rebbe and the Rebbe is Chabad, and whatever the Rebbe said will come to pass.

When we express the Rebbe's protest against the expulsion of Jews, against evil and crime, we should do so proudly and joyously, and not with our eyes lowered in shame. We have the merit of being v'niflinu!

## IMPORTANT NOTICE

Concurrent with the time for yeshiva registration, **Rabbi Hanania Yosef Eisenbach**, Rosh Yeshiva "Tomchei Temimim" in Bnei Brak will be arriving in NY for registering new students in the yeshiva g'dola.

Rabbi Eisenbach will be in NY from Sunday through Wednesday, **19 - 23 Sivan.**

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# HOW CAN WE SIT AT HOME?

BY CHANA KATZ

It's amazing how some people can gain so much strength from the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach in a relatively short period of time.

In recent days, a group just short of a minyan, gathered from different parts of Eretz Yisroel for a tour of the northern Shomron led by shliach Uriel Gorfinkle of Avnei Chefetz. The stories that came out of this trip grew more inspiring by the minute.

One of the participants, Yoel Krauss, 25, shared some fascinating details of the visit. To think that a few years ago he was not familiar with Chabad... Now to hear him talk and watch him ride through some of the most volatile terrorist villages proudly waving a huge Moshiach flag...

\* \* \*

Krauss' attachment to Safon (northern) Shomron, began during Chol HaMoed Pesach when Beis Moshiach organized a special trip to strengthen the communities slated for evacuation – G-d forbid. A few days after that rally, he returned.

Last week Krauss returned again, this time bringing six other acquaintances from Ramat Gan. One, a retired army commander, said he never felt the land in such a strong way. The group became energized, ignited, each returning with a commitment to become more involved in whatever ways he could.

They were in good company.

Krauss quoted the Rebbe as saying that when a Jew walks anywhere in Eretz Yisroel – and more so, the Shomron – with “Ko’ach b’Torah,” Avrohom, Yitzchok, and Yaakov accompany him.

While much attention is being given to Gush Katif now, Krauss stressed the Rebbe's view of the Shomron as the “manul” – the lock – to all of Eretz Yisroel. Holding on to the Shomron will secure all of the land. Unfortunately, the government's life-endangering plans are diametrically

*From the back,  
Krauss could see that  
the soldier's head was  
stooped down as if he  
was crying...*

opposite.

There are two main focuses now, according to Krauss. The first is to develop an attachment to the land by actually visiting it. It's virtually impossible to develop this attachment by reading or hearing about the land. To that end, Krauss and others throughout Eretz Yisroel, are helping shliach Gorfinkle to arrange special Shabbatons and group tours. It's incredible how few have actually visited the northern Shomron.

The physical presence of a Jew on every inch of Eretz Yisroel has a tremendous effect, Krauss said, and how much more so the Shomron.

Krauss has received many interesting letters from the Rebbe in recent weeks through the *Igros Kodesh*. In one such letter, the Rebbe asked how one could sit home while his brothers around him were going off to war?

Another letter talked about the war waged in Russia by the Rebbe Rayatz. Because of the fight waged against an entire government by one person, the Rebbe Rayatz, the letter said, now in our generation every Chassid of the Rebbe has been given the ko'ach to be able to wage the current war in Eretz Yisroel.

The letters from the Rebbe and the visits to the northern Shomron, have given Krauss and others who have gone there an abundance of ko'ach, which they have also shared with others. Krauss told the story of one young Israeli soldier whom he met at Chomesh. From the back, Krauss could see that the soldier's head was stooped down as if he was crying, which in fact he was.

Krauss asked him what was the matter, and the young soldier, who apparently wasn't religious, just cried and asked over and over, “How can they give up this land, this place? I can't understand how...”

The place in particular they were

discussing was a mountain from whose heights you can see almost all of Eretz Yisroel. Krauss, who grew up in Ramat Gan, where he now lives with his kalla and is an assistant to the shliach, recalls all of the places he's toured in Eretz Yisroel during his life. And none, by comparison, were as beautiful as this area in the Shomron, he said.

In fact, Ariel Sharon used to bring visiting dignitaries to this same site not too long ago, showing off the awesome view of almost the entire land and proving its strategic importance...

Krauss gave the soldier a Chassidishe pep talk and explained to him that the threats and government strategies are not based on the truth, and in the end, only the truth will prevail.

Krauss opened his own heart to the crying soldier and told him to be strong, that ko'ach b'Torah is stronger than anything the government can do, and that the land will always remain with those who Hashem desires.

\* \* \*

Before Krauss's group set out on the trip, they were warned that the Arab villages, which enveloped these tiny Jewish settlements, contained within them sadistic people who just a year ago shed the very lifeblood of many nearby Jewish residents. So what did Krauss do when the group passed through these particularly volatile areas? He waved a giant Moshiach flag! And not one stone was thrown or bullet fired. It seemed as though the Arabs themselves respect the truth!

A part of the day's tour included a visit to the palace of Jewish kings, parts of which still stand from the First Temple period. Krauss noted with great excitement the prophecy that in the times of Moshiach the Jewish kingdoms would be united.

And here was this group of Chayalei Dovid – that is, representatives of the kingship descending from the tribe of Yehuda, the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach –

sitting in the palace which once housed kings from the tribe of Yosef (Ephraim and Menasheh), such as King Yoram and Achav. They had a farbrengen, learned the Rebbe's sichos, and decided to return to the spot with different groups at least once a month.

\* \* \*

There were other fascinating details of this particular trip, which will undoubtedly lead to more trips to the northern Shomron. Which brings us to Krauss's second point, that if, chas v'shalom, things should ever progress to the point where the roads are blocked in order to prevent Jews from entering the northern Shomron, that everyone should gather, not alone but in groups, and proceed together by foot.

When we go out to battle with the ko'ach of the Torah and the leadership of the Nasi HaDor, the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach, nothing can stop us from crossing the threshold of victory into the Geula Shleima.



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# SHABBOS AT MAOZ HA'YAM

BY SHAI GEFEN

*The abandoned hotel in Neve Dekalim has been resurrected and is filling up with people who have moved to Gush Katif. \* Shai Gefen spent Shabbos in the new settlement and tells us what he experienced.*

The Neve Dekalim hotel on the Gaza coast used to be a popular tourist spot. Since the Intifada, the hotel was abandoned and the equipment was looted and vandalized beyond recognition.

As the time approaches to wage battle against the Disengagement Plan, the hotel is, however, enjoying a renaissance. Baruch Marzel rented the hotel from its owner, Mr. Eitan Ben Dovid, for the purpose of enabling as many Jews as possible to move into the 150-room hotel. The mesirus nefesh of the first people to move in was tremendous, as there was no electricity or water and the place was a wreck.

Dozens of families are already living in the hotel, which has been renamed Maoz HaYam (Stronghold of the Sea). The new inhabitants consist not only of new families but also of guests from around the world.

I visited on Friday and saw a flourishing yishuv. Families were stocking their homes with supplies.

Some apartments are in the middle of renovations. The new beis

*Here, unlike what is felt in other cities, people are certain that the Disengagement will not happen.*

midrash is stocked with s'farim, and Jews are sitting and learning. Books on Chassidus Chabad fill the shelves.

Baruch Marzel is helping yet another family acclimate to their new home. I met Rabbi Dovid Meir Druckman, rav of Kiryat Mochkin, preparing the eiruv around the new yishuv. Rabbi Druckman seems like an old-timer here.

The new settlers stand around the rav in order to ask halachic questions that have come up. There's another Chabad guest here, Rabbi Danny Cohen, shliach in Chevron. He's busy preparing food for dozens of families for Shabbos. On Erev Shabbos, the residents immerse in the sea.

**What will Maoz HaYam contribute to what was already here in Neve Dekalim?**

Baruch Marzel: We are in the midst of preparing to prevent the expulsion, not only here but around the country. In Gush Katif, we looked for a place that would serve as an absorption center for the thousands of people who are coming to live here. We decided to set up a yishuv in this hotel.

I'd like to mention that the owner of the hotel, Eitan Ben Dovid did not agree to the deal the army offered him. The army wanted the hotel to train in for the expulsion and to set up a military base for the soldiers who would be doing the evacuating. Before Pesach, I called and rented the hotel.

As a result of the huge protest gathering on Pesach, the first families moved in. My son-in-law, Ezriel Steig (who is close to Chabad) moved in with his family, and then many others began to arrive and to fix up the place. Today a few dozen families live here.





**Building, renovating, expanding**

\* \* \*

Kabbalas Shabbos was uplifting, with the dancing and singing. Here, unlike what is felt in other cities, people are certain that the Disengagement will not happen. The Chassidic aphorism, “Think good and it will be good,” is the motto of the new residents as well as the old. We are right on the beach and the sound of the waves is soothing.

Rabbi Druckman spoke and urged people to be strong and to realize that this was a fight for Jewish existence. He addressed the soldiers who had come to daven and begged them not to take part in this enormous crime.

We ate the Shabbos meal in the makeshift dining room. We felt that history was happening here and the decree would be annulled? Baruch Marzel said, “We need help in every area. We need food and equipment. Refurbishing this hotel is costing us over a million shekel. This week we’re setting up a dining room for a thousand people!”

There is even a kollel and the talmud Torah from Chevron moved to the new yishuv. I was told that there are a number of yeshivos that plan on moving here. The goal is to have a thunderous sound of Torah emanating from here.

The new resident, Rabbi Druckman, said, “There are other

rabbanim who have expressed interest in moving here.” Rabbi Druckman was the first rabbi to come and lead the battle.

Shabbos Mevarchim Sivan. In the morning, we said the entire T’hillim with a minyan, followed by Shacharis. After davening, we held a farbrengen with Rabbi Druckman. He is a powerful source of inspiration, and spoke mostly about mesirus nefesh to save the Jewish people. When the time for Seuda Shlishis came around, we all gathered to learn *Likkutei Torah* together.

After Maariv, it was back to routine, if you can call life at Maoz HaYam routine. It was difficult to part after such an inspiring Shabbos and meeting Jews who are ready to sacrifice everything in order to defend Am Yisroel.

Before I left, Baruch Marzel pleaded with me for help. “If not now, then when?” he asked. “Now is the time to help. Everybody can help in some way. We need a lot of equipment and food, equipment to fix up the place and money to sustain us. Whoever can help should be blessed.”

Anash, come and visit Gush Katif in order to strengthen the residents, old and new, and with Hashem’s help, we will succeed!



**Rabbi Druckman and Shai Gefen (left)**



**Journalists from around the world interviewing Baruch Marzel**