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**BEIS MOSHIACH**

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### U.S.A

744 Eastern Parkway  
Brooklyn, NY 11213-3409  
Tel: (718) 778-8000  
Fax: (718) 778-0800  
admin@beismoshiach.org  
www.beismoshiach.org

### ERETZ HA'KODESH

ת.ד. 102 כפר חב"ד 72915  
טלפון: (03) 9607-290  
פקס: (03) 9607-289

### EDITOR-IN-CHIEF:

M.M. Hendel

### ENGLISH EDITOR:

Boruch Merkur  
editor@beismoshiach.org

### ASSISTANT EDITOR:

Alexander Zushe Kohn

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# NOT TO REMAIN IN THE FIELD

LIKKUTEI SICHOS VOL. 4, HOSAFOS, PG. 1343-1345  
TRANSLATED BY BORUCH MERKUR



All matters discussed in Torah, including the allegories, are precise in all their details. But at first glance, the terminology of the Alter Rebbe is not understood there [in his allegory of the king in the field]: “the city folk go out to greet him...in the field.” This wording indicates that their place is in the city but they only now venture out to the field. But at first glance (in the analogue) it is the opposite: Their place is in the field, and the innovation of [the month of] Elul is that the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy shine even in the place where they are at present, in the field.

The explanation of this quandary is as follows: The means by which each and every Jew perceives this illumination of the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy [which are spiritual in nature] is on account of the root of his soul. The Alter Rebbe alludes to this in saying, “the city folk go out to greet him...in the field.” For the reason the Jewish people perceive the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy is because they are “city folk” [an allusion to the Jewish soul as it exists in the Heavenly realm of Briah, which is referred to as “city.” See footnote 11 in original text.] It is just that for the time being they happen to be in the field, [a metaphor for being] in the exile of the body and the Animal Soul. Notwithstanding the fact that they are in exile, “one cannot compare the virtue of a minister whilst in captivity to the virtue of a commoner” [Footnote 12: *Likkutei Torah* ibid [i.e., Parshas R’ei] 32c]. Being that they are “city folk,” even when they are in the field, they “receive the light of His blessed countenance,” the illumination of the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy.

\* \* \*

Another matter that is not readily understood from the terminology of the Alter Rebbe in the allegory there: The

wording implies that the original place of the king is in the field (for he does not write that “the king **goes out** to the field”), whereas in the analogue the place of the king is in his royal palace, but he makes a special trip to the field to enable everyone to receive him.

The explanation is as follows: In terms of revelations, when the king is in the field, it is a descent in comparison to how he is in his royal palace. For when he is in his royal palace he wears a royal crown and royal vestments, etc. Which is not the case when he is in the field. Nevertheless, in truth, the very fact that the king forgoes the revelation of his royal crown and royal vestments, and he goes out to the field to enable everyone to receive him, proves that the repentance of those who are found in the field is more precious and pertinent to him than his royal crown and vestments (like the example of the service of penitents, which reaches higher than the service of the righteous). For His royal vestments and crown are merely [elements constituting his] appearance. Whereas His blessed essence is specifically in the field, as it is known that it is specifically the lower worlds that are a dwelling place for His blessed essence.

In the allegory in discussion, the Alter Rebbe writes, “As he makes his way to the city, they follow him. Afterwards, as he enters his royal palace, etc.” At first glance, since His blessed essence is specifically in the field, etc., as has been noted, why is this necessary and what advantage is accomplished in going to the city? The matter is as follows: Regarding a dwelling place there are two factors: 1) In a dwelling place one’s entire **essence** is present (as in a home, for **one’s essence** resides in the dwelling), and this is accomplished through the fulfillment of mitzvos specifically in the realm of action. 2) the one who lives in the dwelling is **revealed** there. Thus,

revelations are also necessary.

Notwithstanding the fact that this service takes place in the month of Tishrei, the Alter Rebbe writes about this matter in the allegory which elaborates on the service of the month of Elul. It could be said that he, thereby, suggests that even the beginning of the service of receiving the yoke [of Heaven], the venturing outwards to receive His blessed countenance in the field, must be on condition and in a manner [intended to] follow him afterwards to the city and to his royal palace, for then they come from the service of Elul to the service of Rosh HaShana and the Ten Days of Repentance and etc., until the revelation of Shmini Atzeres – “They will be to you alone, with no strangers among you.”

\* \* \*

In the address of the holiday of Pesach 5694 (*Likkutei Dibburim* 116a) my esteemed teacher and father-in-law, the Rebbe [Rayatz], describes the spiritual state in Lubavitch in the month of Elul. In the beginning of the passage there [he writes]: “After Shabbos Nachamu, we would already begin [the practice of] studying following Maariv, in fulfillment of that which is written, ‘Arise and sing at night.’ When the Shabbos that blesses the month of Elul arrived, we would already begin to sense the Elul-atmosphere, etc.” It is not understood, however, why he arranges the two topics – the increase in the learning after Shabbos Nachamu and the conduct of the month of Elul – in one aphorism, for at first glance they appear to be two separate topics.

It is further not understood why in the preceding passage he describes the conduct of Between the Straits, for the conduct of Shabbos Nachamu is apparently connected with the conduct of Between the Straits [and not Elul]. Indeed, the consolation (of Shabbos Nachamu) is for matters associated with Between the Straits. Thus, it

would seemingly be appropriate to conclude the aphorism regarding Between the Straits with the matter of the conduct following Shabbos Nachamu (and thus conclude with something positive), and the subsequent aphorism should begin with the conduct of the month of Elul.

The explanation hinges on a well known insight concerning repentance. Although repentance is loftier than Torah (for which reason atonement [is accomplished through repentance] even with regard to blemishes in and transgressions of [the commandment of] Torah study), nevertheless the “revelation” of the entire matter of repentance is specifically through Torah. Indeed, this is the central point of the month of Elul [i.e., repentance expressed through rededication to Torah study]. The same principle applies with regard to the service of man: Notwithstanding the fact that the primary service of the month of Elul is the service of repentance, nevertheless this itself is “revealed” through Torah study. That is, in order for one to come to terms with the great necessity of repentance and how to repent and etc., one must add and increase in Torah study, especially the study of the inner dimension of the Torah, which clearly elucidates concepts associated with repentance.

Thus, my esteemed teacher and father-in-law, the Rebbe, arranged in a single aphorism the matter of

increasing one’s study along with the conduct in the month of Elul, thereby alluding to the fact that the service of the month of Elul – repentance – is connected with the increase in Torah study. The latter point is reflected in the conclusion of the verse, “I am to my beloved and my beloved is to me” – whose acronym [in the original Hebrew] spells out “Elul” – “who shepherds among the roses (*shoshanim*),” for “*shoshanim*” has two meanings: Thirteen Petals of Mercy (the place of repentance) and those who study (*shonim*) Torah.

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His blessed  
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field, must be on  
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# LOVE, LUBAVITCH STYLE

BY RABBI CHAIM ASHKENAZI  
TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY

*Without Chassidus, we think that love is measured in expressions and actions of goodwill. Saying a good word to or about another Jew, giving him something nice or keeping something bad away from him – these are examples of ahavas Yisroel. Similarly, in connection with G-d – when you fulfill His desires out of a sense of your love for Him – this is ahavas Hashem. Regarding ahavas HaTorah, when you learn because you enjoy every portion that you understand, revealing new innovations from your studies – this shows how much you love the Torah. Chassidus comes and reveals something deeper: All this is merely loving yourself! Excerpts from a chassidic farbrengen.*

## THE BANNER OF LOVE

The Rebbe Rayatz's memoirs deal with the chain of events that led to the revelation of Chassidus in general and Chabad Chassidus in particular. At the beginning of the memoirs, there appears an explanation of the word "Lubavitch," which is based on the word "lyuba" – "love" in Russian. This brings us to an understanding that the path of Chabad-Lubavitch, its

conception, its birth, its development, and its continuing influence, is founded on love.

At first glance, there arises a question: Is this actually an innovation of Lubavitch? Love is the basis of the whole Torah – whether in the form of love of fellow Jews, love of G-d, or love of the Torah! We learn from our Sages and the Rambam that these have been the foundations of every matter

of avodas Hashem throughout the generations.

The answer is that Chassidus revealed what the meaning of this love really is. Torah sources constantly speak about the need to love the Creator, the Torah, and our fellow Jews, but Chassidus revealed what it means to love. Chassidus does this in its own unique, illuminating style, a meaningful and significant innovation that had never been known before on a wide scale, except to true Torah giants.

Try and ask a child what ahavas Yisroel is. He'll come up with a few interesting ideas: Letting a friend use his things, helping him in his studies, stopping others from teasing him...

For without Chassidus, we think that love is measured in expressions and actions of goodwill. Saying a good word to or about another Jew, giving him something nice or keeping something bad away from him – these are examples of ahavas Yisroel. Similarly, in connection with G-d – when you fulfill His desires out of a sense of your love for Him – this is ahavas Hashem. Regarding ahavas HaTorah, when you learn because you enjoy every portion that you understand, revealing new innovations from your studies – this shows how much you love the Torah.

## NO FAKING, PLEASE

Chassidus comes and reveals something deeper: All this is merely **loving yourself!** If you say something nice about someone or do a good deed

for him, this is because you love yourself. You're the type of person who likes people and doing nice things, and therefore, every good thing that someone does arouses within you a feeling of warmth and affection for that person. This means that a person's good actions or something nice that you can do for him is what arouses **you**, having nothing to do with the other person himself. Therefore, if someone doesn't do any good deeds or if you don't perceive any good deeds on his part, you have no connection with such a person. In addition, you are the one who determines what good deeds are, i.e., they are only good if you think they are.

While such conduct is on a humane level and cannot be compared *ch"v* to acting badly towards one's neighbor, nevertheless, it stems from a person's human nature, which is on the level of a "cultured animal." This expression comes from R. Hillel Paritcher, who, after he was introduced to Chassidus in general and *Tanya* in particular, said that even though he was an outstanding Torah scholar and *mekubal* beforehand (as is known), he now realized that up until now he had been nothing more than a cultured animal, a mode of conduct where a person never breaks through the limitations with which he was created. In the final analysis, he merely continues with his natural tendencies, and thus, he is just like an animal on two legs.

What is so bad about such conduct? Outwardly, he loves his fellow Jew and acts towards him in an appropriate manner. However, when we contemplate this point a bit more deeply, we find that it leads to haughtiness. He is expressing and fulfilling his own desires, albeit in positive ways, e.g., performing acts of kindness with his fellow Jew. Yet, as a result, he is making himself into a greater metzius with each passing moment.

Apart from inflating his ego, he can also possibly do things that are detrimental to others, e.g., giving a sharp knife to an infant who is screaming and whining that he wants it, feeding him something that he can *ch"v* possibly choke on or is not healthy for him – all because the adult can't bear to hear the child's heart-rendering cries.

### FULFILLING HIS NEEDS OR MY NEEDS

The natural attribute of love dictates how a person acts towards others in such a way that he doesn't always see what is really the best thing



for them. This represents love without Chassidus. However, Chassidus has an entirely different approach, as expressed quite clearly in a story about R. Moshe Leib Sassover, who learned what true *ahavas Yisroel* is from a drunk.

Once when he was in a tavern, he saw a drunken gentile fall upon his friend, embrace him, and say to him, "I love you, I love you!" His friend replied, "If you love me, maybe you know what I'm lacking?" R. Moshe Leib learned from this what *ahavas Yisroel* is: feeling **what the other person is missing**, not what I want to

give him.

In a similar vein, we see Rashi's commentary on what Avrohom Avinu said to Avimelech: A guest comes to a certain place, and instead of asking him, "Do you have what to eat?" they look at his female companion and ask, "Is she your wife or your sister?"... Asking if someone needs food shows that you are concerned about what the guest is lacking, whereas, asking about his wife demonstrates your interest in yourself.

Another example comes from the Chassidic story about someone who was sitting in shul during Shacharis as the minyan began to say "*Va'yevarech Dovid*," when one of the worshippers immediately approached him and said that you are not supposed to sit at "*Va'yevarech Dovid*." "The fact that I have been sitting for a long time without *parnasa* doesn't seem to bother anyone," the man replied. "So why does it bother you that I'm sitting at '*Va'yevarech Dovid*'?" The worshipper's rebuke did not come out of true love, i.e., no interest in the other person's situation.

This may provide an explanation to the pasuk, "When a man offers **from among you** a sacrifice." The Alter Rebbe brings various comments in *Likkutei Torah* on this passage, particularly the question: Why doesn't it say, "When a man **from among you** offers..."? The Alter Rebbe explains that this refers to Supernal Man, who brings a Jew in a poor spiritual state closer to him. Furthermore, he brings **from among you**, not all of you, because the closeness only pertains to the G-dly soul. Thus, we find that when Supernal Man permeates us and sees the needs of the G-dly soul in its battle with the animal soul, he brings the Jew closer to him accordingly. As a result, it is fitting for a Jew to check and see what the person coming closer is lacking.

This is the explanation of the *HaYom Yom* entry from the 28<sup>th</sup> of

Nissan, in connection with the Chassidic discussion in the time of the Alter Rebbe: What is loftier – ahavas Yisroel or ahavas Hashem? The Alter Rebbe said that ahavas Yisroel is loftier because he loves that which is loved by the Beloved.

Thus we have a clear definition of what true love is – not to love something and offer it to others. While it's true that this is an expression of love, it is not true love, which exists only when you love what **he** loves. You give him what he is lacking, not what you are lacking. Even if you're giving something good that also may be good for others – this is not what is demanded from you; give him what **he** needs.

### EVEN WHEN THE GIVER IS LACKING

What is the measure of true love in Lubavitcher terms? Chassidus shows us the way to have true concern for the good of others. When we remove the garments of our “self,” this enables the magnitude and intensity of our love to burst forth in great revelation (or in the words of *HaYom Yom*, to be engraved on the soul of a Jew). We find this also regarding ahavas Hashem and ahavas HaTorah, but we'll save those subjects for another time.

Getting back to the discussion of loving our neighbors, the world teaches that love stems from a desire to receive: *I* have a natural feeling of love and I need the other person in order to bestow my love upon him, and without this, I am lacking something and this even causes me anguish. Chassidus explains that love is founded upon self-existence: “I love, therefore I am.” Therefore, Avrohom Avinu was deeply pained when he couldn't bestow kindness, because G-d prevented guests from visiting him after he circumcised himself. This teaches us that when someone has a person he can influence, the giver is on the level of a *mekabel*, as he fills what is missing from himself.

(Needless to say, someone who built and gave money to the settlements over the years received strength from them. The moment they no longer needed him – the giving ceased and the destruction came...)

In Lubavitch, love is all giving, as measured when we give someone else what he is lacking, even if this may detract from our own self, in order that we can see him as he really should be. Therefore, the Torah says regarding Avrohom Avinu that only after the Akeida, “**Now** I know that you fear G-d.” Question: Didn't Avrohom Avinu already prove his *yiras Hashem* in other situations? However, at Ur Kasdim, for

*“The fact that I have been sitting for a long time without parnasa doesn't seem to bother anyone,” the man replied. “So why does it bother you that I'm sitting at ‘Va'yevarech Dovid’?”*

example, there was room to say that he was fighting for his ideology. As for his unique brand of hospitality, it was perhaps due to the fact that he was a man of chesed, and he simply couldn't exist without doing kindness to others. Apparently, none of these phenomena were deemed sufficient proof of his avodas Hashem.

The Akeida proved that he possessed a degree of “severity” to suppress mercy for his only son. The fact that he withheld his love at a time when it was not desirable in G-d's eyes proved that even his expressions of love towards guests, etc., stemmed not

from his natural loving tendency, but from his fear of G-d and his desire to walk along His path. Avrohom Avinu's conduct at the Akeida, contrary to his nature, served as a proof that his love demonstrated that he wanted to **give** and not receive, and he was genuinely anguished when there were people that needed kindness who he couldn't reach. Therefore, he was called “one who fears G-d,” even though the attribute of Avrohom is love. This love represents going out of one's self, characteristic of fear, in contrast to the more conventional love where the person remains within himself and receives more and more.

### THE GIVING OF REDEMPTION

The Rebbe shlita said that the Rebbe Rayatz came to America not to receive, but to give. Even though it would appear at first glance that he needed money – and lots of it – from wealthy donors in order that he could establish and maintain his activities in the United States. Not true. The truth is that the Rebbe, leader of the generation, is the one who **gives**, not the one who receives. For this purpose, he is prepared to sacrifice everything for the sake of every single Jew. As the Rebbe shlita said about the Rebbe Rayatz, he placed himself within every detail and every Jew, just as he would do regarding a matter of general concern. This means that he gave all that he had into the state of *mekabel* in order to give.

The Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka, of blessed memory, expressed this point in her famous statement during her testimony for the court case on the *s'farim*: “Father and the *s'farim* belong to the Chassidim.”

We have seen countless examples of the Rebbe shlita's conduct over the years in great detail. Our eyes have witnessed how he devoted himself completely to giving and giving more to each person according to his state – not just Chassidus through saying

maamarim and sichos, but also influencing them in their personal affairs. Whether he playfully waved a piece of lekach before a small child until he took it with his hands or gave out dollars on Sunday, he responded to each person in his own language with the greatest of patience.

We have been privileged to see the realization of the true love of the era of Redemption. This is also G-d's conduct, as is written, "And you will be gathered, one by one," i.e., the Redemption will be according to the state of each individual Jew. This is because G-d wants to give us Redemption, not receive Redemption, and therefore, no Jew will be left

behind in this final exile. This is not like the Exodus from Egypt, where only a small portion of the Jewish people was redeemed, because then there was no giving of the Redemption, rather an action of Redemption on the part of the Giver, not the receiver. Chassidus explains that this is the reason why "the people fled," and afterwards, there were forty years of ups and downs, because it all came from Above with no giving according to the state below.

Therefore, in order to merit the true, complete, and final Redemption with no exiles to follow, the giving must be according to the level of the recipient. As a result, the teachings of

Chassidus were revealed to lead us along this path of Divine service – to think about the other person and to give and influence only according to his level. For this purpose, Chassidim passed up on the comforts of life, both material and spiritual. All Lubavitchers – shluchim, T'mimim, and rank-and-file Anash members alike – are involved with the spreading of the wellsprings of Chassidus and preparing the world for the imminent arrival of our righteous Moshiach as they relinquish their personal desires, walking along the Lubavitcher path of ahavas Yisroel, and bringing all our people together to the Redemption.

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# THE SCENT OF ELUL

*On Shabbos Mevarchim Elul, although it was still summer, the atmosphere had changed. The scent of Elul was already discernible and a t'shuva wind began to blow. Every Jew became more deliberate, more preoccupied with their thoughts, beginning to forget mundane matters. \* A compilation of stories that illustrate Chabad's perspective on Elul.*

## SHABBOS MEVARCHIM ELUL IN LUBAVITCH

The Rebbe Rayatz described the atmosphere of the month of Elul in Lubavitch:

In Lubavitch, the Yomim Tovim and special times of the year were regarded as extremely important. Everybody, g'dolim and k'tanim, Torah scholars, knowledgeable people, and simple Jews, were occupied, with all their abilities and senses, their minds and hearts, their mouths, ears, hands, and feet. At first, with preparations for the holiday, and then with the holiday itself.

During the 102 years when Lubavitch was the capitol city of the Chabad Rebbeim, it also served as the model city in the ways of Chassidus and customs of Chassidim, even in the mundane lives of the entire year, particularly on special days and holidays.

On Shabbos Mevarchim Elul in Lubavitch, although it was still summer, the atmosphere changed. The scent of Elul was already apparent and a t'shuva wind began to blow. Every Jew became more deliberate, more preoccupied with their thoughts, beginning to forget mundane matters.

For two summer months, from after Shavuot until Shabbos Nachamu, with a break for the Three Weeks, which were truly sorrowful days, since the laws of Tisha B'Av were kept in all their details, they would stroll a bit between Mincha and Maariv in the market square. Between Pesach and Shavuot, nobody went out for walks, but after Shavuot, until 17 Tammuz, they would stroll and enjoy the balmy summer breeze.

After Shabbos Nachamu, they began learning after Maariv, to fulfill what it says, "arise and sing at night." And when Shabbos

Mevarchim Elul arrived, they began to feel the atmosphere of Elul, and with great anticipation, they looked forward to the "L'Dovid Hashem ori v'yish'i," the sound of the shofar, the first tekia that acknowledged that the gates of the month of mercy were open.

The maamarim of Shabbos Mevarchim Elul, with the usual beginning, "Ani l'dodi, v'dodi li – the acronym for Elul," or "HaShamayim kis'i," or "R'ei, Anochi nosein lifneichem ha'yom," were all saturated with the spirit of Elul. Each day of the month of Elul bears no resemblance at all to the days of the rest of the year.

As you lie in bed at six in the morning, you hear the first vasikin minyan in the beis midrash already finishing davening and the sound of the shofar. The sound of shofar is rousing. Elul is here! You rush to get dressed, and are not satisfied with yourself. Why did you sleep so late?

A thought comes to mind of Moshe Rabbeinu, who was on the mountain, and that these days are the Yemei Ratzon, which can truly be capitalized on. One must be a mentch and one must not waste time.

When you arrive in shul, there's a big crowd there already. Some recite T'hilim, others are learning Chassidus, some are saying *Tikkunei Zohar* while others are standing or sitting and davening. ...





In the order of avoda in Toras Chabad, prayer – service of the heart – is one of the primary things. In Lubavitch there were those who were called “baalei avoda,” who davened for many hours on weekdays of the whole year and especially during Elul, when it was altogether different.

When one entered the “second room” of the “minyan,” he would be astonished by the unusual sight. Each one was immersed in his thoughts and in d’veikus, not hearing or seeing what was going on around him.

One sang “baruch gozer u’m’kayem” with a Chabad niggun, another one was saying, “chanun v’rachum,” and a third one was saying, “v’kulam m’shabchim u’mefo’arim.” Another one was in the middle of “ahavas olam,” and was saying a few words, the profound meaning of the words shining forth as each word was pronounced, with such hiskashrus and with such a pleading voice that you felt how, with each word, the

worshipper was rising higher and higher! He was getting ever closer to the point, and soon, soon, he would reach his goal.

The beseeching tune of “maher v’havei aleinu bracha v’shalom,” the quiet, pleasing melody of, “v’solicheinu m’heria komamiyus

***Each was immersed  
in his thoughts and in  
d’veikus, not hearing  
or seeing what was  
going on around him.***

l’artzeinu,” the confident voice in which he said, “ki Keil poel yeshuos ata,” and the happy sound in which he said, “v’keiravteinu malkeinu l’shimcha ha’gadol” – gave him the strength to say Shma Yisroel.

(Likkutei Dibburim, vol. 1)

## THE DAYS OF ELUL – HAPPY DAYS

The Chassid, R’ Yosef (who was the uncle of the Tzemach Tzedek) was once in a certain town at the start of Elul. They sat at a gathering and one of the people said, “The gloomy days begin.”

R’ Yosef said, “Why? On the contrary, happy days are beginning, for in Elul the 13 Attributes of Mercy begin to shine and the King goes out to the field, i.e., the luminary approaches the spark. If so, happy days are beginning.”

## ELUL – T’HILLIM SEASON

When R’ Avrohom Pariz learned in Tomchei T’mimim in Lubavitch, there was a time that the gabbai was a member of the Pidyon Shvuyim group (literally, Redeeming the Captives, who would help yeshiva students earn exemptions from the draft) and would often meet with the Rebbe Rashab about this.

Once, in the month of Elul, the Rebbe told him to go to Vitebsk and he added: Since you're going to Vitebsk, buy me a T'hillim. And the Rebbe added with a smile: It [the month of Elul] is the season for it.

### IT'S ELUL IN THE WORLD!

Once, during the meal, a Chassid was standing and he heard the Rebbe Rashab say as though to himself: Ah, it's Elul in the world and the time seems to just pass...

The Chassid trembled when he heard this, and when he repeated it to Anash they all said: What don't you understand? The Rebbe meant you!

## *Slichos is not the time for a cheshbon ha'nefesh but the time for t'shuva.*

### TIMES FOR CHESHBON HA'NEFESH

Once at a Friday night meal, the Rebbe Maharash spoke about making a cheshbon ha'nefesh and said:

There's a set time for a cheshbon ha'nefesh and the set time for it is as follows: During the day, it's the time when you recite the Krias Shma before going to sleep. During

the week, it's Thursday, when you recite Krias Shma before going to sleep. During the month, it's Erev Rosh Chodesh. During the year, it's the month of Elul. Those who push off all the times for making a cheshbon ha'nefesh are left with the last time, the days of Slichos.

When he finished speaking, the Rebbe began to sing an old niggun with great d'veikus. Afterwards he added: The truth is, the days of Slichos is not the time for a cheshbon ha'nefesh but the time for t'shuva. But those who procrastinated in making a cheshbon ha'nefesh can make one at this time, but the main point of the days of Slichos is the avoda of t'shuva.

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ב"ה

# SEVENS ARE BELOVED

Every Purim, hundreds of bachurim spread out over New York, and from subways to exclusive office buildings, they bring mishloach manos and the other mitzvos of the day. Yisroel Katorza and Zevi Rothman during their year on K'vutza went every week to Kings Highway to do mitvzaim and help the many Israelis who work there with the mitzva of t'fillin.

On the Sunday afternoon of Purim, the two bachurim arrived at their last stop, a coat store. A number of Israelis congregated there and the megilla was read. In the middle of the reading, an Israeli walked into the store. He saw the Chabadnikim reading the megilla and was thrilled. He could barely wait until they were done and then he burst out saying that he had a story to tell everyone.

"I'll tell you where these guys get their incredible drive, their concern for every Jew. My name is Moshe Chazan and I was born in Shlomi. My father was Rabbi Sholom Chazan. When my father was still a child, people predicted that he would grow up to be a rav. He attended the Chabad yeshiva in Morocco in his childhood.

"When he emigrated to Eretz Yisroel he began serving in various rabbinic positions. He was rosh yeshiva of Od Yosef Chai in Chaifa and many of his students became rabbis, including Rabbi Dovid Abuchatzzeira. Then he became rav of Shlomi. He quickly acquired the trust of the residents of Shlomi thanks to his wisdom, and they

loved him.

"Sadly, at the height of his efforts in spreading Yiddishkeit and directing Jews back to their Father in Heaven, when he had already started writing s'farim, he fell ill. The doctors told him the worst, and my father suffered tremendously from the pain.

"One day, when his illness threatened to overcome him, he

***"The Baba Sali said, 'I can only add another year to your life, but if you want more than that, then fly to the Lubavitcher Rebbe in New York. He is the Tzaddik HaDor and he can certainly pray for you.'"***

visited the Baba Sali, Rabbi Yisroel Abuchatzzeira and told him what he was going through. Baba Sali, who greatly esteemed my father, thought for a while and then said, 'I can only add another year to your life, but if you want more than that, then fly to the Lubavitcher Rebbe in New York. He is the Tzaddik HaDor and he can certainly pray for you.'

"My father lost no time but at the first opportunity he went to the Rebbe with me accompanying him. I went in for the yechidus too.

"I will never forget that special feeling that enveloped me. The Rebbe looked like an angel and his eyes were penetrating. I was afraid to look into them. The Rebbe listened closely to what my father said and then gave him seven dollars, one after another, and blessed him with bracha v'hatzlacha. When we left, the Rebbe gave me seven dollars too and the yechidus was over.

"Despite my father's serious condition and the doctors' bleak prognosis about his having only a few months left to live, he went back to Eretz Yisroel in good spirits. He believed with complete faith in the blessing. He went back to Baba Sali who told him explicitly that the Lubavitcher Rebbe had given him life.

"Days passed and my father recovered. The doctors were shocked and agreed it was miraculous. My father was overjoyed and he reported to the Rebbe. He didn't take it easy but used the years he was given to spread Torah while leading the town of Shlomi.

"After precisely seven years from the day the Rebbe had given my father seven dollars, my father passed away. It was only one week after he finished writing his Ko L'Chai on the Hagada shel Pesach, as well as having finished building the mikva, a project that took a few years. His passing was a shock to the



people of Shlomi who so loved him, and it was a short time after he was offered the position of rav in Chaifa.”

\* \* \*

The workers in the coat store stood riveted as they listened to this incredible story.

“Now tell me, with such a great Rebbe, is it any wonder that he has such wonderful Chassidim?”

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**RABBI ZELIG RIVKIN, SHLIACH OF THE REBBE MH”M IN NEW ORLEANS:**

# ‘WE ARE GOING BACK TO WORK’

*“The Rebbe sent us to New Orleans, and as soon as we can return to the area, we will go back to work on a larger scale than before.” These are the words of Rabbi Zelig Rivkin, said from his temporary refuge in Houston, Texas, following the devastation of hurricane Katrina.*

ascertain that not a single member of his community was lost, and all are well.

From his current location in Houston, Texas, at the home of Rabbi Shimon Lazarov, Rabbi Rivkin gave an interview to *Beis Moshiach*. He states unequivocally, “The Rebbe sent us to New Orleans, and as soon as we can return to the area, we will go back to work on a larger scale than before.”

\* \* \*

Two weeks ago, the news reported with some degree of hysteria that hurricane Katrina, which had already struck South Florida, and done a great deal of damage, was going to make landfall again. This time, it had picked up even greater speed and would hit the city of New Orleans by the next day. Early predictions indicated that it would practically destroy the entire city.

Local government agencies ordered an immediate evacuation. Eighty percent of the residents heeded the call, and long lines of traffic could be seen leaving the city. Hundreds of thousands of people fled the city in one day, leaving behind tens of thousands of residents who lacked the means to travel or decided to stay for one reason or another.

As mentioned, there were a number who remained behind willingly, namely, the shluchim of the Rebbe MH”M: Rabbi Zelig Rivkin, whose Chabad House is located in New Orleans, his son Rabbi Mendel Rivkin, and Rabbi Yosef Nemes of Metairie, a suburb of New Orleans.

## A VIEW OF SHLICHUS FROM THE EYE OF THE STORM

“We are currently at home, and at this time the hurricane has made landfall. The eye of the storm is not passing through the city, but is further east. However, we also have very powerful winds, and lots of rain. There are parts of rooftops flying through the air, torn off from homes in the area. I am on the second floor of my home, together with my family, and the waters have not reached this far up.” That is what people tuning in to the Israeli television program “Mabat” heard from Rabbi Yehoshua Zelig HaKohen Rivkin, shliach of the Rebbe to the State of Louisiana, during the storm. In the background, one could hear the sounds of the hurricane.

In answer to a question from the interviewer, as to why he did not evacuate with the eighty percent of the residents who left a day earlier, Rabbi Rivkin responded that he decided to stay after consulting the Rebbe. The answer in the *Igros Kodesh* was that if you think good it will be good. The

letter also said that at this time there is a great arousal of [Divine] mercies upon the institutions of Chabad.

Now, after the hurricane has passed, leaving tremendous devastation in its wake, in addition to all the dead and missing, the expression “great mercies” takes on a whole new meaning. Rabbi Rivkin has been able to



Rabbi Zelig Rivkin

Rabbi Rivkin received the response of the Rebbe in volume 18, page 182, of the *Igros Kodesh*. The Rebbe indicates there to conduct oneself “as per the instruction of Rebbeim and N’siim to **think good**, and thus will be fulfilled the conclusion of their dictum that **it will be good**.” The Rebbe also writes on the same page, “Since Divine providence has granted him the merit and success, and has afforded him the good lot of being from the workers in the institutions of the Baal HaHilula, therefore, this will certainly increase the arousal of the great mercies by the Baal HaHilula. And this will also add in the blessings of Hashem in everything you need.”

Strengthened by the response of the Rebbe, Rabbi Rivkin decided to stay put. In a conversation with Rabbi Yosef Nemes, Rabbi Nemes told him that he had also written to the Rebbe. However, he felt that he did not receive a clear answer. He recalled that the previous year when there was a hurricane warning he had received a very clear answer. The letter he opened to said that the captain of a ship did not desert his post until every one of his passengers had reached safety. This time, since he did not receive a clear response, he consulted with Rabbi Avrohom Levitansky, shliach in S. Monica, California, who is also a practicing posek. Rabbi Levitansky ruled that as long as there are Jews in the city, the Rebbe’s shluchim must remain to provide assistance for the remaining Jews. The Rebbe’s shluchim did in fact remain, and were able to provide material and spiritual assistance to the remaining Jewish families.

On Monday morning, the hurricane began to pound the city. The dire prediction, which spoke of a category five storm making a direct hit, didn’t materialize. The storm, which had weakened to a category four, veered right, east of New Orleans. The brunt of the storm hit Mississippi, with waves reaching twenty feet high, washing boats onto the main highways. Trees

were sent flying into the streets and homes. Electricity and telephone poles came crashing down.

During the afternoon hours, after the storm had quieted down, Rabbi Rivkin went to the Chabad House. He saw a few downed trees and pieces of roofing blowing around, but that seemed to be the extent of the damage. After hearing on the radio a warning from the director of the National Hurricane Center that New Orleans was still in danger of flooding, from the high waves caused by the storm, he decided to bring the sifrei Torah and other religious articles to the third floor of the Chabad House.

Later in the day, he heard on the

*The expression “great mercies” takes on a whole new meaning. Rabbi Rivkin has been able to ascertain that not a single member of his community was lost, and all are well.*

radio that one of the levees had broken and there could be flooding as high as fifteen to twenty feet.

Much of New Orleans is up to ten feet below sea level, and is dependant on a network of levees, canals and pumps, in order to prevent being swamped by the Mississippi River on the one side, and Lake Pontchartrain on the other. The concern was that the waves would flood the levees and turn the city into a poisonous swamp, filled with chemicals and runoff from the oil refineries, in addition to sewage from the destroyed sewer system.

Rabbi Rivkin’s home, like most homes in the city, is situated on ground level. He realized that if the predicted flooding occurred, the ground floor

would be swamped. He moved his family to the second floor, and continued his work helping the few remaining Jews over the telephone.

\* \* \*

On Tuesday, more of the levees were breached, and whole neighborhood became submerged in water as high as twenty feet. The floodwaters overran the city reservoirs and in a short time the tap water became unfit to drink. “The waters reached the danger point,” says Rabbi Rivkin, “and after I spoke again to Rabbi Levitansky, we concluded that there was no choice but to leave the city before the flooding got to the area where I live.”

Before he left, he tried to make contact with Rabbi Nemes in Metairie. After a number of unsuccessful attempts, he realized that the water must have already flooded the suburbs. Rabbi Rivkin contacted one of his acquaintances, asked him to locate Rabbi Nemes, and inform him that he was leaving. He would leave the keys to his house and car in a hidden spot, in case Rabbi Nemes decided to move to his house.

At the last minute, Rabbi Rivkin managed to leave his home, even as he could see the floodwaters bearing down, only a few blocks from his home. Traveling on broken roads, partially underwater, Rabbi Rivkin managed to get out, and make his way to Houston, Texas. There he was received with open arms by the local shliach, Rabbi Shimon Lazarov.

Rabbi Rivkin didn’t rest for a moment. As soon as he dropped off his few possessions, he began to locate the Jewish families from New Orleans who had managed to evacuate to Houston earlier in the week. He succeeded in finding dozens of families, and began providing material and spiritual relief.

\* \* \*

Meanwhile, Rabbi Nemes was trying to contact the rescue teams to save him and his family. On the other side of the country, a huge rescue effort was underway by fellow shluchim.

Rabbi Shlomo Cunin, shliach in California, who heard on Tuesday night about the shliach of the Rebbe stranded in the heart of the flood areas, tried to contact him to see if he could be of assistance. By that time, all the telephone lines, including cell phone transmitters, had gone down, and Rabbi Cunin could not get through. He then began to use his connections in government to try to save, as quickly as possible, the Rebbe's shliach who stayed to the last minute only to help his fellow Jews.

In the late hours of Tuesday night, and early Wednesday morning, Rabbi Cunin worked the phones, talking to the governor of California and the Police Commissioner, asking them to personally contact the governor of Louisiana, to try to save Rabbi Nemes and bring him to safety. Rabbi Cunin also contacted a good friend who had contributed thirteen million dollars to President Bush's reelection campaign, and asked him to utilize his White House connections.

Rabbi Cunin's son, Rabbi Levi Cunin, who, due to his role in trying to save the Rebbe's library in Russia, maintains many contacts with important Senate members, arranged a conference call between the aide of the Senator from Louisiana and a brother of the shliach, Rabbi Mendel Nemes of Crown Heights. He relayed all the information about the location of the shliach, and they discussed the possibility of landing a helicopter near his home to extract him.

In an interview with Rabbi Mendel Nemes, he told of the mobilization of the Rebbe's shlichim to help a brother

shliach. "I literally felt that '*Chassidim ein mishpacha*,'" he proclaims emotionally. "Rabbi Levi Shemtov, Rabbi Shia Hecht, Rabbi Yaakov Goldstein and Rabbi Sholom Wilhelm, contacted every possible person or agency to try to help my brother. They worked exactly as if it was their own brother."

In the home of the shliach, Rabbi Nemes, there were, besides for his own family, a number of Israeli girls whose hotel had evacuated and they had nowhere to go. Rabbi Nemes took them in, and now had to find a way to get them out as well.

Finally, Rabbi Nemes managed to contact a member of his community who had remained in the city, and together they managed to escape the area in two large vans. On the way, he stopped at a gas station and informed his brother that he had made it out. When he heard about the tremendous efforts made on his behalf, he emotionally asked his brother to thank all involved.

"Even after my brother managed to get out, the calls offering to help continued to pour in," recounts Rabbi Mendel Nemes. "While my brother was waiting for a few hours in line at the gas station, I received calls offering help, from a ticket to New York to the use of a house in one of the nearby states, in order that he be able to continue his work in the coming months."

While waiting for gas, Rabbi Nemes began to plan his next moves. He called Rabbi Levi Klein, Shliach in Memphis, Tennessee, where many of the evacuees had gone, and asked him to try to locate the Jewish evacuees.

After traveling for twenty-four hours, a trip that usually takes five hours, Rabbi Nemes arrived in Memphis late Wednesday night, where he was put up in the home of Rabbi Levi Klein. Upon his arrival, he met some of the members of his community, who had since been located by Rabbi Klein, and began the work of reconstruction.

\* \* \*

When we spoke to Rabbi Rivkin earlier this past week and asked him about future plans, he sounded determined. "The Rebbe sent us to New Orleans, and not to any other place, period. As soon as we can return, we will go back to work on an even grander scale."

Meanwhile, Rabbi Rivkin plans to go to Baton Rouge, the next closest city to New Orleans, and from there continue his activities in the upcoming weeks. He will focus his efforts on the Jews amongst the rescue workers, and will organize a minyan for them for Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur.

From talks he has held with local officials, he judges that within two months, parts of New Orleans will be functioning again, and the Chabad House will return to its activities. Meanwhile, he continues to be amazed by the outpouring of ahavas Yisroel from the Jews of every community where Jewish evacuees find themselves. "In his talks, the Rebbe Rayatz describes the trait of tz'daka that beats in the hearts of American Jews, and now you could see it come to life," he declaims with emotion.

"People who never knew each other have opened their homes to the families evacuated from New Orleans, and others are coming and offering every possible assistance.

Notwithstanding the claims that not enough is being done for the refugees, it is inspiring to see the great love and solidarity the Jewish communities have displayed to their fellow Jews from New Orleans. There is no doubt that this display of ahavas Yisroel will speed up even more the true and complete Redemption," concludes Rabbi Rivkin.



# A GIFT OF SHLICHUS

*Mrs. Faiga Sarah Yemini and her husband Amitai have been on shlichus in Los Angeles for 25 years, reaching out to the tens of thousands of Hebrew speaking Jews there. Their going on shlichus was a birthday present for the Rebbe. \* An interview with Mrs. Yemini.*

“We have been working with those who speak Ivrit for 25 years now and we have a thriving Chabad center. It’s hard to believe when you see people who look like old-time Lubavitchers that they made an abrupt change in their lifestyles to become frum. This comes from the ko’ach of the meshaleiach, the Rebbe MH”M.”

The Yeminis have no problem obtaining a proper chinuch for their children or kosher food, nor do they have problems with a

building or location.

“The community is flourishing. Our biggest hardship is one that many share: we want to see our king! That’s how we were taught – that the Rebbe is our life!”

It’s not surprising that when their children grew older, they joined their parents in their shlichus work, at the Chabad Center L’Dovrei Ivrit. Shlichus is not just another part of life to them; it is life itself.

**How did you get here?**

My husband is an Israeli and I am American. I grew up near New York and I went to Bais Rivka in Crown Heights. When we got married, we were set on shlichus. My husband spoke with Rabbi Chadakov about it. At first, we were considering Guatemala but then an offer came from Rabbi Shlomo Cunin, who asked that we come and set up a Chabad house for Israelis. In those days, there were 100,000 Israelis here! Rabbi Chadakov answered my husband, apparently upon orders from the Rebbe that he should accept Rabbi Cunin’s offer.

There were various delays but when Yud-Alef Nissan came around, Rabbi Cunin decided to bring the Rebbe a birthday present: a Chabad house for Hebrew-speaking people in Los Angeles (we are particular about calling ourselves “L’Dovrei Ivrit” and not a “Chabad house for Israelis,” as per



the Rebbe's instructions). So our whole shlichus here is a gift to the Rebbe.

My husband came here right after Pesach and I joined him after Shavuos. That day, my husband met an Israeli in the financial district by the name of Shimon Ben Harosh. My husband said, "You will be the first person to put on t'fillin." One mitzva led to another and today he is part of the Lubavitcher community in Tzfas.

## SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS

The Center was founded because of the large numbers of Hebrew-speaking people in Los Angeles, who require their own programs. We started with a day camp. Over the years, baruch Hashem, it has acquired a great reputation and about 200 children register every year.

The next project was to start a high quality preschool. Everything here has to be done meticulously since there's lots of competition with the Reform, Conservative, and secular influences.

Our day camp attracts children from all over the city and our bus picks them all up. We have adults come to us and say, "You probably don't remember us but we were in your day camp." It's an experience that remains with you forever.

The preschool was started 15 years ago, and baruch Hashem, it's doing well. We have children from all backgrounds and from all over the city. We get Persians, Americans, French, and Israelis of course, aside from Lubavitchers who live nearby.

Just today, I received a phone call from people who live far away, however, they heard about our school and want to send their daughter to us. I'm just returning from a meeting with them.

In addition to the camp and school our Center is busy with the usual Chabad house activities: minyanim, meals, and Shabbatons, for which we bring superb speakers. Those who attend the Shabbatons leave feeling strengthened in basic Yiddishkeit, especially inyanei Moshiach and Geula.

Every Friday night, after the davening, we have a Shabbos meal for young people. We do holiday programs, of course, too. About 500 people come to our public menorah lighting. We are also in touch with members of the Israeli consulate.



Rabbi Yemini shortly after going on shlichus

## STORIES

Mrs. Yemini: "We feel that the Rebbe is chai v'kayam! Many people who are just taking their first steps in Judaism are already writing to the Rebbe to ask for his guidance and brachos. The Rebbe told us in yechidus, 'All the brachos will come through the shlichus.' We constantly see the ko'ach of the Rebbe.

"I have a friend who became frum who always got direct answers from the Rebbe through the *Igros Kodesh*. Then, for eight months, she didn't get the kind of answers she

was used to getting. This really bothered her. Then, when she wanted to make a trip but wanted a bracha first, she decided to try and write again.

"On one side of the page she opened to the Rebbe gave a bracha for a trip and on the other side the Rebbe responded to someone who complained that he didn't get an answer from the Rebbe, and the Rebbe said he should know that the Rebbe read his letters!

"The woman looked at me and emotionally said, 'You know, I feel that the Rebbe is with me and literally walking with me, step by step...' We saw how this answer strengthened her so much.

"Here's a story that made waves in our city. An Israeli family that began learning about Judaism started coming to classes and even visited us for Shabbasos. They improved in their Shabbos observance and at a certain point they started using a blech to be able to keep their food hot. But they saw no reason not to put cold food on the blech, understanding the prohibition as just not to cook on Shabbos.

"They were also unreceptive to the idea of chalav Yisroel. The woman said that cow's milk is kosher and it made no difference who was there at the milking. As much as we tried to explain these things, we were unsuccessful in getting through.

"One night, the woman had a dream. She dreamt that the Rebbe was asking her: Can I come to your home for a cup of coffee? What about the milk? Is it chalav Yisroel? And the blech on Shabbos, do you heat up food according to halacha?

"She was shaken by the dream and from then on she is particular to use chalav Yisroel and to heat up the food on Shabbos properly.

Today, all their children are religious and her daughter is even married to a rabbi. It's a beautiful Jewish family!

"Here's another story. Every Rosh HaShana, my husband goes with a group of bachurim to the hospital to blow shofar for the patients. One year, they went to a certain room where there was a Jew in a coma. The man's family asked them not to blow the shofar near him, but Lubavitchers being stubborn, they blew it anyway.

"As soon as they blew, the patient opened his eyes and looked directly at the shofar. Everybody knew this was the ko'ach of the Rebbe.

"Yet another story. At one of my classes sat a girl who had been convinced to come to the shiur. At first, it was bizarre to her because she thought Judaism was old-fashioned, but in the end she was convinced to attend a shiur.

At the first shiur, she sat openmouthed. She was shocked to discover that Judaism could answer all that she lacked. As she attended more shiurim, she grew in her Yiddishkait until she began keeping Shabbos. However, this entailed a major challenge. She worked in radio advertising and had to work on Shabbos.

"Resolving to keep Shabbos meant losing her job. At some point, she decided to stop working. Some time later she got a phone call from her former place of work and they told her that there was an opening at the beginning of the week and she could continue her work and keep Shabbos too.

"Today, that woman is a Chassidische lady in every way. She and her husband have raised a lovely Lubavitcher family."

## THE STREETS AREN'T

*At the first shiur, she sat openmouthed. She was shocked to discover that Judaism could answer all that she lacked.*

### PAVED WITH GOLD

Many Israelis come to Los Angeles thinking money grows on trees here. Then, reality hits them

in the face. The Chabad house helps them too.

"We try to help those to whom America was not what they expected, whether with tz'daka or in finding work. My husband has lots of connections with businessmen and this enables him to help others.

"Some years ago, a person came here who was going through a hard time. We tried helping him obtain basic items until he was able to make it on his own. One time, my husband went to ask someone to contribute towards our work. This



Children at a model seider



Jewish outreach in the business district.



Rabbi Yemini shaking hands with a business man

Jew that he helped just happened to walk in and when he heard what my husband wanted he turned to the potential donor and said: You know, this is Rabbi Yemini and thanks to him, I now can stand on my own two feet. Please give him a generous donation because this is very important.

“And thanks to his heartfelt words, that man became a regular donor to our Chabad house.”

I asked Mrs. Yemini about other

programs they run and she said:

“In addition to the preschool and day camp. I teach eleventh and twelfth grades at Beis Chana high school. I also organize N’shei Chabad gatherings on special days in the calendar. Once a year we have a Shabbaton for N’shei Chabad. This Shabbaton provides us with a spiritual injection and is very successful.

“Once a year I organize a group of women for a trip to 770, which

has a profound influence on the women. Most of them return here with a list of hachlatos.

“We are in touch with IDF soldiers who serve in the Kochav Yaakov and Psagot areas, taking care of their material and spiritual needs. This is a joint project of our Chabad Center and R’ Danny Cohen, shliach in Chevron, and Rabbi Minsky of Kochav Yaakov together with Rabbi Ohana who runs Chabad activities for soldiers in the area.

“My husband puts his neshama into this project. Recently we had a Jew become frum because he was deeply affected by this program. At first he helped us and then, when he got more involved, he began to get more interested in Yiddishkai.

“Now, a moment before the Geula, is the time to strengthen hiskashrus. Here we feel a tremendous hisorerus. Many people became mekuravim to Chabad and are now Lubavitchers. It’s hard to believe that they never saw the Rebbe, not to mention yechidus, yet they’ve turned their lives around.

“We are here in Los Angeles but we yearn to see the Rebbe MH”M in Yerushalayim.”

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# TO BE A COMPLETE TAMIM

BY RABBI YEHESKEL LEBOVIC



## TAMIM ACCORDING TO RASHI

We usually worry because of the unknown, not knowing what to expect exacerbates any difficult situation. Thus, in the proverbial “light at the end of the tunnel,” the darkness of the tunnel would represent the doubt of the unknown, and the light, the certainty of knowing.

Since time immemorial people have sought relief from worry by not waiting patiently for the passage of time till the future point at the end of the tunnel, but by striving to develop an earlier knowledge of what the future may hold. The nations of the ancient world have sought advice and instruction of fortunetellers, the crystal-ball-soothsayers and palm-readers, attempting to probe the unknowns of the future.

Jews are forbidden (D’varim 18:9-15) to seek enlightenment from such sources (even if they should prove to sometimes be accurate) and are bidden to rely in such matters solely on the pronouncements of our prophets – not politicians– who possess the Divine power to accurately predict future events.

Knowledge of the future, besides mitigating worry, fear, and doubt, also gives one the ability to adequately prepare for a predicted calamity. The more accurate is a weather prediction, for example, the better one can plan even for a tornado or tsunami.

In the context of the above-mentioned *p’sukim* dealing with this issue, the Torah enjoins us to be “*tamim*” (ibid:18:15) and not to imitate the non-Jews who seek information from the necromancers. Rashi comments (ibid): “*walk with Him with t’mimus, look forward to Him, and don’t delve deeply into the future, but whatever comes upon you accept with t’mimus, and then you will be with Him and of His portion.*” The word “*tamim*” in most Torah texts means “one who is whole and complete,” as, for example, a *korban* offering which needs to be *tamim*, whole and without blemish.

In our present context, which contains a limited number of prohibitions regarding consultations with necromancers, we may ask, why should there be an emphasis on the extreme: don’t transgress these *few* prohibitions, but make sure that you are *tamim*, whole and complete, in the full observance of *all* the Mitzvos?

This question seems to lead Rashi

to conclude that “*tamim*” here does *not* mean whole and complete, but rather “simple,” lacking sophistication and astuteness (and *feeling* none the worse or lacking for it), as the *Tam*, the simple son of the Hagadah, or “Yaakov was a man who was *tam*” (B’Reishis 25:27), meaning that he was lacking, not wise in the crafty ways of the world. In our context: you may not delve in getting to know what the future holds, but rather remain incomplete and lacking of that type of knowledge.

## WORRY OR ACCEPTANCE

The next question which Rashi then addresses is: If we are not allowed to delve into knowledge of future events (short of finding a prophet – not always readily feasible), how can we mitigate worrying about the future? If there is a “kosher” way, short of prophecy, which may enable us to gain this type of knowledge, and which may enable us to adequately prepare for storms of the future, why shouldn’t we avail ourselves of it? Don’t we rely on weather predictions regarding impending storms as a matter of course?

According to Ramban ( D’varim 18:9 ) who holds that the predictions of the fortunetellers are usually false

and inaccurate, we can well understand why we should not rely on them. But Rashi, who implies that the Torah prohibits relying on their predictions *even* when they *are* accurate, would it not be useful to rely on them when their predictions are not connected to idol worship?

To preempt this question, Rashi adds: (a) “look forward to (the help) of G-d”; (b) “don’t delve deeply into what the future holds” (vs. occasionally inquiring of a prophet regarding the future); (c) “be accepting with *t’mimus* of all that may befall you.”

This may be explained as follows. G-d abhors our being preoccupied, fixated on, and “delving deeply” on the predictions of fortunetellers (even if accurate), but wants us to “look forward to His help,” and offset worry about the future by adopting an attitude of full acceptance of *whatever* the future may hold. Accordingly, worry is mitigated through unconditional *acceptance* rather than through whatever *clarity* one can gain about the future.

### FORMULA TO HOLD ON TO THE LAND

We must still understand why Rashi adds further: “you will (then, through adopting this kind of attitude) be with Him and as His portion.”

This will be understood by bearing in mind the general theme of these *p’sukim*: “Do not seek predictions of the fortunetellers, for Hashem abhors this and is *therefore* chasing these evil nations out of the Holy Land.” By implication, if one follows the injunctions of steering clear from the pundits and fortunetellers, rather putting his full trust in G-d and accepting what He has in store for him – that will secure his hold on the Holy Land, and, in effect, set the stage to truly be “with Him and His Portion.”

The current leadership in Israel is defective in the worst way on all these counts. They *do* rely heavily of the modern-day necromancers, soothsayers, pundits, politicians, naysayers, and predictors of our times. They blindly, lemming-like, follow their opinion that Jewish and Israeli salvation lies in being attentive and subservient to world opinion and to American financial support, and they indeed fear their “dire”

***If there is a “kosher” way, short of prophecy, which may enable us to gain this type of knowledge, and which may enable us to adequately prepare for storms of the future, why shouldn’t we avail ourselves of it? Don’t we rely on weather predictions regarding impending storms as a matter of course?***

predictions about what the future will hold, should their opinion not be followed. They thus reject out of hand the *Tamim* approach, don’t look forward to G-d’s Help, and blithely give Gaza away because of political predictions and calculations! Instead of becoming “His portion” and securing the possession and annexation of Gaza and other biblically-mandated territories, conquered in a defensive war, they

willfully let go off the Land and give it to the sworn enemy on a silver platter, and increase the security risks many times over!

### TOMCHEI T’MIMIM

Based on this Rashi, I would suggest that the name “*T’mimim*,” given by the Rebbe Rashab to the *talmidim* of the newly founded Lubavitcher Yeshiva in 1897, is more aligned with the meaning of *Tamim* in this *parsha* (according to Rashi) than its meaning of “completeness and blemish-less.” For he, the Rebbe, had in mind to raise an army of devoted chassidim who would not plan courses of action based *merely* on “sound” predictions of, and thought-out calculations about the future, but rather, go *Lchat’chilla Aribber*, just “go for it” with simple faith and *bitachon*. This approach had already been enunciated by his father the *Rebbe Maharash*, i.e., to act with full assurance and reliance on G-d’s help and guidance, regardless of seeming current *lacks* (of money, resources, political pull, fear of repercussions, etc.) and contraindications and/or dire predictions of contemporary soothsayers, naysayers and purveyors of impending doom. This approach was definitely continued by his son, the Rebbe Rayatz, as he took on the challenge of melting the “American icy indifference” and turn it into fiery spiritual quest. This same approach has by now been exponentially applied by the Rebbe, whose army of *T’mimim* are conquering the world for Moshiach.

Thus, the antidote to the current dismal Israeli leadership failure is the introduction of the Chabad philosophy of *Lchat’chilla Aribber*, which has clearly traceable roots in the Torah and Rashi’s commentary. May it happen speedily in our days and hasten the imminent revelation of Moshiach!

*Based on Likkutei Sichos vol 14, pp 64-69*

# VOLUNTARY EXILE TO NORTHERN SHOMRON

INTERVIEW BY SHAI GEFEN

*Before the expulsion from northern Shomron, the rosh yeshiva of Tomchei T'mimim in Kiryot, Rabbi Yigal Pizem, went with his talmidim to live and learn in northern Shomron in order to support our brothers living there. \* Rabbi Pizem describes this historic shlichus.*

Rabbi Pizem: When we heard that the terrible expulsion process was going to be implemented, we decided that it's time to do something in order to help our fellow Jews who live in northern Shomron. We knew that the halacha enjoins us not to stand by our brother's blood and that we could not sit at home, thus indirectly being a part of this catastrophe.

We decided that the T'mimim, the chayalei beis Dovid, must take part in the protest within the framework of Tomchei T'mimim and according to the guidelines for chinuch we received from the Rebbe. As the T'mimim in Soviet Russia did back then, mobilizing to save the Jewish people, that is what we did here, for the T'mimim are an integral part of

the nonstop battle to save Am Yisroel in Eretz Yisroel.

We had two options, either to go to Gush Katif or to northern Shomron. The shliach in northern Shomron, Rabbi Uriel Gurfinkel, had acquired a building, which includes a beis midrash and library, living quarters, a dining room and kitchen.

It wasn't all shipshape but we didn't care. We kept our eyes focused on the goal, namely to help the Jews of northern Shomron in the battle for Chomesh and Sa-Nur.

At the beginning of Tammuz, we moved our yeshiva to the yishuv Avnei Chefetz and from there we sent delegations to Chomesh and Sa-Nur. We set up the yeshiva with all the s'darim and yeshiva discipline. In addition to that, we did various activities and mitzvaim in the yishuvim of northern Shomron. We changed mezuzos in many homes, made sure each home had a picture of the Rebbe, and set up an array of



Putting t'fillin on with a soldier

spiritual activities to save northern Shomron, putting t'fillin on with soldiers, etc.

It was definitely a special time. Before our eyes were the stories of mesirus nefesh of the T'mimim during the oppressive and cruel Communist regime. We didn't have it easy. The T'mimim immersed each day in a pit with ladders in order to reach the water. Only afterwards, when conditions improved, did they immerse in a mikva that was in the process of being built.

Whether it was the mikva or other material needs that were lacking, you didn't hear the T'mimim complain. There was the sense that we were in the midst of the battle for shleimus Eretz Yisroel. You saw the willingness



**Rabbi Yigal Pizem**

of the "Rebbe's children" to do all they could to give the Rebbe nachas.

Even during intercession when T'mimim go home, our T'mimim didn't want to go home. They wanted to stay and not lose a minute. They felt this was a holy shlichus.

In the period before the expulsion and churban, there were tours to become familiar with the area in case the need would arise to get to yishuvim via mountain paths when the roads would be closed. The bachurim got to know the area and used this knowledge later on.

The people at the yishuvim were happy with our yeshiva. It gave them lots of hope and bitachon. A few weeks before the expulsion, soldiers tried to set up a gate to make the entrance to the yishuvim narrower. Our bachurim helped thwart this plan



The T'mimim farbrenging moments before the soldiers barge in



The expulsion from northern Shomron



when Jews are in trouble.

\* \* \*

We are in a terrible plight. I don't know who will be able to raise the gauntlet and renew the battle. We have reached that lowly state that the Rebbe said we would

reach. The leadership of this country is a band of criminals that transgresses the law and even receives full support from the court system. The criminal Omri Sharon roams free while a 14-year-old girl who went out to demonstrate was incarcerated until the end of proceedings against her.

Sadly, large segments of our nation were silent. The Matteh HaOlami to Save the Nation and the Land, run by Rabbi Wolpo and Rabbi Rapp, along with a small group of activists, worked hard while others sat silently. Just three days before the expulsion, they woke up and did something to show that they did something too. Despite the large turnout at the Kosel event, it was lacking content and meaning. Their behavior was an example of what the Rebbe said about those rabbanim who sit silently, thus actually helping destroy Eretz Yisroel.

To sum it up, we had a great z'chus that our talmidim took part in the battle. I feel that this contributed a great deal to strengthen the bachurim including in their Chassidishe hanhaga. At this time, the soldiers of the house of Dovid have to lead the battle to bring the Geula. We must teach people the besuras ha'Geula, thus preparing us to greet Moshiach.

and the commander of the unit, despite his greater manpower, decided to retreat.

During the actual expulsion, the talmidim were in Sa-Nur and Chomesh. They were told that we don't use violence. The bachurim decided to hold a farbrengen at the time the soldiers would show up to evict them, and to try to include them in their farbrengen, which can accomplish what the angel Michoel cannot accomplish.

Sadly, the soldiers were cruel, and as soon as they broke through the blockades they began beating the bachurim for no reason. One was hospitalized and another went to a local clinic. Others suffered injuries. The feeling was that we were reverting back to communist Russia, when the KGB burst in, beat up, and arrested the Chassidim farbrenging.

The month-long voluntary exile of our yeshiva was one of the finest hours of our yeshiva. Despite the physical hardships and despite the battle, the talmidim felt that this was a historic shlichus to come to the aid of their brethren rather than, G-d forbid, setting ourselves apart from our brethren at this difficult time. The support they gave the residents and their aid in the battle served as a tremendous kiddush Hashem. It was a real chinuch lesson for the T'mimim, a tangible example of what it means to be moser nefesh

*We are in a terrible plight. We have reached that lowly state that the Rebbe said we would reach.*

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# ...SO WE DON'T REPEAT IT

BY SHAI GEFEN

## SIGNS FROM HEAVEN

The first korban of the Disengagement was a chasan, a Gerer bachur by the name of Shmuel Mett (may Hashem avenge his blood), who learned in the Mirrer Yeshiva. He was murdered days after the expulsion in the Old City of Yerushalayim, and there have been more attacks that followed that one.

It's hard to say this while "the dead is before us," but when you take even a superficial look, you see the signs from Heaven, though we ignore them. In a sicha of Motzaei Shabbos Parshas Naso 5738, in the midst of the Camp David meetings, terrorists infiltrated the Israeli border and the Rebbe said that the goal is to derive a lesson in avodas Hashem that we must fulfill the p'sak din in *Shulchan Aruch*, siman 329. The same is true now, when a man was murdered immediately following the expulsion:

**We know that from everything that happens we must learn a lesson in avodas Hashem, especially when it's connected with events that took place lately regarding Eretz Yisroel.**

It was said a number of times; being that we find ourselves in the double and redoubled darkness of Galus, we must resort to natural means. Therefore, Hashem declared in the *Shulchan Aruch* that when news arrives that gentiles are coming, although they come only about matters of straw and hay, and even

though this is the truth, despite this, you go out with weapons against them, lest the land be easy for them to conquer.

**In order to make the test easier, a number of things took place that graphically demonstrate that the enemy is not coming about straw and hay! All those who talk about peace are lying! They speak about peace but seek to ambush us. They are charlatans who speak about peace but in their hearts are setting a trap.**

**There are those who wanted to confuse themselves and others and say that since he speaks about peace, you can rely on the fact that he truly wants peace. In order to make the test easier and to hint at their intentions openly, he himself said that if they do not accept what he says there will be a war.**

Similarly, regarding the eastern front, they said that there is nothing to even think about, because in secret talks with the King of Jordan and the President of Syria, it was agreed that nothing will come from there. However, they saw that for a number of months although it seemed as though the border was quiet (despite there being certain things that they hid and didn't want to publicize so it shouldn't make a bad impression) – it has already been publicized that terrorists were sent from there.

The only explanation for the occurrence of this unusual event (that

transpired after a number of 'quiet' months) is that it's in order to arouse Am Yisroel.

\* \* \*

Sadly, large segments of the religious and chareidi population, who should have led the battle against the destruction of Gush Katif and northern Shomron, remained aloof. Others collaborated. The halacha in *Shulchan Aruch* didn't interest them, and from Heaven they showed us clearly that the goal of the terrorists is neither the Gaza Strip nor northern Shomron. The murder of the chareidi bachur took place in **Yerushalayim**, where the rabbis who collaborated with their silence, or those who rejoiced at the sorrow of the expelled settlers, live.

Hashem, in His love for us, shows us time after time, what the terrible significance is of not following the halacha, and how we must act when gentiles besiege our towns. But we continue to ignore the signs. We can clearly see how the battle here is not for "straw and hay" and not over this territory or that, but for the continued existence of the Jewish people.

One would have thought that after our enemy's mighty victory over us, when they succeeded in cowing Israel and making them flee with their tail between their legs, there would be peace and quiet for at least a few years, in order to show the



Western world that they actually seek peace. However, the truth is out in the open. Hashem hardened Pharaoh's heart and the Arabs continue to kill us in the streets of our city. The location of the murder in the Old City should wake us up, as the Rebbe said in that sicha.

Rabbi Kuti Rapp told me that seven years ago when Rabbi Shlomo Raanan was murdered in Tel Romeida in Chevron, he went to console the family with Rabbi Leibel Groner. As they entered the house of mourning, Mrs. Geula Cohen was coming out. She burst into tears and told them that a year after the Six Day War she had a yechidus with the Rebbe and the Rebbe told her that they would have to re-conquer Yerushalayim.

"What the Rebbe said sounded far from realistic, and because I greatly admired the Rebbe, I was ashamed to tell my friends what the Rebbe said. Today, I see how he was right with every word he said."

If we don't learn the lesson from the humiliation at the end of the Disengagement and if we continue to ignore the Heavenly signs that scream out at us, "**Jews, start fulfilling the p'sak din in Shulchan Aruch!**" then the situation will just get worse. Why should we wait for this to happen?

It's very painful to know that the battle for Gush Katif and northern Shomron was one of a number of additional battles that we will have to wage. We can stop the runaway train. As long as the land isn't in our enemy's hands we can prevent the tragedy!

## **REMEMBER, DON'T FORGET!**

Rabbis Dovid Meir Drukman and Sholom Dovber Wolpo, along with the Matteh HaOlami to Save the Nation and the Land, deserve to be singled out for praise for planning a mosad that will chronicle the terrible churban of Jewish communities in

Gush Katif and northern Shomron.

The purpose of this mosad is not to enable us to reminisce over our nostalgic memories of the beautiful past pre-expulsion, but to remind ourselves that those who perpetrated this crime aided Hamas and terror centers. Thanks to them, Arafat City will be founded on the ruins of Neve Dekalim. If we allow things to take their course and allow these criminals to continue doing as they please, they'll take it till the end.

Remembering is something that disturbs people, and it is precisely what they want to prevent. They would rather that the public get back to their routines. They want the pacification of the voting public. If there's a Yad V'Shem that will chronicle the horrors and destruction, we won't forget those sights. Today, more than ever, in order not to repeat the same scenes, we must "remember and not forget what Ariel Sharon did to you."

## **"AN OBJECT OF SCORN AND DERISION TO THOSE AROUND US"**

It's frightening to see how Israel is viewed by the world after the expulsion. If in Yerushalayim they thought they would be greeted with a bouquet of flowers following the expulsion, it quickly became apparent that we had become a laughingstock. While Israel was trying to stop the painful bleeding of the Disengagement, the goyim were already planning the next demands.

The EU ambassador to the Middle East, Mark Otte, said that Israel's leaving the Gaza Strip is a model for future departures from the West Bank and eastern Jerusalem.

"Our position regarding the West Bank and eastern Jerusalem is the same, they are occupied territories and the future of Jerusalem will be discussed in the negotiations between

*"There are those who wanted to confuse themselves and others and say that since he speaks about peace, you can rely on the fact that he truly wants peace. In order to make the test easier and to hint at their intentions openly, he himself said that if they do not accept what he says there will be a war." \* It's time we made a unilateral disengagement from those symbols of blue and white, the symbols of the cruel expulsion, and revert back to the symbols and flags that our ancestors passed along through the generations.*

Israel and the Palestinians,” he said.

Regarding Israel’s demand that the P.A. disarm the Hamas and Islamic Jihad of their weapons, Otte said that the EU does not require the P.A. to initiate internal military conflict or a civil war.

Get it? Israel needs to withdraw until Jerusalem, but the Arabs do not need to strip the terrorist organizations of their weapons, and these are the nations we seek to appease. We rely on them and fulfill their demands.

Not one nation thinks we left Gaza as heroes. Mohammed Daf, arch-terrorist, said it the way it is, “You conquered our land. Today you are leaving Gaza in humiliation. Today you are leaving hell but we promise you that tomorrow, with the help of Allah, every Palestinian will become hell for you. Without this jihad and persistence, we would not have achieved the liberation of the Gaza Strip. We will not hesitate and will not rest until we liberate our entire holy land.”

He makes himself quite clear. None of them hide their true intentions.

They all know where we are heading, but nobody says boo.

In the interview with Rabbi Wolpo in the previous issue, he mentioned a chilling line that the Rebbe said to Rabbi Yolles – that after giving away land, Israel will become a lowly nation. And yet, after we debase ourselves we bemoan the increase in anti-Semitism.

We are getting the message from around the world how they look at Jews with scorn. We are an “object of scorn and derision to those around us.”

## ORANGE AGAINST THE BLUE AND WHITE

The battle against the Disengagement was expressed by

colors that symbolized a deeper battle. Orange was anti-Disengagement and blue and white was pro-Disengagement. The expulsion army wore a blue and white flag and the symbol of the menorah on their black uniforms. So it was blue and white that expelled, withdrew, uprooted and destroyed Jews and their shuls, and showed disdain for the settlers who put their lives on the line daily, as well as disdain for their beliefs. So that nobody would be mistaken, the Israeli government made it quite clear.

***“What the Rebbe said sounded far from realistic, and because I greatly admired the Rebbe, I was ashamed to tell my friends what the Rebbe said. Today, I see how he was right with every word he said.”***

One of the slogans the Left used to promote the Disengagement was “Leaving Gaza – Returning to Zionism.” I actually identified with that slogan. Leaving Gaza was another stage in the “return” to Zionism, in disengaging from Torah, from Eretz Yisroel, and Am Yisroel. Anyone who innocently thought that the blue and white flag identified with him got a cruel but very clear lesson to the contrary.

This battle took us to the stage of “who separates between the sacred and the profane.” Until now, there was confusion, in thought and

perspective. They tried to mix light and darkness, the sacred and the profane, and tried to say the impure is pure. Now the difference is crystal clear. Whoever identified with the State and its symbols became an inseparable part of the evil expulsion plan.

Ari Shavit in *Ha’Aretz* put it well: “What was proven in August 2005 was that the State of Israel trumps Eretz Yisroel. The nationalism of sovereignty reined in the nationalism of the inheritance of our Fathers. After the era of the settler-ethos, and after the era of the peace-ethos, it is now the turn of border-ethos. The power of this new ethos is that which enabled the Disengagement to triumph politically. It was this power, which enabled the Disengagement to take place militarily. It resulted in the end in officers wearing kippot preferring their commanders’ [orders] over that of their rabbis. It caused most of the settlers to leave their homes with heads down, for despite the complaints about the manner in which the Disengagement decision was received, in the end, it was clear to all, that it reflected a truly nationalistic will, the will of sovereignty and prudence, morality and nationalism, and a desire to purge Zionism of the Occupation.”

\* \* \*

It’s very painful, but this journalist analyzed it right. Everybody needs to make an accounting: Do we identify with any Zionist values. Is there any k’dusha to the State and the army? What connection do we have with those symbols that over the years have become the symbols for taking Yiddishkait away from hundreds of thousands of Jews?

It’s time we made a unilateral disengagement from those symbols of blue and white, the symbols of the cruel expulsion, and revert back to the symbols and flags that our ancestors passed along through the

generations – “In the name of our G-d, we raise our banners.” All the attempted substitutes to date didn't last. Many, even those punctilious in mitzva observance, thought that the establishment of the State was small salvation, a Geula that we could manage with for now. However, it soon became obvious that there is only one true and complete Redemption, with Moshiach from the house of Dovid. Any other “geula” turns out to be a false geula, which leads to tragedies and disappointments.

Now, that the boundaries are clear and everybody knows what the job of the “blue and white” is, the time has come to be mekarev our brethren to the real Geula, to tell them the real besuras ha'Geula from the leader and prophet of the generation.

### WHICH IS PREFERABLE?

Which is preferable, that a German expel a Jew? That a Moslem destroy shuls? That an American desecrate graves? Or that Jews, our brothers, a large portion of whom are religious and traditional, should carry out these horrors “with sensitivity and determination,” and choose the “holiness of the State” over the Torah and cause a tremendous worldwide chilul Hashem?

The Rebbe gave us the answer. This is what the Rebbe said 13 years ago. At the time, it seemed divorced from reality, as the Shamir government had only agreed to hold talks about a possible autonomy. In light of what just happened though, it pays to reread this:

**It is not possible for a Jew, who believes in Hashem and His Torah, to**

**be a partner to things like this, G-d forbid, and give a stamp [of approval] to something like this. It would be preferable that the government dissolve and there no longer be a Jewish government. For the only reason these plans are being discussed is because of pressure from the nations (as they themselves say). If this is the case then it would be preferable if they established a government of gentiles in Eretz Yisroel, G-d forbid, who would decide from the outset what should be done with Eretz Yisroel, so at least Jews won't sign to these things!**

It's one thing if people who don't believe in G-d did this – you could understand that. But if people who believe in G-d sign to giving away parts of Eretz Yisroel, this is a chilul Hashem!

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# SHIVA IS OVER. OUR GENERAL IN MILCHEMOS HASHEM IS STILL IN COMMAND. FORWARD!

BY CHANA KATZ

When two Chassidim received permission – through sheer Hashgacha Pratis – to enter the decimated settlement of Sa-Nur last week, they screamed and shouted “Yechi” until they got there. But what greeted their eyes – destruction and ruin – brought them to tears and a feeling of numbness.

Yet their moving experience, which was shared in an interview with *Beis Moshiach*, was really poignantly symbolic of the lesson we must all learn now: to rise above our thoughts and feelings and simply follow the directions of the general (the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach) until we reach the final and complete Redemption.

\* \* \*

The Chassidim were driving in the northern Shomron, when they picked up a homeless Jew who requested a ride to Shavei Shomron. Once they got to Shavei Shomron – the last settlement on this particular road before Sa-Nur and Chomesh – they decided to see how far they could get...

Almost all of the army troops and black-vested police had already departed from the northern Shomron following the one-two knockout punch they rendered upon this pure, holy land and the people who held out there until the last second with extraordinary emuna and mesirus nefesh.

Still, when the Chassidim requested

permission to go to Sa-Nur and Chomesh to collect any possessions that the bachurim may have left behind, it took what seemed like endless hours of waiting and marches through protocol. Finally, they were told they couldn't enter Chomesh, because the powerful D-9 army destruction bulldozer, was still sinking its ugly metal jaws into the once-thriving Jewish homes, mercilessly guzzling and gulping down massive chunks of stone and cement and reducing them to dust and gravel. (Who could have operated these cranes?!)

But they were permitted to go to Sa-Nur – to see if anything was left of the belongings of the 40 or 50 Chabad bachurim as well as Anash, who brought an amazing message of light in the midst of darkness to media viewers across the world.

\* \* \*

“We drove down the road screaming to our wives that we were going to Sa-Nur,” said one. “We screamed ‘Yechi’ and said we’re not (sneaking in there) by foot; we’re going with the ko’ach of the Rebbe!”

The large metal electronic gate at Sa-Nur was gone. The houses that once overlooked the incredibly magnificent and peaceful hills and valleys, were all gone, reduced to rubble. The new mikveh which had just opened days before, was all

plowed under.

Only three buildings stood: a British fort from the Mandate period which is considered by the government as having “historic” value, an Arab mosque (which had been converted into a shul), and a newly opened synagogue whose pending destruction was at the mercy of the politicians and Supreme Court “justices.”

Inside the shul (and note how the government spares the mosques but fights to destroy the Jewish shuls and homes and yeshivos and graves), one of the Chassidim broke down crying. The other came over and gave him a hug. “We were kind of like numb...just walking around in the rubble.

“There was food lying around. We picked up a couple of trays of eggs. It reminded me that we didn’t eat the eggs dipped in ashes this past Tisha B’Av because it fell on the Shabbos. Carrying these eggs was like eating the eggs dipped in ashes...”

\* \* \*

In the “historic” British fortress, tables and chairs were overturned, and the beautiful children’s nursery school and kindergarten, which had been so beautifully painted and once filled with the laughter and learning of children, was desolate and lifeless.

They returned to the shul to daven and saw a sign on a board, leftover from the previous week’s battle: “We don’t want your money. We just want

to be left alone to live here!”

Davening Mincha was “very difficult.” They screamed out “Yechi” and “Ad Masai?” with all their souls.

“The whole place is just a churban – even the circle that was there when you drove in had been flattened by a bulldozer.

“After Mincha, we took the car over to where the Chabad tent had been. A couple of soldiers came over and asked who we were and where we were from. We answered we are Yehudim from Eretz Yisroel. I told him we were looking for a Moshiach flag and he said he saw one ‘over there.’”

The little path somehow managed to remain untouched, they noted, adding that they considered themselves zocheh to be there that day. “Hopefully Moshiach will come and there will be Jews walking in Sa-Nur today Mamash!” cried out one.

Stopping at the new shul to learn Chitas, which was on page 222 that day, one of them said, “Twoooo, Twoooo, Twoooo.” It reminded him of a story he read about a Chassidishe farbrengen in Russia, during which, one of the Chassidim turned over a chair, pretended it was a train, and said, “Tooooo...tooooo...tooooo. Who wants to go to the Rebbe? Most just thought he was crazy, but some did get on – and later they were zocheh to get out of the vale of tears.”

\* \* \*

They decided to go back to the new shul to daven the evening prayers. Before they had arrived at Sa-Nur, the rumor had been spread that the new shul already had been destroyed. By davening there that evening, they saw that its existence, G-d willing, would be at least for another day.

On the way back, they drove past Chomesh, the land that was awarded to the daughters of Tz’lafchad after they succeeded in their strong fight for their rightful inheritance. The hill had once been lined with homes. They were all gone.

\* \* \*

With all that happened over the last few weeks, which only compounds

the murders and disabling of thousands upon thousands of Jewish churbans over the recent years, it seems that one who appears numb and out of “matsav ruach” is not alone.

This condition, it turned out, was not only widespread, but highly infectious.

Thus it is with an uplifted heart and reinvigorated status that we bring you the following chizuk from a farbrengen in the holy city of Tzfas this past Shabbos with the mashpia Rabbi S.Z. Gafni, as given over by Rabbi M.K.:

The more people were involved in prayer and actual battle against the Disengagement, the more they seemed to be left confused by the outcome. And in some ways, it was even parallel to Gimmel Tammuz, after which those

*“Most just thought he was crazy, but some did get on – and later they were zocheh to get out of the vale of tears.”*

who stood strong saw things the way Hashem wanted them to be seen (and not the way they personally wanted to see them). The parsha is R’ei – take a “look”!!!

Yaakov Avinu went through all sort of tests and trials and finally came to a point where he didn’t want any more. It was enough already. But what did he get? The painful trial of Yosef. And yet, when that trial ended, Yaakov was said to have spent the happiest 17 years that remained of his life. After he had undergone all the purifications, he had actually merited the World to Come in this world!

Now, we are in a test within a test! A person’s understanding is taken away, for if we had kept the faculty of understanding, it wouldn’t be a test. But the Jewish soul is able to sense that

it is a test, and thus he has the power to stand up to it.

The Rebbe told us clearly what to do.

When Avraham Avinu went to the Akeida he was intending to go all the way but Hashem stopped him at the last moment. That he was willing to go all the way was enough...

Moshiach’s men have to function beyond thinking. This is a milchama of the Rebbe. There is a general and things **are** under control – even if we don’t understand how.

So we have to go on to the next order: pushing the concept of Geula to the top of everyone’s thinking, because the shita of the government is not Jewish!

What we are seeing now is likened to a homeopathic treatment (in which) the problem is brought to the surface. All the lines and thoughts of the Zionists are coming to the surface, just as it was foretold that in the days of Moshiach all will become clear.

Zionism and Judaism cannot go together. A tikkun (to this thought) is needed.

At the same time, Hashem is sending all these floods and hurricanes. There is a report that 55 percent of the people in America feel that the recent catastrophes are a punishment from Heaven. Eleven percent feel it is because Bush kicked Jews out of their homes. That’s three million goyim who have come to the conclusion that the Oibershter runs the world.

Everything which is occurring is bringing us closer to the Geula. And we must go back to being shluchim. The Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach said that when you listen to the leader of the generation and the nasi ha’dor – it will bring the Geula closer.

The Shiva is over. The natural healing process makes some tend to forget.

There is a lot of work to be done!

Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu V’Rabbeinu Melech HaMoshiach L’olam Va’ed!

# FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE

BY NOSSON AVROHOM

*Michael Gotzel is a charming young man from Kfar Chabad who began working with new immigrants from the CIS. He has been so successful that his work has become an organization called, Moreh Geula.*

It's hard to believe that from such a small, two room office, located in a room in Beis Rivka in Kfar Chabad Beis, so much light shines forth to the world. I expressed my amazement at the beginning of this interview with Michael Gotzel. Instead of answering me, he smiled. "This office," he explained later, "is only the means to receive the brachos and guidance that we get from the Rebbe for every project we do."

For five years, Michael Gotzel has been operating *Moreh Geula*. He came from Russia over a decade ago and lives in Kfar Chabad Beis, and his main focus is on spreading the besuras ha'Geula and the identity of Moshiach.

From his little office, he oversees a vast operation that reaches people both within the country and abroad. When he began on a small scale, he was skeptical of the reactions he would get.

"If you know the Russian population, you know that most of

them are intellectual and very distant from matters of faith, hiskashrus to a tzaddik, Moshiach, etc. After so many years of oppression under the Communists, religious concepts sound absurd to them.

"But I was surprised, for dozens of people began asking to write to the Rebbe. It took up most of my time. Back then, my friend Shmulik Portman, who lives in Maalot today, with whom I started the organization, prepared a special computer program that made it easier to put people's questions into the *Igros Kodesh*.

"And from then on, it was all history. Interest grew and grew and we realized that we had to capitalize on it and make it into something more serious. That's how we came to start the organization. Dozens of young people, who knew nothing about Judaism, have become Lubavitcher Chassidim, and hundreds more are in the process while others are in the beginning stages.

"That's not all. About 10,000 families are registered in our database and the quiet revolution that many Russian immigrants in Eretz Yisroel are experiencing is beyond anything we anticipated. I can tell you about dozens of stores that sold pork and were closed thanks to our work. Many of the owners began attending our shiurim."

Michael Gotzel was born over 30 years ago in the city of Krivorog in the Ukraine, which is near the River Dnieper. Although his parents had strong Jewish roots, he didn't hear anything about Judaism except for a few words in Yiddish here and there that his parents spoke between themselves.

In his youth, a publication called *Jewish Tradition*, which was published in Latvia became popular and Michael avidly read it. Unlike other Jewish children his age, Michael did not experience anti-Semitism. On the contrary, even the gentile children in his class competed over who was more connected to the Jewish nation. Nevertheless, Michael had no connection with Judaism and he wasn't even circumcised.

After the fall of the Communist regime, Michael's pintelev Yid woke up and he got up his courage to attend a *Tanya* shiur given in a shul in Dnipropetrovsk by the shliach, Rabbi Yechezkel Rappaport. Michael



later said that this shiur answered many questions he had about Judaism.

Although atheism still reigned in Russia and many citizens didn't believe in G-d, Michael bought a *Tanya* translated into Russian. He read it from beginning to end. Although he didn't understand it, he realized it was something deep and intellectual, and this is what attracted him.

Back then, he also began studying at university and he joined Rabbi Shmuel Kaminetzki for some Shabbos meals.

"While I was in university, I began to experience anti-Semitism. One night, thirty hooligans came up to my room. They were drunk and had bottles of vodka, axes, and knives. They wanted to kill me and my roommate, who was also Jewish. We closed the door in a panic, and leaned on it so it wouldn't open. The drunks banged on the door and we, on the other side, were terrified. We kept quiet so they wouldn't know we were there and would leave.

"The door was very thin and we were afraid it would break. At that critical time, I looked back at the room and noticed the *T'hillas Hashem Siddur* that I had gotten from a gentile friend who had been at a shiur in Odessa. I quickly took the Siddur and read the words, "Shma Yisroel...", pouring out my soul.

"Then I flipped through and saw what I later learned was the Song of the Day for Wednesday. Since it was Wednesday, I read the verse, "G-d is the G-d of vengeance," as I cried bitterly and pleaded for a miracle.

"When I finished reading the psalm, I heard a bloodcurdling scream and then silence. We didn't rush to open the door but waited for half an hour of silence before daring to open the door. That's when we saw a frightening sight for the entire hallway was full of blood.



“The next day, we found out that two of the drunks had been playing. One of them thought that he understood warfare and he asked another guy to try and stab him and he would show him how he defends himself. Well, the knife cut him and blood gushed out. The rest of the gang was scared and fled.

“Not long after that, I emigrated to Eretz Yisroel. When I got there, I wanted to study Judaism at the university, but one day I met Rabbi Mordechai Nachimovsky in Cholon, who explained to me that university is not the ideal place to study Judaism.

“As time went on, my interest in Judaism grew. I began wearing a kippa and grew a beard. I studied applied mathematics for a while at Machon Lev in Yerushalayim, and then switched to a yeshiva for baalei t’shuva at the Merkaz Gutnick Center in Yerushalayim, which is headed by Rabbi Yekusiel Farkash.”

As mentioned earlier, Michael, along with Shmuel Portman and other friends, started an organization to reach out to Russian immigrants. It became a warm home away from home, a place with a listening ear for all, a place for one’s religious as well as material needs, such as finding a job.

One of the main ways they reach out is with brochures and newspapers that come out each week. Their best publication is the weekly *That’s Life*. It contains fascinating articles on a variety of subjects. The writers include seasoned journalists in the Russian language, such as Esther Segal, who produces a program on Channel 9 and Alexander Rimon from the newspaper, “Vesti,” the largest Russian newspaper in Eretz Yisroel.

The magazine also contains answers to questions on Jewish subjects, which are edited by Rabbi Yehoram Ulman. It is printed on

glossy paper and is distributed in the tens of thousands, not only in Eretz Yisroel but also in Russia and in Russian communities in the U.S. and Australia.

The editorial staff of the organization puts out a terrific brochure each week called *Geula*, which is given out on mivtzaim to Russians in Eretz Yisroel and other countries. Another brochure they publish occasionally is *Moreh*, which

***“If you know the Russian population, you know that most of them are intellectual and very distant from matters of faith, hiskashrus to a tzaddik, Moshiach, etc. After so many years of oppression under the Communists, religious concepts sound absurd to them...”***

has news updates about the organization. They have also translated the Krias Shma and candle-lighting times into Russian.

Shmuel Portman: The magazine is very successful. When there are delays, we get phone calls from people who want to know where it is already. The various brochures are very effective and people call us who want to write to the Rebbe or find out about a shiur near their home.

Moshe Sperling, who also works for the organization, explains the importance of the magazine: The magazine helps me prepare shiurim on a high level. Just recently, there was an article about solar power and halacha. I based my shiur on this topic and when you speak to people about relevant topics as seen through the eyes of ancient halacha, they find it absolutely fascinating.

Michael relates a great story in connection with the magazine: A few years ago, I got a call from a woman who said she was a new immigrant who lived in the Pardes Katz neighborhood of B’nei Brak. She said that she had read in our paper that the name of the spiritual leader is Schneersohn and since this was also her name, she wanted to check out the connection.

She showed me a video tape that her daughter shot when she visited Niezhin, where she pointed at some family graves, but when she came to the Ohel of the Mitteler Rebbe she said she did not know who he was.

I told her that this was the grave of the second leader of the Chabad movement. I spoke with her for a long time about her Chassidic roots and asked her to deepen her connection with Yiddishkait. When I told her about the Rebbe whose headquarters are in New York, she exclaimed: Of course I know him!

Then she told excitedly told me that her grandfather was a religious man, and four decades ago, when she wanted to marry a gentile, he made sure that an emissary of the great rabbi in New York would go to speak with her and convince her not to marry him, and that’s what happened.

Michael went on to relate: The monthly magazine offers a dollar from the Rebbe to anyone who contributes 700 shekel. I recently got a phone call from a woman in Tzfas who said she wanted to make the



Michael Gotzel with some kids



The spirit of Moshiach permeates the publications produced by Moreh Geula

donation and get the Rebbe's dollar. A few days later, the woman called again and said she wanted to buy

another two dollars.

Her request intrigued me especially since she didn't sound



A farbrengen for Russian immigrants with Rabbi Moshe Chaim Levin of Brooklyn

particularly well off. I asked her why she wanted even more dollars and she explained that she had bought the first dollar for a bracha for a shidduch as she had been waiting for some years. The day she received the dollar she met the man she would marry. When she saw the segula of the dollar, she wanted another two for her parents.

\* \* \*

Shiurim and the study of inyanei Moshiach and Geula takes place daily at various locations around the country. When I asked Michael who participates in the shiurim, he surprised me when he said that most of the participants are in their thirties and forties, and some of them are in their teens. When I asked how he got young people to attend the shiurim he said:

"I'll give you an example from last year. I bought a lot of meat and cold drinks and equipped with musical instruments a few of us went to the beach of Bat Yam, where many young immigrants hang around with nothing to do. We set up shop and began to talk to these young people asking them to join us.

"They came over for the food, and we sat down and learned some easy concepts in Chassidus and inyanei Moshiach and Geula. We also sang some niggunim, which arouse the neshama. We did this every day for weeks and made an enormous impact on them."

\* \* \*

One of the people who gives a shiur and is an active worker for the organization is the mechanech Rabbi Michael Fogel, who lives in Eilat. In his free time, he does work for the organization, giving two weekly shiurim in *Tanya* and Gemara. He has also started a Shabbos minyan for Russian speakers with a farbrengen afterwards.

Michael has a special story depicting the impact of the shiurim:

When the commotion over the Indian hair sheitels was going on, I told the people at the shiur the Rebbe's view, namely that it is a sheitel specifically that brings the brachos listed in the Zohar.

A few days later, one of the shiur participants came to me with a bottle of mashke and said, let's make a l'chaim. He told me that after the shiur he told his wife that if she wants to fulfill what the Rebbe said she had to wear a sheitel.

His wife had been unemployed for months and was receiving unemployment compensation, but this was going to end in a few days. She committed to wearing a sheitel and the next day she got a call from the National Insurance office, who told her they had made an error and she would continue to receive unemployment compensation. Then the phone rang again and this time it was an employer with whom she had had an interview. He told her she had been accepted for the job.

\* \* \*

The shiurim unite the participants and it has happened more than once that members of the shiur, with the help of the organization, helped one of them in trouble.

For example, says Michael Gotzel, there was a new immigrant from Georgia, who before he immigrated, had fought in the army. He was wounded severely and his doctors gave him drugs instead of medication to help with the pain. When he came to Eretz Yisroel, he was a drug addict and was nearly in the next world...

His participation in the shiurim gave him a lot of strength. At one of the shiurim, the participants contributed money so he could go to a rehab center. Today, his problems are behind him as he encourages other people who are in his former situation. He is religious and does a

## WHEN THE GOYIM DO THE WORK

The work with olim from the former Soviet Union entails some work with gentile olim. Michael relates:

When I was a teacher in yeshiva in Nechalim, most of the class were goyim. I taught a lot about the Sheva Mitzvos B'nei Noach. After about half a year, the hanhala asked them to convert and they refused, as I had taught them that they have seven mitzvos and they didn't want a fake conversion.

Because they insisted on not converting, they were sent from the mosad to learn in Pardes Chana and they kept in touch with me. Thanks to them, I even went to farbreng with the Jewish boys in that mosad. I saw how they convinced their friends to return to their roots. Now those boys are serving in the army and I hear from them that they urge their Jewish friends to keep Torah and mitzvos, especially pushing for t'fillin.

lot to be mekarev his friends.

\* \* \*

When I asked Michael how to instill emuna and hiskashrus to intellectual Russian Jews, he answered:

First of all, it depends on how you present things. Even though inyanei Geula and Moshiach are intangibles, they can be explained in a deep and scholarly way. I wondered, at first, how I would manage to get these concepts across, but the results spoke for themselves. From the very start, I got dozens of phone calls from people who wanted to write to the Rebbe and had questions about Chassidus. That's when I understood what the Rebbe meant when he said that the world is

ready for Geula. I'm not sure that if we would have conveyed the same messages twenty or thirty years ago whether we'd have been successful.

\* \* \*

Through the organization's Internet site, called *Geula*, Michael is able to keep in touch with thousands of Russian immigrants and to expand the numbers of his mushpaim. The website has news about the organization with pictures, as well as archives of shiurim on various topics. Sometimes live shiurim are given and listeners are able to ask questions and get answers on the spot.

The organizers get enthusiastic feedback from Russian Jews around the world, with most of them

## THE REBBE'S BRACHA

Michael relates: There's a very special Jew by the name of Leonid Doks, who is a very senior advertising executive in Russian language media and currently owns a very successful Russian publication. He helps us a lot with publicity.

Back when I worked out of the office of Rabbi Zimroni Tzik in Bat-Yam, he came to write to the Rebbe and complained about problems at work in one of the newspapers. The Rebbe wrote him that the more he helps the shluchim the more successful he will be. So he helps us a lot and now he runs a newspaper. He tells everyone that it's thanks to the Rebbe's bracha.



One of the workers with a group in Miron

coming from Eretz Yisroel, the U.S., Russia, and Germany.

The website is set up with “buildings,” says Michael. When a person finds a topic of interest, he can click on the “building” and hear more detailed lectures.

Menachem Mendel Saloniki, who runs the website has an interesting story to relate:

Two years ago, when I was 16, my aunt asked me to learn Tanach. I felt connected to Yiddishkai

although I was not a Jew at the time, and I threw myself into my studies. In my city was a Chabad shliach whom I admired. I was envious of his work. From childhood, I knew that Chabad is a special movement.

After I completed my studies, I was asked (how ironic!) to represent Jewish Ukraine in the Tanach Quiz and I went to Eretz Yisroel. My competition was tough but I won first place and was Chasan HaTanach that year.



Helping a Jew put on t'fillin

When I returned to the Ukraine, I met Michael Gotzel at the airport and immediately saw how special he is. He is a man of truth and I connected with him.

At that time, I was very interested in Chassidus, and I kept in touch with Michael through the Internet, with me in the Ukraine and he in Eretz Yisroel. After studying *Tanya* in depth, I decided to join the Jewish people. I went to Eretz Yisroel via the Jewish Agency's Naaleh program. My aunt, who did not want me to convert, told me how hard it would be but I was determined to go through with it.

At first, I studied in Yerushalayim at a Zionist place where I spent a year preparing for conversion. I was guided by Michael the entire time.

During the conversion, when they asked me to say only eleven of the principles of faith, I started with the last two that have to do with the Geula, and this surprised them. I plan on learning in the yeshiva in Tzfas soon.

\* \* \*

Today, Menachem Mendel is proud to be able to help Michael in bringing Jews back to Yiddishkai, and he does this by maintaining and updating the Internet site. He says that every day he gets dozens of comments from Jews around the world, who want to know more about Judaism.

“I know of Jews who are returning to their roots thanks to the website,” says Menachem with satisfaction. “Every day there are thousands of hits and I handle various questions. If you know the Russian population you know they are intellectuals, and then suddenly they have such emuna, it's incredible. It's really Yemos HaMoshiach.”

\* \* \*

One of the nicest programs of

Moreh HaGeula, which strengthens and unites the mekuravim, includes trips and Shabbatons organized each month. This started when the mekuravim themselves asked for a trip to Jewish sites in order to explore Jewish history. Christian groups organize trips for hundreds of innocent Russian Jews and bring them to churches on Shabbos.

Michael says: When I heard that, despite the costs of these projects I took them on anyway and we began having our own trips and Shabbatons.

They all revolve around publicizing about Moshiach and living with Moshiach. The goal of these trips is to instill Yiddishkeit but not through lectures. We have tour guides who include Yiddishkeit and Moshiach in their talks. When we go in a group, our symbol so nobody gets lost is a big Moshiach flag. During the trip, we try to go to all sorts of places that express our yearning for Geula.

Once we visited the yeshiva in Tzfas, and in Miron we stopped near an *Igros Kodesh* stand and a picture of the Rebbe. There were also video screens with scenes of 770.

Menachem Mendel Slonimsky says: During the trips, many people are inspired and I know that today they take an active part in shiurim where they live. During the outings, we put t'fillin on with those who didn't do so yet, and for some of them it's the first time in their life that they're putting on t'fillin.

Many people call to ask when the next trip will take place. The first trip had only a few people and on the last trip, we filled three buses.

\* \* \*

It wasn't easy to interview Michael in one shot because he had to keep interrupting in order to help the phone receptionist provide assistance to callers on various facets

## NOT A DAY GOES BY THAT I DON'T THANK HASHEM FOR SENDING ME MICHAEL

When I asked Michael whether he sees the fruits of his labor, he said, "Of course. There are about a hundred baalei t'shuva from our work."

Michael opened up one of his contact lists with hundreds of names and phone numbers and he asked me to pick a name at random. I pointed at the name Lev Nasis from Pisgat Zeev in eastern Yerushalayim, who told me about his connection with Michael:

"I knew Michael back when he was in the yeshiva in Nechalim. I came from an irreligious family and did as I pleased, but from the day Michael came to teach in the yeshiva I was captivated by his charisma. He possesses the trait of truth, without facades and falsehoods. On the one hand, he is all smiles but on the other hand, he is quite clear on everything having to do with Torah and mitzvos.

"At first I took some Gemara classes with him and later on I began attending Chassidus classes and farbrengens he arranged which drew me into the world of Chabad. Even later, I continued to keep in touch with him as he started his organization and I became a Lubavitcher. Now I am married and have a daughter and there's not a day that goes by that I don't thank Hashem for sending me Michael."

of Judaism. When we finally spoke for a while about his work, it was hard to draw miracle stories out of him. "We have dozens of miracles a day. Whoever writes to the Rebbe receives clear answers," said Michael when I asked him for stories.

Throughout the interview,

Michael emphasized the ko'ach of the Rebbe and his brachos that sustain the organization.

This summer, Moreh Geula had a camp for Russian immigrant children who are not yet observant. It offered all the amenities and was run in the spirit of Yemos HaMoshiach.

## A GENTILE WOMAN WHO WROTE TO THE REBBE

Michael relates: I got a phone call from a woman who said she wasn't Jewish. She said that she had seen our magazine and read that you could write to the Rebbe through the *Igros Kodesh* and receive his bracha. She said her father was Jewish and was sick and the doctors didn't know what to do for him, so she wanted a bracha from the Rebbe.

I asked for his name and his mother's name and wrote it to the Rebbe. The answer was about putting on t'fillin and giving tz'daka. She asked how much she needed to give for his recovery and I told her as much as she wanted.

A few days later, she called me back and said she wanted to donate 500 shekel to our organization. When I thanked her and noted the fact that this wasn't a typical donation she explained, "From the time you wrote to the Rebbe, my father has improved and he is back to himself."

# IGERES KODESH, A DREAM, AND TZITZIS

BY SHOLOM DOVBER CROMBIE

Since Yaniv became a baal t'shuva, he has put tremendous efforts into convincing his brother Lior to do t'shuva too. Yaniv would love to see his brother following the ways of Torah and mitzvos. He constantly thinks of ways of bringing Lior to shul on Shabbos and to classes at their neighborhood Chabad house.

However, their irreligious neighborhood and friends who were interested in other pursuits, made it difficult for Lior to take any steps in the direction of mitzva observance. He was swept along by the street and was ashamed to be different. Being that this was his feeling, Yaniv was quite surprised when, at a family gathering, Lior asked him to come with him to a Chassidische farbrengen.

When Yaniv expressed his surprise, Lior told him that a malignant tumor had been found in his fiancée and he was extremely worried about her. Yaniv told him what the Alter Rebbe says about the power of a Chassidische farbrengen, which is greater than that of the angel Michael. He went on to explain how the Rebbe extols the participation in Chassidische farbrengens.

They agreed that when the next farbrengen came up, Lior would go along with Yaniv and people would wish Lior l'chaim and refua shleima to his kalla.

That same week, Yaniv made sure that a farbrengen took place at their yishuv. The brotherly atmosphere at the farbrengen won Lior over and he enjoyed what the shliach, Rabbi Amram Shaatal had to say.

Lior picked up his cup to say l'chaim and to ask for a speedy recovery for his fiancée and everybody present said amen and wished him that the power of this prayer and this farbrengen would stand her in good stead.

The next day, Lior told Yaniv that he wanted to write to the Rebbe for a bracha for his kalla. Before Lior put the letter into a volume of *Igros Kodesh*, he made a few positive resolutions: he committed to going to shul every Shabbos and to strengthen his Torah and mitzva observance.

Just then, their mother came in all excited. She said she had just had a dream as she napped, in which she saw her son Lior wearing tzitzis.

Lior felt the noose of religion tightening around him and he angrily disparaged the dream. "Ima, do me a favor and don't get me involved with your bizarre dreams." His mother shrugged her shoulders and left.

When Lior opened the *Igros Kodesh* and began to read the Rebbe's answer, he was dumbfounded. This is how the letter began:

**I was given the request for a bracha for you and your wife and will mention it at the holy gravesite of the Rebbe, my father-in-law. The merit of these days of Parshas Shlach and its conclusion – parshas tzitzis, regarding which you are particularly careful to influence others about – will stand by you and your wife for length of days and good years...with blessings for proper health and good news regarding yourself and your family and mushpaim.**

Lior read and reread the letter with the bracha and the mention of care with tzitzis and good health. He was simply flabbergasted. He immediately connected the letter with his mother's dream.

It was hard for him to commit to keeping the mitzva of tzitzis. How would he wear it all day? What would his friends say? And it would be hot... This mitzva seemed too much for him.

Yaniv explained to Lior that if he really wanted to look out for his fiancée's welfare, he had to accept what the Rebbe told him. He said that the Rebbe's bracha is fulfilled when we add in our mitzva observance, and the Rebbe spoke of tzitzis and gave a bracha for good health.

Lior found himself confronted with a powerful dilemma: his friends and neighbors' mockery versus the possible recovery of his kalla. It took time until he resolved to wear tzitzis, no matter what. Yaniv took out a new pair and Lior put it on.

A month later, the doctors wanted to follow the progress of the tumor's growth and Lior's kalla went in for a test. When the doctor came out of the examining room, he looked concerned. He repeated the test to make sure there was no mistake. The results were identical. The tumor had disappeared.

The family's friends and acquaintances were thrilled. All rejoiced over the miracle. Most did not know that there was a direct connection between the miracle and the tzitzis that Lior had lately started wearing.