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The international weekly heralding the coming of Mashiach
BEIS MOSHIACH

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THEN YOU WILL DELIGHT IN G-D - IN THIS WORLD

LIKKUTEI SICHOS, VOL. 30, PG. 125-133
TRANSLATED BY BORUCH MERKUR



1. At the conclusion of the Laws of Shabbos, the Rambam writes: “[With regard to] every individual who keeps the Shabbos according to its law, and honors it and delights in it according to his capacity – tradition has already been explicit in mentioning that his reward is in this world, in addition to the reward hidden away for [him in] the World to Come, as it is said, ‘Then you will delight in G-d, and I will cause you to ride upon the high places of the earth, and I will feed you with the inheritance of Yaakov, your father, for the mouth of G-d has spoken’” [Yeshayahu 58:14].

2. Commentators [Migdal Oz, Smag – see Footnote 3 in original] note that the source for the Rambam’s statement is the saying of Rebbi Yochanan in the name of Rebbi Yossi in Meseches Shabbos [end of 118a ff]: “Every individual who delights in the Shabbos is given a boundless inheritance, as it is said, ‘Then you will delight in G-d, and I will cause you to ride upon the high places of the earth, and I will feed you with the inheritance of Yaakov, your father and etc.’” The Gemara continues [expounding on the verse’s reference to “the inheritance of Yaakov” specifically]: “Not like Avrohom, of whom it is written, ‘Rise and go forth in the land, across its length and etc.’; not like Yitzchok, of whom it is written, ‘For unto you and your descendants I shall give all these lands’; but like Yaakov, of whom it is written, ‘And you shall burst forth to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south’” [thus describing a “boundless inheritance”].

However, according to this [commentary, citing this Talmudic passage as Rambam’s source] it is not understood why Rambam diverges from the teaching of our Sages [in the following two respects]:

a) With respect to defining the deeds by which a person may merit this reward, it says in the Gemara, “Every individual who delights in the Shabbos,” whereas the Rambam writes, “Every individual who keeps the Shabbos according to its law, and honors it and delights in it according

to his capacity.” That is, the reward according to Rambam is not for delighting (in the Shabbos) alone, but for fulfilling all the Mitzvos of Shabbos as specified by law.

b) With respect to defining the reward, Rambam writes only, “the tradition has already been explicit in mentioning that his reward is in this world, in addition to the reward hidden away for [him in] the World to Come.” That is, he leaves out the description of the reward – “he is given a **boundless inheritance**,” as it is specified there [in the Gemara] as being the inheritance of Yaakov (and not of Avrohom or Yitzchok).

At first glance, Rambam’s divergence implies that his intent here is not to reference the teaching of the Gemara per se, but simply to cite the Scriptural source [Yeshayahu 58:14] in its literal reading. (For we may classify the explanation of the Gemara – “Every individual who delights in the Shabbos is given a boundless inheritance” – as a **teaching** (*drash*), whereas the intent of Rambam, who uses the term, “**explicit**,” is to cite the literal dimension (*p’shat*) of the Scripture. Indeed, in many instances Rambam cites Scriptural passages in order to evoke their literal reading alone and not in accordance with the teachings of our Sages per se.)

It is plausible to assert that this is why the Rambam writes [at length], “Every individual who keeps the Shabbos according to its law, and honors it and delights in it according to his capacity” (and not (in an abridged manner), “Every individual who delights in the Shabbos”). That is, insofar as the verse, “Then you will delight in G-d,” follows the preceding verse [which enumerates various conditions whereby one properly observes the Shabbos], “If you restrain your foot because of the Shabbos, from performing your affairs on My holy day, and you call the Shabbos a delight, the [day] sanctified by G-d honored, and you honor it by not doing your ways, by not pursuing your affairs and speaking [mundane] words” – which then continues – “Then you will

delight in G-d, etc.” [Footnotes 12: Yeshayahu 58:13. See Radak there.] The promise, “Then you will delight in G-d, etc.,” comes in continuation to all [the conditions] said before it (and particularly because the phrase, “and you call the Shabbos a delight,” is **not** at the end of the verse), namely (as Rambam paraphrases): “Every individual who keeps the Shabbos according to its law, and honors it and delights in it according to his capacity.” [Thus, the appearance is that Rambam is merely citing the words of the Scripture to reference its literal meaning, not the Talmudic lesson learned therefrom.]

And at first glance, one may inquire: why does Rambam stray from the teaching of the Gemara in deference to the (mere) literal dimension of the Scripture?

2. This may be explained by first examining the specific terminology used by the Rambam in the phrase, “the tradition has already been explicit in mentioning that his reward is in this world, **in addition to the reward hidden away for [him in] the World to Come.**” Indeed, this requires explanation: Appearing earlier in Rambam’s text [i.e., *Mishneh Torah*], in the Laws of Repentance, is the statement, “The principle reward for the Mitzvos is in the World to Come.” What compels Rambam to reinforce this matter here [in the Laws of Shabbos]?

It says in the Midrash [Shmos Rabba, end of Chapter 25] (in the course of enumerating several advantages in keeping Shabbos): “Moreover, all that which one consumes [of one’s reward] in this world is only from the dividends [*peros*, literally “fruits”], but the principle is reserved for you in the World to Come, as it is said, ‘and I will feed you with the inheritance of Yaakov, your father, for the mouth of G-d has spoken.’” It is explained in the commentaries [Yafeh Toar] that the intent of the Midrash is to include Shabbos among those things that a person consumes of their dividends also in this world. (And the fact that it is not mentioned in the [more legally binding] Mishna, which reads, “These are the things that a person consumes of their dividends, etc.,” is because he [i.e., the author of the Mishna] taught and omitted [i.e., he enumerated some items in his teaching, but left other items out (to be extrapolated)].)

At first glance, one may posit that this [Midrash] is the source for the words of the Rambam here, his intent being that Shabbos is included among the category of Mitzvos that a person consumes of their dividends in this world. Accordingly, the meaning of the Rambam’s statement, “the tradition has already been explicit in mentioning that his reward is in this world, in addition to the reward hidden away for [him in] the World to Come, as it is said, etc.,” is that the verse, “Then you will delight, etc.,” includes both matters: the reward in this world and the reward hidden away in the World to Come. These two rewards are derived as follows:

“Then you will delight in G-d, and I will cause you to ride upon the high places of the earth” – a reference to “his reward...in this world”; “and I will feed you with the inheritance of Yaakov, your father” – signifying, “the reward hidden away for [him in] the World to Come.”

However, it is difficult to say that this is Rambam’s intent here, because:

a) If we want to say that the intent of Rambam here is to cite the words of the aforementioned Midrash, then “the main thing is missing from the text,” for Rambam should have outlined the difference between the two categories of reward – that the reward in this world is (only) considered the “consumption of dividends,” whereas the reward in the World to Come is the “**principle**” (for this is an essential and foundational distinction). However, the Rambam makes no mention of that, saying only, “it is explicit...that his reward is in this world, **in addition** to the reward hidden away for [him in] the World to Come.” This manner of expression does not imply that there is a distinction **in the nature** of the reward.

b) Secondly, but primarily, in Rambam’s *Perush HaMishnayos* it explains the reason why in the Mishna, “These are the things that a person consumes of their dividends in

His reward is in this world, in addition to the reward hidden away for him in the World to Come.

this world, etc.,” the Tanna cites the examples of Honoring One’s Father and Mother and Bestowing Benevolence, etc.” Namely, because only “in the second group of Mitzvos, those that are hinged on the benefit to humanity,” is it said that one consumes of their dividends in this world (since it is through them that “good will be meted out in this world”). Keeping Shabbos, however, **is not** in this group (as it is mentioned **in the Rambam there** – that

Shabbos is among “group one of the Mitzvos...which are between the individual and the Holy One Blessed Be He”). Indeed, it is difficult to say that the Rambam cites the words of the Midrash as a legal position (that also with regard to [the Mitzva of keeping] Shabbos, “a person consumes of their dividends in this world”) in opposition to an explicit Mishna.

(And these two difficulties are besides the fact that it [i.e., the proposed answer that the intent of Rambam here is to include Shabbos among the category of Mitzvos that a person consumes of their dividends in this world] does not (effectively) explain the unusual mention of, “in addition to the reward hidden away for [him in] the World to Come.” It is obvious that the main reward is in the World to Come, as it is explained **at length** in the Laws of Repentance. The innovation here, rather, is merely that there is the reward of dividends [for observing Shabbos] also in this world. Thus, he should have said no more than, “his reward is in this world” (and we would know implicitly that this is “in addition to the reward hidden away for [him in] the World to Come).)

[To be continued, be”H]

WHAT REMAINS IN THE AVODA OF SHLICHUS?

BY RABBI CHAIM ASHKENAZI
TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY

The m'shaleiach said to all of them: This is the task of the shluchim. As a result, from that moment on, anyone who is not involved in preparing the world to greet Moshiach belong neither to the m'shaleiach nor to the Alter Rebbe ch"v. Excerpts from a chassidic farbrengen.

ALL OF US IN THE DISPLAY WINDOW

The Rebbe Rayatz once said to the chassid R. Itche der Masmid, may his blood be avenged, "If you are involved in the matter of educating young children (as is known, the establishment of cheiders was one of the Rebbe Rayatz's main occupations during that period of the destruction of Jewish educational institutions in the Soviet Union), *bistu meiner* [you are mine, i.e., you honorably represent me]. And if you don't, you may be Itche (who was truly a wonderful chassid, considering by most to be the *beinoni* according to *Tanya*, and thus honorably represented the Alter Rebbe), but

you are not *meiner*."

What exactly did the Rebbe Rayatz mean? Was R. Itche, known to be totally detached from material matters, not great enough to represent him honorably? Naturally, the Rebbe Rayatz was not coming to detract from the Alter Rebbe, and say that he (the Rebbe Rayatz) is more important than the Alter Rebbe! The Rebbe Rayatz's intention, rather, was to say that this **is** the Alter Rebbe today; the involvement in educating young children in the time of the Rebbe Rayatz **is** the Alter Rebbe. This is not because the conduct as it was in the time of the Alter Rebbe was *ch"v* incorrect, but this is on the level of "We do not derive from

before Mattan Torah..."

This story serves as a guide for understanding what we must do in our generation in order to be "*meiner*," to belong to the Rebbe.

All of us – Lubavitcher Chassidim wherever they may be – are shluchim of the *m'shaleiach*, the Rebbe shlita, since we are a spark of the general soul of the leader of the generation. He chose each soul of the generation for the purpose of carrying out the shlichus.

It's true that there are those whom Divine Providence have placed in such a situation that their material *parnasa* comes via their open involvement in the shlichus of the leader of the generation. A sizable portion of them have already appeared in *Seifer HaShluchim*, as is known. There are others whose *parnasa* is openly channeled through involvement in worldly matters that are permissible and kosher in accordance with halacha, however, in their free time, they are also involved in the shlichus of the *m'shaleiach*. Furthermore, even insofar as they are involved in their material affairs, they represent the *m'shaleiach*.

All of us are included in the definition of a chassid as demonstrated by R. Shmuel Munkes, who hung himself over the door of the Alter Rebbe's room. He explained that just as a shoemaker hangs a shoe and a tailor hangs a garment in the display window as a form of example, similarly, a Rebbe needs to have a chassid hanging on display. Each and every one of us, wherever he may be, hangs in the display window as an example of a chassid of the Rebbe shlita.

AGAINST YOUR WILL YOU ARE A SHLIACH...

It doesn't matter if you want to be a shliach or not, because there is no choice on this matter, just as you have no choice whether or not you are a Jew – "against your will, you live." The choice is only if you act as a Jew by choosing good, or, "with a strong hand I will rule over you," and thus, you will have to act as a Jew against your wishes.

By the same token, there is no choice whether to be a shliach or not *ch"v*, just as the garment represents the tailor, whether he wants it to or not. The only thing in doubt is whether it represents its manufacturer honorably. As the Rebbe Rayatz said to HaRav Zalman Gurary, "The good things and the successful activities are attributed to the shliach and the unsuccessful ones are attributed to the *m'shaleiach*, so try to make only good activities!"

The question is: Will the shoe or the garment hanging over the door be first-rate or of inferior quality? For there is a difference between a shoe and a garment and a shliach representing the Rebbe MH"M: there is no possibility of a shliach being second- or third-rate. If the shliach *ch"v* alters his shlichus, the *m'shaleiach* comes and tells him: I sent you to fix things,

not ruin them.

If the shlichus is material in nature – e.g., delivering a physical object, etc. – one doesn't have to do it. However, he has to know one thing: the result of his failure to carry out the will of the *m'shaleiach* is the termination of any connection with him. But in our discussion, we're talking about a spiritual shlichus, and as we mentioned earlier, he **must** fulfill his shlichus; there is no choice.

If so, each of us must ask himself: What shlichus do I have to carry out in these times? Since the times of the Alter Rebbe, every

every one of us to be involved in such matters not **only** with himself, but even beforehand, he must be involved with his fellow Jews.

The Rebbe MH"M has demanded that we don't wait for the other person to come to us, rather we must leave our *Daled amos* and go out to him. Even if this will certainly detract from his involvement with himself, as he will learn less chassidus and daven more quickly, nevertheless, every moment that we can have an effect upon our fellow Jew, we must do so before anything else.

The Rebbe shlita himself



Chabad chassid had to act in accordance with the *Shulchan Aruch*, as illuminated by the luminary of the teachings of chassidus, which brings greater vitality into all that is holy and instills caution against anything that is liable to *ch"v* cause harm to the warmth and vitality in holy matters. This has not changed to this very day.

The Rebbe shlita adds that all this applied until our generation, when there is a fire that consumes everything in its path. Thus, it is the complete obligation of each and

demonstrated a proper example of this conduct, spending thousands of hours giving personal attention to throngs of people at farbrengens, upon entering and leaving 770, in private yechidus, answers to countless letters from everyone who wrote about matters of great personal concern, and hours upon hours distributing dollars to people from all walks of life – and remarkably, each person was left with the feeling that the Rebbe is his alone.

WE DO NOT DERIVE FROM BEFORE MATTAN TORAH

All this was with the clear and revealed objective of saving one more Jew and then another Jew from the fire. This conduct was beyond all comparison, even among the Rebbeim, from the point of view of the vast amount of time invested and coming down to the level of the simplest people (who, in the words of the Alter Rebbe, outwardly have no special quality other than the fact that they are G-d's creations).

Everyone understands how precious every second is to the Rebbe and what the Rebbe could do with himself at any moment, if he were hidden in his royal chamber. However, he chose instead to provide a living example of "what He does – He commands us to do."

Thus, since the beginning of the Rebbe MH" M's leadership, it has been clear and obvious to everyone that together with the desire to deal with oneself on the level of "When will I do for my [own] home?" a Jew must alter his line of thinking and deal primarily with his fellow Jews, while squeezing in dealing with himself along the way. The living example hanging over the Rebbe's shlita threshold must be a chassid who is completely devoted at every moment to saving someone else from the flames.

Chassidim would say that this is the reason why our custom is when we put on the *T'fillin Shel Yad*, we don't wind the strap towards our body as others are accustomed to do, rather we wind it away from us in the direction of the other person – an expression of giving.

Even though the custom (regarding outreach, etc.) was different in previous generations, nevertheless, "We do not derive from before Mattan Torah." Every Rebbe was the Moshe of his generation, and he stood between

you and your G-d to tell you the word of G-d. "Torah was given and halacha was revealed."

As long as it was not revealed and we were expected to do only what had been revealed in the days of the Alter Rebbe, we were imbued with strength and vitality for that purpose, and thus, sustained the world. This was the ultimate we could hope to achieve, and if our efforts proved successful, we represented the firm honorably. However, the moment that a new product hit the market – i.e., a new instruction – this was now the main thing. This became THE task, and we were given new strengths to achieve the goal, and thus continue the flow of vitality to the world at large.

The Alter Rebbe and the Rebbe Rayatz did not represent two differing opinions, each one going in an opposing direction. The same approach outlined by the Alter Rebbe from 5505 was outlined by the Rebbe Rayatz from 5680 and thereafter. The two are one and the same, each demanding that we connect the world to G-dliness, as in the times of Mattan Torah.

In the generation of the Alter Rebbe, this was done through the instructions that applied in those times, while the Rebbe Rayatz achieved this through the Jewish education of young children. Thus, someone who was not involved in connecting the world to G-dliness through the Jewish education of young children – even a chassid on the level of R. Itche – not only was this not the approach of the Rebbe Rayatz, it was also not the approach of the Alter Rebbe.

REPRESENTING THE MAIN SHLICHUS

Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sara 5752. It had been customary for several years that every shliach of

the Rebbe MH" M would come for the Shabbos before Rosh Chodesh Kislev to receive new instructions from the *m'shaleiach* himself. Thus, with all the shluchim (or at least a sizable majority of them) gathered together, the Rebbe shlita said that now the main avoda of the shluchim is to prepare the world to greet Moshiach. It's not enough just to believe, or even to long for his coming.

The Rebbe shlita said this to shluchim from all over the world, involved with all types of Jews, "from your woodcutters to the heads of your tribes," including the ten listed in Mishna Kiddushin (*Asara Yochasin*). The *m'shaleiach* said to all of them: this is the task of the shluchim.

As a result, from that moment on, anyone who is not involved in preparing the world to greet Moshiach, all these Itches belong neither to the *m'shaleiach* nor to the Alter Rebbe *ch"v*. Naturally, there are plenty of Itches among the shluchim, who sow *ruchnius* and reap *gashmius* with true self-sacrifice on their part, together with their families (as they could easily be in close physical proximity to the Rebbe shlita and be involved in matters of Torah and avoda of the heart and soul, yet instead, they sacrifice themselves, their families, along with their material and spiritual comfort).

Anyone who is not doing his shlichus on Moshiach – exactly which Rebbe does he represent? Anyone who thought that he represented the Rebbe before Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sara 5752 – that Shabbos was Mattan Torah – "Torah was given and halacha was revealed"!

Is there a leader in the capital city or not? Is there a *m'shaleiach* who establishes what the shlichus is, or is everything hefker, make

When it comes to Mitzva campaigns on Shabbos candles, t'fillin, matza, Chanuka, Purim, etc., there is a flood of informational material in every language. When the date of a certain Jewish festival approaches, the worldwide print and electronic media gives reports on Chabad activities. Where are the hundreds and thousands of booklets, brochures, articles, assemblies, and placards on Moshiach in every language? Where's all the noise throughout the world about preparing the world to greet Moshiach? We only hear a weak and faint voice in the distance!

your own Shabbos? Is there no manufacturer and thus no products, and anyone who wants the title can come and grab it? Is there no clear line of action on what today's shlichus is, and therefore, everyone decides on his own what matters of Torah and Mitzvos are suitable for publicity, regardless of who's really in charge? The main thing is to get more Jews closer to G-d, it doesn't matter how it is done nor what I focus on; what's most important is to be part of this effort to bring Jews closer to the A-mighty, that's the "in" thing"... *In short: Itche!* Yet, with all your great qualities, you are *ch"v* "nisht meiner" (not mine).

BELONGING TO THE REBBE MH"M

There is also an even more painful point than the abovementioned. There are even those who might say: What's the difference? In any event, I'll derive much benefit, and the Rebbe will even smile at me warmly for bringing Jews closer to G-d. Another man puts on t'fillin, another woman become stringent in the laws of Family Purity, another family kashers their kitchen, another child comes to learn in a school *al taharas ha'kodosh* – don't you think that the Rebbe appreciates all this?

Of course, he does. That goes without saying. We all know how precious the Rebbe deems every mitzva that a Jew does, even if it was for one time only. As has been emphasized on numerous occasions, one good action tips the scale to the side of merits for that person and the whole world. So isn't this something from which the *m'shaleiach* would derive pleasure and embrace wholeheartedly?

This is not the place to engage in a lengthy discussion to illustrate the absurdity of such a question.

However, in order that the person asking shouldn't think that the question is correct and proper, let's respond briefly. Naturally, the Rebbe shlita derives much pleasure from every good action, including those done by other organizations involved in outreach activities, e.g., Bnei Akiva, Shas, etc. There are even those who became *baalei t'shuva* through their involvements with cults in the Far East, *l'havdil*, where they eventually rebelled against it and revealed the spark of their Jewish soul.

It's quite obvious that if another Jew puts on t'fillin and another keeps Shabbos, etc., this is a source of tremendous pleasure to the Rebbe shlita, but this is not the subject of our discussion. As we mentioned earlier, it's clear that R. Itche was a magnificent example to anyone he met, and one surely felt the G-dly truth within him. However, our discussion is on the question of "*Du bist meiner ahder nisht?*" (Are you mine or not?), and for this we need a special *farbrenge* on the unique quality of "*Du bist meiner*" – you are the Rebbe's. Thus, anyone who makes the abovementioned claim apparently doesn't know anything about what's so special about this.

Here's (*l'havdil l'havdil*) an illustrative example of the fundamental error to such a claim, which is brought without *ch"v* any intention of insulting anyone: Today's Israel Defense Forces include several thousand non-Jewish soldiers who have no connection whatsoever to the Holy Land, unlike the Druze and Bedouin soldiers who do feel some bond, based on their level of understanding. These non-Jewish soldiers have risked their lives to kill terrorists, and it is clear that every terrorist they have killed is a source of tremendous and immeasurable satisfaction to us all.

However, they belong neither to the Land nor the People of Israel – “*nisht meiner*.” It is totally wrong to say that if one of these soldiers risks his life for the Jewish homeland, he’s one of us. Untrue! They deserve, rather, a hearty *yasher ko’ach* for all they do for us, along with a variety of material rewards and benefits, provided that they do not harm the spiritual standing of the Jewish People. Enough said.

WHAT CAN WE SAY AND HOW CAN WE JUSTIFY OURSELVES?

The end result of this line of thinking is that when it comes to Mitzva campaigns on Shabbos candles, t’fillin, matza, Chanuka, Purim, etc., there is a flood of informational material in every language. When the date of a certain Jewish festival approaches, the worldwide print and electronic media gives reports on Chabad activities. Where are the hundreds and thousands of booklets, brochures, articles, assemblies, and placards on Moshiach in every language? Where’s all the noise throughout the world about preparing the world to greet Moshiach? We only hear a weak and faint voice in the distance!

When Moshiach will suddenly come (and he’s due any moment), the Rebbe explains that no Jew will remain behind in Galus – unlike the previous exiles and redemptions when not everyone was redeemed. With the True and Complete Redemption, everyone will be redeemed, “And you shall all be gathered, one by one,” and even if they don’t want to go, it won’t help because all the non-Jews will round up all those in hiding and bring them to Melech HaMoshiach.

Then, they’ll all rise up and cry

out against Lubavitcher chassidim: You knew all along who Moshiach is and that he was about to arrive, because he told you and established that your main task as his shluchim was to publicize the need to prepare for his coming – so why didn’t you do that? Why didn’t we hear about this, day and night, in the print and electronic media?

Then, they’ll all rise up and cry out against Lubavitcher chassidim: You knew all along who Moshiach is and that he was about to arrive, because he told you and established that your main task as his shluchim was to publicize the need to prepare for his coming – so why didn’t you do that?

As the shluchim of Moshiach, you knew how to harness all the new innovations in mass communications and publicity to advance your objectives. Chabad did this for Agudas Yisroel, its Shabbos lighting campaign with millions of candles and boxes of matches, and all the other mitzvaim. But the most important that you learned in *Tanya*, the

whole purpose of the world, the days of Moshiach, this you kept to yourselves? You gave us the appetizers and the main course you ate all by yourselves!

You call that Ahavas Yisroel?? This is how you show your love for your fellow Jew? Were you afraid that there wouldn’t be enough room for everyone when Moshiach comes, and so you took all the places of honor? How egotistical! How unfeeling can you be towards the rest of the Jewish People! It would be one thing if you would have acted this way in the previous generations, which didn’t deal with other people as we do. Then, you didn’t relate to us at eye level. But in this generation, when you invite us to a variety of Chabad functions on matters connected with Torah and Mitzvos, and you explain to us how good it is to be a Jew and then come asking for contributions for all types of lofty objectives – you hide the main thing from us?

What will we say to them then? No, *ch”v*, we didn’t hide anything; we simply didn’t believe it ourselves...

In a similar vein, someone not from Anash once said after the recent Persian Gulf War, when all of the Rebbe shlita’s prophecies were fulfilled right down to the letter: What’s with you Lubavitchers? What are you waiting for your Rebbe to do in order to believe in him?

Thus, in the words of the Rebbe, “*Ker a velt haint!*” We must turn the world over today regarding the one and only remaining shlichus: to prepare the world for the Redemption. We must not tarry, because “*Hineh Hineh Moshiach Ba!*” and we will merit to be counted among his shluchim, to be considered as belonging to him, and be with him at his hisgalus, *mamash* NOW!

THAT'S WHAT A SOUL FRIEND IS

BY RABBI SHNEUR ZALMAN CHANIN

Before the black clouds covered the sky completely, the Chassidic wedding took place. As was the custom in those days, it was a meeting place for the G'dolei ha'chassidim and activists from the entire area, who came to farbreng until dawn.

THE BLESSING OF AN AUSPICIOUS DAY

After my father, R' Chaikel Chanin, became engaged to my mother, Chaya Leah (the daughter of Rabbi Shmuel Nimotin, may Hashem avenge his blood), they discussed when to make the wedding. The best time was after Yom Tov, at the beginning of Cheshvan, but there were those who said that it says in s'farim not to make a wedding in Cheshvan.

As I already mentioned, poverty was a regular guest of most of the Jews of Russia, whose material state was abysmal. Punctiliousness about hiddurim and segulos, whose source was in Kabbala or in the will of Rabbi Yehuda HaChassid, was, unfortunately, not something the broader public could observe. Generally, the mechutanim would set a wedding date when they would earn something, when they would

obtain a few kopeks and marry off the couple. Many married on Fridays in those days so that the wedding meal was also the Shabbos meal, thus saving the extra expense of food and klezmer musicians. However, this situation was different. The more comfortable financial situation enabled customs whose source is in p'nimius ha'Torah to be upheld. Therefore, they decided to ask their grandfather, Rabbi Yehoshua Nimotin, what to do. He suggested that the wedding be held on 3 Cheshvan, the yahrtzait of Rabbi Yisroel of Ruzhin.

He explained that even though there are those who refrain from making weddings in Cheshvan, they had nothing to fear, and with Hashem's help no evil would come to pass, and "it pays to rely on the Ruzhiner" who undoubtedly would be happy that they were making a wedding and rejoicing on his yom hilula. Certainly, the couple would

receive his brachos and their marriage would be an everlasting edifice.

My parents' wedding took place in Leningrad on 3 Cheshvan 5693 (1932) and the mesader kiddushin was Rabbi Yehoshua Nimotin. It was held in the joint home of the mechutanim. As I already wrote, together they had five large rooms. They removed the beds and other furniture and brought in large tables and chairs. Over 300 people participated in this wedding.

TAKING PRECAUTIONS

At that time, fear of the government wasn't so great. My father bribed the concierge so he would look away and wouldn't report what was going on. Nevertheless, the



R' Chaim Shaul Brook

chuppa took place indoors and not on the street under the heavens, so that passersby wouldn't notice a religious ceremony.

(In those days, the N.K.V.D. had a man in every building whose job it was to write down the name of anybody who entered the building and who they were visiting, how much time he or she spent there, etc. Certainly, if a large gathering took place, what Chassidim call a farbrengen, he was supposed to report immediately to the N.K.V.D. office. Naturally, the police would come and punish those who had gathered there for their crime.)

The wedding demonstrated the friendship and unity that prevailed among the Chassidim in those days. "Chassidim are one family" wasn't just a nice saying; you could really feel the closeness among them. As my father testified, all the famous Chassidim came from near and far, those who were friends of his father. Guests came from Nevel, his birthplace and where he lived previously, as well as from other cities, in order to participate in the simcha.

MEMORIES FROM THE ATTIC

My father specifically mentioned Rabbi Chaim Shaul Brook the melamed, who taught him in Beshenkowitz. R' Shaul put himself in danger and secretly left his place of exile in order to join in this simcha.

When my father wondered: How was he not afraid? He was a prisoner sent to exile, and the N.K.V.D. had eyes everywhere, and informers and spies swarmed in every corner, and certainly emissaries of the devil were present at the wedding... R' Shaul said: although much time had elapsed since my father had been his talmid, he shouldn't think that all was forgotten. He should know that

the friendship between them remained strong, as did the strong connection to him as his talmid, which was strengthened even more when my father stayed with him in the attic during World War I.

(As I related, at that time, R' Shaul hid from the military authorities and sat alone most of the time and began to fear he wouldn't hold out. Out of all his talmidim, my father volunteered to serve as his chavrusa and companion.)

When R' Shaul heard that my

"Menashe'ke's hug is out of genuine love. He loves me dearly and I love him. If only you reached this level. The love that you think you have for me is worthless for how is it expressed, by taking a revolver out to shoot?"

father was going to be wed, he could not refrain from personally participating in the simcha. He felt it was his obligation and privilege. He was certain that the fellowship among Chassidim that came from the depths of his heart and the essence of his soul would stand by him and wouldn't cause him any harm.

R' Shaul, like other Chassidim, farbrenged all night in the spirit of "great is the

power of a libation," and in the morning he returned to his city of exile. My father would say that it was a miracle that there was no reaction whatsoever from the authorities about R' Shaul's presence at the wedding.

And my father would conclude: That's what a *yedid nefesh* (soul friend) is.

THANKS TO A PLEASURE TRIP

Another distinguished guest that attended the wedding was Rabbi Menachem Mendel Gluskin, rav of Minsk and Leningrad. He was an extraordinary man in the Jewish world of that time.

R' Menachem Mendel Gluskin went to Leningrad to serve as rav of the city in the summer, and he had no place to stay. My father invited him to stay at his mother's house, which was empty because she was with the children in the vacation city of Luga at the time.

The city of Luga did indeed serve as a vacation spot and the Rebbe Rayatz would go there at an earlier point in time, but for the Chanin family it also served as a city of refuge.

At that time, the N.K.V.D. operated primarily in the big cities, like Leningrad and Moscow, but in the smaller and more distant cities and towns, like the vacation spots where few people lived, their wicked hand was not felt in its full strength, and fear of them was diminished. My grandmother and the children went to Luga for the summer and my father joined them for the Yomim Tovim.

There was a mikva in Luga that remained intact from the time that the Rebbe was there, there was a minyan, and there was a kosher sukka for groups of Chassidim who were hiding out there. This is why



R' Elya Chaim Altheus in his youth

Rabbi Gluskin was able to stay in the Chanin home in Leningrad for over half a year.

My father had great respect for Rav Gluskin and was very happy that he came to his wedding.

THE SECRETARY AND THE RAV

R' Chonye Morosov also came to the wedding and he drank and farbrenge. My father became friendly with R' Chonye at the time that the Rebbe came to Leningrad in 5684, when my father went to the Rebbe at least twice a year. R' Chonye was the Rebbe's secretary and when my father began doing business, and as per instructions from R' Chatshe Feigin, he donated most of his money towards maintaining Tomchei T'mimim, R'

Chonye felt grateful towards him and devoted of his time and wisdom to my father.

He counseled him and guided him about how to go into private audience with the Rebbe, how to write to the Rebbe, and in general, about his spiritual conduct. Later on, when my father moved to live with his mother and family in Leningrad, after the Rebbe left Russia, my father would visit R' Chonye every day and arrange matters pertaining to the yeshiva with him.

At the wedding, this friendship was expressed even more when R' Chonye drank mashke and farbrenge till dawn.

Another honored guest at the wedding was Rabbi Refael Kahn (Germanovitzer), the rav of Nevel,



R' Chaikel in his youth, in the center of the picture, holding the seifer Torah

who was one of the great Chassidic rabbanim at that time. He had moved, having no choice in the matter, to Malchovka, a suburb of Moscow, but had to flee the authorities and had come to Leningrad. He met my father whom he had known from Nevel, and was a dear friend of his father, my grandfather, and he asked my father and his mother if he could hide out at their house. With his mother's permission, my father took R' Refael in and R' Refael lived there for nearly a year. R' Refael farbrenged at the wedding with the other Chassidim until late at night.

(R' Refael Kahn managed, many years later, to leave Russia and reach safer territory in Riga, capitol of Latvia, where the Chabad Chassidim appointed him as their rav, until World War II when the Nazis burned him in a shul along with all of Riga Jewry, may Hashem avenge his blood.)

CHASSIDIC LOVE VERSUS A BRANDISHED REVOLVER

My mother's uncle Avrohom (son of Rabbi Yehoshua Nimotin) also came to the wedding. Unfortunately, he was off the path, and he brought his son who had become a sworn communist. Menashe'ke Altheus was a Chassidic Jew and devoted to the Rebbe, but he was a wise-guy and enjoyed pranks. During the wedding he drank mashke and when he was tipsy he hugged his grandfather, R' Yehoshua, and grabbed his beard as though he was going to pull it out.

When the communist grandson saw this, and he had also drunk mashke, he took out his revolver and aimed it at Menashe'ke. How dare he touch this holy man? But his grandfather, R' Yehoshua, told him to put his revolver away and said, "Fool, that's what happens to someone who strays, Heaven forbid, he goes completely off the path.

Menashe'ke's hug is out of genuine love. He loves me dearly and I love him. If only you reached this level. The love that you think you have for me is worthless for how is it expressed, by taking a revolver out to shoot?"

EXCESSIVE ZEAL AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

Among the guests who came to

the wedding was a Jew who to all appearances was a genuine communist: no beard or peios, a leather suit with shiny gold buttons. In the middle of the wedding, my grandfather R' Shmuel introduced him to my father as Berel Sarabin, his friend from Tomchei T'mimim. My father was taken aback. How could a talmid who learned in Lubavitch look like that? But he didn't ask

A CHASSIDISHE BEINDEL

R' Menasheh Altheus, who pretended to pull the beard of Reb Yehoshua Nimotin at the wedding, was a "Chassidische beindel" (lit. a Chassidic bone, i.e., someone with a deeply ingrained Chassidic identity) and a very joyous person. One time, before Sukkos, he somehow managed to get a Calabrian esrog and the Chassidim's joy was boundless. But then a serious question arose about the kashrus of the esrog. With a trembling heart, they brought the esrog to my grandfather, R' Yehoshua, hoping that, as a rav and gaon, he could somehow find a way to permit the esrog.

My grandfather looked at the esrog for a long time but didn't find it permissible. He said that as a Lubavitcher Chassid, he knew the importance of having a Calabrian esrog, but there was no choice in the matter, for according to halacha one could not recite a bracha on this esrog and it was better to say a bracha on a kosher esrog that came from Eretz Yisroel. Everybody had no choice but to sadly accept this p'sak din.

On Yom Tov, after davening, R' Menasheh banged on the bima in shul and loudly announced that since there had been a question about the esrog from Calabria and they had asked the rav, the p'sak din was as follows: The Chassidim would say a bracha on the esrog from Calabria and the misnagdim would say a bracha on the esrog from Eretz Yisroel.

Naturally, the shul was in an uproar. What a chutzpa! This person was making a mockery of the congregation and of the honor of the rav and his p'sak din!

However, when my grandfather heard this he said: If only there were more people like him. He is still a Chassidische beindel, and if only my grandson (the communist who pulled out his gun at the wedding), Avrohom's son, was like him.

Naturally, the shul was in an uproar. What a chutzpa! This person was making a mockery of the congregation and of the honor of the rav and his p'sak din!

questions, just thanked him for coming and said l'chaim with him.

At the Sheva Brachos, when they sat and relaxed, my father asked how a talmid of Tomchei T'mimim Lubavitch, could have sunk to such a low level. My grandfather told the following story:

In 5684, because of persecution by the N.K.V.D., the Rebbe decided to leave Rostov and move to Leningrad. But he didn't want to do this without receiving permission from the Rogatchover Gaon, who lived in Leningrad at the time and was the rav there. A delegation of Chassidim was sent to the Rogatchover to ask for his approval.

Some Chassidim feared that the very presence of the Rogatchover in Leningrad would interfere with the Rebbe Rayatz's work or would at least diminish the Rebbe's honor. When they heard that the Rebbe was asking the Rogatchover for permission to go to Leningrad, their fears grew and they decided to take action.

Three Chassidim, R' Dovber Sarabin, the Chassid R' Elya Chaim Altheus and another Chassid whose name I don't want to mention, zealous for their Rebbe, went to the Rogatchover and told him that since the Rebbe planned on moving to Leningrad, he (the Rogatchover) should pack his bags and go back to Dvinsk where he came from.

The Rogatchover smiled and didn't respond.

THE ANSWER OF A CHASSIDIC GAON

When word of what they did got back to the Rebbe, he sent them a shliach to tell them that they were playing with fire and that they should go to the Gaon immediately, before it was too late, in order to ask his pardon in the proper manner for offending the honor of a Gaon such

as him.

R' Elya Chaim Altheus was clever and he went to the Gaon immediately and said, "The Rebbe said I should ask forgiveness from the Gaon, so I ask you to forgive me wholeheartedly."

The Gaon answered with a smile, "That's a real Chassid. He [R' Elya Chaim] wouldn't have come to ask forgiveness on his own, because he is

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still convinced that he did the right thing, because this affects his Rebbe's honor. But since the Rebbe told him to, he obeys and does so with kabbalas ol and bittul. This is dear to me and it is only thanks to this that I forgive you wholeheartedly!"

The other two Chassidim did not ask forgiveness of the Gaon. R' Dovber, who had previously been a

genuine oved Elokim, fasted, davened at length for hours daily and reviewed Chassidus clearly for others, seemed to have become possessed by a spirit of folly. A few months after this incident, he shaved his beard, removed his peios, sent his children to Russian public school, became completely irreligious and a sworn communist.

All this was ten years ago, said my grandfather, and I continued to keep in touch with him. Occasionally we meet and I talk to him about this and that. Now I had a golden opportunity to invite him to the wedding so he would be among Chassidim, perhaps the "makif" would be a good influence on him. I was happy that he came because no Jewish soul should go lost, especially a talmid of Tomchei T'mimim, and I continue to hope that he will become a baal t'shuva. Recently I feel that he is beginning to slowly draw a little closer to Yiddishkai.

My grandfather added that from here we clearly see the meaning of the Mishna in Avos which says, "be careful of their coals so you are not singed," how careful we must be with the honor of Torah scholars, especially a "Prince of Torah" like the Rogatchover Gaon.

Berel apparently had a z'chus for my father told me that he saw him some years later with a long beard, having done a complete t'shuva. The other Chassid was killed by the cursed N.K.V.D., may Hashem avenge his blood.

* * *

As my father told me, this was the last wedding that took place in Leningrad, officially, with a large crowd and great pomp. Immediately afterwards began the infamous arrests of Chabad Chassidim and fear of the N.K.V.D. intensified. After that, weddings were held clandestinely and modestly and were attended only by men.

PROMOTING THE REVELATION OF MOSHIACH

BY NOSSON AVROHOM

*For three years he lived in encampments in Taba, “trying to find himself” along with a group of bored kids. They had no ideology, except for a deep hatred for religion and those who observe mitzvos. This is how he lived, from hand to mouth, until he went to New York and performed in various clubs. There, he was extricated from the depths of klipos to a life of Chassidus and k’dusha. * The personal story of Yaron Oz, leader of the HaHitgalut Band.*

I met the HaHitgalut Band for the first time when I went to the weekly Melaveh Malka outside the prison walls of Maasihu to encourage the Disengagement protesters illegally interred there. A roster of performers sang that Motzaei Shabbos but the HaHitgalut Band, directed by Yaron Oz and his partner Motti Fisher, drew the most attention. The style of music, the sweet voice and the words, captivated everybody. The crowd

begged them not to stop.

When I asked Yaron what is the secret of his band’s popularity, he replied without hesitation, “Our songs express a longing for the Geula and the hisgalus of the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach. This is what attracts people.”

Popular acclaim is heard from all segments of the population, Chassidim and non-Chassidim, religious and those not yet

religious. “Song is the best medium to reach people nearly anywhere,” points out Yaron.

The day after that Motzaei Shabbos at Maasihu I met Yaron at a Gimmel Tamuz farbrengen in Bat Yam. I discovered that, like numerous other people in recent years, Yaron had also made a radical change in his life and was now religious. Not long ago, he was king of the clubs in Yerushalayim and played together with top musicians.

Yaron’s personal story is fascinating. He was born a little more than three decades ago in Yerushalayim. His family moved among neighborhoods like Beit HaKerem, Bayit V’Gan, and Maalot Dafna. Until sixth grade, he went to public school in Maalot Dafna.

The atmosphere at home was passionately Leftist, without Judaism. His parents were second generation to Holocaust survivors. Academics were top priority in his home. Yaron’s marks were excellent and in seventh grade, he switched to a school for the gifted in Bayit V’Gan. This school placed tremendous emphasis on academics and Yaron rose to the challenge.

“At age 14, I began to feel a strong desire to search for the true meaning in life. I was looking for something real, something genuine. I grew my hair long and wore “freak” clothes, and one day I decided to leave home. For three years, I wandered around, at first living near the Ein Gedi springs, and later on, with a group of guys in tents in the Taba area of the Sinai desert.

“During those three years I avidly read many philosophy books. Today I know that one of the philosophers whose books I read voraciously took much of his material from the writings of Kabbala and Chassidus.

“I had nothing to do with tradition at that time. I knew nothing about Judaism and religious people. I was raised to believe that



**Yaron Oz in New York
View from the Twin Towers**

chareidim are primitive people who lack even minimal culture. Any encounter with a religious person

ended with my saying, ‘go to the army,’ or ‘go work, you parasites.’ I had a deep hatred for the religious community. It was my mother who taught me tolerance and Ahavas Yisroel, no matter what the other person believed. My attitude towards religious Judaism came from the elitist mindset of the school I attended.

“The first time that I had, despite my background, any connection with Judaism was when I was in seventh grade. My teacher gave me the book *A Tzaddik in His Time*, which is a biography about Rabbi Aryeh Levin. I remember reading the book with great interest and feeling so connected to him. I read it over and over and simply loved it, yet apparently the book wasn’t enough to diminish my hatred for Judaism.

**Yaron Oz at a Geula Kinus
(Photographed by Berush Blinitzky)**



“I can explain this perhaps by saying that I had been taught to read Tanach as just another history book and story book that was no different than other books. The inner connection between the text and the soul was missing.

“When I was in Taba, I lived hand-to-mouth for three years, supporting myself by selling earrings or working at the hotels in Eilat. I lived in tents in the Sinai desert and visited my parents in Yerushalayim occasionally.”

At this period of his life, Yaron was reviewed as a musician by the various media outlets. When he became more proficient in music, he wrote songs and appeared on radio and television. Channel 3 played his songs and predicted a great career for him.

“My Leftist beliefs had me playing at demonstrations of Shalom Achshav, who wanted the army out of Lebanon and wanted to return the territories to the Arabs. My ideology was that all was permitted for the sake of peace. I would have agreed to give away Yerushalayim for peace. We lived with the twisted feeling that we had stolen land and that we had to make amends for our crime.

“One day I went with a group of guys to live in a house in Ohm Al Pakham in order to support co-existence. Today I laugh at myself and my blindness.”

Yaron was drafted into the paratroopers division and from there he was stolen away by another select group for a new Intelligence unit. Yaron served as a sniper and endangered his life on more than one occasion.

After two years in this special unit, he made a surprising decision to switch to a military band. His commander was stunned and

pressured him to return, but music lured him away and he went back to his bohemian lifestyle.

In 5750, when released from the army, he studied music at a musical academy near Hebrew University in Yerushalayim. He studied musical theory, arrangement, and composition. Then he went to Rimon, the best school for music in Eretz Yisroel, where he studied three years.

“Then I heard that the Jewish Agency was looking for a musical emissary to New York and I applied for the tests which I handily passed. After half a year, I arrived at the summer camp of Young Judea, a

“I met Yossi Piamenta in 770 and was happy to meet a frum musician. Until then, I thought the combination was impossible.”

secular Zionist youth movement attended by kids whose very Jewishness is questionable. They are told of the importance of making aliya and they even did various religious ceremonies, such as Kiddush on Shabbos.

“After camp I decided to remain in the U.S. and I began playing with bands in clubs and appeared in concert with great singers and musicians. I was living in Queens with another Israeli whom I knew from Yerushalayim.

“One Friday afternoon he asked me to go with him to the Chabad house. ‘What’s a Chabad house?’ I

asked him. It was out of the question for me to go to a house of religion, but after half an hour and more of nudging, I agreed to go with him.

“When we got there I met Rabbi Shraga Zalmanov, who welcomed me. After the davening, there was a wonderful Shabbos meal. I was so out of things that I went out to smoke occasionally. I peppered him with lots of classic questions, such as, ‘Why did the Holocaust happen?’ and ‘Why don’t religious Jews go to the army?’ I didn’t stop questioning him, though he remained calm and responded.”

This encounter with religion through Chabad was special. Yaron felt that this was something authentic and he went to the Chabad house from time to time and loved spending time with Rabbi Zalmanov. In Eretz Yisroel, in his wildest dreams, he never would have entered a religious institution.

Yaron also felt depressed and a lack of clarity and he sought something that would change his life.

“After a few months I moved to Brooklyn with another guy, and that’s when my serious and deep connection with Judaism in general, and Chabad in particular, began. This was a connection that changed my life.

“It began on Purim when a bunch of bachurim, including Yoni Fein and Motti Fisher, who were in the kiruv process themselves, came to my apartment with Eliyahu Kanterman, who was in K’vutza at the time. They read the Megilla for us, made a Purim seuda, and danced. I was surprised and moved.

“Kanterman decided to start a *Tanya* shiur in our place, as though to preserve those special moments on Purim. To my surprise, I

expressed not a word of opposition to this idea. On the contrary, a certain openness and acceptance instantly replaced my former beliefs about Judaism. I suddenly felt open to hearing about Judaism. After some *Tanya* classes I felt an enormous thirst to know more. Although I didn't understand every word of *Tanya*, I realized that this was something deep and serious and it fascinated me.

"My strong opposition towards religion began to melt away from shiur to shiur until one day I announced that I was ready to put on t'fillin every day. I called my mother and asked her to send me my t'fillin that had remained in my closet since my bar mitzva. The fact that the *Tanya* had managed to break all my barriers and to bring out a feeling of enthusiasm and enormous desire for Judaism, is something I found inexplicable. Instead of the *Tanya* answering my questions, it simply concealed them.

"In Tishrei 5756 I went to 770 for the first time. You could say this was the 'final blow' in my decision to do t'shuva. I discovered a magical world and I felt, for the first time in my life, after playing for years at a



In the army band, entertaining soldiers

thousand events, that I was finally seeing true simcha that came from the heart. This was genuine simcha, not wild merrymaking.

"I felt so connected to the simcha in 770 that I couldn't leave it. I began to look at all the ideas I had had in my life as one big, ongoing mistake. I had had principles based on nothing because of my lack of Jewish knowledge. In 770 I found the truth.

"I met Yossi Piamenta in 770 and was happy to meet a frum musician. Until then, I thought the combination was impossible. I

remained in New York for another while and began to grow a beard and to wear a kippa. I supported myself by playing with the *Negina* and *Neshama* bands. At the weddings where I played, I felt true simcha.

"At one of the first weddings I found myself standing and crying, I was so moved. At this period of my life, I felt as though I was floating. I was like someone who had found a lost object after many years of searching. I was incredibly happy.

"Then I started a band with Yoni Fein and Motti Fisher, the two bachurim who had come to my apartment on Purim. They were also musicians who had become frum. I remember that on Lag B'Omer 5757 we went to Crown Heights. We were looking for a bonfire to play music at but didn't find anyone.

"We went to 770, where we met Rabbi Shraga Zalmanov with some of his mekuravim near a small bonfire. We sat down and began to play. The atmosphere was very joyous. We sat until six in the morning as bachurim and residents of the community slowly began to gather around us.

"At this time in my life I began to miss Eretz Yisroel and my family very much. I couldn't decide whether to leave or to stay. Someone suggested that I write to the Rebbe through the *Igros Kodesh* to ask his advice.

"I had three questions for the Rebbe. One was about a shidduch, another was about money, and the third was about whether I should go back to Eretz Yisroel. The Rebbe's answer was in volume 18 pages 136-7, where the Rebbe addressed the question about a shidduch and about the proper perspective on finances.

"I was amazed by the Rebbe's



Lag B'Omer 5757 at 770 with Motti and Yoni

clear answers but was sad that there was nothing about a trip to Eretz Yisroel. Kanterman said that if the Rebbe did not answer then I should remain in New York, and when I again felt the need to return, I should write a second time.

“I really missed home and one day I took my baggage and flew to Eretz Yisroel. I opened a restaurant in Yerushalayim and every Thursday I performed on my guitar. This attracted many young people. But as time went on I realized that Kanterman was right. Although I continued to put on t’fillin every day and to keep basic mitzvos, I felt a spiritual decline as compared to what I had experienced in New York. I realized that I would have been stronger over there.”

Yaron’s conscience bothered him and one day he decided to leave the restaurant. He moved to Tel Aviv to manage projects for a security firm. When he describes that period he pauses and then tries to explain how this in-between stage of his life was the hardest period of his life. On the one hand, he was enjoying financial security; he was king of the clubs in Yerushalayim and a very sought-after guitarist. On the other hand, he knew this was all false; it wasn’t the truth that was worth living for.

“When I was in Tel Aviv I heard about the Chabad yeshiva in Ramat Aviv. When I went there I met the rosh yeshiva, Rabbi Yossi

“One time, at the end of a shiur, R’ Reuven called me over and said, in his forthright manner, ‘Enough with the games. Start being a Jew.’”

Ginsburgh, who was mekarev me and invited me to join the various Chassidus classes. I particularly loved Rabbi Reuven Dunin’s shiurim.

“One time, at the end of a shiur, R’ Reuven called me over and said, in his forthright manner, ‘Enough with the games. Start being a Jew.’ He gave me the kuntres ‘U’Maayan M’Beis Hashem.’ What he said made a great impression on me. I decided that the time had come to stop playing games and that I couldn’t sit on the fence any longer. I committed to keeping Shabbos then and there.

“During that year I was often the guest of R’ Kanterman, who had married and lived in Beitar Ilit. The Shabbos atmosphere with the Chabad community there attracted me. Two years ago, I moved to

Beitar and I learn in the yeshiva in Ramat Aviv and in the Chassidic library. I support myself by playing in bands and I give private lessons and lectures in music. I always include Chassidus and emuna.

“A few months ago, R’ Yossi Ginsburgh asked me to use my musical talent to spread the Besuras Ha’Geula. This enabled me to fulfill an old dream and I started a band called HaHitgalut, dedicated to the Hisgalus of the Rebbe MH”M. The band is becoming popular faster than we anticipated and it’s all with the Rebbe’s brachos.

“People who have heard us play invite us to play at events and the feedback is, baruch Hashem, encouraging. Various talk shows that heard about the change in my life interviewed me. I always try to make a kiddush Hashem and kiddush Lubavitch.”

Yaron referred to quite a few musicians who have become involved in Yiddishkait lately.

“In recent years there have been some famous musicians, absolute atheists, whom I would never dream would become religious, who are becoming frum through various programs. This used to be something Sephardim did but now the t’shuva movement is attracting people from all segments of society. This is another stage in the coming of the Geula.”

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TRAVELING WITH THE REBBE'S BLESSINGS

Z. MENDELSON

Allow me to introduce myself. I am a Lubavitcher Chassid (at least I try to be) of middle age. I don't stand out in any way. I try to see to it that my home deserves the "Chabad house" sign on the front door and that the residents of the home and the home's contents also fit the sign.

Like every Chabad Chassid, I always made it my business to spend as much time with the Rebbe MH"M shlita as possible. I didn't allow more than two years to elapse between visits. That is, until the children, the "Meshicho'i," grew up, for when they got older they asked to go along on these trips. Since then, the money I put aside for a ticket once in two years, and alternately for my wife, went for tickets for the kids. I felt that the children did better in bringing back an atmosphere of hiskashrus and chayus and that it was worth investing in their Chassidische chinuch.

That's how ten years went by since I had last been in 770. The years passed and the children grew. The bar mitzva boys entered mesivta, learned diligently, and began to earn tickets in limud b'al peh contests. The girls worked in day camps, etc., and the burden of

supplying the funds for tickets lessened somewhat. I thought it was high time that it was my turn to go again.

I waited for the first opportunity, a special day that coincided with a time that I could

I used my last day in 770 to strengthen my emuna that the Rebbe would indeed be revealed then and there. I had a personal reason for this for I hoped that I wouldn't need to fly home!

take off from work and leave the family. I bought a ticket, a passport, and a visa and was ready to go. I said goodbye happily and expectantly, anticipating enjoying my visit to Beis Chayeinu and

meriting to see the hisgalus of our king on 10 Shvat, the day he accepted the nesius. I was very excited. For years, I had paid for tickets for the younger set and I finally had the chance to go myself!

The first part of the flight was uneventful. It was a short flight to a European country with a brief stopover and a change of planes. Then we were on our way directly to New York. I found it hard to believe that this time it was I who was going and not someone else that I was accompanying to the airport.

Everything was fine. Shacharis. Mivtza T'fillin with a few Jews. A short rest. Lunch. Shortly after I finished eating, I began to feel a choking sensation. I tried drinking some water. It didn't help. I got up to walk around a bit. Maybe the unpleasant feeling would go away. It didn't help; I felt worse. I didn't know how much longer I could manage with these sensations.

I asked a stewardess how much longer the flight would be. I was sure we were towards the end of the flight, but no, there were another four hours to go until we landed. I wasn't comfortable sharing with her how I felt. In my heart, I prayed for a bracha from the Rebbe and hoped

for the best.

The next four hours passed, more or less with me struggling to breathe. I ended up victorious and survived the flight. I completely forgot the unpleasant experience when I found myself standing in the doorway of 770 ready to enter Beis Moshiach. All the difficulties of the flight immediately evaporated when I encountered friends and acquaintances, old Chassidim and new, with warm greetings, Chassidishe kisses and warm hugs.

From then until the end of the visit, I used every minute to join the Rebbe's t'fillos, the farbrengens, the shiurim, and simply being there in the four holy cubits of Beis Rabbeinu in Bavel, Beis Moshiach.

These weeks could be described as close to "heaven on earth." Obviously, the main thing was lacking, i.e., we did not see the Rebbe, but I felt the Rebbe constantly. The days flew by and I confirmed my flight home.

As the time for my flight approached, I felt a certain uneasiness. Something inside me gave me a strange feeling. Perhaps I was a bit afraid? Memories of my previous flight came back to me and I became apprehensive. What had caused me to feel that choking sensation? Was it some kind of asthma attack? I didn't have answers to these questions. What was clear to me was that I had to ensure, to the best of my ability, that the same thing didn't happen again.

A personal confession: In my hurry to get to 770, I forgot an important rule, which is buying health insurance before a flight. That put me in an awkward position. I wanted to be examined by a doctor and found fit for flying, and to understand what had happened on the previous flight and how to prevent it from

happening again. Without insurance, I didn't have the money to do this.

In order to have a free medical consultation from a professional, I went to a pharmacy on Kingston Avenue, where the pharmacist was friendly. I told him what had happened to me and he said it was probably due to my excitement.

"You hadn't been to the Rebbe for many years and excitement can definitely cause various physical reactions. Since you feel stressed about the flight home, buy a tranquilizing remedy and you shouldn't have any problems."

I tried arguing with him and explaining that the first part of the flight, before I had eaten, was fine. But he diagnosed me as a stressed out person and I saw that he had decided that his explanation was the correct diagnosis. I bought the remedy and hoped for the best.

I used my last day in 770 to strengthen my emuna that the Rebbe would indeed be revealed then and there. I had a personal reason for this for I hoped that I wouldn't need to fly home!

However, there I was on the flight home and it happened again. About two and a half hours before we landed in Eretz Yisroel, they served a meal. I was very hungry and I foolishly tasted, only tasted, those things that had caused the problem the previous time. After all, the pharmacist had said it was only stress.

Within a minute, I began to feel my throat constricting. I had a difficult time breathing but there was nothing to fear, right? It was only stress. I took out the drops I had bought and took some. Nothing happened. My respiratory passages were as swollen as before. I tried to distract myself. I opened my Chitas to the collected letters at the end of

the T'hillim and tried to read them. I tried to go back a few generations in time to feel the atmosphere of the stories and to block out the unpleasant here and now.

I finished reading the compilation but still I could not breathe properly. I was in terrible distress and felt that I needed immediate medical attention.

I went to the back of the plane and tried to explain this, while choking. The crew was terrific. Without giving me the feeling that my life was in danger one of the stewardesses announced that they sought a doctor, saying "could a doctor come to the back of the plane," but nobody responded.

In the meantime, a steward took me and began banging on my back in order to open an airway. I was choking and he was banging. Another stewardess brought a bag of ice to put on my neck, maybe that would help. Another stewardess gave me five-minute updates about how close we were to Tel Aviv and encouraged me to hang in there for just another little while.

The pilot informed the ground crew at Ben Gurion Airport that they had a passenger in medical distress and that they should be prepared to receive him with first aid equipment upon landing. I just couldn't believe that this was happening to me!

I kept on trying to focus on "the mind rules the heart" and the mind rules the breathing.

What helped me retain my sanity was the knowledge that I had two special brachos from the Rebbe, one for length of days and good years and one to raise all my children to "Torah, chuppa, and good deeds."

Since these two brachos had not been fulfilled yet, I tried to picture how it would feel when the swelling

went down and the airway would open and I would be able to breathe normally again. I thought of the pasuk that says, “Kol ha’neshama t’halel Ka,” which refers to thanking Hashem for every breath. Until you are tested with this, ch”v, you don’t know how true it is.

Two hours went by, perhaps the hardest two hours I had ever experienced in my life. I tried to take in air, the steward banged me on the back, the stewardess encouraged me to remain with them and not allow my neshama to fly out before we landed. I tried with all my might, choking and coughing repeatedly. At times, I wondered whether this was really happening to me. The crew was not Jewish. What did they think about Jews in general, about Chassidim, about me? Did I represent Jews and Chassidus properly? Was I showing them how a Chassid acts in distress? Was I living what I had learned for years?

Suddenly, a little relief. The plane began to descend. With every significant drop in altitude, I felt better. Very slowly, but surely, the swelling went down and allowed air to get in. Yes, air. The coughing and choking began to subside. Very slowly, but it was happening. I no longer had to motion to the steward to bang on my back so I could get some air in. I could say a few words. I was saved, baruch Hashem, and we landed.

It’s difficult to describe the joy of the three gentiles who were with me those final two hours. What a relief for them! They opened the rear door immediately and sat me opposite it so that I could breathe the air of Eretz Yisroel. A minute later, I was in a wheelchair and in the hands of the Magen Dovid Edom crew, who wheeled me into an ambulance.

The driver told me he was

taking me to the nearest hospital but I had other plans. My children had come to greet me at the airport and I wanted to see them and go home. I felt as though I had literally gone out of Egypt. I could breathe normally and as far as I was concerned, it had all ended miraculously and I had no need for any medical attention. I said this to the paramedic, who checked me to

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ascertain that I was 100% fine. He filled out the necessary forms and released me.

I had left Egypt, but it was only partially so and temporary; just one day later I discovered that I could not even get into a car without having the same kind of respiratory attack. I began to fast in order to cleanse my body of the foods that I

was perhaps reacted to.

I went for tests and was given medication that I was supposed to take for the rest of my life. I would be dependent on the medicine in order to eat any food at all and even in order to take a sip of water. When a daily dose of the medicine didn’t help, the doctor doubled it. I was also put on a very strict diet. There were only a few things that did not cause severe reactions. My body refused to digest even the simplest and most basic foods.

I went from being a healthy person free of any medical conditions who had never taken medicine, to an old man whose every breath required pills. I had to take off work, forgo mivtzaim and giving shiurim. Absolute rest. For an active Chassid such as myself, this was extremely difficult, but the Rebbe wrote me through the *Igros Kodesh* that I should listen to the doctor and every word of the Rebbe is holy to me. My personal hardship played no role here.

I didn’t fully brief my entire family about my experience. I thought it wasn’t wise to cause them pain or fear. It was enough that I had gone through it.

A year and a half went by. In the beginning, I had another severe attack that necessitated a visit to the emergency room, injections (which also caused an allergic reaction) and tests. But as time went on, the ongoing treatment helped. Eventually I was able to get into a car, having the proper medication with me, and not without much trepidation. I still couldn’t walk on pavement that wasn’t perfectly straight. Any elevation, no matter how small, brought on an attack. But I began to feel some improvement.

By Divine Providence, I heard about a new alternative treatment. The first thing I said to the

practitioner was that I wanted to go to the Rebbe again. Being a Chabad Chassid, going to the Rebbe is an important part of my life. He promised me that he would be able to help me improve to the point that I could fly without any trouble. I was a bit skeptical but was ready to try what he suggested. I couldn't entertain the possibility that I would never be able to fly to the Rebbe again.

The treatment was finished and the practitioner declared that I was free of allergies and of the possibility of another attack. I could travel, fly, do whatever I wanted: shiurim, mitzvaim, work. I could get back to the routine life of a Chassid.

At the very beginning, I could feel that the treatment had been helpful. I could throw out the prescription for my other medication. The real test came recently.

I had a personal simcha to attend and was invited to Beis Chayeinu. Flying? Who me? Long trips within Eretz Yisroel was one thing. I could even travel back and forth for hours, but flying? The very thought terrified me. I wanted to do it but it was horrifying to consider. I was undecided, as the desire to go was enormous, but...

There were times I slept and dreamt about it and woke up in a fright. I dreamt about boarding the plane and in my dream, my respiratory passages closed. I mean that I really couldn't breathe – in real life! That made me decide that no way would I fly, thank you very much. If I could sail there, fine, but I wouldn't fly.

Family pressure increased. How could I not participate in the simcha? I went back to the practitioner for a consultation. Yes, he understood my panic and gave me remedies that would prevent a

recurrence. He gave me the green light to go.

I wrote to the Rebbe about the medical opinion I had received. I wrote the entire chain of events and felt that a Chassid is not alone and I wouldn't make the decision myself. Because of the pikuach nefesh involved in my question, I chose volume 18 (chai) of the *Igros Kodesh*. The answer I opened to was on page 146:

“After a long break I received your letter ... in which you write about the event that happened to you. May there be only good, visible and revealed good from now

Thus, armed with the Rebbe's holy instructions I went to Ben Gurion airport without fear. Who would have believed it: me boarding a plane again!

on for you to relate in both personal and general matters ... regarding my opinion about the event which took place on the road...” Here the Rebbe explains the spiritual inyan of “road” and what Chassidus says about it. The Rebbe quotes the verse, “and they will guard the way of Hashem to do tz'daka and mishpat.” “Tz'daka” is literally “money,” material tz'daka. The Rebbe says that tz'daka must be for both those near and far. The letter ends with a bracha: **“May you relate good news in all this and in parnasa with peace and expansiveness”** (parnasa was a

problem but I hadn't written to the Rebbe about it) **“and may Hashem grant you success, with blessing.”**

I consulted with a mashpia to verify that I had understood the answer properly. I was ever so grateful that I belonged to those mekusharim of the Rebbe and that the Rebbe is here to guide us.

I had to carry out the lesson learned from the inyan of derech, being on the road. Giving precedence to actual tz'daka to those who are close. That wasn't hard to find. I was in the midst of a Kinus of “Torah, t'filla, and tz'daka” and the organizers needed some money. It was beyond my capabilities but I knew that I had to fulfill the Rebbe's instruction generously.

Then I felt confident that the flight would be fine. I bought a ticket. Then, on to the second part of the Rebbe's instructions: spiritual tz'daka for those who are close. I arranged a farbrengen in honor of my leaving, at which I wrote a pidyon nefesh to bring bracha and success to my mekuravim and those who attend my shiur.

Thus, armed with the Rebbe's holy instructions I went to Ben Gurion airport without fear. Who would have believed it: me boarding a plane again!

I won't lie and say that I experienced no Amalek moments. I had them, but they were few. When they happened, I directed my thoughts to the Rebbe and hoped for the best.

Well, the happy ending you know, since I'm writing this story in good health. The flight was fine. I gave the actual tz'daka to those who are far and I wait for an opportunity to farbreng here with “those who are far” and to relate my personal, Chassidische story again.

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THE FATE OF A CHILD

BY N. AVROHOM

She whispered to me, "I am Jewish! Nobody knows this. Two nuns want to take my son. If I go to the hospital, that will provide them with the opportunity they need to take him with them and he won't be a Jew!"

Dozens of young people go in and out of the Chabad house in Poona, India, as do even more mature adults, who have not ceased searching for meaning in their lives. These tourists feel at home at the Chabad house. One of the tourists put it this way, "This is a precious, authentic Jewish pearl in the midst of an isolated island of idols."

Many people join the shiurim on Chassidus that take place at the Chabad house and the various programs, and this provides them with what will ultimately lead them back to the way of their forefathers.

A few months ago, an older woman walked into the Chabad house. A few hours later, after observing the positive activity taking place around her, she expressed her amazement at the shlichim's work.

"I know Chabad from way back when. Without them and without the Lubavitcher Rebbe, I don't know where the Jewish people would be today."

The woman remained until late at night when many tourists left and the shlichim began preparing for the next day's activities. That is when she took the opportunity to tell the

shlichim a wonderful story:

Thirty years ago is when I finished my army service. Like other young girls my age, I decided to travel to the U.S. I lived in Florida for a year where I learned the real estate business. After a number of successful sales, I felt I could go off on my own. I opened my own real estate office and hired some workers.

Not far from me lived a religious Jew, whom I later learned was Rabbi Weberman, a shliach of the Rebbe. I did not have a direct connection with him but each week I would wait at the window to watch the rabbi and all ten of his children go to shul, all wearing festive Shabbos clothes. When they would go up on the bridge, they had to walk single-file and this was just a sight to behold! The rabbi in black with his ten, well-dressed children stopped anybody in the vicinity in their tracks. All gazed at the spectacle.

One day the phone in my office rang. It was one of my employees on the line. She yelled, "Come quick!" Fearing something awful had happened I asked her to tell what was going on. She took a deep breath and then said that Abuelifa was in danger

but did not want to go to the hospital.

Abuelifa was a middle-aged gentle woman who lived with her young son in one of the apartments in the building that we rented. She had diabetes and the doctors had to amputate both her legs. Everybody who worked at the real estate office knew her. Now she wasn't feeling well and had called an ambulance. The paramedics wanted to take her to the hospital but she refused to go. My employee wanted me to try and convince the woman to go with them.

I never had any personal relationship with the tenants and customers but I felt differently about this woman. I felt bad for her and without wasting precious time, I went out to my car and drove over quickly.

I sat down next to Mrs. Abuelifa with paramedics and psychologists around me. I put my hand on hers and gently asked her, "Why don't you go with them? They will help you. If you stay here, in your condition, you'll soon die!"

Instead of responding to my plea, she asked me, in a trembling voice, to bring her pocketbook from the other room. When I gave it to her, she shook. Before she opened it, she burst into tears while I was left wondering what was going on. It took time to calm her down and then she opened her pocketbook and took out, of all things, a mezuzah!

She cried as she whispered into my ear, "I am Jewish. None of my friends or acquaintances know this. It has been a long time now that I am

not living with my gentile husband. Lately, due to my chronic condition, there are two nuns, social workers, who want to take my only child away from me. I know that if I go to the hospital now, this will give them the opportunity they need to take him with them to their church, and then he'll never be Jewish!"

She cried and cried. She knew I was Jewish and understood that I could be trusted with her secret.

I was stunned. Abuelifa a Jew! How could I be so blind all these months? And maybe we hadn't been concerned enough about her...

After a while, I recovered from the shock and said, "Go to the hospital and I'll take your son." She agreed with a heavy heart and she looked at me as though to say, I'm counting on you!

And so I took in the boy who was sweet but very shaken by what was going on. The woman seemed to have realized that this was her final chance to reveal her secret, for shortly thereafter she died after much suffering. I heard about her death

after she lay in the morgue for three days.

I knew I had to act quickly and that there was only one person who could be relied on under these circumstances. I called Rabbi Weberman the Lubavitcher and told him the whole story. He was overcome by what I had to say and he acted. He arranged a minyan and the funeral. I was afraid about what would happen with the child. The shliach calmed me down and said, "Bring him to the funeral and we will see what to do next."

I went to the funeral and the child stayed close to me, hugging me and completely bewildered. I could see the nuns waiting at the entrance to the cemetery. When they saw me holding the boy they came over to me to talk to me about him. I told them we would talk after the funeral.

During the burial, I stood near Rabbi Weberman and spoke to him quietly about our next step. We agreed that we had to sit down with them and discuss things, and that's what we did. We came to an agreement that since we knew that

the mother had been Jewish, for the next two weeks we would look for a Jewish family to adopt the boy and if not... We also agreed that the boy would stay with me in the interim.

Ten days later, the phone rang. It was a Jew from Miami, 50 years old, who had heard the story and was very excited. He and his wife wanted to adopt the boy. After lots of discussion and inquiries, and in consultation with Rabbi Weberman, I took the boy to the couple's house and suggested to the boy that he stay there for a day and see how he liked it.

At the end of the day the boy said he wanted to stay "another little while." After four days, I went with Rabbi Weberman to visit the boy. He ran towards me happily. I asked him if he wanted to stay in this house.

"Will you come and visit me?" he asked. I promised him I would visit, and when I left, I couldn't hide my emotion over the whole story.

Today, thirty years later, I have found out that this boy is a rav in a community in Canada.



'WHAT THEY DID IN CHEVRON'

BY SHAI GEFEN

"THE DISHARMONY OF THE WICKED"

The split in Likud and Sharon's resignation from the Likud party, following a cursed Coalition that will never be forgotten, illustrates the Chazal that says, "The disharmony of the wicked is good for them and good for the world."

That party and the one who leads it, that used the votes of those who elected them to expel Jews and destroy Eretz Yisroel, are getting their just desserts far sooner than we anticipated. The party that brought us the Disengagement Plan doesn't deserve to exist and this debased government deserves to disintegrate. The prime minister who brought us the expulsion must go home.

We don't know what's really going on, but the most amazing thing is that this entire process began, by Divine Providence, on the same day that the huge rally took place at Binyanei HaUma in Yerushalayim. That rally proclaimed, "The Israeli government declared war on G-d and His Torah," and thousands of sorrowful Jews expressed their protest and their utter disengagement from this evil empire.

No doubt, Sharon will go down in the history of the Jewish people as the one who brought destruction upon yishuvim and the burning of shuls, while giving our land away to those who seek to destroy us. Sharon

willingly joined Nevuchadnetzar and Titus who exiled Jews and destroyed our temple. We witnessed horrific sights as we watched both our fellow Jews as well as Arab marauders, destroy Jewish communities.

After such degradation, the only way to go is up and we are not waiting for the "aliya" of a better prime minister. We want nothing less than the true and complete Redemption, when the Jewish people will witness the return of the captives of Zion.

"DID YOU MURDER AND ALSO INHERIT?!"

Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sarah marks the purchase of the Meoras HaMachpella by Avrohom Avinu. The Meoras HaMachpella is one of the three places about which, Chazal say, the nations of the world cannot challenge our ownership. Yet we see that our enemies from without, in collaboration with our enemies from within, are starting up with us over these three places, even though they have no claim whatsoever.

The Rebbe said hundreds of sichos about the holy city of Chevron and the obligation to protect it and keep it in Jewish hands. Sadly, we see that Hashem's enemies want to attack Chevron, and even now, they are battling for Chevron. The families that live on Jewish owned land in the Chevron market area are threatened

with expulsion by the Israeli government.

The following is a sicha that the Rebbe said on Shabbos Parshas Noach 5731 about the government not allowing Jews to live in Chevron:

I was asked why I started publicly talking about shleimus ha'Aretz. The answer is since, until now, I tried to work on this quietly and I saw that this wasn't effective, therefore I have no choice but to begin talking about this in public. Maybe this will help.

Regarding Chevron, it was a mistake that I didn't talk about it in public. I only worked quietly and this was ineffective. The proof is that they passed a law that Jews may not live in Chevron, only outside of it, and even then, only 240 families. I asked: How can it be that Jews pass a law that gives Chevron, city of our fathers, to Arabs?! Even if they don't want Jews living in Chevron, why do they pass a law about it? As soon as they wanted to throw Jews out of Chevron, they sent in the army to expel them, and this was done without a law, so why did they pass a law that has been signed by all the ministers?

They attempted to answer that there is no difference whether there is a law or not, for in any case the Jews will be out of Chevron. But that's not so, for after passing a law they can't go back on it, especially when this law, of giving Chevron to Arabs, is signed by all 24 ministers, from the



extreme Right to the extreme Left.

I sent someone to the government to ask them how can they hand over Chevron to Arabs. They answered that this isn't so, for they allowed 240 families to live there. I asked again, but they only allowed these 240 families to live outside of Chevron and not within Chevron!

They answered me: What do you mean? The area where we allow them to live is ten minutes away from the Meoras HaMachpella!

I asked them: What advantage is there in being ten minutes away when even being one minute away can mean you are outside Eretz Yisroel (and exempt from all mitzvos that are done exclusively in the land). Even if the distance is short, they are still outside of Chevron!

I don't understand how they pass a law that forbids Jews from living in Chevron! How does a Jewish government approve giving Chevron to Arabs?

Not only that but the mayor of Chevron himself is an Arab who participated in the pogrom against the Jews in 1929. Now he's the mayor there when everybody knows that he or his brother or his father took part in a pogrom against Jews! There are pictures that were taken at that time that prove that the mayor of Chevron was involved in the massacre.

Not only does the mayor not hide this fact, he is proud of having rid Chevron of Jews. And it is to these Arabs – not to Arabs living in Egypt, but to those Arabs who murdered Jews in 1929 – that they have given Chevron!

What did the government representative answer me? That there's a "status quo," because the Arabs have been in possession of Chevron for thirty years now. In other words, this is a situation of "did

you murder and also inherit," for they murdered Jews and they inherited them. This is what they call "status quo" ...

What they did in Chevron is what they plan on doing in Yerushalayim too. And not just now but three years ago, when they conquered Yerushalayim during the Six Day War (when they sent emissaries to the U.S., to the Vatican, to Nasser, and to Houssein to ask what they should do with Yerushalayim), they planned on giving away Yerushalayim.

They want to make Yerushalayim a city with three owners, and not only that but they write in the "compromise agreement" that Yerushalayim belongs to Christians, Moslems, and only then Jews.

The truth is that even historically, and not just from the halachic perspective (i.e., that Hashem wrote it in the Torah), Yerushalayim belongs to the Jewish people, because Jews were there 1000 years before the Christians and Moslems. Yet now they want Yerushalayim to belong to Arabs too.

We must fight and pray for Chevron and may Hashem thwart the plans of our enemies from without and within. May we immediately merit, "and remember the kindness of the Avos and bring the redeemer to their children's children," with the revelation of the Rebbe MH"M.

THE GOVERNMENT IS DISSOLVING!

Three months passed since the churban of Gush Katif, a wound that can never heal, and the "Disengagement government" is dissolving. All those politicians who supported this nightmare realized that they will not be elected for the next Knesset and that they can represent only the Arabs whom they helped.

We don't know what's really going on, but the most amazing thing is that this entire process began, by Divine Providence, on the same day that the huge rally took place at Binyanei HaUma in Yerushalayim. That rally proclaimed, "The Israeli government declared war on G-d and His Torah," and thousands of sorrowful Jews expressed their protest and their utter disengagement from this evil empire.

Many ask and begin to consider who is worse and who is better among the various candidates. They're setting up the scales to weigh who is "good for the Jews." Actually, all these considerations are worthless when this government led by the one who brought a churban upon us, along with his ministers, no longer has a right to exist. They caused a chilul Hashem for which there is no atonement.

On Yud Shvat 5752, Moshe Katzav, then Minister of Transportation in the Likud government, spoke to the Rebbe. I was standing nearby when I heard the Rebbe say that he would personally do all he could to bring down the government. Indeed, the Shamir government, that was considered "super-Right," disintegrated.

This is what the Navi HaDor said to Katzav:

I constantly fought for a Shamir government and just as I did all I could to establish a government with Shamir as prime minister, if they continue in this direction about talks [with Arabs] then I, Menachem Mendel, will be the first to strongly fight with all my powers against Shamir so that the government falls apart.

Until now only Shimon Peres was against the Shamir government, but if Shamir continues in this direction about talks about autonomy, then I will also be opposed to a Shamir government.

If Shamir cannot withstand the pressure of the world, he should openly announce that he cannot withstand the pressure and can no longer be prime minister!

The Rebbe explained what he meant. The Rebbe knew precisely what the consequences of bringing down Shamir's government of the Right were:

It is not possible that a Jew who

believes in Hashem and His Torah would, G-d forbid, collaborate and sign to this. It would be preferable that the government dissolve and not be a Jewish government, as the only reason for these talks is world pressure (as they themselves say). So if this is the case, then it would be better to have, G-d forbid, a gentile government in Eretz Yisroel to decide what to do with Eretz Yisroel, for at least then Jews won't sign to these things.

The truth is that even historically, and not just from the halachic perspective (i.e., that Hashem wrote it in the Torah), Yerushalayim belongs to the Jewish people, because Jews were there 1000 years before the Christians and Moslems. Yet now they want Yerushalayim to belong to Arabs too.

The Disengagement Plan passed with the votes of religious Jews. Parties that are built, supposedly, on belief in Hashem and Eretz Yisroel changed their minds and their platform to destroy Jewish settlements and profane the sacred. They have no right to exist! There can be no forgiveness or atonement for those who brought destruction upon thousands of Jews and declared

open war on Hashem and His Torah.

As Chassidim of the Rebbe, we cannot support any party or person who took part in this Disengagement crime. All the questions about who is better are moot.

May we quickly merit the fulfillment of the prophecy of the removal of the wicked government from the earth and merit the Malchus Beis Dovid.

DISENGAGEMENT DENIERS!

It seems incomprehensible to us how anybody can deny the Holocaust. After all, the Holocaust was witnessed by the world, millions were murdered and there were millions of witnesses. But something that just happened to us shows us how it's possible to deny the obvious.

Three months have gone by since thousands of Jews were expelled and wander around and nobody says boo. The media and its cohorts on the Right and the Left are doing everything to make people forget about this crime. There is a clear agenda to try to make the public forget it all and to forgive what was done. If that wasn't enough, in the background you can hear tzaddikim say we need to forget and forgive.

Our job is to remember and remind others so that generations to come know what happened. We cannot allow the new Holocaust deniers to have their way. Their goal is to enable another expulsion to take place without undo opposition. Behind the words "forget and forgive" is an agenda, and we need to see what really motivates those who claim they want the nation to unite.

Those who forgave Sharon for destroying Yamit and Sinai, got the expulsion of Jews from Gush Katif. We won't deny, and we won't forget, and we won't forgive, because this is the only approach that will scare them off from doing it again.

**R. BARUCH MARZEL OF CHEVRON,
CHAIRMAN OF THE NATIONAL JEWISH FRONT:
THE FUTURE OF
THE CITY OF
CHEVRON IS IN
DANGER!**

INTERVIEWED BY SHAI GEFEN
TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY

In an exclusive interview with Beis Moshiach, in commemoration of Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sara – “Shabbos Chevron,” local resident R. Baruch Marzel, candidate in the upcoming Knesset elections and one of the leading figures in the struggle for Eretz Yisroel, warns that the fate of Chevron is in serious peril. “The government is planning to expel fifteen families from the Chevron marketplace. I call upon all Chabad chassidim to wake up now and to come to Chevron and help in the continuing fight.”

As this article is written, thousands of Jews are expected to come and spend Shabbos in the Holy City of Chevron. For the past several years, Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sara, when we read in the Torah about Avraham Avinu’s purchase of *M’aras HaMachpella* (the Cave of the Patriarchs) has turned into a focused day of pilgrimage, declared as “Shabbos Chevron.”

At present, following the “successful” expulsion of the Jews of Gush Katif and the northern Shomron, the government of Israel is planning to expel fifteen families from the Chevron marketplace, which was built generations ago entirely on Jewish land. While the Jewish Community of Chevron is deeply concerned over the situation, they have promised to fight with determination in order that there should not be *ch”v* a

I call upon people not to wait until the last minute. Don't rely on anyone. Don't fight with love, but stand strong and gather together for the preservation of our soul right now. We must know that we are facing a well-oiled machine that is prepared to do anything and rules out no steps to achieve its purpose. This is what we must confront, and the sooner we commence the battle, the greater our chances to emerge victorious.

return to the difficult scenes from Gush Katif, when Jews were forcibly thrown off their land.

How have the preparations gone leading up to the special commemoration of Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sara (Shabbos Chevron)?

Every year, Chevron puts on its holiday best for Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sara. Many thousands of Jews throng into the City of the Patriarchs. Chevron has been known for its immense hospitality since the days of Avraham Avinu, and it continues the tradition. What happens here on Shabbos Chayei Sara, you won't see anywhere else in the world. Everyone has a place for meals and lodging. The magnificent people of Chevron tend to all of them. This is a Shabbos to strengthen and uplift the spirit, primarily in these days when so many are rising up to destroy us.

We have recently heard talk about pullbacks within Chevron. Is this a continuation of the Gush Katif expulsion plan?

Our fears have been realized. However, we never saw matters as said and done with. The struggle to preserve the wholeness of Eretz Yisroel is an ongoing one, particularly here in Chevron, where every rock bears our blood, sweat, and tears – literally and figuratively. As a result of the evil and criminal expulsion plan in Gush Katif and the northern Shomron, the “*sitra achra*” has raised its head and now wants to take Chevron as well. At this point, they want to expel fifteen Jewish families that came in the last few years to live in the Chevron marketplace. Maybe as a result of the call for early elections in Adar, this edict will be postponed for a while. However, all of us must keep our fingers on the pulse. The Rebbe

cried out from the depths of his heart regarding the Jewish Community of Chevron: “Did you murder and also inherit?” Just as they did in Gush Katif, they also want to do here by giving the homes that have belonged to Jews for centuries to the grandsons of the murderers in the 1929 Tarpat riots.

Recently, there has been a period of “disquiet” in the area surrounding the gravesite of the Rebbetzin Menucha Rochel, where the current battle is being fought. What's happening there?

With the help of G-d and in the merit of the shliach, R. Danny Cohen, we have succeeded in rehabilitating the location in recent years with the establishment of a kollel and bringing many new visitors. The Arabs understand the strategic position of the location, practically weakening their foothold on Chevron, and they are doing everything possible to limit the Jewish presence there and to throw us out not just from the surrounding area, but from all of Chevron. As part of this plan, the “Palestinian Authority” plans to build a school on the premises, as it is clear that this school would endanger the kollel students and the visitors at the gravesite of the Rebbetzin Menucha Rochel. The “Palestinian Authority” erected several caravans on the nearby plot in order to establish facts on the ground. The real chutzpa is that they placed these caravans on Lot #37, which belongs to the Jewish cemetery and was regrettably separated from the rest of the cemetery at the time of the 1997 Chevron Agreement. According to historical experts, this lot contains the ancient gravesites of Chabad chassidic elders and rabbanim, including Rabbi Shimshon Menasheh Chaikin and Rabbi

Gelbstein. Thank G-d, after a lengthy public battle, when the matter even reached the Knesset plenum, we succeeded in removing the caravans from the area and we hope that the location will remain secure as it is today.

Is the fate of the Jews in Chevron placed in doubt?

At a large rally six years ago, I said that the Jewish Community of Chevron was in danger, and then everyone thought that I was dreaming. A few months ago, Sharon said in a newspaper interview that he would make certain that Rebbetzin Menucha Rochel's gravesite would not be relinquished. As a result, I started worrying, since it reminded me of Sharon's pre-election promise that "The law of Netzarim is similar is to the law of Tel Aviv."

It's clear to me now that we're headed for a big and complicated fight to save Chevron. We will not sit with our arms folded and we won't just say, "It's not going to happen." We will daven and cry out before G-d Alm-ghty that it shouldn't happen, but together with this, we will act with all our soul and all our might to save Chevron from all those who seek to overtake it. We hope that with our joint efforts, we will succeed in preventing this evil government from giving away Chevron, and if we get started soon in our activities on this front, we will succeed in stopping such disasters in the future.

Doesn't it cause you to despair when we have already seen that the prime minister can do whatever crimes he wants – all in the name of the law?

Even Stalin, Nebuchadnezzar, and Titus did what they did and thought that they controlled the whole world. Every wicked regime

eventually met its end, and Sharon will soon meet his. It is forbidden for us *ch"v* to fall into despair, and to give up on the many struggles that are standing at our door. Regrettably, and this must be said openly, there are rabbanim who are sitting on both sides of the fence. In their estimation, Torah and the state of Israel have equal value and importance, and the army remains holy and beyond reproach – even when it expels Jews from their homes. These rabbanim are also to blame for the expulsion of Jews from Gush Katif, as they weakened



and caused the failure of the battle – all in the name of the holiness of the army and the state.

I can tell you that Chevron will not sit with arms folded. We will not allow the army of expulsion to carry out its scheme.

What can we do now?

I call upon people not to wait until the last minute. Don't rely on anyone. Don't fight with love, but stand strong and gather together for the preservation of our soul right now. We must know that we

are facing a well-oiled machine that is prepared to do anything and rules out no steps to achieve its purpose. This is what we must confront, and the sooner we commence the battle, the greater our chances to emerge victorious.

Chevron has made tremendous strides over the years in the merit of the strength of its stance. I do not ignore the reality after the Gush Katif expulsion, when the "sovereign entity" managed to lead on certain rabbanim and to destroy our power of deterrence, thus causing immeasurable damage to Eretz Yisroel. We see today, more than ever before, the fulfillment of the Rebbe's words that any time that there would be friction between Jews and Arabs, the government and the army stand at the side of the Arabs. For this very reason, we must begin the battle immediately and strengthen the Jewish settlement of Chevron.

What are the lessons you have learned from the recent Gush Katif expulsion in order to put a stop to possible future withdrawals?

It is impossible to achieve victory through "love" – period. Only with a determined and forceful war with self-sacrifice and total devotion can we prevail. It is still possible to repair the heavy damage. However, we first must make certain that the lessons have been internalized. I would like to note that the giant rally organized by The World Headquarters to Save the Nation and the Land placed a strong emphasis upon the battle for Chevron, and G-d willing, not only will they not succeed in giving away Chevron, we will even expand and grow. The tens of thousands of Jews who are flooding into Chevron for Shabbos Chayei Sara are the best possible testimony that the Jewish People are connected with an unbreakable bond to Chevron,

and any further crimes in the name of law and democracy will not be carried out in the City of Patriarchs.

What do you have to say to Chabad chassidim in Eretz Yisroel and throughout the world?

I would like to take this opportunity to make a personal appeal to all Anash: Come and harness your efforts for Chevron and let's continue the struggle for *shleimus ha'Aretz*. The battle has not ended – it has only just begun. The entire Land of Israel is in great danger. The struggle is not just over Chevron, not just Yesha, but all of Eretz Yisroel.

Another word to Chabad chassidim: We must understand the lessons from what happened in Gush Katif. We saw how certain individuals worked tirelessly for Gush Katif with great self-sacrifice,

It's clear to me now that we're headed for a big and complicated fight to save Chevron. We will not sit with our arms folded and we won't just say, "It's not going to happen."

but to our regret, the majority of people remembered a bit too late. I don't want to get into placing blame, but we must know how critically important this matter is. This is the time to fight. Now we must make people aware of the grave danger that faces Am Yisroel.

We saw in Gush Katif how all the political parties helped Sharon. It deeply saddened our hearts to see our own people, our flesh-and-blood brothers, preferring narrow interests and other considerations to saving the People of Israel and the Land of Israel. Let us all pray before G-d that before the elections, we will be privileged to see the Complete Redemption through Melech HaMoshiach. Chevron is connected with an unbreakable bond with *Malchus Beis Dovid* and the Complete Redemption. Dovid HaMelech reigned in Chevron before Yerushalayim, and in order to reach Yerushalayim, we first must protect the Holy City of Chevron, especially Chabad chassidim, who know well the great affection the Rebbeim had for the city, where they acquired an everlasting inheritance.



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THE PEOPLE WHO WALK IN DARKNESS SAW A GREAT LIGHT

*Rabbi Sholom Dovber Wolpo's new book, Bein Ohr L'Choshech, has just been released. * An interview with the author.*

INTERVIEW BY RABBI SHOLOM YAAKOV CHAZAN

What is the subject and purpose of your new book?

The book defines our times and differentiates, in a way that leaves no room for doubt, between it and the true and complete Redemption that will come through Moshiach. For decades the Rebbe MH" M strongly fought those who attempt to associate the State with "is'chalta d'Geula" and "reishis tz'michas Geulaseinu." The Rebbe elaborated, in sichos and letters, how this way of thinking actually lengthens the Galus, and brings, Heaven forefend, tragedies upon the Jewish people.

The book is divided into four sections. The first section is a clear and orderly exposition of the Rebbe's approach to the Geula process and a halachic definition of our era. This section contains the Rebbe's view about Zionism, the establishment of the State, belonging to the Coalition, the chief rabbinate, Yom HaAtzmaut, and the infinite distance between these ideas and the true Geula and the beginning of Geula, which is

only through Moshiach.

The second section, which is mainly for learned people, explains some halachic issues or topics in Chassidus and Kabbala that expand upon what was explained in the first section, as they are explained in the Rebbe's lengthy teachings.

The third section answers many questions that the religious-Zionists have about the Rebbe's position, and debunks the proofs that they bring from Chazal and from the s'farim of G'dolei Yisroel. I was asked these questions over the years by various rabbanim, especially by the author of a book attempting to prove their position.

The answers that I wrote show how their so-called proofs are worthless and demonstrate how they have misrepresented the views of Chazal and g'dolei Yisroel.

In the fourth section there are appendices that apply to topics that were discussed at length in the book, the first one being a long letter of the Rebbe Rashab which

negates the Zionist idea.

Do they really misrepresent g'dolei Yisroel?! Wasn't Rav Kook z"l the founder of this shita?

The book proves, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that even Rav Kook did not say that the State is the is'chalta d'Geula. He spoke about a medina that would be established by leaders who are tzaddikim, and about a medina whose goal it would be to teach the world that Hashem is one and His name is one. Whoever uses Rav Kook's words to prove that the current State, which sins and causes the many to sin, is the "reishis tz'michas Geulaseinu," is defying Rav Kook and causing anguish to Rav Kook. (This is aside from the fact that according to the Chabad Rebbeim, even a state that was conducted according to Torah has nothing to do with Geula, which comes only through Moshiach.)

What motivated you to write this book?

We just experienced the Disengagement tragedy, when thousands of Jews were expelled from their homes by Jews, with their shuls destroyed and their land handed over to terrorists. And all this was done by a Jewish government in Eretz Yisroel, with all mosdos of the State taking part in this crime. Many religious-Zionists, who sincerely and innocently believed in the holiness of the state and its mosdos, were stunned.

Thousands of young people, who had been educated about the holiness of the flag and the Israeli national anthem, were confused and failed to understand how they could fight the “Geula” itself and how this “Geula” turned on its believers. People have questions and the answers can be found only by learning what the Rebbe said about Geula.

Many Lubavitchers asked me to give them material with which to explain to those who are uncertain as to what the Rebbe’s position is on this topic, and baruch Hashem, I have merited to complete this important work. This book is a “guide for the perplexed,” as the subtitle says. We Chabad Chassidim must bring the “d’var Hashem zu halacha,” and the “d’var Hashem zu ha’ketz” to the masses who yearn for the d’var Hashem and earnestly seek the truth.

Some people say: why pour salt into people’s wounds...

In my humble opinion, this is not about “salt” on wounds but “alcohol”; it burns but it cleanses and heals the wound. Since the Disengagement, there have been dozens of meetings for the purpose of making a cheshbon ha’nefesh about one’s relationship to the state and the army.

Many religious-Zionist rabbis

and educators have abandoned their prior beliefs about the holiness of the state and are seeking truth. All of them want to know and understand the Geula process as it’s brought in halacha, particularly in the Rebbe’s teachings. This book is not to attack the views of others, but to respond to those who want truthful answers.

The Rebbe addressed this topic very sharply and said that belief in the state as is’chalta d’Geula and “reishis tz’michas Geulaseinu” leads



Rabbi Sholom Dovber Wolpo

to actual tragedies and korbanos in Eretz Yisroel, as well as to undermining the real emuna in the coming of Moshiach, and it delays the Geula. When printers complained to the Rebbe about Chabad not putting Yom HaAtzmaut on their calendar, the Rebbe said this [i.e., the establishment of the state], postponed Moshiach’s coming by fifty years.

Many people wonder how Sharon had the ability to carry out

the expulsion, how this wicked person had the siyata d’Shmaya to do what he did. The answer is simple. He got the power in the shuls when they blessed him and his government every Shabbos near the Torah and called them, “reishis tz’michas Geulaseinu.” If we want to prevent further expulsion tragedies, we must eradicate this false belief in the medina.

We have an opportunity now, for people are open to hearing us. With Hashem’s help, publishing and distributing this book will immediately bring the hisgalus of the Rebbe MH”M.

Do you have instructions from the Rebbe to publicize his views on Zionism?

At the beginning of the book I have a handwritten note that the Rebbe wrote to Rabbi Yehuda Paldi z”l. There the Rebbe blesses him with “success in your matters and especially in your work in negating those who err and say that this bitter, dark Galus, saturated with korbanos of the Jewish people, may Hashem avenge their blood, is the is’chalta d’Geula. May Hashem save us from them and their masses and forgive their error with His great mercy.” In another letter to Rabbi Paldi, the Rebbe writes, “the merit of the many helps each one who protests against this.”

When the Rebbe told me to write the book *Daas Torah about the Situation in Eretz Yisroel*, I wrote a long chapter at the beginning, which is a compilation of what the Rebbe said against the concept of the state being the is’chalta d’Geula. The Rebbe saw this book and even edited and corrected it. The Rebbe urged me to print more copies and even used an unusual phrase that demonstrated that Anash must be knowledgeable in this book (as I quoted in the introduction to the

book).

The writer R' Uriel Tzimmer z"l was told explicitly to write a booklet on this subject and to write it in a deliberately sharp manner. Who knows how many tzaros would have been prevented if we had broadcast this message years ago, as the Rebbe wanted.

Who are you addressing in your new book?

The book is addressed mainly to Anash and the T'mimim. Learning this book is part of the requirement to learn inyanei Moshiach and Geula as this topic appears in the *Likkutei Sichos* of Nasi Doreinu. Lubavitchers also need to learn this in order to know how to respond. When Anash and the T'mimim hear comments from the religious-Zionists, they need to know what to say and how to defend the Rebbe's position.

The book is also addressed to those who are seeking the truth about the Geula now that they have become disgusted and have ceased believing in the medina and the concept of a secular kingdom. Even the chareidi population, who never believed in the holiness of the medina, is also confused about what is holy and what is unholy when it comes to Geula and Moshiach.

I can tell you that in the first days of the book's distribution, a shliach called me to tell me that he arranged to learn from this book every morning together with a Zionist rabbi who teaches in a yeshiva. This Zionist rav is a talmid chacham and he just can't get over what the Rebbe has to say. He finds the book a comfort and he has been distributing the

ha'medina," as some in their camp are promoting.

They have come to realize that this just isn't going to happen. We pray for one thing and one thing only: may the "flowering of Dovid Your servant quickly flower." And instead of Medinat Yisroel we will have a real Malchus with the true and complete Redemption.

Does the book contribute towards one's hiskashrus to the Rebbe?

This is the main purpose of the book. The book is not just about negating a belief but about how the revelation of Chassidus is the beginning of the true Redemption, and the Rebbe's nesius is Yemos HaMoshiach. This is explained at length at the end of the section of questions and answers.

What message do you have for our readers?

Each of us has relatives, neighbors, colleagues, etc. who would benefit

from reading this book. We "soldiers of the house of Dovid" have to see to it that the book achieves its goal and that the Rebbe's message becomes widely accepted. Let us help those who are "perplexed" to open their eyes and thus we will hasten the hisgalus of the Rebbe MH"M.



Rabbi Volpe's new book

book within his own circles.

There are still some Zionist rabbis who insist on maintaining their Zionist beliefs but most rabbanim and talmidim of these yeshivos know that there's no way that they will make a "change from within" and work on "tikkun

BAR MITZVA DELAYED 80 YEARS

BY MENACHEM YEDIDYA

He has become a familiar figure in 770. Sometimes he's here for a week or two, sometimes less. Sometimes a few weeks go by and then suddenly, one day, he's back, with his backpack, simple, modest,

with a smile. R' Yisroel is a French-born engineer for an Israeli industrial-security company. He often drops into 770 when on a business trip. In the course of his visits, he became acquainted with

the T'mimim and became one of them. He davens with them and joins their farbrengens. It's not at all unusual to see him sitting with them in friendly conversation.

I came across Yisroel as he sat at a farbrengen in 770 with an old man sitting at his side and surrounded by some T'mimim. There was a bottle of mashke and it looked as though they were celebrating someone's birthday. I was told that Yisroel was the baal simcha, though he said, "I only have a small share in this party."

I asked him to explain what was going on and he said, "Okay, come here this afternoon and I'll tell you."

So I showed up later on and this is the story Yisroel told me:

"The old man you saw celebrated his bar mitzva today. It was a bit late, being that he's 93, but better late than never, right?"

"Back in Nissan, I unwillingly got into a debate with some Mizrachi Jews. The topic was the Rebbe and his status now,



after Gimmel Tammuz 5754. They claimed that it was a fact that most Lubavitchers concur that the Rebbe is gone. I emphatically counterclaimed that the opposite was the case and that most Lubavitchers believe the Rebbe is *chai v'kayam* and that the world still depends on him.

“As these arguments usually go, both sides stuck to their position and everybody went their way. When I got home later, I felt uncomfortable about what had happened and I opened a volume of *Igros Kodesh* for some encouragement from the Rebbe. The volume I chose was Volume 11 (and it was Yud-Alef Nissan that day) and I opened it to page 85 where it said:

In response to your letter ... don't be at all put off by those who do differently, who want to explain their behavior according to logic – that they are the majority. In fact, the aforementioned is proof to the contrary, for a majority in quantity does not hold sway at all.

“I read this again and again and pinched myself to be sure I wasn't dreaming. I felt that I had been given superhuman strength and had become a new man. I saw how Hashem was guiding me.

“Everything was fine until on one of my trips I went to a state near New York, where I met a shliach who hosted me. In the few days I was there, the shliach noticed that I had changed. I wasn't the same Yisroel who had visited him in years gone by. Yisroel was suddenly teaching Jews about Moshiach and telling them about miracles that happened when writing to the Rebbe through the *Igros Kodesh*.

“The shliach was an opponent of all this and one day he engaged me in conversation and blasted those

who promote it. I felt conflicted, as this was a shliach with years of experience, who was attacking my beliefs. Two days later, I said to myself: enough. No more wondering. If there's a proper approach then I want a sign from Heaven that shows what it is.

“Two days later I continued my trip and since whenever I'm in the New York area I drop into 770, I did so this time too. Actually, I shouldn't say I drop in; it would be more appropriate to say that 770 is the purpose of my trip and all the

Putting on of t'fillin that evening, right around sunset, without a bracha, wasn't as kosher as it could have been. I felt that I wanted to put t'fillin on with the old man another time and this time, to do it right.

rest are stops that I make.

“Anyway, it was Thursday and close to sunset when I noticed an old man enter 770. He was wearing a cap down on his forehead and I got up the nerve to go over to him and suggest that he put on t'fillin. He refused. Actually, why should he agree to something he did not understand? He only spoke Romanian while I know English, French, and Ivrit. My Romanian consists of being able to count to three...

“So he refused to cooperate, while I felt the pressure of the setting sun and just took his arm and began rolling up his sleeve. At this point, the old man got up and agreed to let me do what I was doing.

“Someone walking by said it was sunset and he should not recite the blessing on the t'fillin. I was sorry about that but felt that I had gotten a sign that my efforts had borne fruit.

“Only a few days later, things began to move quickly. On my travels in some forsaken place I met an older couple. When I asked the husband to put on t'fillin, he refused. It was nice to meet Jews in the middle of nowhere but he would not put on t'fillin. It was his wife who decided that he had to put on t'fillin.

“He was pressured by two people now and we won and the man began rolling up his sleeve. I was taken aback when he said that this was the first time in his life that he was putting on t'fillin.

“During that amazing week, a close friend with whom I had business ties, finally agreed to put on t'fillin. He hadn't put on t'fillin in years. I had no doubt. The events that had taken place in the last few days were a sign from Heaven. I had asked for one, and gotten it.”

“One minute,” I said. “So why were you celebrating the old man's bar mitzva now, on Chai Elul?”

“Wait, wait, where are you rushing? There's more to say before that. The putting on of t'fillin that evening, right around sunset, without a bracha, wasn't as kosher as it could have been. I felt that I wanted to put t'fillin on with the old man another time and this time, to do it right.

“After a lot of effort, which included trying to find out where he lived, we managed to bring him to 770 one fine afternoon. At some point during the celebration, he told us that he had recently had his 93rd birthday. By the way, in French, my mother tongue, the number 93 is said as follows: first you say four times twenty which is eighty, and then you say thirteen, for a total of 93. Saying it this way emphasizes the 13, which was especially meaningful this time.

“This story brought a series of

*It was nice to meet
Jews in the middle of
nowhere but he would
not put on t'fillin. It
was his wife who
decided that he had to
put on t'fillin.*

events that began one year ago, when I came here for my son's bar mitzva, to a close. That year I became friends with the T'mimim of K'vutza 5765, who also took an interest in my son who was here for the two months leading up to his bar mitzva.

“I would like to thank all the talmidim of K'vutza who hosted me, helped me, and contributed towards the homey feeling I had during my stay in 770. I dedicate this story to them, a story of wonderful Divine Providence. Thank you.”

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