

# CONTENTS



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**BEIS MOSHIACH**

## **4 | THE PLEASURE OF 'NOT EATING' THE THIRD MEAL**

D'var Malchus / Likkutei Sichos, Vol. 6, pg. 81-85

## **6 | ON WHICH LEVELS OF MY SOUL HAVE I NOT YET ACCEPTED THE REBBE'S MALCHUS?**

Yud Shvat / Interview of Yosef Yitzchok Kesselman by Avrohom Raynitz

## **14 | FROM RESURRECTION TO REDEMPTION**

Profile / H. Ben Yishai

## **18 | THE WONDERS OF MOSHIACH (CONT.)**

New Release

## **21 | THREE GROUPINGS OF THE TEN PLAGUES**

Thought / Rabbi Yosef Karasik

## **24 | BRACHA 'BY MISTAKE'**

Story / Daniel Gordon

## **27 | R' BERKE (CONT.)**

Chassid / Shneur Zalman Berger

## **36 | WHO IS POISONING THE WELLS?**

Shleimus HaAretz / Shai Gefen

## **39 | 'NOW, BEFORE THE ELECTIONS, PUBLIC OPINION WILL INFLUENCE THE GOVERNMENT'**

Shleimus HaAretz / Interviewed of Itzik Pass by Shai Gefen

## **42 | CHEVRON IMAGES**

Perspective / Chana Katz

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# THE PLEASURE OF 'NOT EATING' THE THIRD MEAL

LIKKUTEI SICHOS, VOL. 21, PG. 84-88  
TRANSLATED BY BORUCH MERKUR



The Sages of the Talmud [Meseches Shabbos 117b, end] note that the word “today” appears three times in the verse that speaks about the eating of *mahn* (manna) on Shabbos: “Moshe said: Eat it today, for today is Shabbos to G-d; today you shall not find it in the field.” From here the Sages learn that there is an obligation to eat three meals on Shabbos.

Although a meal is principally defined as the eating of bread [Shulchan Aruch of the Alter Rebbe, Orach Chaim 274:5, 188:10], we find, however, that concerning the third meal there is the following disagreement among the Poskim in the *Shulchan Aruch*: There are opinions that maintain that also the third meal requires the eating of bread, but “there are those who are lenient...[ruling] that one is able to fulfill the [requirement of eating the] third meal with any food made of the five varieties upon which is said the blessing, ‘...Who creates various species of grain (*mezonos*),’ as this [category of food] is termed ‘sustenance’ (*mazon*). And there are those who are more lenient, permitting its fulfillment even with items that are commonly served as a side dish to be eaten with bread, such as meat, fish, and the like... There are those who are more lenient [still], permitting its fulfillment even with fruit” [Shulchan Aruch of the Alter Rebbe, Orach Chaim 291:7; see also *Shulchan Aruch*, Orach Chaim 291:5].

The Alter Rebbe, in his *Shulchan Aruch*, concludes [citing the Mechaber, *ibid*]: “But one should not at all resort to relying on any of this [leniency], unless it is absolutely impossible were it any other way, for example, if one is extremely full and it is impossible for him to eat bread without causing himself to suffer.”

Regardless, the custom of our Rebbes, our leaders, is known – that in the vast majority of instances, they

would not eat bread for the third meal; they would fulfill the requirement of the meal with a mere taste [of some food]. [See *HaYom Yom* for 22 Adar I. See Footnotes 7 and 9 in the original.]

The reason for this is as follows: Since the third meal is learned from the third instance of “today” mentioned in the verse, where Torah states, “(today you shall) **not** (find it in the field),” indicating the negation of finding the *mahn*, it is, therefore, appropriate that this should be acknowledged in the third meal through not eating any bread, exemplifying the “you shall not find it” [quality] of the *mahn* (bread).” [Lvush 291:5. See also *Piskei Dinim* of the Tzemach Tzedek there, pg. 357b, end]

The (inner) explanation of this matter, as it is explained in Chassidus [*HaYom Yom* *ibid*, etc. – see FN 9], is that the third meal of Shabbos corresponds to the Shabbos of the Future to Come (as it is stated (also) in Bach, Orach Chaim 291), of which it is said, “In the World to Come there is **no** eating and **no** drinking, etc.” [Brachos 17a]. The spiritual manifestation that is revealed then is at the level of “*ayin*” (nothingness) (as it is stated in B’chai [Parshas B’Shalach, also cited in *Piskei Dinim* of the Tzemach Tzedek there]). Thus, the meal is also not a typical meal. [It is a unique meal, rather] that emphasizes the, “you shall **not** (find it)” – meaning, we **don’t** eat any bread; we fulfill our obligation with a mere taste [of some other food].

2. Our holy Torah is one Torah. Thus, the inner dimension of the Torah (and its customs) and the legal portion of the Torah are “all one” [FN 13: for the exoteric and the esoteric dimensions of Torah are the body and soul of the Torah [respectively] (Zohar III 152a)]. That is, all parts of the Torah correspond one with the other and

they all adjoin in a single channel (*ola b'kana echad*). Thus, it is understood that a custom of the great among the Jewish people (and those who follow in their footsteps) done *l'chat'chilla* (from the outset) according to the inner dimension of the Torah, is not on their part, a leniency and a case of *diaved* (a secondary alternative) according to Torah law, G-d forbid.

We must [however] understand: It is true that according to the inner explanation of the matter, the third meal is higher than eating, and this serves as the rationale for not eating bread [then], however, according to Torah law, it is, nevertheless, a leniency, to the extent that the Alter Rebbe says, "one should not **at all** resort to relying on any of this" (unless in an instance of *diaved*, [e.g.,] when one is already full [and cannot eat any more]). How then does this correspond to the fact that according to Chassidus it is considered to be a *hiddur* (an especially beautiful way of doing the Mitzva) to not eat bread?

3. We may assert the following explanation:

Concerning the Mitzvos of eating three meals on Shabbos, the Alter Rebbe says "that the Mitzvos of the three meals of Shabbos **are only** for the sake of pleasure" [FN 85: *Shulchan Aruch*, Orach Chaim 288:2, **and in the same manner** he wrote regarding the third meal in 291:1. See also 167:23], meaning that regarding all the three meals of Shabbos, the requirement is not the eating (of bread) unto itself [FN 16: as it is regarding the eating requirements of Pesach, sacrifices in general, and other

cases] but the concept of **pleasure** associated with it.

According to this – that with regard to all the meals of Shabbos, the commandment is connected with **pleasure**, and not with the eating unto itself – in a case where a person suffers from the eating, not only is there no obligation of eating incumbent upon him, but more so: there is a perspective that obligates him **not** to eat (and the wording of the Alter Rebbe, "it is not necessary for one to cause himself to suffer by eating" [291:1], possibly means that he is not obligated and that it is practically forbidden), since such eating is the opposite of the concept of the meals of Shabbos, **the opposite of pleasure**.

[The above explanation] is paralleled in what the Alter Rebbe explicitly writes in connection with the concept of fasting and not eating on Shabbos: "Regarding a person for whom eating is harmful, for whom it is then pleasurable for him not to eat, it is not at all necessary [for him] to eat. In fact, **it is practically forbidden** for him to eat, so that he will not suffer on Shabbos" [288:2].

And just as this is so with regard to preventing eating in general, so it is also concerning the particulars of eating. Namely, if one would suffer were he to eat **bread** in the Shabbos meal, **from the outset** there is no requirement for him to eat bread. In fact, were he to eat bread, he would be doing something that is the opposite of the intent of the Shabbos meal.

[To be continued be"H]

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*...It is, nevertheless, a leniency. How then does this correspond to the fact that according to Chassidus, it is considered to be a hiddur to not eat bread?*

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AS YUD SHVAT APPROACHES, EVERY CHASSID MUST MAKE AN HONEST ACCOUNTING:

# ON WHICH LEVELS OF MY SOUL HAVE I NOT YET ACCEPTED THE REBBE'S MALCHUS?

INTERVIEW BY AVROHOM RAYNITZ

*What is kabbalas ha'malchus, on an external level and on more inward levels? Why do we have a hard time living with inyanei Moshiach and Geula and why is it the nature of the G-dly soul to be apprehensive about Moshiach's coming? How is the world ready for Geula and why doesn't everybody happily accept the B'suras HaGeula? \* An exclusive interview with Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Kesselman, mashpia and shliach in Johannesburg, South Africa.*

Chabad Chassidim around the world are preparing for Yud Shvat, the day the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach accepted the leadership of the seventh generation. As Chassidim, we know that like all Yomim Tovim, the inner meaning and energy of the day is repeated year after year, so how should the avoda of kabbalas ha'malchus be

expressed nowadays?

Kabbalas ha'malchus means that we willingly nullify our wills to the Rebbe and fulfill all his directives, and since "we ascend in holiness," each year we must accept the Rebbe's malchus on a higher level. Thus, someone who, last year, fully accepted the Rebbe's malchus, must make an effort to accept the Rebbe's

malchus this year on a higher level.

Each person must make an honest, personal accounting: Which horaos of the Rebbe are the hardest for me to do? What do I know that the Rebbe wants of me that I haven't done until now? When a person succeeds in accepting a horaa that seems too hard for him, this is a first step in kabbalas ha'malchus.

Obviously, I'm not talking about that which we are obligated to do because of halacha and the *Shulchan Aruch* which every Jew is obligated in. We are connected to the Rebbe and therefore we have greater responsibilities. Fulfilling Torah and mitzvos b'hiddur (in the best possible way) is the foundation of every Jewish home and obviously a Chassidic home (as in the Rebbe's bracha, "on the foundations of Torah and mitzva"). However, a Chassidic home shines with an extra special light when illuminated with the Rebbe's horaos.

The Rebbe said that every day we need to learn Chitas and Rambam, and some Chassidim have a hard

time doing so. For these Chassidim, making a firm commitment not to allow a day to pass without Chitas and Rambam is considered kabbalas ha'malchus.

Then there's a deeper spiritual accounting also required before Yud Shvat: *What do you know that the Rebbe wants from you that you are not even willing to admit in your thoughts that the Rebbe wants from you?*

A man came to me and complained about his situation. I told him that since the Rebbe said that Moshiach is already here and you just need to open your eyes, even his personal situation is in a Geula state. Therefore, he merely needs to think positively and we are promised, "think good – it will be good," and he will see that everything works out just fine.

He thought I was pushing him off and didn't understand how I expected that of him, "after all, that's

a lifetime's avoda..." He wasn't able to accept that as a Chassid, the Rebbe demands of him to believe that the Geula is really here and to live with the belief that when you think positively, it will be good. He said I was being evasive...

When a Chassid makes an honest spiritual accounting, he must look to see for which levels of the soul does he need Hashem to send the Rebbe in order to take him out of his galus. And precisely there, on those levels that he is unable to handle alone, he must accept the Rebbe's malchus and begin to use them for k'dusha. It could be on practical levels like Chitas and Rambam and it can be on deeper levels such as bitachon and simcha or looking positively at others with genuine Ahavas Yisroel.

A cheshbon ha'nefesh is made not only in order to know what to tackle. It's also necessary in order to know what *not* to be involved in.

Without a cheshbon ha'nefesh, a person can fantasize about ahavas b'taanugim... Although in Chassidus it says that a beinoni can reach high levels, still, the Alter Rebbe's Chassidim said, "Halevai a beinoni (if only we attained the level of beinoni)!" So what should we say?

They say there was once a group of bachurim who asked the Rebbe for a bracha to attain ahava b'taanugim and the Rebbe told their mashpia that they aren't connected to reality. They don't know what it's all about.

Before making a cheshbon ha'nefesh you have to properly assess your abilities. Only after knowing what you are capable of can you know what to focus on in your avoda. A certain person was offered a shlichus position and he thought that even though he wasn't capable of doing it, he would go l'chat'chilla aribber and take it. When he asked the Rebbe for a bracha, the Rebbe said the suggestion wasn't practical.

How do we understand this? After all, the Rebbe isn't limited and here's someone who wants to go on shlichus in a l'chat'chilla aribber way! Apparently, thinking that you can do everything is an expression of superficiality, it's makif. When you know your abilities and are willing to use all your abilities in a l'chat'chilla aribber way, this is a more pnimiyus'dike expression. It's more serious.

After a Chassid acknowledges what he is capable of, he must define his role in the world in accordance with the horaos that he receives from the Rebbe. If he doesn't know his role in the world, he is likely to do things that are positive in themselves. But by *him* doing them, he is missing the goal. The Rebbe writes that sometimes a person does positive things but they come from the *kluginker* (the clever one, i.e. the yetzer ha'ra) in order to



stop him from doing what he really needs to do, from fulfilling his true role.

It is only after recognizing one's abilities and knowing your role that you can make a true cheshbon ha'nefesh and arrive at the right conclusions regarding the question: in which levels of the soul must I express my acceptance of the Rebbe's malchus?

**Many kinds of people consult with you as a mashpia. What do you find is the hardest thing of all for most people?**

No doubt about that one. It's the topic of Moshiach that is the hardest to implement. I'm not talking about publicity, but the difficulty in believing that the Geula is already here and we need to open our eyes, and about the difficulty in having inyanei Geula and Moshiach permeate our daily lives, as the Rebbe says they should. The Rebbe himself said that this is difficult ("es kumt un shver").

**What's the reason for this?**

It's very simple. When Moshiach reveals Hashem's Essence in the world, it won't be only the forces of klipa that are nullified, but also every existence that is separate from the forces of holiness, because everything will be permeated with the revelation of the Essence. Opposition to the topic of Moshiach also comes from the side of holiness, from all the giluyim that don't want to stop being independent entities.

Even seven generations ago, when the avoda of bringing the Sh'china down to earth started with the Alter Rebbe, there was great opposition and not only from the forces of impurity but also from the forces of holiness!

The Alter Rebbe was arrested by gentiles, by people on the three levels of impurity, but he was arrested because misnagdim informed on him to the government!

Likewise, the students of the Maggid didn't look kindly on spreading the wellsprings in the way of the Alter Rebbe. These talmidim received their strength from the heavenly court, which didn't initially agree to the spreading of the wellsprings in this unrestrained way.

So too with our generation. We are in a time when the Rebbe wants to do his job and finish bringing the Sh'china down to earth. It's not only the animal soul that opposes him, but also the revealed parts of the G-dly soul! As it says in the famous maamer, "B'Yom Ashtei Asar" 5731, "**all the giluyim, as great as they are, conceal the Essence.**"

And as I said before, the Rebbe himself says it's difficult. Why does the Rebbe tell us that? Firstly, so we are not put off when we see that even the forces of k'dusha attack the subject of Moshiach. Secondly, in order to let us know that this is very hard work and if we want to succeed at it, we need to reach a point of "putting aside his very being," a state of utter bittul to the Rebbe.

In the maamer I just mentioned, it's brought in the name of the Baal Shem Tov that when you go to a king, each person gets distracted by the beautiful chambers along the way to the throne room. These are the king's chambers, with the loftiest giluyim, but if you become distracted by these giluyim, you simply won't get to the king. Only someone with utter bittul to the king remains unimpressed by the chambers despite the spiritual enticements and walks steadily towards the king himself.

In the *HaYom Yom* for Yud Elul, the Rebbe quotes a letter from the Rebbe Rayatz that "the inyan of yechidus is to ascertain his situation and to establish a method of avoda in turning away from evil and to approach good middos, to unite with utter unity and give oneself over, to be devoted with all one's desires."

"To be devoted with all one's desires," means mesirus nefesh to fulfill the Rebbe's horaos. How can we say that this is a basic condition for yechidus when most of Anash who were in yechidus did not get horaos that required mesirus nefesh?

From here, we learn that a real Chassid needs mesirus nefesh even *before* going for yechidus. Before hearing from the Rebbe what his role is, he has to be determined that even if mesirus nefesh will be necessary to do what the Rebbe says, he is ready for that. A Chassid like this can enter for a yechidus. And if you need mesirus nefesh in order to carry out personal horaos, all the more so for a general horaa that was given to everybody in our generation!

Only a Chassid, who works on himself properly, and reaches a state where he gives over all his desires to the Rebbe, can fully carry out the Rebbe's horaa to live with Moshiach. Because it is only when you are completely battul to the Rebbe and fully given over to him with all your desires, that you receive the kochos of the Rebbe MH" M himself, and with this ko'ach you can withstand all the deterrents, even those that come from the side of k'dusha.

When a Chassid is battul to the Rebbe, he also begins to hear what the Rebbe actually wants of him. We say this in our davening every day, "and my soul should be as dust to all," and only then do we say, "open my heart to Your Torah."

As I said, each person must know his abilities and even someone who hasn't yet reached the necessary level of bittul must know the goal in order to know what to strive towards and what the right direction is.

**You are talking about spiritual levels of Geula, but the Geula will also bring material plenty, "all delicacies will be as dust." Is that not enough to arouse a longing for**

## **Moshiach, at least from the superficial levels of our soul?**

As Jews do, I'll answer your question with a question. Each of us has fantasies where we run when reality is hard to bear. A writer likes to fantasize about the day when he will be a famous author and a rosh yeshiva likes to fantasize about being versed in all of Shas, Rishonim and Acharonim. Each in his field. But there is one fantasy that every Jew must dream about daily: the Geula.

Tell me, how many Jews do you know who really imagine what the Yemos HaMoshiach will be like? Why don't we fantasize about the good days we'll have after Moshiach comes? After all, no fantasy can hold a candle to the reality of Geula! So why don't we fantasize about something real and greater than anything else?

The answer is simple. If you examine people's fantasies, you will notice a common denominator they all share: *their* reality, *yeshus* (ego). Each one dreams of the day when he will be the best in *his* field, for the day when *he* will do it all.

This is why nobody fantasizes about Moshiach, since in Yemos HaMoshiach one's metzius will be nullified! That's right, it will be better than your best fantasies, but this good won't aggrandize your metzius. On the contrary, part of the goodness of Yemos HaMoshiach is the bittul ha'metzius, so who really wants that?

The mashpia R' Mendel Morosov once said to a talmid by the name of Lazer that when Moshiach comes he will be, "ois Lazer" ("Lazer no more" and a play on words because the word "goel," redeemer, in Yiddish is "oislazer") and the pasuk says, "and a goel will come to Tziyon."

The Rebbe's entire being is one of "Atzmus U'Mehus as it is encloded in a body," for which reason he is not interested in any gilui but in

Atzmus U'Mehus itself. As the Alter Rebbe said, "I don't want Your Olam HaBa, I don't want Your Gan Eden; I want You alone." Therefore, only the Rebbe, who is Melech HaMoshiach – only he can truly want Yemos HaMoshiach.

Therefore, the only way to truly want Yemos HaMoshiach is to be utterly battul to the Rebbe, to give one's will over to him completely. And when the Rebbe's ratzon is our ratzon, we will listen to his horaos and we will truly want the Yemos HaMoshiach.

*They say there was once a group of bachurim who asked the Rebbe for a bracha to attain ahava b'taanugim and the Rebbe told their mashpia that they aren't connected to reality.*

**It's not only the emuna in and anticipation of Moshiach that are difficult, but publicizing the Rebbe's message, the B'suras HaGeula, is difficult too. One of the greatest difficulties is that it seems as though the whole subject causes machlokes, even among Lubavitchers. Some say better to drop it for the sake of achdus.**

Those who maintain that the subject of Moshiach should be dropped because it arouses machlokes, has to acknowledge a historical fact. Seemingly, the greatest fomenter of machlokes in

the Jewish world in the past 300 years was the holy Baal Shem Tov! The teachings of the Baal Shem Tov cut the Jewish world in two, into Chassidim and Misnagdim. Does any Chassid think that we should stop spreading the wellsprings of Chassidus in order to stop machlokes? Does any Chassid think that the Baal Shem Tov wasn't the greatest ohev Yisroel?

Whoever says that after the Rebbe said we should publicize the B'suras HaGeula we should drop it because it causes machlokes, apparently doesn't understand the difference between a Rebbe and a mashpia. A mashpia only reveals one's innate abilities, whereas a Rebbe actually creates those abilities!

When a mashpia wants to give his mushpa a derech in avodas Hashem, he examines the abilities of the mushpa and gives him a derech in Avodas Hashem that suits him. If the mashpia gives him a derech that doesn't match his abilities, it could break the person, so he is limited to the abilities and capabilities of the mushpa.

However, even after the mashpia matches the course in avodas Hashem with the abilities of the mushpa, since the abilities are in a potential state, not an actual state, the mushpa won't accept the work that easily. He will oppose it and say it's beyond his capabilities, but in the end he is capable of doing it.

When the Rebbe asks us to prepare the world to greet Moshiach, he does not first examine each person's abilities. According to the world's capabilities, there is no chance that we would truly want Moshiach. If the B'suras HaGeula was said fifty years ago, there would not simply have been opposition, but a shviras ha'keilim (breaking of the vessels)!

The Rebbe, with his enormous abilities, changed the world. He

imbued the world with new capabilities so the world could receive the great light of the B'suras HaGeula. That is what the Rebbe says – that the world is ready.

Does this mean that now everybody welcomes us and is happy to hear the B'suras HaGeula? No. But just like with the teachings of Chassidus in the time of the Baal Shem Tov, now too we have the ability and now the work is for us, the mashpiim, to reveal the ability that the Rebbe brought down.

It's like the mushpa who got a derech in avodas Hashem from his mashpia based on his abilities, who nevertheless may protest that it is beyond him. So too, the world, despite its ability to absorb inyanei Geula, is wont to react with hostility to the B'suras HaGeula. This doesn't mean that the world isn't ready; it means that we have more work to do in order to uncover the abilities that exist in the world, and then the world will readily accept it.

The Rebbe role in **drawing down** the ability to do something, has been the Rebbe's approach with all the mitzvaim. Take for example Mivtza T'fillin. Until 5727 (1967), this was not something the world could accept. It was out of the question for a Tamim to go out on the street to put t'fillin on with passersby. The Rebbe announced Mivtza T'fillin only after he drew down the ability for the world to accept this reality. But even then, it didn't go smoothly. There was plenty of opposition, even from within Lubavitch, from mashpiim of the previous generation who assumed the Rebbe must mean a spiritual inyan and not that you were actually supposed to go out on the street!

I remember standing on a street in Manhattan with t'fillin when a frum woman came over to me and with tears in her eyes asked me to go back to yeshiva. "You look like such a good bachur, what a pity that you

left your learning!" she said.

What ended up happening? Today, in hindsight, we can see that the keilim that the Rebbe drew down before the mitvza proved themselves. There was opposition but ultimately we succeeded in fulfilling the role of mashpia. And after revealing this to the world, everybody accepted Mivtza T'fillin and many non-Lubavitchers try to copy Chabad's success.

The same is true, even more so, with Moshiach. Even after the Rebbe said that the world is ready, we have the difficult job of uncovering and revealing this readiness. In the course of this work, sparks will fly.



But when you know that this is the nature of the work, you remain unfazed and carry on until you succeed in uncovering this readiness and the message is accepted.

### **What is the best way of revealing the readiness of the world for Moshiach?**

Since we're talking about Geula, which is mainly about transforming the inner reality of the world, the manner of influencing others also needs to be done in a pnimiyus'dike way. Especially after the sicha of VaYeishev 5752, in which the Rebbe outlines the way of refining the world and emphasizes that the avodas ha'birur must be done in

accordance with the mentality and conditions of the specific place. It's only when you take this into consideration that you can penetrate deeper levels of the soul.

This is also the simple explanation of what the Rebbe meant when he said that the study and the avoda of inyanei Moshiach and Geula needs to be in a way of "*ofen ha'miskabel*" (in a way that makes the person receptive). The Rebbe didn't say the learning needs to be "*b'd'varim ha'miskablim*" (subjects that are received). Because once the Rebbe drew down these capabilities into the world, all of inyanei Moshiach and Geula are in the category of d'varim ha'miskablim. This means that the Toras HaGeula, which is an accepted inyan, needs to be presented in a way that suits the recipient.

In order to illustrate this point, I'll give you an extreme example. When a Chassid meets a nonobservant Jew on the street and tells him that the Geula is imminent and then there will be the "gilui ha'Atzmus," the man won't argue with him. He simply won't have the foggiest idea of what he's talking about! A Jew like this needs to hear that Geula will bring peace to the world, no hunger or war.

At first, he won't accept it because he doesn't believe this can ever happen. And what will happen with the Arabs when the Beis HaMikdash is built on the Temple Mt.? It's just not logical. He'll argue but when he thinks it over he'll conclude that it pays to wait for such a wondrous time.

Since it's very important that the B'suras HaGeula permeate people in a deep way, according to their mentality, we have to match the style of the message (not the message, just the style) to people's mindset. An Israeli bachur's style might work fine in his hometown but not on mitzvaim in Manhattan. He needs to



adapt to the American mentality.

A Chassid who goes to a new place and insists on doing things just the way he did them previously where he was successful, is like the maggid shiur who switches from a top class to a rudimentary class but continues giving shiurim on a high level. He doesn't care whether the students understand him or not. He wants to say his shiur! This Chasid fools himself because he's convinced that he's accomplishing a lot in inyanei Moshiach when he's not having a positive effect on others.

Not caring about our impact on others is an expression of our metzius, not Moshiach. Whoever is really battul to the Rebbe must fulfill his horaos so that the explanations and hafatza suit the people they're dealing with.

This is true for all of the Rebbe's mitzvaim, but with Moshiach, it's far more important, since all the other mitzvaim are about action, while Moshiach, to a large extent, is about emuna and learning, which can be effective only when done in a way that fully suits the local mentality.

We spoke earlier about the need to make a cheshbon ha'nefesh. Every Chassid needs to think about whether he is working on inyanei Moshiach and Geula according to his comfort level or as the Rebbe wants. The Rebbe said about many things that they hasten the Geula. Does he try to do them all or does he choose those things he likes to do?

Aside from the importance of asking your mashpia before every significant step, it would seem from the Rebbe's sichos and letters on the subject, that one's mashpia should not be overseas, because then he is unfamiliar with the local mentality and is unaware of circumstances that could change his mind.

**The reality is that there are Lubavitchers who do not work on inyanei Moshiach and Geula, and**

**even oppose it. Is there a way of working on inyanei Moshiach and at the same time keeping the peace?**

It says, "As waters reflect a face, so does the heart of one man to another." When you work on inyanei Moshiach with real Ahavas Yisroel there's no doubt that the ahava will have an effect, and even those who don't agree to everything you do won't oppose you that strongly. In the end, the opposition will disappear.

*If you become  
distracted by these  
giluyim, you simply  
won't get to the king.  
Only someone with  
utter bittul to the king  
remains unimpressed  
by the chambers  
despite the spiritual  
enticements and  
walks steadily  
towards the king  
himself.*

You also have to understand those Chassidim. As I explained earlier, the whole inyan of Moshiach goes completely against a person's metzius, and to a certain extent, even the metzius of k'dusha. Those who live only with the giluyim of the Rebbe will definitely find it hard to accept inyanei Moshiach, which are the revelation of the Etzem. A Chassid like this is really concerned for the honor of Lubavitch and he finds it hard to understand that he is

stuck in the stage of giluyim and that Lubavitch, led by the Rebbe, has moved on to the next stage of the revelation of the Essence.

What's important is to try, as much as possible, not to knock the other guy. When you avoid saying that he is not a Chassid, and you work seriously and in a positive way, the opposition diminishes. When we understand him, he will also understand and accept our view as legitimate.

In general, we need to differentiate between things the Rebbe said explicitly and those things that are not black and white. Those things the Rebbe said explicitly must be done no matter what, while with those things the Rebbe did not say explicitly, you have to consider each place separately.

For example, the Rebbe said we should publicize the B'suras HaGeula. Obviously, we must publicize it and there's no compromising on the fact that we must publicize it. But we didn't get clear instructions on how to publicize it. This is dependent on various factors that must be considered in each place, in consultation with marketing specialists.

**How can we influence Anash who are still not involved in inyanei Geula to get involved?**

Simply by learning and teaching. When the Rebbe said that inyanei Geula don't come with ease, he also gave the solution: learning inyanei Moshiach and Geula. As I said earlier, inyanei Geula are the polar opposite to a person's metzius. In order to change man's nature you need the ko'ach of Torah.

The Rebbe also explained that when a person's mind is full of inyanei Moshiach and Geula, it will naturally influence the heart so that he will want Moshiach, and this will

automatically lead to doing things that hasten the Geula.

A Chassid who learns the Rebbe's sichos of 5751-5752 sees how the Rebbe constantly speaks about the Geula and the hisgalus of Moshiach. He realizes that if he is a Chassid of the Rebbe he needs to live with what the Rebbe is involved in: inyanei Moshiach and Geula.

A Chassid who learns the sicha that was said to the shluchim in 5752, in which the Rebbe says that the avoda of shlichus is over and a new avoda began, must define in his own mind which avoda ended and which avoda began. He will come to the conclusion that there has been an essential change from the avodas ha'shlichus before 5752.

There are some who don't directly deal with inyanei Moshiach and Geula, but at shiurim at the Chabad house will suffice with a mention that Moshiach needs to come. My question is: can you call this a new avoda? What was the avoda that ended with 5752? And what's the new avoda? Make a cheshbon ha'nefesh: exactly what is it that ended and what new thing began?

The real problem is that people aren't learning. I once sat with a group of Chassidim and we spoke about the belief that the Rebbe is chai v'kayam. I must say, their ignorance astonished me. They

didn't know basic things from the Gemara, like the story about Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi who came every Friday night, after he passed away, to say Kiddush for his family, or the story about R' Elozor, who for eighteen years following his death, lay in the attic of his home and conducted dinei Torah, etc. If they don't know this, no wonder it's hard to accept the fact that the Rebbe is

***This is why nobody fantasizes about Moshiach, since in Yemos HaMoshiach one's metzius will be nullified! So who really wants that?***

chai v'kayam!

If this is the case among Anash, it's far worse outside! Basic knowledge is lacking. I had a mekurav who davened here at the Chabad house but learned in a Litvishe yeshiva. They attacked him for davening with the Lubavitchers, who believe that the Rebbe is Moshiach. When they asked him why he believed that the Rebbe is Moshiach, he said: I believe that

Moshiach can come at any moment and the Lubavitcher Rebbe seems like the man. Do you have another candidate?

When they continued to attack him with various questions, he said to them: I'm a simple person. If you have questions write them down and I'll ask the Lubavitchers. They promise to respond to every question with sources in Shas and Poskim, and if you are willing to accept it as a source, the Zohar too. But there's one condition. Every question you have, you need to cite a source from Shas or poskim.

Suddenly they were quiet. Apparently, all their questions were based on gut feelings without any sources in Shas and Poskim.

So I repeat, the best way to eliminate the opposition and to influence people to begin working on inyanei Moshiach and Geula themselves is through learning the sources, especially the Rebbe's sichos of 5751-5752 (with devotion and bittul), in which the Rebbe tells us where we stand in the Geula process. There are incredible things in these sichos and I'm sure that if Anash would learn them they would be galvanized to work on inyanei Moshiach and Geula until the complete hisgalus of the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach, may it take place immediately.

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# FROM RESURRECTION TO REDEMPTION

BY H. BEN YISHAI

*Who doesn't want to be connected to Geula? To feel and know that she too, "little her," is contributing something towards the lofty goal we all strive for? Mrs. Tirtza Harel of Migdal HaEmek, a very busy woman, mother of a large family including triplets, with three married children and a minyan of grandchildren, who is involved in numerous projects, shares her Geula outlook with us.*

Mrs. Tirtza Harel of Migdal HaEmek is first and foremost, a mother of thirteen children. She is a volunteer for the organization Efrat that encourages pregnant women not to terminate their pregnancy, is a kalla teacher, helps run a learning program for women three times a week, and is active in Kochav HaYeladim, an organization that arranges activities for special-needs children. She also lectures to women and girls around the country.

**How do you fit all this into your**

**day? Describe a day in your life.**

I get up at 6:15, prepare food for the children and drive with them and some other teachers to Afula. From there they have transportation to the Chabad school in Taanach. I stay in Afula for the minyan for Shacharis that begins at 8 o'clock in the Chabad shul. Every morning it's an amazing experience. I'm alone in the women's section and the atmosphere in shul is wonderful. There's no talking during the davening. It's great to start the day this way. Right after davening, I

learn Chitas, Rambam, and read the *HaYom Yom*.

About 10 o'clock is when the learning program in Migdal HaEmek begins. On days when there is no Medreshiya, I do my volunteer work for Efrat or work with kallos or help guide people in how to have an easy birth. All this takes place in the morning and sometimes at night.

I return home in the afternoon and cook, do laundry, and clean the house. I daven Mincha and rush to bring my daughters and the teachers back from Afula at 3 o'clock. The late afternoon hours and evening are devoted to the children. Talking, walking, listening, helping with homework, and then putting them to sleep between seven and eight. That's when the evening begins with phone calls to and from people who waited until I was available. Sometimes I give shiurim and then daven Maariv (sometimes at one in the morning). I try neither to miss a t'filla nor to miss saying Krias Shma from a Siddur. It revives me.

There were times that I felt overwhelmed, but I'm used to that. I go to sleep between 12-2 at night and get up at 6:15. I wake up a

minute before the alarm and plunge into a new day.

\* \* \*

Tirtza was born on Kibbutz Nir Dovid. From a young age she was involved in various creative endeavors. She acted in theater and worked in the music room at the kibbutz. In the army she served in the entertainment corps headquartered in Tel Aviv and edited two army newspapers. She was also part of the testing panel for the military orchestras. She wrote and published four books of songs and poetry that were played on radio, TV, and at festivals. She participated in an art exhibit in galleries in Tel Aviv.

**What an interesting life you led. It wasn't enough for you?**

Even though I was so creative, I wasn't happy, since my creativity came from my feelings of emptiness. I searched for more and more stimulation to fill the spiritual vacuum that I didn't know existed. I created numerous works, but it wasn't happy art. I only realized this after I became a baalas t'shuva.

**How did that happen?**

Hashem sent me an out-of-body experience. I was clinically dead. I don't recommend that anybody go



Some of Tirtza's children when they were young

*There is no end to the gratitude we get in return. I have an album of baby pictures and I look at them as my own children.*



Some of Tirtza's family

through what I went through, but there's no question that this is what propelled me and gave me the tools to do what I am doing today.

**Is clinical death really the way they describe it?**

Yes. When my neshama left my body, I stood before the heavenly court and asked for life. It was only when I was there that I felt the enormous value of life. From up above I saw my body lying down there. I saw that I remained whole as I was before. I continued to see it all

as though I was there but at the same time I saw it all from a deep, spiritual, true perspective.

**What did you conclude from your experience?**

You can summarize the change in me as "the advantage of light over darkness"! Firstly, it was clear to me that there is a Creator of the world and there is judgment. Second, I understood that here in this world is the best place to be because of our ability to effect change and to make an impact, which is impossible in any other world.

I also understood that Hashem sends us tests in order that we progress. Through this experience, he prepared me for my general and personal shlichus, which is actually my personal Geula. I value life no matter the circumstances. The value of life had become clear to me with a very deep awareness.

Because of this, I decided I would give lectures to people who think that death is the solution. Many people think that death is a refuge, a relief. Many people think that death is the end. They identify with the body and ignore the neshama. They are afraid of tests and challenges and don't know that only in this world can we see what needs correcting and improve ourselves, through the right perspective of gratitude.

From then on, I devoted myself to saving lives and I joined anything that enabled me to do so. I told my story so people would know that over there you can't correct anything, and only here can you do and accomplish. I remember that when I stood there I felt I had made an enormous mistake, and felt devastated that I had had the chance but didn't use it, that I wasted time. I suddenly understood that every moment is precious.

In the lectures I give I say there is no such thing as death as the end. I tell my story in order to open people's eyes so they hear that there is no cessation of life. A person continues to live on a very high level of awareness and continues to see everything. It's important to me to convey this message so that people don't think that ending life is a way out.

### **What feedback do you get?**

I speak for women and girls around the country and address all kinds of people – secular, dati or chareidi – and my story shakes them up. It helps them connect to life in a stronger way, to value life.

### **Is this the reason why you volunteer for Efrat?**

When I realized, when I stood before the heavenly court, that life has enormous value while we are still here in this world, and hardly anybody deeply appreciates this, I felt I had to increase life in any possible way. When I became acquainted with Efrat I knew this was for me.

Teaching kallos is also connected with this, connecting a person with his role in this world in everything having to do with the beginning of life. This is in addition to my large family and raising my children in the ways of Hashem.

### **What do you do for Efrat?**

I help women who are going through a difficult time in their lives and encourage them to go on and have their babies rather than terminate their pregnancies, G-d forbid. There is no end to the gratitude we get in return. I have an album of baby pictures and I look at them as my own children. I look at the album a lot and I'm in touch with many of the mothers. There was a kitrug on these children, a battle for their lives, and they are always children with special

neshamos. The parents are always more connected to them than to their other children.

### **Can you tell us some stories?**

There was a Russian woman who was 42 years old who had a fifteen-year-old daughter. She discovered that she (the mother) was pregnant and wasn't at all pleased. It was very hard to convince her to keep the child since in Russia her choice

*When you cry for something, it should only be over something worth crying for. Even if sometimes it seems as though we are crying over something else, if we look deep within ourselves, we will see that it is only Moshiach that we are lacking because when he comes, we won't be lacking anything.*

was acceptable. With Hashem's kindness, we managed to save her baby.

Today she doesn't know how to express her tremendous feelings of thanks as well as the gift of the appreciation of life. She shudders when she looks at her little girl and thinks about what she was planning on doing to her. "How could I have

even considered doing that?" she asks herself.

There was a story with someone who promised me she wouldn't abort but didn't keep her promise. Since she promised me, I believed her and didn't keep on top of things. When I heard that she had aborted the baby I was devastated. I cried a lot. I realized that my serenity regarding her was misplaced. She had lulled my urge to save lives to sleep. I felt terrible that because of my foolish naiveté I didn't connect with her neshama and didn't understand where she was holding. It hurt me because I felt that I had to give more of myself. This story motivated me not to let this happen again.

Since then, I do things completely different with the women I meet. I cry along with them and stay with them until the end. Today we have a team of amazing women who are ready to drop everything at any time and devote their neshamos to these women: Einat, Miriam Dalia, Chana Rus, and Talia.

That wasn't the end of the story with that woman. Time passed and I'd see her on the street now and then but she made believe she didn't see me. More time passed and I saw that she was pregnant with a sour face. And then another pregnancy with a sour face. Five years went by until I met her with the children and she looked happy.

I went over to her and told her that in the merit of the baby that wasn't saved, many other babies were saved, since I was much more aware. I told her that every baby saved since then was that baby's z'chus.

I asked her what lesson she had learned from what had happened and she told me that after she aborted she resolved never to do that again. On the contrary, to try

and bring more children into the world. You have no idea how happy I was to hear that.

\* \* \*

Tirtza has also felt the value of life in a negative way when her tenth child died. “Then too, I prayed over how precious life is and how we have to be thankful for it.

The child, Menachem Mendel, died on 14 Kislev thirteen years ago, after living two weeks. “After him I had triplets and then a year and a half later, my youngest daughter.”

As mentioned earlier, aside from raising her large family and being involved with Efrat, Tirtza also helps run a Medreshiya with Rebbetzin Chana Rus Shokron. The Medreshiya is open in the morning, three times a week. This is the seventh year. There are shiurim in Halacha, Chassidus, and Moshiach and Geula and women of all ages and backgrounds come.

“Whoever participates in the shiur sees miracles in her life,” says Tirtza with sparkling eyes.

Aside from this she is active in Kochav HaYeladim, which is operated by the municipal social services with support from the Joint



Tirtza's grandchildren

and communities abroad. “This project deals with everything needed for the proper development of children ages infant to six. The budget also covers the needs of special children with motor and sensory problems as well as a center for speech therapy and communication so that parents don't have to travel far with their children.

“The common denominator in everything I do is the motto of reinforcing life within the gashmius,” says Tirtza. It's all connected to increasing life since it all comes from the awareness of the purpose and meaning of creation.

#### **How do you have the strength, the energy to do everything you do?**

One of the main ways is chapter 11 of Igeres HaKodesh in *Tanya*, “L'Haskilcha Bina.” You have to learn it and live it. This chapter presents us with a way of thinking that influences our emotions even in the hardest times, when a person is faced with a test. The chapter shows how “evil,” in quotation marks, is actually true goodness. This chapter opens our eyes since it shows that everything that happens to us is from Hashem.

We come from Supernal Good, from Hashem's thought, and we know that everything that happens to us is all from His holy hand. The Torah uses the phrase “very good”

regarding the creation of the world, and commentaries explain that “very” refers to evil. What seems evil to us is actually **very** good.

The Alter Rebbe says that when something is good, it means that with our senses we perceive it as good while evil is beyond our ability to see as good.

It says, “The one Hashem loves, He rebukes.” The rebuke comes from greater love since Hashem cares about us and therefore He refines us from a higher place of hidden good, while in this world it looks as though this is a negative experience.

#### **From where do you get your enthusiasm?**

I think that what gets me going is the feeling that Hashem loves me. I feel Hashem's love for me and the nachas ruach that He has from my efforts. I take things very much to heart. I cry a lot when I hear people's stories, or in davening, and even from sippurei tzaddikim.

My children always ask me, “Ima, why are you crying?” I tell them that I am yearning for Moshiach. One day the children said to me that there was a woman in shul who also yearned for Moshiach...

Because when you cry for something, it should only be over something worth crying for. Even if sometimes it seems as though we are crying over something else, if we look deep within ourselves, we will see that it is only Moshiach that we are lacking because when he comes, we won't be lacking anything.



# THE WONDERS OF MOSHIACH

*The 35 stories that appear in the book Niflaos HaMoshiach are mostly Igros Kodesh stories, but also include miracle stories that took place in years past. \* The following is the introduction to the recently published Niflaos HaMoshiach, which gives an overview to the Chassidic practice of writing to the Rebbe. \* Part 2 of 2*

The following is the answer to the question the Rebbe was asked, “Many suggestions were proposed for ... And we can’t decide which to consider, what should we do?”

The Rebbe responded, “There are those who open a Chumash or T’hillim and the first pasuk they encounter, according to halacha, guides them in what to do” (Heichal Menachem vol. 2 p. 217).

The Rebbe spoke about this custom in public too, basing his statements on the practice done by previous g’dolim, saying this is in the category of “maaseh rav,” which should not be second-guessed, and as such is a practice that pertains to all. This is how the Rebbe put it:

We find a source for this practice – to look in Torah for direction to know what do – in the stories of Chazal (Chagiga 16a, Gittin 56a, 68a, Chullin 95b, etc.) about Tanaim and Amoraim

who met a child and they said to him, “Tell us a pasuk.” They decided what to do based on what he said. In other words, hearing the pasuk that the child, whom they met that day, said, was a lesson for them – by Divine Providence (and therefore, they asked a child specifically; i.e., since his intellect wouldn’t be mixed in, etc., Divine Providence would be more apparent).

As far as actual practice, it is known the practice of a number of people, whether G’dolei Yisroel or simple people, as well as women – that before doing a particular thing they open a holy book and look at the place they opened to and the first thing they see is what they base their decision on.

For example, if they open to the pasuk, “open shall you open [your hand]” or “rejoice shall you rejoice,” and the like, they have a sign from Above that they will be very successful

in what they are about to do. Or else, they understand from the sign to refrain from doing something or to postpone it, etc.

(Sicha Shabbos Parshas Noach 5749, Hisvaaduyos vol. 1, p. 309)

In the sicha of 15 Shvat 5748 (Hisvaaduyos vol. 2, p. 325), the Rebbe says that one can find answers to questions in avodas Hashem in the teachings of the Nasi HaDor. And when one finds it difficult to understand what the Rebbe says, then the “rav” will help him find the answer and the right advice without the “bribe” of self-love, etc. In footnote #62 the Rebbe adds and innovates “that even in *inyanei r’shus* (optional, non-mitzva activities) there are instructions in the teachings of Chassidus of the Nasi HaDor. Especially, since we know ... that the revelation of the yechida is within the four cubits that are outside a person,” i.e., it is specifically with regard to mundane matters that the Rebbe’s Atzmus is revealed!

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Writing to the Rebbe and receiving an answer in the *Igros Kodesh* is not at all different than the writing and the seriousness in the years prior to 3 Tamuz – i.e., requiring immersion in a mikva, proper preparations in thought, speech, and action, giving tz’daka, and strengthening one’s hiskashrus to the Rebbe, each according to his ability.

As in the past, writing to the Rebbe is not a substitute for the explicit instructions and guidance that the Rebbe gave us all (see sicha 21 Adar 5748, Hisvaaduyos vol. 2, p. 429 etc.):

Regarding questions in avodas Hashem, Torah and mitzvos – ask a rav moreh horaa (or a beis din) in your city, including what the Mishna says, “asei lecha rav.”

Regarding questions of advice for parnasa and the like, “Salvation comes with much counsel” – consult with knowledgeable friends.

Regarding questions of health, “And you shall guard, etc., your souls,” to conduct yourself in such a way that you don’t get sick in the first place, including – if the need arises, do as an expert doctor instructs...and even better – a doctor friend. And in special circumstances, “Salvation comes with much counsel,” two expert doctors. And when there is a difference of opinion – do as the majority says.

(To clarify, even when asking friends, etc., it is clear that this is the Rebbe’s answer being conveyed through those friends or a doctor friend, etc. The story is told of a Chassid whom the Rebbe told to consult with friends and when he asked the Rebbe why he didn’t merit a clear answer from the Rebbe, the Rebbe said: What do you care if my answer comes through them?)

The Rebbe also says that asking by opening a holy book is only when “**you want to clarify what to do in inyanei r’shus (for which there is no explicit Torah instruction)**” (sicha Shabbos Parshas BaMidbar 5749, Hisvaaduyos vol. 3, p. 224).

In other words, “**An important point must be clarified here. Namely, searching for signs in Torah regarding how to act is only for those things where there is room for doubt, etc.**

**More generally put – in inyanei r’shus..., where there is a need to seek in “the heavens” (in Torah) for a “sign,” how one should act in “your ways.” But in something that he knows for sure must be done al pi Torah, something that is really a matter of Heaven, there is no need to seek for signs, etc. And obviously one should not push off doing something because of some sign, etc.**

(sicha Parshas Noach, Hisvaaduyos 5749,



The newly published *Niflaos HaMoshiach*

vol. 1, p. 310).

Obviously, all these limitations apply to a question about whether to do this or that, but even when one asks a doctor friend, as the Rebbe says to do, it is important to also ask the Rebbe for a bracha. In that sicha where the Rebbe delineated who to consult about what, the Rebbe concludes, “As far as requests for a bracha, pidyonos, etc. – I repeat once again that in these matters there is a ‘chazaka’ that they

will continue with Hashem’s help, to fulfill requests, etc.”

Along with the Rebbe’s request that Chassidim write him detailed reports about their work in Chabad activities, the Rebbe also asked that people not write about trivialities:

There are those who think that first and foremost, they must try and write letters to me and the more the better, without it mattering who is writing, what his position is, and what he is writing about... Therefore, it is necessary to clarify that before writing a letter...think once again whether it is necessary to write this letter or is it a waste of time, the time of the writer and the time of the recipient.

(27 Cheshvan 5749, Hisvaaduyos vol. 1, p. 362)

\* \* \*

Since it is possible to understand differing ideas from the Rebbe’s answers, the right thing to do is not to rely solely on oneself but to present it to a mashpia, a rav posek halachos, or a friend. As the Rebbe said to do as quoted above and in the sicha of 2 Adar 5748, or as the Alter Rebbe himself concludes the introduction to *Tanya*:

**He whose mind is too limited to understand how to derive advice from these pamphlets, let him discuss his problem with the foremost scholars of his town and they**

**will enlighten him. Of [these scholars], I request that they not lay their hand upon their mouth (to keep silent) to conduct themselves with false modesty and humility. It is well known how bitter is the punishment of he who “withholds food” and also how great is the reward from the comment of our Sages on the pasuk, “Hashem enlightens the eyes of them both.” Thus Hashem will cause His face to shine upon them, with the light of the**



countenance of the King, (which provides) life.

## PART V

Regarding the benefits in stories of Chassidim, much has been written already especially in the writings of the Rebbe Rayatz, who extols those who tell stories and those who listen to them.

This is true for Chassidic tales and even more so for miracle stories, miracles done by our Rebbeim. Although for many years, Chassidim avoided recounting miracle stories because they said that hiskashrus to the Rebbe, Nasi HaDor is unconditional, the Rebbe himself spoke a number of times in praise of miracle stories.

In the lengthy correspondence between the Rebbe and his father-in-law, the Rebbe Rayatz, the Rebbe expressed his view that in our generation, in which the view that gashmius reigns supreme, we need miracles. The Rebbe put it this way:

**Correction of this situation can only be done through obvious miracles which elevate a person's soul from a deep pit to a high place ... for there is nothing that refines the physicality of nature to man and inspires his soul with a feeling of upliftedness like a miracle that breaks nature.**

This correspondence is mentioned in a number of the Rebbe's sichos and on Shabbos B'Reishis 5715, the Rebbe

said that the Rebbe Rayatz did not negate his [the Rebbe's] point and even wrote back that starting with the first leader of Chabad, the Alter Rebbe, when they had a need to display miracles, they did so.

The sicha of VaYeishev 5752 is well known and in it, the Rebbe says that relating miracles has the power to hasten the Geula:

**A Chassid can claim that he was educated to Torah study and he has no time for other things including miracles, so that they play no role in**

*Asking by opening a holy book is only when "you want to clarify what to do in inyanei r'shus"*

his life.

First of all, there must be the awareness and gratitude to Hashem for the miracles that He does. Especially as it is close to Chanuka, which is a time of "publicizing miracles." Therefore, even if you want to say that the rest of the year doesn't need this emphasis on publicizing miracles (as we see that miracles are the focus of Chanuka and Purim), during Chanuka there ought to be the publicizing of miracles. One can say that this

includes not only the miracle of the war and miracle of Chanuka (the jar of oil), but the publicity of all miracles that Hashem does for the Jewish people – "in those days, in this time."

Furthermore, and most importantly, the awareness and gratitude and giving praise to Hashem for the miracles that He does, in addition to the idea of appreciation for the good that was done, also pertains to the coming of Moshiach Tzidkeinu with the true and complete Redemption. As the Gemara says: "Hashem sought to make Chizkiyahu Moshiach...the Attribute of Judgment said to Hashem...You did all these miracles for Chizkiya (he was saved from Sancheriv and healed of his illness), yet he did not say shira to you. Will you make him Moshiach?!"

Based on this it is understood that publicizing miracles that Hashem does in our time pertains to actually bringing the true and complete Redemption!

The main lesson to be learned is that since we are already after all the inyanim and the Geula still did not come, it would be very fitting to be involved in publicizing miracles. Namely, to publicize to oneself and others, and in every single place, the miracles that Hashem does for us, with the knowledge that this is connected with the true and complete Redemption.

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# THREE GROUPINGS OF THE TEN PLAGUES

BY RABBI YOSEF KARASIK

*Punishment as correction for sins. \* “All I did, I did for your sakes.” \* Shocking statement by the Baal Shem Tov. \* Chizuk to the Jewish people. \* An interesting look at the plagues according to the Midrash, Kabbala, and Chassidus Chabad.*

## PUNISHMENT AS TIKKUN

Punishments from Hashem are not revenge, G-d forbid, out of G-d's wrath, but a correction for the harm man inflicts with his evil actions and sins, as an “educational punishment,” to arouse a person to repent and correct his deeds.

The ten plagues with which Hashem smote Egypt were a correction for Pharaoh's sins, in order to teach Egypt that there is a Creator and Someone in charge, as it says, (1) “So that you know that I am Hashem in the midst of the earth,” and, (2) “so the Egyptians would do a sincere t'shuva” for their misdeeds against the Jewish people. Thus says the prophet Yechezkel that Hashem takes revenge on the enemies of the Jewish people so that (3) “they know that I am

Hashem.”

Another reason for the plagues is to fulfill the promise made to Avrohom Avinu at the Bris Bein HaB'sarim, (4) “and the nation ... I will judge” – that Hashem will punish the Egyptians for the slavery and slaughter of the Jewish people. (5)

In addition to these reasons, the pasuk gives another reason for the ten plagues (6): “I mocked Egypt and My signs that I placed within them...” so that “you know that I am Hashem!” In other words, the reason for punishing the Egyptians was so that “the Jewish people would recognize the might of Hashem,” and as Rashi says (7), “Hashem brings punishment upon the goyim so that Israel hears and is frightened.”

This is quite amazing – mighty

events take place in the world, ten plagues, the splitting of the sea, etc., all for the purpose of the Jewish people fearing and being impressed by Hashem's might!

The Baal Shem Tov (8) once explained that sometimes mighty events take place in the world even for one Jew (and not only for the entire Jewish people):

There was once a war between two nations which lasted seven years. The Baal Shem Tov said that the war took place so that a righteous Jew, an oved Hashem, would hear the sound of the armies fighting and would learn from them to compose a niggun, “so he may serve Hashem with that niggun.”

Is that not amazing? Revolutions that take place in the world, the building up of a military industry, warring armies, bloody battles, dead, wounded, etc. – and intelligent people analyze the political reasons, the history, etc. The Baal Shem Tov says, no! The reason the war took place is only so that one Jew will increase in his avodas Hashem! A niggun for avodas Hashem!

**“EVERYTHING I DID,  
I DID FOR YOUR SAKES”**

The Rambam (9) writes similarly,

when he tells of a king who built a magnificent palace in order to glorify his kingdom, but that wasn't the real reason for building it. Hashem had brought this about, had given the king the thought of building a palace, of investing huge sums of money and much effort, solely so that one day when a righteous Jew would walk by, he would find a place to rest in the shade of this mighty edifice!

The Midrash says (10): Rabbi Yitzchok says, the year that King Moshiach is revealed, all the kings of the nations of the world will quarrel with one another...and all the nations will make a commotion and be terrified and fall on their faces... And Israel is in a commotion and is frightened ... and He says to them: My children, do not fear. Everything I did, I did for your sakes. Why are you afraid? Do not fear, the time for your redemption has arrived. (The final Geula is unlike the first Geula insofar as the first Geula was followed by suffering and servitude of the nations, but with the final Geula you will not suffer or serve the nations thereafter.)

All events taking place in the world is only because of you, because of the Jewish people. So too with the exodus from Egypt, Hashem smote the Egyptians in order to demonstrate His might to the Jewish nation.

## THE PLAGUES DIVIDED INTO THREE GROUPS

In Kabbalistic works it explains that the ten plagues are divided into three groups, and therefore, in the Hagada, Rabbi Yehuda gives acronyms for the ten plagues: D'tzach, Adash, B'Achav, dividing them into three groups (for he could have divided them into four groups or two groups).

If you examine the story of Moshe's meetings with Pharaoh before each plague, you see there is a pattern that fits this division of three groupings. In the first plague of each of the three groups, Moshe meets with Pharaoh, warns him and conveys a

spiritual message. In the second plague of each of the three groups, Moshe meets with Pharaoh and only warns him, and in the third plague of the three groups, Moshe doesn't even meet with Pharaoh:

The first group – D'tzach: before the first plague, blood, Moshe adjured Pharaoh to free the Jews (“the waters of the Nile will turn to blood”) and added a spiritual/G-dly message (“with this you will know that I am Hashem”). Before the second plague, frogs, Moshe warned Pharaoh (“I will afflict all your borders with frogs”), but he did not add a message that Hashem is the Creator. Before the third plague, lice, Moshe did not warn Pharaoh, did not convey a message, and didn't even meet with him.

The same is true for the second group of plagues – Adash: Before the first plague in this series, wild animals, Moshe warned Pharaoh to free the Jews (“behold I am sending ... the wild animals”) and he added a message (“so that you know that I am Hashem”). Before the second plague in this series, pestilence, Moshe warned Pharaoh (“a very severe pestilence”) and did not convey the message about Hashem being the Creator. Before the third plague, boils, Moshe neither warned Pharaoh nor conveyed a message about Hashem, and did not even meet with him.

So too with the third grouping – B'Achav: before the first plague of this series, hail, Moshe warned Pharaoh to free the Jews (“behold I will rain ... a severe hail”) and added a message (“so that you know that there is none like Me in the entire land”). Before the second plague in this series, locusts, Moshe warned Pharaoh (“behold I will bring locusts tomorrow within your borders”) and did not convey the message that Hashem is the Creator. Before the third plague, darkness, Moshe neither warned Pharaoh nor conveyed a message about Hashem, and did not even meet with him.

The division of the plagues into

three groups is because of their role in educating Pharaoh and the Jewish people in absolute faith in G-d.

## THREE FOUNDATIONS IN BELIEF IN HASHEM

There are three foundations in belief in the Creator: 1) that Hashem created the world and everything in it, and, 2) that Hashem runs the world every moment and nature does not work on its own. All natural events are under G-dly supervision. Hashem sustains everything from the mightiest animals to the tiniest of creatures. 3) Hashem can change the rules of nature by means of miracles.

Pharaoh denied each of these three principles: 1) he denied the existence of the Creator, as he said, (11) “I do not know Hashem.” Pharaoh maintained that nature rules, that the Nile was G-d. 2) He denied that Hashem rules the world, as he said (1), “who is Hashem?” He believed that nature runs on its own and who was Hashem to tell him what to do? 3) He denied that Hashem could change the rules of nature when he said (1), “who is Hashem that I should listen to His voice,” i.e., what power does He have that I should submit to Him and listen to Him? The laws of nature rule and Hashem cannot change them and cause me harm.

Each group of three plagues teaches and corrects one of Pharaoh's mistakes.

## THE FIRST GROUP: TO BELIEVE IN HASHEM

The first group – D'tzach: blood, frogs, lice – teach Pharaoh to believe in Hashem, which is why Moshe says before the first plague, (12) “with this you will know that I am Hashem.” We see this with the plagues of the first group:

1 – “The first plague, blood” – the Egyptians thought that the Nile was G-d since it watered their fields and

they relied on it for their sustenance. When the waters of the Nile turned to blood, Hashem was showing them that there is a power above the Nile: “The One Who said that the Nile should have water, is the One Who said it should be blood.”

2 – “The second plague, frogs” – the Nile swarmed with frogs and when they left the water for dry land and entered ovens, etc., they could see that there is a Creator and that the Nile is not a Creator, “the One Who told the frogs to live in water tells them to go on to dry land.”

3 – “The third plague, lice” – the One Who told the earth to produce food to sustain life will tell the earth to swarm with lice that will feed on man and animals. After this plague, the last in the series that came to teach them about faith in Hashem, the Egyptian magicians conceded, “This is the finger of G-d” and acknowledged Hashem.

### THE SECOND GROUP: THE CREATOR RUNS THE WORLD

The second group – Adash: wild animals, pestilence, and boils – teach Pharaoh that Hashem runs the world and nature does not run on its own, as Moshe said before the plague of wild animals, “so that you know that I am Hashem in the midst of the earth.” We see this with the plagues of the second group:

1 – “The fourth plague, wild animals” – contrary to the nature of wild animals that they strike at everyone and do not differentiate among people, Hashem showed that He runs the world and the wild animals did no harm in the land of Goshen. This openly demonstrated that Hashem supervises every detail.

2 – “The fifth plague, pestilence” – the same thing happened with the pestilence that Hashem separated between the cattle of the Jewish people and the cattle of the Egyptians.

Only the Egyptian’s cattle were struck.

3 – “The sixth plague, boils” – although boils afflicted people throughout Egypt, it did not strike at the Jews, in order to demonstrate that Hashem rules nature. Furthermore, the boils first struck at the Egyptian magicians and only afterwards the rest of Egypt, because the magicians were the ones who misled Egypt, telling them that the plagues were not the finger of G-d. Therefore, Hashem showed that He rules nature and the magicians were the first to suffer.

After this plague, the last in the

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series of plagues that taught them that Hashem rules nature, the Torah says, “and the magicians could not stand ...” because of their acknowledgement that nature is in G-d’s hands.

### THE THIRD GROUP: HASHEM RULES OVER NATURE

The third group – B’Achav: hail, locusts, darkness and the death of the firstborn – taught Pharaoh that Hashem judges, rewarding the righteous and punishing the wicked. He lowers the arrogant and raises up the lowly, and He rules and changes

nature as He wishes. Therefore, with the plague of hail it says, (13) “so that you know that there is naught like Me throughout the earth.” This lesson is learned from the plagues of the third group:

1 – “The seventh plague, hail” – Chazal describe the many miracles that took place with this plague, in which Hashem demonstrated His absolute power over nature: fire and hail together; the hail differentiated between righteous and wicked, even among the Egyptians, even though the difference between an Egyptian “tzaddik” and rasha is minute; and many other miracles.

2 – “The eighth plague, locusts” – Hashem’s great army of locusts that concealed the sun and which swarmed everywhere, but regarding the field of a tzaddik, even if his field was surrounded by fields of the wicked which were struck by locusts, his field was saved.

3) – “The ninth plague, darkness” – the darkness differentiated between the righteous and wicked among the Jews.

4) – “The tenth plague, death of the firstborn” – differentiated between firstborns and everybody else.

*(Sources: commentaries on the parsha, Likkutei Sichos, vol. 36, p. 33)*

#### NOTES:

- 1) Shmos 8: 18
- 2) S’forno on Shmos 7:3
- 3) Yechezkel 25:14-17
- 4) B’Reishis 15:14
- 5) Rambam Hilchos T’shuva 6:3
- 6) Shmos 10:2
- 7) Shmos 7:3
- 8) Maamarei Admur HaZakein, 5565, chelek 1, amud 202
- 9) Hakdama to his commentary to Mishnayos
- 10) Yalkut Shimoni Yeshaya, 60, remez 499
- 11) Shmos 5:2
- 12) Shmos 7:17
- 13) Shmos 9:14

# BRACHA 'BY MISTAKE'

BY DANIEL GORDON

*To the shock of his wife, as soon as she said that the Rebbe had told her, “refua shleima,” he said they were going to the doctor immediately. She insisted that she felt fine and why should they bother but he didn’t take no for an answer...*

R' Moshe Sheiner of Kfar Chabad relates:

I heard the following miracle story on my way back to Boro Park from a farbrengen with the Rebbe in 5751 (1991). A Poilishe Chassid, who had been at the farbrengen too, joined me in the taxi late that night. He excitedly told me what happened with his good friend in Williamsburg, though he did not tell me the names of the people involved.

\* \* \*

A few weeks ago, my Satmar friend's wife heard terrible news, that her sister, who lives in Yerushalayim was very sick. The doctors did not hold out any hope and all she could do was pray. At a certain point, she decided to go to New York and to ask the Lubavitcher Rebbe for a bracha. She knew that only the Rebbe could help, and despite her illness, she arrived in New York herself, not sufficing with just sending a letter or

someone to represent her.

Upon her arrival in New York, she went to her sister, a Satmar Chassid, who hosted her. On the first Sunday, she planned to go to the Rebbe for “dollars” in order to receive the Rebbe's bracha. She took it for granted that her sister would accompany her, but to her dismay, her sister adamantly refused. Her sister explained that there was no way in the world that she would go to 770, for she saw this as a betrayal to Satmar, which didn't view Lubavitch and the Rebbe positively, to say the least.

All her pleading was for naught. Her sister was afraid of the family being excommunicated, of not being able to do shidduchim for her children, of shalom bayis problems, of her children being thrown out of their schools, etc. The Yerushalmi woman was beside herself. According to the doctors, she was not much longer for this world, and her last hope was coming to America in order to obtain

the Lubavitcher Rebbe's bracha. Yet her own sister, her flesh and blood, refused to help her!

After a few days, many arguments and much pleading, they came to a compromise. Her Satmar sister would accompany her to 770, would wait in line with her, but would under no circumstances, enter the building. In addition, nobody was allowed to know that she had gone to Crown Heights, including her husband.

The next Sunday, the sisters went to 770 and waited in line. Thousands waited to see the Rebbe and receive a dollar and a bracha. As they waited, the sisters got into an animated conversation and they kept moving up without paying attention to where they were. After a long wait, they were inside the building, very close to the Rebbe. That's when they realized where they were, but it was too late.

The first one to pass by was the sister from Yerushalayim. The Rebbe gave her a dollar and said, “bracha v'hatzlacha,” and then made an up-down, dismissive motion with his hand. Then it was the turn of the sister from Williamsburg. The Rebbe gave her a dollar and said, “refua shleima.”

The Yerushalmi sister was very happy to have received the Rebbe's bracha but her Satmar sister was terribly upset. She felt fooled for she hadn't wanted to go there and in the end she had had no choice but to pass



accompany her sister and hadn't intended to do something so terrible.

Her husband remained calm and only quietly asked, "What did the Rebbe tell you?"

His wife saw no point in repeating it but he insisted. He knew good and well who the Lubavitcher Rebbe is. To the shock of his wife, as soon as she said that the Rebbe had told her, "refua shleima," he said they were going to the doctor **immediately**. She insisted that she felt fine and why should they bother but he didn't take no for an answer.

After a doctor examined her and found nothing wrong, he suggested that she take a certain X-ray at a nearby hospital. A few minutes after taking the X-ray, a doctor called the couple in and asked them to sit down.

"I don't know why you came here but you should know that if you hadn't come here today, tomorrow you would have been unable to do so..."

Needless to say, the two sisters had a refua shleima!

by the Rebbe, and after all that, the Rebbe's bracha seemed pointless. She felt fine, so why did she need a bracha for a refua shleima? And why hadn't her sick sister gotten a bracha for a refua shleima.

She cried and cried. When her husband came home, he found his

wife an emotional wreck, which was unlike her. All his attempts at calming her down or obtaining some explanation from her were fruitless. She was too afraid of his reaction.

After a few hours though, she finally broke down and told her husband how she had agreed to

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# R' BERKE

BY SHNEUR ZALMAN BERGER

*Based on a supernatural instruction of the Rebbe, R' Berke submitted his request to emigrate from Russia and was given permission to leave! \* In Eretz Yisroel, R' Berke was a melamed of small children. He taught them what real mesirus nefesh is. \* How did the Rebbe react when R' Berke referred to him in yechidus as "The Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach shlita"? \* Part 4 of 4 in the biography of the Chassid, baal mesirus nefesh, mekushar to the Rebbeim, and an outstanding oved, R' Berke Chein a"h.*

## HEAVENLY DECREE

After the histalkus of the Rebbe Rayatz in 1950, R' Berke became mekushar to the Rebbe MH"M, and thus he wished to send the Rebbe a *pidyon nefesh*. This was no simple matter, however, since it was forbidden to send letters to the United States and every letter that left the Soviet Union was censored. What greater crime could there be than to send a letter to "Schneersohn"?

R' Berke wrote to the Rebbe through Chassidim who lived in Eretz Yisroel. This was the simplest way but it was time-consuming and roundabout. Months could go by until an answer was received. Sometimes R' Berke would write a *pidyon nefesh* and



R' Berke davening in 770

put it in a volume of *Tanya*.

R' Berke continued to live in fear, hiding from the long arms of the K.G.B. His living conditions were intolerable. No wonder then that his father-in-law, Rabbi Shneur Zalman Kalmanson, often asked the Rebbe for a bracha for his son-in-law, daughter, and granddaughter, who had remained behind the Iron Curtain and suffered greatly. In a letter dated 24 Nissan 1957, the Rebbe wrote:

In response to your express letter...in which you ask once again regarding efforts on behalf of your daughter, her husband, and their daughter to come to Eretz Yisroel: It is proper, and there is no reason to postpone efforts in this. Especially, since we are coming from the days of our liberation, when Hashem took all the Jewish people from constriction to expansion, with joy and upraised hand, and this concept continues in the days that follow, as Chazal expound on the verse, when these days are remembered, they also recur...

When you write to your daughter and her husband, please give them my regards and blessing that everything connected with this be arranged easily and in a good way, and may the Creator and Ruler of the world place them all in a state of expansiveness, materially and spiritually. and with serenity...

When Rabbi Kalmanson realized that there was no natural way for R' Berke to leave the Soviet Union, he pressured his daughter to ask for permission for herself and her daughter to leave. However, Faige was

insistent that she would not leave without her husband, no matter what.

A few years later, a supernatural directive from the Rebbe suddenly arrived: to ask for exit visas for the entire family.

R' Berke described what happened at a Chassidische farbrengen:

"In those days, I was utterly 'treif,' and was afraid to show my nose outdoors. How could I dream of asking to leave? We decided to ask the Rebbe and would do whatever he said. Obviously, all the letters between my father-in-law and me were written in code.

"One of my sons (R' Mordechai) who was already fortunate enough to be learning in Tomchei T'mimim-770, followed his grandfather's (my father-in-law) advice and asked whether his mother should request to leave the Soviet Union alone. The Rebbe's answer was clear and surprising – that his father (me) should present a request to leave for the entire family and Hashem would help.

"My son was stunned by this answer. Nobody had considered such a possibility, for I was 'treif and pasul.' The secret police were searching for me, and many of those who were arrested and interrogated later said that one of the focal points of their interrogation was where was Berke Chein? So how could I reveal my whereabouts? I would immediately fall into their bloodthirsty hands!

"When my son raised these questions to the Rebbe, the Rebbe smiled and dismissed all his concerns, saying: They won't realize...

"When I got this instruction from the Rebbe, I was at the same time ecstatic and terrified. It was like it is quoted in Chassidus, 'joy implanted in my heart on one side and crying implanted in my heart on the other side.' My wife was able to ask for the form, and could even submit it afterwards to the Interior Ministry in my area with the claim that I didn't feel well and was in bed, but how

could I fill out the questionnaire and sign it when there were thirty questions about my life from my youth until that day? There were questions like was I ever arrested, for which crime, was I sentenced, for how long, where did I live all this time, what did I do, what did my family do, etc.

"Obviously I had to deny my 'dark' past and invent all sorts of lies, but at the end of the questionnaire there was a warning that for every lie the punishment was three years in jail and the terms could not be served concurrently.

"But since the Rebbe had told me

***"When I presented the papers and documents to the clerk at the airport along with the luggage, he became furious and said our permits were forged and even cursed me..."***

to submit it and even dismissed any concerns, I would surely be okay. They wouldn't notice and wouldn't associate one thing with another. They simply wouldn't realize it was me.

"I filled out the form with all its many details. There wasn't one true word in any of my answers except for my name, the first names of my family, our family name and our present address. The rest was falsified with perfectly acceptable information. And of course we included a dozen passport photos, as they required. If they had discovered that it was all

made up, I would have gotten over 80 years in jail and exile to Siberia.

"From the day we submitted the request to the Interior Ministry, I was indescribably petrified. I continued to stay indoors. Every knock at the door made my heart race. When certain types walked by the house, I became enormously frightened.

"Months passed and there was no sign of a response, but the tension hadn't dissipated and the fears did not cease. It was only *a year and a half later*, in 1961, that we got a positive response, which said I should come and get a passport with an exit visa. I couldn't believe what I was seeing. I feared they had laid a trap to catch me, but I had no choice. I went to the Interior Ministry in utter fear to get the visa, and the clerk simply handed it to me..."

### **"AND THEY BELIEVED IN HASHEM AND IN MOSHE HIS SERVANT"**

The mashpia, R' Michael Mishulovin was there and he describes the tremendous joy when they received the coveted documents:

"When R' Berke received the passport and exit visa he began to dance from joy and his friends joined in his dance. He composed different tunes to the words, 'and they believed in Hashem and in Moshe His servant.' He couldn't understand how they had given him an exit visa except that it came about miraculously through the Rebbe.

"The joy continued until the flight. The night before, he stayed in his father's house in Moscow. Despite the secrecy surrounding his trip, word got out and about a minyan of Chassidim gathered in his father's house and farbrenged all night. As for R' Berke, whatever Chassidische niggun they sang, he put it to the words, 'and they believed in Hashem and in Moshe His servant.' He said, 'I never believed I would be able to get a Russian passport and that I would be able to



walk about freely in the street without fear of every person I saw. Now, I've even gotten a visa. This is only because of the faith in Hashem and in Moshe His servant of our generation..."

R' Berke told about what happened next:

"As soon as I came home with the news, we packed all our belongings in bundles and suitcases within four hours and boarded the plane for Moscow, where we had to wait a few days until there was place for us on the plane to Vienna.

"When I presented the papers and documents to the clerk at the airport along with the luggage, he became furious and said our permits were forged and even cursed me. He took all the documents with him in order to verify them. As you can well imagine, my heart sank. I couldn't do a thing for he had all the paperwork. I protested but was ignored. I stood there for a while in tremendous fear and wondered what would become of me.

"After a while the wicked clerk returned and hissed, 'You're lucky, Jew. This time the signatures aren't forged.'

"A stone rolled off my heart and I hurried to make the final arrangements and boarded the plane that was waiting

on the runway. Throughout the flight I didn't stop thinking about what the Rebbe had said, 'They won't realize...'"

R' Berke, his wife and daughter flew to Vienna and from there to Eretz Yisroel. It's hard to describe the family reunion after such a long separation. R' Berke's son, Meir Simcha said:

"My parents and sister arrived in Eretz Yisroel in 1961. I hadn't seen my parents in 14 years and had only heard about my sister Freyda. It was an incredibly emotional reunion."

### A CHASSIDISHE CHINUCH FOR MESIRUS NEFESH

R' Berke settled in Kfar Chabad and worked as a melamed. He did his work with endless mesirus nefesh. He davened and learned with the children with all the Chassidische chayus that welled up in his heart. Each day, before the five-year-olds said Shma, he would stop them and say, "My dear children, we are about to say Shma Yisroel. It says in holy s'farim that when you say Shma you should think that you are ready to give up your life for Hashem. So I will tell you a story about mesirus nefesh..."

And every day he told the children thrilling stories of mesirus nefesh. The

children listened closely to the stories of this Chassid who was a model of true mesirus nefesh.

After the story, he would say: "And now let us all say the Shma Yisroel together with the intention of being ready to give up our lives with 'Echad.'"

You can well imagine what the Shma Yisroel of the children of Kfar Chabad was like after hearing this from the depths of the heart of a Chassid who personally lived with mesirus nefesh for many years.

### A PRAYER LIKE THAT

R' Berke's davening was unique and it only began after hours of preparation. Once he retired, he devoted the entire day to Shacharis, starting with immersing in the mikva, learning Chassidus, and ending with the actual davening, which took hours.

With the break of dawn you could already make out R' Berke's bent-over figure with his stick and basket over his shoulder, walking to the mikva. He immersed 310 times daily, as is the custom of the kabbalists. He did this despite the fact that the great effort this entailed caused him pain because of medical problems he suffered from.

From the mikva, he went to shul where he joined a Chassidus shiur before the first minyan. Then he returned home to put on t'fillin and say Shma. When a family member asked him why he did it this way, he explained that he read that one should put on t'fillin each day at home. And since, when he left for the mikva, it was before the time when one can put on t'fillin, he returned home for this purpose even though walking was difficult for him in his later years.

When he returned to shul, he sat down to learn chapter 32 of *Tanya*, for he had learned from the elder Chassidim that you cannot say, "I accept the positive command of love your fellow as yourself" before learning the chapter of *Tanya* that discusses Ahavas Yisroel. After putting on his



R' Berke with his brother R' Avrohom Aharon

## IMMERSION BEFORE IMMERSING

In the final years of his life, R' Berke spent long periods with his son-in-law and daughter, the Friedmans, who lived in Tzfas. On these visits, he went to the gravesite of the Arizal. Before doing so, he immersed in the Ari's mikva. But prior to that, he was mehader to immerse and purify himself in another mikva.

down again for another two hours and at four he got up again. He slept for a total of four hours and from four until six he learned Hemshech 5666 in the house and then he went to the mikva and to daven."

R' Berke put on four pairs of t'fillin every day (Rashi, Rabbeinu Tam, Raavad, and Shimusha Rabba) after getting the Rebbe's approval. But it wasn't only four pairs that he put on because he had a number of pairs of each type: from "thin" hides (sheepskin) and "thick" hides (cowhides), with Arizal writing and the

to the Rebbe.

R' Berke related two important points about his first yechidus:

"When I left Russia and arrived in Kfar Chabad I would gather the children in shul before Kabbalas Shabbos and tell them stories of mesirus nefesh about Chassidim in Russia. Then, when the minyan began, I debated whether to daven with the minyan or first learn Chassidus and then daven. I decided to ask the Rebbe in yechidus.

"Apparently there were some people in Kfar Chabad at that time who weren't that particular about davening with a minyan because the Rebbe told me: Since the inyan of davening with a minyan needs chizuk in Kfar Chabad, and since they look at you, they might learn from you not to daven with a minyan. So daven with the minyan and then learn Chassidus."

R' Berke followed this guidance not only personally, but also worked on strengthening the inyan of davening with a minyan among others. As soon as he arrived in Eretz Yisroel, he tried to organize minyanim for Shacharis so nobody would be left without a minyan. He himself davened in yeshiva later on, after arranging the minyanim and learning Chassidus for many hours.

In that same yechidus the Rebbe referred him to a top doctor in the United States for a medical examination.

"I went with my nephew to the doctor," said R' Berke, "and he told me that he was one of the doctors who treated the Rebbe Rayatz, and they discovered something amazing. One of the main arteries that brings blood to the heart was blocked for five years but it didn't stop the Rebbe Rayatz from leading a normal life."

After R' Berke saw that the Rebbe wears a hat (fedora) he decided that he had to do the same and he went to a hat store in Crown Heights and bought a black hat. At the next farbrengen, when the Rebbe saw him with his new



R' Berke with his brother, R' Avrohom Aharon and his son R' Meir Simcha

tallis and t'fillin, he sat down to learn chapters 41 and 42 of *Tanya* (as the mashpia R' Nissan Nemenov taught him). Only then did he begin to daven, and his davening was slow and with great chayus.

R' Berke's grandson, Peretz Friedman, relates that when he spent the summer with his grandfather, he followed him around and was amazed to see how his grandfather spent his day:

"At ten at night he lay down to sleep and at twelve he got up and began to learn Torah. At two, he lay

Alter Rebbe's writing and other pairs from various scribes. He put them all on every day and recited the Shma with each pair. No wonder his davening lasted until the afternoon and in the winter months until nearly sunset!

## CHASSID AND MEKUSHAR

A few months after he arrived in Eretz Yisroel, R' Berke traveled to the Rebbe for the first time for Tishrei 5722 (1961). We don't know about his first yechidus with the Rebbe, but what follows are some amazing facts that illustrate R' Berke's devotion and bittul



**R' Berke receiving a dollar from the Rebbe**

black hat instead of his cap, the Rebbe said that as a Russian he should continue to wear a cap. The Rebbe told him to take off his hat immediately and in order for him to have two head coverings, he gave R' Berke a white

handkerchief as a gift.

Two years later, R' Berke came to the Rebbe again, and from then on, he went to the Rebbe at least once a year and sometimes twice.

His hiskashrus to the Rebbe was outstanding. He made a special effort to be at every t'filla and every farbrengen in order to see the Rebbe.

The Rebbe was greatly mekarev R' Berke and told him to stand next to him on the bima during the t'kios on Rosh HaShana.

### **R' BERKE WRITES TO THE REBBE: "MELECH HA'MOSHIACH"**

Even then, forty years ago, R' Berke began to write to the Rebbe and to call him "Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach shlita." He even said this in yechidus.

One time the Rebbe asked him in yechidus how he knew this and R' Berke said that he felt that this was so. The Rebbe did not react but smiled broadly.

But on another occasion the Rebbe told him that he had to write, "Melech Moshiach" without the letter "Hei" before the word "Moshiach." And so, in photocopies of letters that he wrote to the Rebbe in those years, he writes, "Rebbe Melech Moshiach." We don't find that the Rebbe minded this term,

on the contrary, he responded to all of them.

R' Sholom Yaakov Chazan, who in recent years has worked on editing the *Igros Kodesh*, said that he saw one of the letters that R' Berke wrote to the Rebbe in 5730 with a number of questions. At the beginning of the letter and before each question, he wrote "Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach shlita" in big letters and the Rebbe answered each question in his holy hand.

In Elul 5728, after the passing of R' Avrohom Pariz who was responsible for collecting maamud money, Kupas Rabbeinu and Keren HaShana, the Rebbe told the residents of Kfar Chabad that he appointed R' Berke to be in charge of these funds.

R' Berke filled this role with great dedication. Every so often, he sent letters to Chabad centers in Eretz Yisroel in which he asked them to send him all the money for the Rebbe's funds. The money he raised he transferred to Aguch in Eretz Yisroel, which distributed the money according to the Rebbe's instructions. He brought the list of donors with him to the Rebbe when he traveled for Tishrei.

R' Berke did the work of fundraising maamud with a special chayus. Rabbi Amir Yitzchok Rosen relates:

"In the last year of R' Berke's life I was in his house a few hours a day in order to help him. I was privileged to be of help to him in counting the maamud money. Whenever he counted the money, he wore his jacket, put on his cap and gartel, and only then began to count. The counting took a long time and for a Chassid in his eighties it was quite an effort.

"I once asked him why he bothered with his preparations before counting and he looked at me and simply said, 'This is the Rebbe's money.'"

R' Berke's son R' Mordechai relates:

"Until his final years, my father stayed with me when he came to 770. His hiskashrus to the Rebbe was



**R' Berke with a Chabad delegation at the Prime Minister, Yitzchok Shamir, from right to left: R' Zushe Wilmovsky, R' Berke, R' Shmuel Chefer, R' Berke Wolf (on the side)**



**R' Berke with his son-in-law Eliyahu Friedman and his grandchildren**

outstanding. Just as an example I'll tell you that when he had to submit the maamud lists to the Rebbe, if he hadn't been to the mikva yet that day he would tell me to write the words, 'Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach' on the envelope."

The family has a photocopy of an interesting note that he wrote to the Rebbe regarding the money and there's much mystery surrounding this story. This is what he wrote:

*K'vod K'dushas Admur Melech Moshiach shlita*

*Whenever I wrote the lists of donors to the tz'daka funds, I wrote all their family members, and now there are those who say I did not do the right thing because this takes up the time of the Rebbe Melech Moshiach shlita.*

*So I would like to know what to do in the future.*

*Chaim Dovber Chein 7 Tamuz 5742*

The Rebbe's answer in a postscript was (see photocopy): **In response to your question, obviously, continue to list all family members in the list of donors.**

The amazing thing is that this answer was written on 5 Sivan 5742, a month before R' Berke wrote his question!

### **R' BERKE MELTS THE HEARTS OF THE KIBBUTZNIKIM**

When R' Berke first arrived in Eretz Yisroel he would travel at least once a week to kibbutzim and moshavim around the country in order to spread the wellsprings through "U'faratzta."

He was not fluent in Ivrit and the little Hebrew that he spoke was pronounced with an Ashkenazi-Yiddish accent, but this didn't stop him from doing what the Rebbe wanted. Before going, he would always put on a suit and his gartel, as if he were going to daven.

When he got up to speak, he began to briefly describe the mesirus nefesh of the Chabad Chassidim in Russia.

### **'FASTEN YOUR GARTELS' ON A PLANE TO VISIT THE REBBE FOR YUD SHVAT**

The journalist, Shmuel Avidor joined a charter of Lubavitcher Chassidim who went to the Rebbe for Yud Shvat 5730. In an article entitled, "Fire of Chabad Above the Atlantic," he described the flight, which included a description of R' Berke.

"The plane experienced turbulence and the pilot warned us to put on our seatbelts. The same message was lit up over the seats. Someone noted with a smile, 'On a plane like this it should have said fasten your gartels.' The stewardess asked passengers to sit down and put on their seatbelts but that's just when R' Berel [i.e. Berke] started chazaras ha'shatz of Shmoneh Esrei. He stood there wrapped in a tallis with his t'fillin secured on his head.

"His eyes were closed and his long beard swung from side to side as he davened out loud, 'G-d of Avrohom, G-d of Yitzchok, and G-d of Yaakov, the great, mighty, awesome G-d.' The stewardesses turned pale. One of them bit her lips. It was prohibited to stand now and one needed to sit down and fasten his seatbelt, but R' Berel Chein stood in the middle of Shmoneh Esrei, and from his mouth burst forth the words, accompanied with cries of awe. One of the crew members tried to approach R' Berel Chein in order to convince him to sit down but it was just as he was saying, 'Blessed are you Hashem, who resurrects the dead.' At that moment, everybody jumped up and loudly said K'dusha!

"The crew members were frightened. What was going on here? But the Lubavitchers were saying K'dusha along with R' Berel, and in order to appease the crew, some young Chassidim went over to them after K'dusha and told them about R' Berel Chein, who looked now, in tallis and t'fillin, like a fiery being from a different world.

"R' Berel Chein was one of those who went from place to place in order to spread Torah and Chassidus. He was captured, judged as a 'dangerous criminal' and sentenced to jail, yet imprisonment did not break him. Indeed, he left jail as skin and bones, but his eyes continued to shine and he immediately went back to work as a Chabad mashpia.

"When R' Berel Chein, who supports himself by teaching since he came to Kfar Chabad a few years ago, stands and davens, no power in the world can move him from his place or stop his davening. He habituated himself in this way since his days in Soviet prison. He can remove himself from the material world and delve deeply into his prayers. Once, the guards caught him as he davened and they beat him until he bled but he only noticed the blood after he finished davening. Whereas the blows themselves, he didn't feel at all.

"Did R' Berel Chein feel anything now on the plane in the middle of the flight? Not at all. R' Berel Chein finished davening, changed his Rashi t'fillin for Rabbeinu Tam and repeated the Shma as someone who stretches out his neck al kiddush Hashem."

The members of the kibbutzim listened to every word being said by someone who had recently hidden from the communist authorities himself. In

those days, a Jew from the Soviet Union was a novelty and an attraction.

He would conclude his riveting talk with a heartfelt plea: Fortunate are

you, children of Avrohom, Yitzchok, and Yaakov, that you merit to live in our holy land without any oppressors. Therefore, my dear brothers do not do the wrong thing; put on t'fillin, keep Shabbos, eat kosher, fulfill the Torah, and may this help your brothers who still remain there to successfully preserve the inner spark with mesirus nefesh.

His speech, said from the heart, ignited hidden sparks in the hearts of his listeners far more than all the speakers who spoke fluently and had a polished manner.

There was no gathering, farbrengen or any Chabad event that he was invited to attend that he turned down. He participated even when it was hard for him due to his poor health, since he saw this as part of doing as the Rebbe wanted.

His son, R' Mordechai Chein relates:

“When the Rebbe announced Mivtza T'fillin in 5727, my father decided to increase his hiddur in t'fillin, saying that when the Rebbe said ‘Mivtza T'fillin,’ he wasn't talking only about putting t'fillin on with others but for us Chassidim too. The hiddur he undertook was to put on all four kinds of t'fillin at sunrise and to say Shma with each one.

“When he told the Rebbe in yechidus, the Rebbe said it was too great a spiritual pleasure to put on all four pairs immediately at sunrise and from then on, my father only put on Rashi and Rabbeinu Tam at sunrise.”

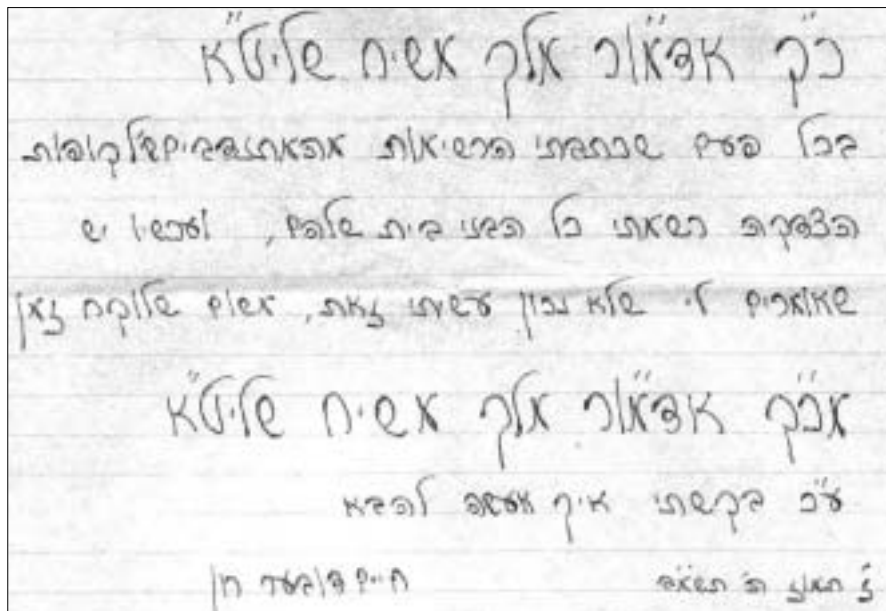
### KNOW HIM IN ALL YOUR WAYS

R' Berke's grandson Peretz Friedman relates:

“When my grandfather would say a bracha, the whole house heard it. He did every mitzva with great enthusiasm. In general, he did not like laziness and coldness, and when he saw me do something without any fervor, he would say to me that I was acting like a misnaged.

“He once had a long conversation with me about the need to eat: ‘Today, it's not acceptable not to eat. Some think that by minimizing eating they

are coming closer to Hashem. The problem is that by minimizing eating, a Jew becomes nervous. You must eat well and happily so you have strength



7 Tamuz 5742, R' Berke's letter to the Rebbe



5 Sivan 5742, the Rebbe's response which was written a month before R' Berke's letter was written

to serve Hashem happily.’

“One time we stayed with my grandfather and I was wild, and my parents were upset. My grandfather called me to his room and told me to sit down next to him. For over an hour, he lectured me about the importance of respecting my parents. It wasn’t rebuke. He wasn’t angry. He explained how, according to the Gemara and halacha, this mitzva is very important and therefore, it was vital that I fulfill it.

“He told me a story that touched me. ‘When I was a boy,’ he said, ‘my grandfather, R’ Meir Simcha Chein asked me to climb on the roof in order to fix something. My grandfather explained to me that for an older person it was hard to climb up there, which is why he was sending me. At first, I made a sour face because I didn’t want to climb up to the roof. In the end, I decided to do as he asked. When I came back down, my grandfather said with a big smile: I’m jealous of you for you didn’t want to do it but you did it anyway, so your mitzva is greater.

“The story and the other things that were said affected me so much that I was especially careful about kibud av v’eim the rest of the year. For example, I remember that I started taking utensils myself and didn’t bother my mother to bring me a spoon or fork. And when I brought the utensils back when I was finished, I immediately rinsed them so my mother wouldn’t have to do it.

“The chinuch my grandfather gave me he also gave to the children that he taught for many years.”

R’ Berke’s son R’ Mordechai relates:

“My father had special hiddurim that I became aware of when I stayed in his house. For example, we bought whole loaves for him (not sliced bread), since there is a hiddur to say a bracha on a whole loaf.

“He had special hiddurim for Pesach. When he came to 770 for Yud-Alef Nissan 5732 he stayed with me

for Yom Tov. He had his own kitchen and his own utensils. He also prepared water ahead of time for the entire Yom Tov. The containers that he used to store the water were new.

“A few years later he spent Pesach with me again and he found out that I had lent those utensils to a friend who prepared wine in them. He asked whether the friend added sugar to the wine and when the answer was yes, he asked that I buy new containers.”

At a farbrengen in 770; Dr. Rosen once told how amazed he was by R’ Berke. It was in recent years when R’



**R’ Berke Chein in the final period of his life**

Berke stayed in Crown Heights at his relative, R’ Meir Minkowitz’s house who lived near 770. One Shabbos, after the Rebbe’s farbrengen, R’ Berke went to his hosts in order to wash for the Shabbos meal before sunset. When he got to the house, he knocked but nobody answered the door. He knocked strongly because he thought maybe people were sleeping.

Hearing the knocks, the neighbor, Dr. Rosen came out to see what was going on. When he realized that R’ Berke wanted to wash, he invited him

in. R’ Berke agreed and immediately went to wash.

“His netilas yadayim made an incredible impression on me,” said Dr. Rosen. “It was a whole ceremony. First, he checked each finger to make sure there was no dirt or moisture. Then he checked to see that the cup was whole and whether the handles were wet or dry. Only then did he wash, very carefully, reciting the bracha loudly and enthusiastically. Then he went to say HaMotzi on the lechem mishne and he ate a k’zayis.”

## **PASSING OF A CHASSID**

In the last half a year of his life, R’ Berke was sick and suffered greatly. On Shabbos before Shavuos 5750, he was brought to the hospital. The doctors said the end was near.

On Motzaei Shabbos, the last night of his life, R’ Yitzchok Rosen was there with him the entire time:

“Every so often R’ Berke asked me what time it was since he did not want to forego his hiddur of putting on t’fillin with sunrise, even though he was suffering greatly.”

In the morning, he was able to put on t’fillin. A few hours later, his pain intensified and he closed his eyes and was partially conscious. Even then, he did not stop reciting T’hillim and *Tanya*. In the afternoon the doctors decided, after deliberations, to perform an operation that might save his life but as they prepared for the operation R’ Berke passed away. He was 82.

R’ Berke’s funeral took place the night of Erev Shavuos. It left Kfar Chabad for the Mt. of Olives in Yerushalayim, where he is buried in the Chabad section.

His modest and righteous wife, who was his devoted helpmate for close to sixty years, lived many more years until she passed away on 12 Cheshvan 5764.

May this extraordinary Chassid serve as a role model for all Chassidim.

# WHO IS POISONING THE WELLS?

BY SHAI GEFEN

## HE DOESN'T RULE OUT THE USE OF LIVE AMMUNITION

Police Chief Moshe Karadi told the Meet the Press program that he is not ruling out the use of live ammunition against members of the Chevron Jewish community that he is determined to expel from the Shalhevet neighborhood. Unbelievable isn't it, that Jews are willing to shed Jewish blood and look forward to any provocation (or make them up) that will enable them to clamp down and destroy a Jewish community. And when there is even a remote possibility that an Arab was mistreated, the police swoop down on the Jews to ferret out the child who may have thrown an egg.

The Rebbe foresaw this 38 years ago when he wrote to Ariel Sharon: **On whose side will the Israeli police be when an argument develops between a Jewish boy and an Arab boy?**

Our security forces are preoccupied with expelling Jews from Chevron. The Chief of Staff calls the settlers, "those who poison the wells," just as the greatest anti-Semites said throughout the generations

## THREE EXPULSION CRIMES

Last week, three crimes connected with the expulsion from Gush Katif were made public. When Sharon was in power everybody kept

quiet, preferring to protect the emperor-with-no-clothes. Now, the truth is out.

On Sunday, January 22, State Comptroller Micha Lindenstrauss published the first in a series of reports criticizing the way the government carried out the Disengagement from Gush Katif last August. The first report details the government's failure to adequately defend Jewish communities near the Gaza border following the Disengagement.

"Before the Disengagement," he said, "it was said that the houses in yishuvim near Gaza would be reinforced to be able to withstand Kassam rocket and mortar attacks, yet this has yet to be done."

Lindenstrauss also said that the government had not prepared defenses for those who work in the agricultural sector, some of them foreign workers, "The defensive plan did not include a plan for their defense; reinforced buildings in their place of work are lacking. They are exposed to Kassam rocket and mortar attacks."

He also said that communications are lacking in some yishuvim in the area now bordering on Gaza due to the fact that the I.D.F. dismantled its communications lines in the area in the course of the Disengagement.

The comptroller's office noted that the facts cited above note a

serious and intolerable situation, and although seventeen months have passed since the government decided on the Disengagement and the I.D.F. finished removing its forces from the Gaza Strip, the defensive measures have still not been completed in the yishuvim that are most threatened. Furthermore, the implementation of some of them hasn't even begun.

Professor Yisroel Aumann, the newest Israeli Nobel Prize winner, sounded the cry over the second crime. In his speech at the Hertzeliya Conference he said, "The treatment of the expellees is a national disgrace, and everyone is silent..." Many of the thousands of people expelled from Gush Katif and northern Shomron are still in hotels, he noted, "even now, a half-year after the expulsion, without the most basic conditions. Most of them are not yet in permanent housing, or even in reasonable temporary housing. There is no work, the children are in despair, and there have been some suicide attempts. Many families, and maybe even most, have not seen a red cent in compensation money, and those who have received are spending it on daily food."

"We're not talking about enemies or lawbreakers," Professor Aumann said, "but productive people who built a glorious settlement enterprise, and whose lives have now been destroyed – and yet



everyone just ignores it. The entire media and everyone else; no one hears a word about it, no one relates to it, everyone ignores it. I, for one, will not be silent, and I am not silent.

“I’m not talking about the expulsion itself – but just about the treatment of those who were expelled. It’s not clear whether this is being done purposely to show a message that Zionism is not worth it and [people] might as well stop engaging in it as quickly as possible, or just out of criminal negligence. And I don’t know which is worse.”

The third and worst crime that was also revealed, by Divine providence, over the weekend in a report from Keshev. The report dealt with the topic, “This is how the media covered the Disengagement.” The report reveals how closely the media protected Sharon and deliberately ignored the grave security consequences of the Disengagement.

Keshev’s research team analyzed reports by the Israeli media on the Disengagement, over the weeks preceding the implementation of the plan and during the Disengagement itself. The critique covered all news items that appeared in the main news outlets including newspapers. All together, over 2000 articles and news items were examined. The results of the research point out some outstanding features of the coverage.

For example, we find a number of paragraphs that say that the media deliberately ignored the assessments of security experts:

“Whereas on ordinary days, assessments by security experts grab the headlines almost automatically, in this instance they were methodically shunted aside. A total of 96 out of 102 reports were

swallowed up in the text of articles and supplements. Only six reports made it into the headlines.”

Note what this professional organization, which is considered Leftist, has to say. They are saying that the media knew what they were doing and they did so in order to support their Prime Minister, who wanted Disengagement at any price, even at the cost of pushing out his Chief of Staff, and the devastation and destruction of thriving Jewish communities.

“Until the Disengagement was completed, the newspapers and TV news broadcasters presented it as a necessary step that was unstoppable, that did not necessitate any explanation or criticism. Thus, an entire array of questions was denied coverage: What would Gaza be like after the withdrawal? What about the proposed travel route between Gaza and the West Bank? What will be the political fallout of this process?

“Questions of this sort appeared 63 times during the period in newspaper opinion columns and only 25 times in the news columns, in most cases without headlines. A few articles noted a difference of opinion within the Israeli establishment regarding “the day after” the Disengagement; but as a group, the media chose not to focus on this subject.

“Similarly, Prime Minister Sharon’s political intentions were not seriously discussed, nor the political ramifications during and following the Disengagement. Public discussion, which is so vital, over the ramifications of Disengagement as a political step, was not conducted. So, in the end, the media coverage disconnected the Disengagement from the larger issue of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

*“Most of them are not yet in permanent housing, or even in reasonable temporary housing. There is no work, the children are in despair, and there have been some suicide attempts. Many families, and maybe even most, have not seen a red cent in compensation money, and those who have received are spending it on daily food. We’re not talking about enemies or lawbreakers, but productive people who built a glorious settlement enterprise, and whose lives have now been destroyed – and yet everyone just ignores it.”*



“The newspapers described it as an event taking place in a limited context, divested of its past and political ramifications in the present. An event, taking place within Israeli society, which is torn between violent and suffering settlers and heroic disengagement forces, that had no connection with all the others involved in the dispute – particularly the Palestinians in Gaza and even the West Bank. Thus, the coverage reflected and even strengthened the talking points of the establishment, which were dictated by the powers that be, and betrayed its [journalistic] function of providing complex and critical analysis, which serves to broaden public discussion.”

This is another explicit, professional admission about how the media deliberately hid vital issues about the expulsion from the public and did everything to see it through. All the tough questions were hidden so that they wouldn't create panic and prevent the expulsion.

Now these facts appear in an official report so they cannot be ignored.

### “WE ALSO HAVE MORTARS”

In the previous issue, I quoted the Chief of Staff of the expulsion,

*His moral values prevent him from stopping Kassams but they enable him to deal with “zero tolerance” towards settlers.*

Dan Chalutz, who owes his position to Omri Sharon and Dovi Weissglass, who said that the army has moral values and therefore wouldn't stop the Kassams from landing in Israel.

A friend showed me what this same Chief of Staff said on the eve of the expulsion in a committee hearing before the Foreign Affairs and Security Committee of the Knesset, where he said just the opposite. Back then, Chalutz said that he was sure that it would be necessary to change the policy of the army's reaction after they left Gaza. As he put it, “We also have mortars.”

So before the Disengagement, when he wanted to convince us that we need this expulsion, he told us

that the army has mortars. After the Disengagement, he suddenly developed moral values.

Whoever really thinks that Dan Chalutz thinks that mortars and Hamas are a threat to the existence of the State of Israel is mistaken. His moral values prevent him from stopping Kassams but they enable him to deal with “zero tolerance” towards settlers who have become a political threat for Dan Chalutz.

Yup, it's not the Iranian nuclear capabilities, not Hamas who just won the elections in a landslide, not Hezbollah, and not Kassams. None of those things endanger the welfare of Israel like the settlers, the real enemy. Notice how according to Chalutz, there is a group of settlers “who poison the wells” among us, no less.

Chalutz's hatred for the real pioneers is well understood. This Chief of Staff, who has become the greatest supporter of al-Qaeda and Hamas, feels terribly guilty over what he did to 10,000 Jews and the destruction of beautiful Jewish communities, thus enabling smuggling of thousands of weapons through the Gaza Strip. He is trying to quiet his conscience by throwing mud on those he hurt.

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# 'NOW, BEFORE THE ELECTIONS, PUBLIC OPINION WILL INFLUENCE THE GOVERNMENT'

INTERVIEWED BY SHAI GEFEN  
TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY

*Chevron's Givat Shalhevet neighborhood, named after the infant child, Shalhevet Pass (may her blood be avenged), currently finds itself in the headlines and at the center of a major ideological storm. In the midst of the present controversy, it was only natural to turn to Shalhevet's father, Chevron resident R. Itzik Pass. In an exclusive interview with "Beis Moshiach", he speaks about the sensitive situation, the feelings within the family after Shalhevet's murder, his period of imprisonment, and the pain over Acting Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's decision to drive the Jews of Chevron out of Givat Shalhevet.*

Chevron stands at the top of the public agenda today. As a resident of the Avraham Avinu neighborhood and the father of Shalhevet Pass (may her blood be avenged), in whose memory the neighborhood scheduled to be evacuated was named, how do you sum up what you have gone through during this past stormy week?

On the one hand, it was a very interesting week, and on the other hand, it was a most absurd week, as we saw the security forces they brought in order to deal with thirteen year-old children. We see the government's distorted order of priorities when it compares this to the recent terrorist attack in Tel Aviv or the Arab rioting in

the north. This is not the government's war, rather the left-wing and that which was once the "right" against everything connected to Torah and Eretz Yisroel. We must state the truth: This is a cultural war over the future character of the state – a state like all the nations of the world or a state of G-d's Torah?

At the present time, all haters of G-d have joined together to finish off and destroy the Jewish community of Chevron, which represents our roots in Eretz Yisroel.

**The media is talking about an intifada with masked settlers.**

Such descriptions are a bit exaggerated. Anyone familiar with the ultra-leftwing media knows how they

blow things out of all proportion. I know for a fact that there has been serious violence on the part of the police. Chevron Commander Motti Baruch cocked a weapon in front of children! I don't recall an officer ever cocking his weapon in front of Arab children.

In any event, the army cancelled the regular tour of the casbah last Shabbos, and that shortens the way to confrontation. Only the intervention of the community leaders prevented a disaster stemming from the police commander's conduct. It's clear that the media paints the situation far more against us, and to our regret, people tend to believe all this nonsense.

**Where has the Yesha Council gone? Why isn't its voice being heard in this battle?**

To our great regret, it is part of the establishment that still benefits from the pleasures of the ruling authorities. We have seen what they did in Gush Katif. I don't know if they actually helped the expulsion of Jews from Gush Katif and the northern Shomron, but they definitely made it easier for the state to commit this crime. We didn't receive any backing from them. The truth of the matter is that we weren't expecting much anyway.

**The IDF Chief of Staff, Gen. Dan Chalutz, says that there are settlers "poisoning the wells", and they are a danger to democratic rule...**

It's absolutely true that after the expulsion from Gush Katif, we no longer have any faith in the state or its institutions. The expulsion from Gush Katif was on a strip of land that was

inhabited with the permission and at the behest of the state of Israel. After the Jews were driven out, terrorists began to fire rockets on Ashkelon. People have lost their trust in the state of Israel. Many of our wonderful young people, who love Eretz Yisroel, have turned into opponents of the Israel Defense Forces. The wells were not poisoned by this youth, but by the state of Israel. This is the reaction towards those who have done such an injustice. They know how to expel Jews, but not how to care for them.

### Has Chevron's turn now come?

Not just Chevron, but also Amona and three other outposts. I heard that Olmert asked that they prepare a detailed plan of action to dismantle all the illegal outposts.

The present war is over the future of Yehuda and Shomron – and even Yerushalayim. Israel is another star in the American flag. The “Palestinians” don’t count us in, they simply arrange everything with the Americans behind our backs... Everything that the Americans say, the government accepts, fearful of making a peep. This is the reality today. According to the plans, the majority of Jews living in Yehuda and Shomron are due to be evacuated.

Personally, I am not surprised that Ehud Olmert is continuing along Sharon's path of expulsions: His son refused to serve in the territories; his daughter belongs to a group of anarchists who regularly demonstrate against the security fence and the settlements; his wife is an open supporter of the Meretz Party. An ultra-leftwing family. He is the man who pushed Sharon to the disengagement and now continues towards the destruction of the entire Land of Israel.

**Since the terrible murder of your infant daughter, Shalhevet (may her blood be avenged), you have turned into a well-known family. This dreadful slaughter left a huge scar in the hearts**

**of many...**

It was on Beis Nissan 5761, and we were living in Beit Hadassah at the time. My wife's parents lived in the Avraham Avinu neighborhood. I was standing with our baby Shalhevet at the entrance to the neighborhood, when suddenly shots were fired from the direction of the Abu Sneneh neighborhood. A bullet hit Shalhevet in the head, and I was wounded in both my legs. They tried to save her, but it was to no avail. She was killed instantly. The shooting had already begun beforehand, and I yelled in the direction of the soldiers who were standing there, but they just said it was fireworks and not gunfire... If they would have responded, they could have



**Chevron marketplace area**  
(photo by David Wilder)

prevented the murder.

As you know, we held up the burial for almost a week. Sharon spoke with me, government ministers spoke with me, and only after a week, we buried her in the Chevron cemetery. As a result of the murder, we decided to go and live in the wholesale marketplace, which up until then had been closed both to Jews and Arabs. This invasion was made as a protest and reprisal against this terrible act of murder.

We started renovating the local stores, and turned them into residential buildings. This location is situated on land that legally and officially belongs to Sephardic kollels that gave us their permission and authorization to live on

the premises. Thus, close to the Avraham Avinu neighborhood, Givat Shalhevet, named after my daughter (may her blood be avenged), was founded.

We also established there a kollel for the study of the Laws of Eretz Yisroel named “*Kollel Shalhevet – T'chiyas HaAretz*” and dedicated a seifer Torah in Shalhevet's memory.

### How have you managed to cope since Shalhevet's murder?

A few months after Shalhevet's murder, my wife gave birth to a girl, and *Baruch Hashem*, we now have two daughters. We live in a very supportive environment, and with G-d's help, we will continue to grow and have greater strength in our love of Eretz Yisroel.

Even when I was in prison, the environment was very supportive. Since then, we have moved closer to the Avraham Avinu neighborhood. If they murder us in order that we should leave the area, we will continue to cleave to Eretz Yisroel with full force. Today, I work in agriculture.

This terrible event has definitely been etched upon the conscience of all of us. The murder of a baby girl by sniper fire, while being held in her father's arms, is not an everyday occurrence. Even the delay in the burial, when we demanded greater security for the Jewish residents of Chevron, kept the issue “burning” for nearly a week, deeply rooting the story in our sense of awareness. We will soon be publishing s'farim in Shalhevet's memory, and there are also charitable non-profit organizations and a kindergarten named after her. The site of the murder was also renamed “*Shaar Shalhevet*”.

### What about Shalhevet's murderers?

Some of them are in prison. A few months ago, I was called in and they told me that there would be another trial of a suspect in the murder. I didn't



**R. Itzik Pass (L) with the Rebbe's shliach in Chevron, R. Danny Cohen**  
*(courtesy of the Chabad House - Chevron website)*

come since it required tremendous emotional strength. In principle, when it is much easier for terrorists to get released, go and figure out what will happen to these terrorists in another few years.

**Is it really true that the authorities' plotting against you has not stopped even after your daughter's frightful murder?**

I was arrested and sentenced to two years in prison for nothing, and without the furloughs and parole considerations that any normal prisoner is entitled to receive. At times, they even conducted brutal searches in my cell. They have made us out to be more dangerous than terrorists. Even on the seder night last Pesach, I was not released for the holiday, even though I was eventually released for good on Erev Shavuot. I had difficulty getting out for Shalhevet's yahrtzeit, as they claimed that I am "dangerous to peace in the Middle East"... It's unbelievable how much they scheme against me, while they plead forgiveness from Arab terrorists.

**You have established a new neighborhood in Shalhevet's name. You have been there for several years already. Why is this happening all of a**

**sudden?**

At one of the petitions presented before the High Court of Justice, the state had committed itself to clearing us out. The state's legal advisor claimed that "crime should not pay". As a result, the state of Israel decided to evacuate us from the premises. There is no doubt to whom this land really belongs. This is no case of robbery; what bothers them is the way the place was entered. This is obviously a political decision. Sharon's successor wants a Chevron evacuation to help him in the upcoming elections, and therefore, he is prepared to use any form of provocation that will serve him politically.

**How will this story end?**

You won't see any loving hugs with the evictors here. We saw the one-way love in Gush Katif and how much it helped. The Christians are the ones who turn the other cheek. What will be the level of conflict here? – I have no idea. They won't give in so fast in Chevron, and they will surely be a war over our home and the future of the entire Land of Israel.

**What can we possibly do to nullify this evil decree?**

Thousands of influential Jews must

come to Chevron. If thousands of Jews come here, it will have an influence. All the prayers and supplications for the nullification of this decree will not be forgotten. Similarly, we must apply pressure upon good Jews all over the world in order that they should demand the end of this decree.

One fact I would like to mention: Sharon suffered his stroke the day after they handed out the evacuation orders. I don't know what the decree of Heaven was, but I have no doubt whatsoever that anyone who touches Chevron, touches the apple of G-d's eye. We pray that

G-d will nullify this evil decree.

**What lessons have you learned from Gush Katif?**

If the state so desires, it will succeed in carrying out the evacuation. They want this done before the elections. However, specifically for this reason, it depends in large measure upon public opinion. If there will be fierce public opposition, they will be concerned that they might lose power and they will postpone the expulsion. They will use any and all methods, and there are no steps deemed improper in their eyes. We have recently learned that they have begun to use tear gas against young people. It's quite clear that different rules apply to the Arabs. Only last week, we saw how the police acted towards the rioting in Sachnin and against disturbances caused by Arabs.

**Do you see a comparison between the struggle against the Shalhevet neighborhood and the murder itself?**

The sniper wanted to drive us out of the city, and that's exactly what the Acting Prime Minister is trying to do: Drive us out. However, when we're talking about our own people, this makes for a much more difficult struggle emotionally.

We must strengthen ourselves for any eventuality, and G-d will save us against those who rise up against us, "for G-d does not abandon His people and does not forsake His heritage."

# CHEVRON IMAGES

BY CHANA KATZ

Many of us wish we could be in Chevron, Ir HaKodesh, especially now. This special report was given to Beis Moshiach by a member of Anash who had the z'chus to spend a recent Shabbos in the city of our Patriarchs along with a group who gathered from around the world to celebrate a simcha. While the focus has naturally been on the painful and outrageous details of the ongoing struggle in Chevron, these excerpts take a different perspective — one that transcends the bitter machlokes to reveal glimmers of the true essence and k'dusha of Chevron. It is good armor to take back to the battlefield — the need for which we pray will immediately dissipate. . .

\* \* \*

The beginning of this journey really started on the Rambam's yahrtzeit (Chaf Tevet). I had the amazing Hashgacha Pratis in 24 hours to go through all four holy cities of Eretz Yisroel, which I feel was a preparation to enter the holy city of Chevron.

By Mincha/Maariv I was at the Rambam's grave in Tiveria and took in the scene of the Rambam coming alive. The winds were whipping up and there is a very dramatic — especially at sunset — wrought-iron archway over the kever.

All of a sudden, I caught a glimpse on the men's side of a mysterious, kodesh personality (known among some Old City residents of Tzfat) and there he was, looming above the Rambam, davening his heart out. It was just part of the scene.

From there we went to the boardwalk along Lake Kinneret — a place unfortunately renovated with a lot of "ta'veh-dik" kinds of places. We entered an old building with totally

broken stained-glass windows — a barely-functioning place that the new shliach, Schneur Zalman Turkoff, has taken upon himself to energize.

There, a man addressed the private simcha and at first spoke with tremendous warmth and humor. It was joyful, warm, heimish. And then, like a chuppa with the glass shattering — and there's a reason why the glass shatters — he said: "In the midst of this we cannot forget for even one minute what is happening in Chevron and the challenge to the people living there and the difficulty of the moment we're in. What lies ahead for every person is how we are going to be in the moments to come."

People became silent, emotional, as we all had a 'what are we going to do' feeling.

Rabbi (Yitzchak) Ginsburgh spoke, but he started with a niggun of the Alter Rebbe (because it was close to chof-daled Tevet). It was sung with increasingly incredible strength given the fact that there were maybe only 20 men there. The Rav was pushing it so it rose up and really nullified all of the klippot. When we finished singing the niggun the Rav said: "Now we need the Divine intervention of Tzaddikim to intervene on Am Yisroel's behalf and this is what a Niggun accomplishes."

## KADOSH KADOSH. . .

We returned to the holy city of Tzfas briefly and got up early to proceed to the holy city of Yerushalayim. Yerushalayim is fire — the fiery passion towards Torah. The hour I was there we spent in a place where American tourists were hanging around (while we waited to get on a special, bullet-proof bus with a special permit

to enter Chevron). The group on our bus was a very serious group going with a purpose. So there was a sort of fiery essence in Yerushalayim.

We arrived in Chevron (the holy city representing the aspect of earth). Traveling from Tiveria (water) to Tzfat (air) to Yerushalayim (fire) to Chevron — having this experience is not pashut (simple). It had a profound effect on me. The places, although different, are all tied together.

You suddenly enter Chevron from the top of a hilly, winding road. Chevron is like a maze which has a lot of squiggly lines, but there's only one true path. We entered the top of this maze, where all the buildings are similar to all the buildings you see in Chevron — dark, deserted, barbed-wire surrounding them, an occasional house where a family is living. It feels a little murky, grey, depressing. And the hills are covered with mosques — like lichen that creeps and grows everywhere. Soldiers are in full gear ...

The contrast to this is the three small Jewish areas — Avraham Avinu, Beit Hadassah and Tel Romeida. It was as if, in the middle of decay and shmutz, you would find a beautiful rosebud growing. How incredibly beautiful it was to get off the bus and after walking past more barbed wire and army guarded places you see this plaza of stone buildings and houses with gardens and window flower boxes. You could smell the Shabbos cooking in this pocket of Jewish heart that exists in Chevron!

I stayed at Beit Hadassah, although many in the group stayed at the guest house in the Avraham Avinu quarter. There was a mighty rainstorm as we walked back from the M'arat

HaMachpella and we stayed up to late hours listening to speakers such as Baruch and Sara Nachshon and shliach Danny Cohen. As the gathering broke into smaller groups, we left with our hostess to go back to Beit Hadassah. On the way we stopped at the newly refurbished Avraham Avinu shul and heard the famous story about how, after the 1929 massacre – when no Jews were permitted to live in Chevron ‘proper’ – a brave group of nine Jewish men managed to make it to what remained of the shul to daven on Yom Kippur. But they couldn’t find a tenth man. Right before Kol Nidrei a man with a beautiful countenance and a long, white beard appeared. As soon as the final N’ila prayer came to an end he disappeared — as quickly as he had arrived! They searched for this special soul, but to no avail; He could not be found. Three days later the “tenth man” appeared to the shamash (sexton) and said he was Avraham Avinu and had come to complete the minyan of this group who gathered with such mesirus nefesh!

### **MENUCHA RACHEL KOLLEL/SHUL**

Around the corner from the Avraham Avinu shul is the Rebbetzin Menucha Rachel kollel/shul, sweetly but modestly redone with wood, Chevron marble and stone. There were pictures of Menucha Rachel (the Mittler Rebbe’s daughter) and history and letters of the Rebbetzin’s family...

There is learning going on there all the time. How much it is used is a Kiddush Hashem and once again it comes alive. In honor of her memory, the Torah is alive in Chevron. It’s an amazing room. I could live in this room. There are these treasures in the middle of darkness and they’re going to become more alive!

### **DAVENING WITH THE CHEVRON GIRLS**

Another Chevron image: Friday night davening at the Cave of Machpella. There are sections inside

and each one had its own minyan and flavor. I wanted to go to Sara and Avrohom’s room but it already had a minyan. We went into the large area in between the (smaller halls for) Yaacov and Leah and Sara and Avraham. I looked around and saw some of the Chevron girls who nodded in greeting. When they started to sing Lecha Dodi I wanted to wrap my shawl around my face in embarrassment. I looked at the girls with the strength (they exuded) – their whole body language was that of Chevron, of a foundation stone. They were davening and dancing and a group of us went to the area where they were dancing and made a parallel circle, but instead of taking the hand from my group I took the hand of one

***It’s not about politics.  
It’s about establishing a  
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of the girls and both groups were joined, became one. We were here to connect with them, and they were wide open. A lot of us started crying, small amounts of Ahavas Yisroel opening huge corridors of love in this place.

Shabbos morning it happened again. We were in a large room and I saw, during the reading of the Torah, a woman in her 70’s. She was silent but crying like a waterfall. I just looked at her and didn’t have to ask why she was crying. She was like everyone else in the room. She just knew how to express it.

### **RESIDENTS!**

When you refer to the people of Chevron, don’t call them settlers. Refer

to them as residents. They are not settlers. They didn’t settle this place. This place is Jewish! The people who are in Chevron, they’re so much a part of the land where they live and connected. They’re really like the foundation. This is Chevron. Their purpose is to create a foundation for Am Yisroel and Eretz Yisroel. We know Chevron is the entrance to Gan Eden, where everything from the spiritual worlds comes into this world. The preservation of it cannot be overstated in any words possible. We have to do our part.

When you see these families on Shabbos, their Hachnasas Orchim is outstanding. Do you need more blankets? More food? Can I come and talk with you?

And joyful...they are deeply joyful about Shabbos. And they are dressed l’kvod Shabbos. And this deepness is about being a foundation.

It’s a tremendous z’chus to spend time there. It’s a key to understanding Hashem in this world. Once, someone was there in the spring, and it was dusty and when they got home, they said, ‘I’m going to leave this dust on my shoes – the dust of Chevron...

There’s a lot more that can be said. It’s not about politics. It’s about establishing a deep connection with Hashem, whereby we’re able to stand up in the world and reflect Hashem in the world. We also have to become a little bit of Chevron, foundation stones of building Hashem’s world. Part of our very existence comes from this place, the entrance to Gan Eden. We should be strong enough to merit that the entrance to Gan Eden will blossom forth so that it’s not one rose in a shmutzik (dirty) place – but a garden with children and families building it with tremendous joy. We have to envision that – and we have to make it happen, with Hashem’s help.

Daven, and come to Chevron. Not only does it strengthen the holiness of Am Yisroel, but it strengthens the residents who live there.