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The international weekly heralding the coming of Mashiach
BEIS MOSHIACH

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TO KNOW G-D: IT'S NOT ENOUGH TO BELIEVE

LIKKUTEI SICHOS, VOL. 26, PG. 114-123
TRANSLATED BY BORUCH MERKUR



[Continued from last week]

5. The explanation of the matter:

The topics the Rambam speaks about in these three chapters – the (conclusion of the) Description of the Supernal Chariot and the Description of Creation – are not only matters of contemplation for the sake of **thereafter attaining** Love of G-d and Fear of Him per se; they are connected to the Mitzva of **Knowledge of G-d**, or more so, they constitute a veritable portion of this Mitzva.

As it is explained in the Perush on the Rambam [Laws of the Foundations of the Torah, beg.]: “Included in these two Mitzvos (to know that there is a Deity and that there is no other god with Him) is the concept of the Description of Creation and the Description of the Supernal Chariot, for from this knowledge they will come to know the proofs for the existence of the Creator and that He alone is the first and the foundation of all (*rishon v'tzur la'kol*)” [FN 44: though he does add later that it also leads to Love of G-d and Fear of Him].

And as it is also emphasized (that the matters discussed in these three chapters are a continuation to the discussion of **Knowledge of G-d** in the first chapter) in the very wording of the Rambam [Ch. 2, Laws 9-10]: a) In the second chapter, after the lengthy discussion about angels, Rambam changes course to explain at length how **G-d** “knows Himself...knows everything...recognizes His truth, knowing it as it is, etc. He is the One Who knows, etc.” b) At the conclusion of the chapter [Law 11], he says: “These words that we have said **regarding this matter**, in these **two** chapters, etc., all the principles mentioned in these **two** chapters are referred to as the Description of the Supernal Chariot.” Both chapters together constitute **a single** concept:

the Description of the Supernal Chariot. c) In the conclusion of Chapter 4 [Law 13], the Rambam says, “The subject matter of these **four** chapters...is what the Early Sages called ‘**Pardes**.’” All four chapters together constitute **a single** concept: Pardes.

(The reason Rambam connects the “great principles” with matters concerning (contemplation which brings to) Love of G-d and Fear of Him [ibid Ch. 2, Laws 1-2] but not with the Mitzva of Knowing G-d (which is discussed in the **previous** chapter) is because Rambam arranges the topic of Knowledge of G-d in the context of the Mitzvos that are relevant to it. And since the “great principles” pertain (also) to the Mitzvos of Love of G-d and Fear of Him, Rambam, therefore, arranges them in a manner that they constitute (not only a continuation to the previous chapter, as mentioned, but also) a detail of the Mitzvos of Love of G-d and Fear of Him.)

Accordingly, we may say that for this reason Rambam brings in his work the “great principles of the acts of the Master of the Worlds.” That is, in order to fulfill the Mitzva of Knowledge of G-d, which means (as mentioned above in Section 3) that one has (intellectual) **knowledge** of the **manner** of G-d’s existence (“His existence is more... complete”), it is **necessary** to (at least) know also **these** “great principles,” for (as brought above) “from this knowledge they will come to know the proofs for the existence of the Creator and that He alone is the first and the foundation of all.”

6. According to the above – that the discussion of the Description of the Supernal Chariot and the Description of Creation (which Rambam brings in his work) is necessary for the Mitzva of Knowledge of G-d, or more so, they comprise a portion of it – we can also explain the final law,

the conclusion and seal of the book *Mishneh Torah* [end of Laws of Kings], which reads as follows:

“In that time...the sole occupation of the entire world will be to know G-d alone. Therefore, the Jewish people will be great sages, knowing esoteric matters and grasping knowledge of their Creator according to the capacity of man, as it is said [Yeshayahu 11:9], ‘for the earth shall be full with the knowledge of G-d as water covers the ocean.’”

We must understand:

a) What are these two concepts – “knowing esoteric matters and grasping knowledge of their Creator”? From the fact that Rambam precedes the latter with, “the sole occupation of the entire world will be to know G-d alone,” it follows necessarily that the “esoteric matters” are connected with, “to know G-d.” What then entails the distinction between “esoteric matters” and “knowledge of their Creator”?

b) The syntax of the Rambam suggests that the qualification, “according to the capacity of man,” refers specifically to “grasping knowledge of their Creator” but not to “knowing esoteric matters.” What is the reason for this?

c) How is the (addition of the) conclusion of the verse, “as water covers the ocean,” relevant here? From the words, “**the earth shall be full** with the knowledge of G-d,” we know that “the sole occupation of the entire world will be to know G-d alone” [so quoting the conclusion of the verse appears to be extraneous here].

Moreover, Rambam also describes the Days of Moshiach in Laws of Repentance [9:2], saying “that in those days, knowledge, wisdom, and truth will become abundant, as it is said, ‘for the earth shall be full with the knowledge of G-d,’” but there he does **not** quote the conclusion [of the verse], “as water covers the ocean.”

7. According to what is explained above – that in order to fulfill the Mitzva of Knowledge of G-d we must know the concepts of the Description of the Supernal Chariot and the Description of Creation – it may be asserted that the two terms mentioned above correspond to these two matters – the Description of the Supernal Chariot and the Description of Creation – as follows:

The meaning of the term “esoteric matters” (without the explanation and supplementation that this is in reference to

In order to fulfill the Mitzva of Knowledge of G-d, it is necessary to know these “great principles,” for “from this knowledge they will come to know the proofs for the existence of the Creator and that He alone is the first and the foundation of all.”

the Creator) means matters regarding the “Description of Creation.” Although they are things “that are composite of matter and form” [FN 56: “the terminology of the Rambam, Laws of Foundations of the Torah 2:3, regarding celestial bodies, etc., which comprise a portion of the Description of Creation (which is not so of angels; they pertain, rather, to the Description of the Supernal Chariot).], they are, nevertheless, “**deep** matters” [ibid 4:10], requiring an “expansive mind to get a clear grasp of the meaning and explanation of all the matters” [ibid 4:11]. Therefore, Rambam refers to them as “esoteric matters.”

On the other hand, since this is the “Description of **Creation**” [and not the Creator Himself], we may indeed come to an understanding of the matter.

Thereafter, a loftier concept will be attained – namely, “grasping knowledge of their Creator,” matters pertaining to the Description of the Supernal Chariot. Even with regard to angels, since they are “form without any matter” [ibid 2:3, end], a person, a being comprised of “matter and form,” cannot have a true comprehension of them. How much more so is this the case regarding “knowledge of their **Creator**”; it is **certain** (as Rambam explains [ibid 1:10 – and see FN 63]) that it is not possible that “a living man, who is composed of body and soul,” should comprehend “the truth of existence as it is.”

Thus, Rambam is compelled to add, “**grasping** knowledge of their Creator **according to the capacity of man.**”

[To be continued be”H]

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BETWEEN LIGHT AND DARKNESS

TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY

The introduction and preface to Rabbi Sholom Dovber HaLevi Wolpo's provocative new guide for the perplexed regarding the establishment regime in Eretz Yisroel today and the tragic events they have brought upon the Jewish People.

THE REBBE COMMANDS: WE MUST PUBLICIZE!

There are those who claim that despite all the words of the Rebbe MH"M in his sichos, his letters, in yechidus, etc., negating the concept of the state as "the first blossoming of our Redemption," nevertheless, there is no point in publicizing this openly, and particularly not to do so in printed book form.

In response to this claim, I would like to say that in 5739, the Rebbe instructed me to write the seifer *Daas Torah B'Inyonei HaMatzav B'Eretz HaKodesh*. At the beginning of this seifer, there is a large chapter containing a collection of the Rebbe's words on the subject of negating the idea of "ischalta d'Geula" (the start of the Redemption). The seifer reached the holy eyes of the Rebbe, who even edited and changed several details, while making no comment on this specific subject. Despite the fact that

he knew that there were sharp reactions to what had been written in the chapter, he ordered me several times, verbally and in writing, to print further editions of the seifer. (In a letter from Chanuka 5745, printed in the *Kfar Chabad Magazine*, Issue #1000, the Rebbe's secretary, Rabbi Nissan Mindel, of blessed memory, wrote to Rabbi V. of London that the Rebbe was **amazed** that Rabbi V. was not familiar with the Rebbe's position on the subject of the situation in Eretz HaKodesh, and this after it had already "been printed in Eretz Yisroel in *Daas Torah*, **a seifer that you have surely heard of and read.**")

Here are other quotes of how the Rebbe related to this subject:

*In a sicha from the second day of Shavuos 5716 (*Toras Menachem*, Vol. 14, p. 125, note 101), after a very sharp sicha on the subject, the Rebbe said, "There are those who think that such talk causes damage,

however the truth is that not only does it not cause damage, it will also be beneficial."

*The chassid R. Uriel Zimmer, of blessed memory, tells of conversations that he had with the Rebbe (5716-5719, printed in the *Kfar Chabad Magazine*, Issue #169, Kislev 5745). Among the things he wrote are: "Since the Rebbe had mentioned earlier that Zionism is the sin of the generation, I told him that I had long planned to write an ideological information booklet that systematically explained the reasons for the opposition to the state, and I had even written a few chapters. Although I still had no plans on how to get the money for this project, nevertheless, it seemed to me in light of what the Rebbe had said that it would be worth the effort. The Rebbe said: **Certainly!** He added that I shouldn't worry about the money, I should just do it. On another occasion during a very stressful time, I spoke about my dissatisfaction in my work and my desire to put writing aside. The Rebbe's response: **"On the contrary, you must increase in writing and specifically in the direction that you presently write."** The Rebbe then asked me again why I still haven't written my anti-Zionism booklet. When the booklet was finally printed, the Rebbe told me (5719), "When I read the booklet, I wanted to tell you **that it was not**

written strongly enough." I told the Rebbe that people were strict with me over my publicizing the content of my yechidus in Iyar 5716, during which there were some sharp statements made against Zionism and the state. I said that I did so because I understood from what the Rebbe had said that he would be pleased. The Rebbe said that not only was this true, but this was **an explicit instruction from him that I should publicize the matter.**"

*In a letter from the day after Lag B'Omer 5730 to Rabbi Chaim Yehuda Peldi, of blessed memory, the Rebbe writes, "It seems that I have already expressed **much pleasure and satisfaction** from the article that he printed on the painful and frightful error of calling this bitter and manifold dark Exile by the name "ischalta d'Geula." This has been said many times, particularly when we see the results from this, etc., **and the merit of the many will assist all those who protest against this.** And it is understood that there is no room for a downcast spirit that the protest is not accepted as it should be, eventhough my hope is that it makes an impression in any case, and who stands in the secret of G-d to know the results? It is further understood that this is no exemption for protesting again and again, and particularly according to what has been said and explained many times about the seriousness of the subject and the damage, etc., etc. No need to elaborate on the distressing matter."

*

The Rebbe MH" M declared many times, especially starting from 5750, that the Jewish People are now presently in the final moments of Exile. He urges that the best advice to hasten the True and Complete Redemption is to learn the subject of the Redemption and the coming of Moshiach in both nigleh and chassidus. This is naturally besides

the increase in matters of Torah and mitzvos in general, in order that we will soon be privileged to greet our Righteous Moshiach.

Of course, the study of the subject of the Redemption and Moshiach includes primarily the knowledge and understanding of the correct definition of **what exactly is the Redemption** that we have been anticipating for nearly two thousands years of Exile. Therefore, the Rebbe has requested that we also learn the Rambam's Laws of Kings, as the Rambam is the only rabbinical authority who has issued rulings on



matters that are "halacha on Moshiach." When we consider the words of "the great eagle" on these halachos, we will know exactly what to believe when we say one of the Thirteen Principles of Faith – "I believe in the coming of Moshiach." This Torah study also protects us from **straying and erring** in the understanding of the events that our people have endured in the recent period, and prevent us from failing to distinguish the boundaries between light and darkness.

*

For several generations, a large

community (called "national-religious"), headed by Torah scholars, has seen the emigration of Jews to Eretz Yisroel as the beginning of the fulfillment of the destiny of "the ingathering of the exiles," with the founding of settlements and cities, and the promise of "the return of the exiles of Tzion" and the establishment of Jewish sovereignty in Eretz Yisroel more than fifty years ago as "ischalta d'Geula." In contrast, there are many Torah leaders who have opposed the Zionist idea from the very outset. Even after the founding of the new regime in 5708, they saw it as merely a technical matter without any aura of holiness and Redemption.

The Rebbe MH" M, who ascended to the Chabad-Lubavitch leadership in 5710, has shown tremendous love towards every single Jew, and displayed wondrous affection towards Eretz Yisroel. Yet, despite the fact that in his opinion, there was an obligation according to *Shulchan Aruch* **due to the prevailing circumstances in 5708** to establish a Jewish government in Eretz Yisroel, nevertheless, he never stopped his fervent claim, at farbrengens with his chassidim, conversations with public figures, private and personal correspondence, that not only is this not "ischalta d'Geula," but such statements testify to a state of manifold darkness that lengthens the time of Exile, and even causes punishment from Heaven, to the point of actual sacrifice of innocent human life.

*

During the most recent period, during which the government of Israel has conducted a terrible war against the integrity and wholeness of the Land of Israel, the People of Israel, and the Torah of Israel, heavy questions have begun to peck away in the minds of these very same people who have believed in the

holiness of the “State” and its institutions.

How can it be – that a Zionist government, a Zionist parliament, a Zionist supreme court, a Zionist police force, and a Zionist army uprooted Jews from their homes in Eretz Yisroel, handed the homes over to terrorists, caused desecration to the respect for the dead and the burning of synagogues and batei medrash, and placed the lives of millions of Jews in actual danger – using methods reminiscent of the darkest days of our Exile?

How can it be – that the chief rabbinate, the army rabbinate, the kippa-wearing President of Israel, and religious and “chareidi” Knesset members acquiesced to such a horrible and criminal tragedy through their silence or even gave their cooperation?

How can it be – that tens of thousands of soldiers (a sizable portion of whom have a religious Zionist educational background) closed their ears to the cries of women and children, hardened their hearts from feeling the horrid destruction that they were bringing to the people and the land, and did their evil work with such cruel vigor, as they proudly displayed the blue-and-white flag – the symbol of the “state” – on their hats (brains) and on their chests (hearts)?

*

Thousands of our dear young people struggled with great self-sacrifice against the expulsion. Their leaders had educated them on the holiness of the state and the government, singing since their infancy the words of “Hatikva” with great emotion, waving the Zionist blue-and-white flag – and now, these young people stood in utter astonishment. Was this a dream or the bitter reality? Can it be that we fought with our orange ribbons against the “State” that (seemingly) is

“the foundation of the seat of G-d in the world”? Isn’t it absolute madness to think that the person who stood against us on the other side of the barricade and defeated us in this bitter battle for Eretz Yisroel was none other than “Moshiach ben Yosef,” the prime minister who represents the “natural redemption”?

These wonderful young people are totally confused. They don’t understand – How could we **fight against the Redemption itself**? How can it be that the Redemption could be so cruel to its own sons and daughters?

In order to comfort them in their sorrow and bewilderment, their leaders break out in song: “Eternal people are not afraid, not afraid of the long road,” as they explain to them in long-winded articles: *Chevra*, don’t despair – this is the nature of the shining Redemption, little by little, up and down. At the beginning, it was Herzl and Ben-Gurion, after them came Sharett, Golda, and Begin, afterwards there was Rabin, Shamir, Peres, and Barak, and again Bibi and Arik. Ups and downs at every turn, lights and shadows like the very first rays of the morning sun. But the ultimate will be in another few centuries, when we will have a prime minister wearing a knitted kippa, with 119 Knesset members from the religious parties working under him. Then there will be the complete Redemption at the end of the long road.

If one of these dear self-sacrificing young people would think for a moment about the meaning of the words in the Shmoneh Esrei, and then get up and ask his rabbi: If so, then why do we ask that He should **quickly** make grow the sprout of Dovid? We’re an eternal nation – we’ll wait patiently for the conclusion of the process. Furthermore, why do we specifically need the sprout of

Dovid? The Redemption began with the Zionist ideal, something that naturally grows little by little – why don’t we just let it grow in a natural fashion? And what does Dovid HaMelech have to do with all this? Are you trying to suggest that there won’t be free democratic elections? Who exactly will decide by a majority vote in the holy Knesset that Dovid HaMelech or one of his descendants should be King of Israel?

*

There were so many heartfelt prayers during the year prior to the expulsion and destruction in Gush Katif. Stunned in our hearts, we ask ourselves: Why did G-d do such a thing in this land? What angered Him so much? How can it be that a person so evil as the prime minister succeeded in passing so many difficult political hurdles, until he reached the criminal execution of his personal ideal – the disengagement from Gush Katif? How did he receive so much help from Heaven?

Answer: We gave him the strength! We established that he, his state, and his government are “the first blossoming of our Redemption.” We, the Torah-observant community residing in the Land of Israel with self-sacrifice, blessed him from the depths of our hearts every Shabbos before an open Torah scroll. Absorbing such strength from the side of holiness, it’s no wonder that the false Messiah charged forward with no obstacles in his path, leading his followers and the entire Jewish People into the abyss *r”l*.

Furthermore, while we are now in the final moments before the True and Complete Redemption, the faith in the false Redemption delays the revelation of the True Redemption. Thus, he is standing behind **our wall**, Moshiach is concealed by a wall and a barrier that we have built, and he can not pass his last hurdle. G-d sent us His servants, the Prophets, to

awaken us from the slumber of Exile, and He also gave us several sharp messages in recent years, yet we haven't gotten the hint and have continued to put the darkness before the light. But all the appointed times have passed and it all now depends upon t'shuva. Therefore, G-d placed before us "a king as harsh as Haman" in the hope that the frustrating subjugation under this terrible Exile will break us, once and for all, from the feeling of holiness that we have attributed to this false sovereign state.

G-d expects us to internalize the truth that the founding of a democratic state (on the outside, a dictatorship on the inside) has no connection to the Redemption, and in practical terms, it represents a **total rebellion against the G-d of Israel, the Torah of Israel, the People of Israel, and even a rebellion against the Land of Israel.** Only when we will stop believing in the holiness of the state and its institutions, we will be able to request from the depths of our hearts: "Speedily cause the sprout of Dovid Your servant to flourish, and increase his power by Your salvation."

*

Believe me, my fellow Jews, it's not easy to come out with a complaint, and in writing yet, against a matter of faith that has served as a source of relief to a large and precious community that we **admire, respect, and adore.** It's not pleasant to pluck on the tense nerves of Jews who have now been dispossessed of their inheritance and their livelihood. It's extremely difficult to repudiate rabbanim publicly, some of whom even in these confusing times regrettably continue to hold fast to the horns of the destroyed Zionist altar, **stubbornly** and unbelievably preaching again and again the obselete and tasteless doctrine of "ischalta d'Geula."

But when a situation requiring a true cheshbon nefesh has now been created, it is impossible to refrain from using an opportunity to encourage this trend of disillusionment. We are not just talking about an ideological question – this is an **actual life-and-death matter of pikuach nefesh.** As the Rebbe MH"M has established – and he is the only one revealed as prophet of the generation whose words are proven true and just – **that this is the reason for the loss of life in Eretz HaKodesh!**

Not only is this not "ischalta d'Geula," but such statements testify to a state of manifold darkness that lengthens the time of Exile, and even causes punishment from Heaven, to the point of actual sacrifice of innocent human life.

Whose heart does not tremble upon hearing such words?!

The only advice to put a halt to the eroding destruction of Eretz Yisroel and the loss of its children is to cut off the government's ability to absorb from the sources of holiness. The distorted faith of the Torah-observant community in "the natural Redemption" through those criminals who transgress and those who cause others to transgress is what gives strength and fortitude to the government to carry out its war crimes. This must stop. We must

learn and teach the way of true faith that we will go out of Exile not through our strength and desire, but only through our Righteous Moshiach, who is the only expression of "the throne of G-d's sovereignty in the world." He and none other than he is the True Redeemer, and everything else is mere lies and folly that **r"l has postponed the Redemption for already more than half a century.**

The hope of these wonderful young people who spearheaded the fight against the disengagement is not "to be a free people in our land." Their aspiration is not "to repair the state" and to bring **through the state** the Redemption at the end of this long road. The "orange" youth wants and prays for only one thing – that the present administration known as "the State of Israel" will be **benevolently and mercifully nullified!** In its stead, there will sprout the true kingdom – the kingdom of the House of Dovid through Melech HaMoshiach, speedily in our days.

*

Needless to say, our objective is not "controversy," nor is it our intention to use coercion to instill a new brand of faith upon those who have a clear path according to the guidance of their rabbanim. The seifer *Between Light And Darkness* is geared for those who think that it would be appropriate to look into this matter more deeply, and not to accept the perverted "State-inspired" sophisticated drivel, which appears with amazing regularity in the various weekly Torah pamphlets, as "Torah from Sinai." This seifer has been designed for **the perplexed and the uncertain,** for those who feel that something has gone wrong in the accustomed principles of their faith, and for anyone who is yearning to hear the "words of the living G-d" **from the pure fountain whose waters have never failed.**

SHIDDUCHIM: ADVICE FOR PARENTS

BY G. SHMUELEVITZ

*Many parents are at a loss when it comes to shidduchim for their children: Is my son/daughter ready to do a shidduch? How do I find out information? How do I work with a shadchan? * The following advice is culled from letters and instructions from the Rebbe and from the experience of the author and that of her colleagues.*

There is a saying, “little children, little problems; big children, big problems.” There’s a lot of truth to this saying. Ask any mother whose children have grown passed the “soldiers in Tzivos Hashem” stage and she’ll smile sympathetically.

Fortunate are we. We, as N’shei Chabad, have an enormous advantage over other mothers. We have the close guidance of the Rebbe MH”M on every subject and certainly on this vital topic of shidduchim. The challenges are easier to handle when we learn the horaos and stick to them.

BEFORE BEGINNING

It is advisable for every parent to buy the *Likkutei Horaos, Minhagim, U’Biurim – Shidduchim V’Nisuin* (and in English, the three volume set

Eternal Joy, which can be read at www.sichosinenglish.org). There are parents who go through the entire book with their child before beginning shidduchim. They learn how to approach the inyan, what is important and what is trivial, and gain the right perspective about it all. This way we can be confident that our sons and daughters know what the Rebbe’s view is, and will work with us in accordance with the Rebbe’s wishes.

(Note: As with every letter of the Rebbe, some of the guidance is meant for those specific individuals only, and as such does not apply to all. Some of the horaos have later versions that are not in print. In case of doubt whether a horaa applies to you, ask a mashpia or a Chassidishe rav.)

INTRODUCTION

The topic of shidduchim is complicated. A shidduch does not always go easily. Matches are compared to birth. There are quick births in which the baby emerges within minutes and there are babies who take their time. Some need to be induced, to be eased out, or even a Caesarean section. Obviously, we do not judge the quality or character of a baby by how it was born! That is up to Hashem.

So too with shidduchim. The process can be quick and smooth or long and complicated. Whatever the process is, it doesn’t say anything about the quality or characters of the boy and girl. It’s a personal challenge that is directed by the One Above and is predestined. However, it’s important to remember that a positive attitude by the parents, especially the mother, makes the shidduchim period a more positive experience.

If it’s all by Divine Providence, then maybe we should sit back and wait for the chassan or kalla to make his or her appearance? No! The Rebbe says, “We must take action when it comes to shidduchim.” In many places, the Rebbe quotes the Gemara, which compares the search for a shidduch to a person looking for a lost item, seriously and patiently. Most of the time a shidduch

doesn't happen on its own.

A useful rule of thumb is to make one positive move every day. Make one phone call a day, either to a shadchan or to find out information.

BE ORGANIZED

One of the principles of Chassidus that the Alter Rebbe implanted in his Chassidim is organization. In shidduchim too, being organized will work to our advantage. Make lists and follow up on what needs to be taken care of. Make a check next to each name that sounds worth pursuing. If you found out about someone, write down what you heard. If for whatever reason it didn't work out, don't erase the name (unless you see it listed in the Mazal Tov section of this magazine). There are names that reappear and your notes will help you remember the details.

Although every child has three partners that helped bring him into the world, it sometimes seems as though one of the partners takes more responsibility (usually the mother) while the other parent is otherwise occupied (while the third partner, Hashem, already did His share forty days before the child was conceived). Take on the responsibility joyfully and do it as best as you can.

There used to be more male shadchanim and it was more

appropriate for the father to deal with them (according to halacha the father is responsible to marry off his daughter). Nowadays, when most of the matchmakers are women, it is more appropriate for the mothers to speak to them. Ladies, don't feel bitter for having the job fall into your lap. This is the nicest and most exciting period in your life as a mother. Enjoy it and keep it all in perspective.

Obviously, you will want to share the details, the suggestions and even the jokes with your husband, and he ought to listen closely and be available for consultation. But the one actively in touch with the shadchan will be you, the mother.

WHO DO YOU TURN TO?

When you and your husband feel that your son/daughter is ready to get married; when friends, acquaintances, relatives and classmates being to appear in the Mazal Tov lists (and not in the Bar Mitzva section), the time has come to look for a shidduch.

Who do you call? Professional shadchanim? Friends?

Based on what the Rebbe writes in letters, an "energetic" shadchan is the right person, with the emphasis on "energetic." An active shadchan is not someone who writes down the information and files it away, but someone who asks questions and

makes specific suggestions, rather than giving you a list of graduates of 2002, for example.

The shadchan needs to suggest a name and give relevant information about them, not just the city they come from. She should also be able to describe the person's personality and family background. Someone who is known for her ability "to get things moving," and has a number of shidduchim to her credit, is someone to speak to.

RELATIVES AS SHADCHANIM?

Don't be shy. You can announce to your friends, acquaintances and family that you are looking for someone for your son/daughter. Sometimes, they are more reliable than professional shadchanim because they have a personal interest in seeing you smile under the chuppa.

The disadvantage in relatives being shadchanim is that sometimes they don't approach it professionally. They don't have the savvy to read between the lines, to know when to push and when to let go, whom to enlist for help behind the scenes, and other tactics that are part of the expertise of professional shadchanim

Sometimes a shadchan is too apathetic to our liking. We inquired about her, and she's reliable and has



many sources of potential boys/girls, but nothing moves. In such cases, it's worth following the advice the Rebbe gave, as conveyed by his secretary Rabbi Leibel Groner, to give the shadchan money upfront even before they suggest anyone. This spurs them on to work for you and you'll see results. Obviously, you have to agree ahead of time that if a shidduch works out from another source, the money should be returned.

AVODAS HA'BIRURIM

A name is suggested, great! Now what? Who do you speak to? How do you check the person out? When do you speak to your son/daughter about the suggested name?

First, ask for recommendations from the shadchan. The names she gives you have come from the family and she can give you basic information and tell you what the other side wants you to know. It's a good place to start. And remember, what Hashem doesn't want you to know, you won't find out and it won't make a difference how much research you do.

If you're a bit skilled at this, you can ask some insightful questions which will provide you with more information beyond the superficial. From personal experience, I recommend not doing research until the other side has agreed to the suggestion. In other words, don't start investigating as soon as you hear a name, but only after the shadchan informs you that they are interested. Then you get to work.

Even before that, while learning the Rebbe's letters on this topic, make a list with your son/daughter so that you know what they are looking for in a spouse and ask your questions based on what **they**, i.e., your son/daughter told you they want.

If the criteria of your son/daughter don't match that of you and your husband, try to straighten things out before you get involved in

actual shidduchim. This will prevent misunderstandings and other unpleasantness.

Okay, so you checked him/her out and you think that the person under scrutiny does not suit your darling. Don't be embarrassed to say thanks but no thanks and move on to the next suggestion.

If and when you have the okay from the other side, you made your

There is no point in burdening your son/daughter with thoughts about possible shidduchim when they may not work out. At the same time, I think that an eligible son/daughter needs to know that their parents are actively working to find them a shidduch, so that they can relax and pursue their studies with peace of mind.

inquiries and it sounds good, the time has come to talk to your child. According to the Rebbe, there is no point in burdening your son/daughter with thoughts about possible shidduchim when they may not work out. At the same time, I think that an eligible son/daughter needs to know that their parents are actively working to find them a shidduch, so that they can relax and (especially a Tamim)

pursue their studies with peace of mind. (This is my personal opinion. If anybody knows that the Rebbe thinks otherwise, then ignore what I said!).

WHEN IT'S HARD TO DECIDE

A shidduch came up for your son. You investigated but for some reason it's hard for you to decide. Yet everybody knows that you don't turn down a good idea. You're confused. You don't want to waste your son's time. It's not tzniusdik and it's simply not desirable to meet just to meet. What do you do?

This might sound old-fashioned, but it works. You can ask the shadchan whether you, the parent, can meet (or at least see) the girl. That way you'll know who you are talking about and it will be easier for you to make a decision. This step is also possible later on, when the couple have met, of course with the approval of all parties and with the shadchan as go-between. No, don't worry that you'll make a bad impression as a potential shvigger.

BOTH SIDES AGREE, NOW WHAT?

Once both sides are interested in meeting, you sit down with your son/daughter and review the halachos of yichud. Yes, we are the parents and it is our responsibility to see to it that the shidduchim be conducted according to halacha. Every parent must ensure that their child knows the halachos. If they learned them in school, then review them briefly to be sure that everything is clear. Not only the halachos, but proper, Chassidische behavior.

PRIVACY

How do you maintain privacy? From previous experience, I know it's hard. Every phone call made while the children were up and around, and made behind closed doors, attracted them immediately.

Today, with cell phones, it's easier to be discreet. The Rebbe asked that shidduchim be conducted with utmost tznius, in a Chassidishe way, from beginning until the happy end.

THEY MEET

So the couple meets. It's an emotional occasion. Your son, who seemingly, just yesterday, started going to cheider, is about to make a momentous decision. And you are about to become a mother-in-law! Please, "the mind rules the heart." Don't lose your head now! There's still much to think about. A lot more.

Where should they meet? In a letter of the Rebbe, he writes that the meetings should be in a Chassidishe way. Other than that, the Rebbe says nothing more. So there are different

views about this. Outside of Eretz Yisroel, it was customary to go outside the house to a place like a hotel lobby. The boy picks the girl up from her home after briefly meeting her parents.

Nowadays, things have changed. It's not comfortable for a Tamim to appear on a street in Crown Heights (or in any Lubavitcher community other than Eretz Yisroel) because people will figure out the reason for his being there. So it has become customary for the girl to wait in an appropriate location, the corner of some street, and the boy picks her up in a car. Obviously all the halachos of tznius must be observed in meetings like these.

Another possibility that has come back in style is to meet in someone's

house, whether of relatives or friends. Again, halachos must be followed. Every boy and girl ought to consult with his/her mashpia for personal guidance.

There's a distinct advantage in meeting in someone's home (again, *al pi halacha!*) over going out somewhere. When you go out you are somewhat distracted by what is going on around you. There are passing cars, maybe people you know, all sorts of things going on that divert your attention from the person you're meeting with. In someone's living room or dining room, you can concentrate on the other person and what they're saying.

How many times should they meet? How long should each date take? That's for the next installment. Until then, the rule of thumb should be complete adherence to halacha, Chassidus, and tznius as the Rebbe writes. When in doubt, ask yourself the following question: Would I want the Rebbe to see my son/daughter with so-and-so in place X?

The main thing is it should be with mazal tov and the prophecy of "it will yet be heard ... the sound of rejoicing and the sound of simcha, the voice of the chassan and the voice of the kalla," should be fulfilled with our king leading the way, now mamash!

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DO AS THE REBBE SAID IN THE DREAM

BY RABBI LEVI YITZCHOK GINSBERG
MASHPIA, YESHIVAS TOMCHEI T'MIMIM LUBAVITCH – KFAR CHABAD
YESHIVA KETANA TORAS EMES, YERUSHALAYIM

Time and again we see how the Rebbe MH”M is running the show. Even when it seems as though things are not going as we would like them to, we know that this is part of the G-dly plan.

The following are stories that I heard at the Shabbos Sh’Kulo Moshiach organized by the Matteh Moshiach in Eretz Yisroel, which took place in Bat-Yam.

THE REBBE AND THE DREAM

Rabbi Yisroel Halperin of Hertzliya related the following astounding story, which took place in 5751:

One day a woman from Hertzliya called me and told me that the Rebbe had come to her in a dream and had told her to have another child, and so she was asking me permission to do so. Why did she need permission, I asked.

She explained that she was taking medication for a certain illness and could not have children. The doctors told her that that she is absolutely forbidden to stop taking the medication and this was a matter of pikuach nefesh. Yet she wanted to stop taking the medication and

become pregnant because the Rebbe had told her to and that’s why she was asking permission.

I had no idea what to say. Could she rely on a dream and go against her doctors’ orders? I told her to consult with two other top doctors and to report back to me.

A few days later, she came back and told me that the two doctors confirmed what the first one had said that to stop the medication and become pregnant was a matter of pikuach nefesh for her.

I wrote the whole story, faxed it to the Rebbe and ended it by asking what to do: as the Rebbe had said in the dream or as the doctors had said. A few hours later, I got a phone call from Rabbi Groner. The Rebbe had circled the words, “do as the Rebbe said in the dream,” and had added, “I will mention it at the gravesite [of the Rebbe Rayatz].

I was stunned. Of course, I called the woman and related the Rebbe’s

message: do as the Rebbe said in your dream.

She stopped taking the medication, became pregnant and nine months later gave birth to another child, and all was fine. Afterwards, she called me and said she didn’t feel well at all.

I asked her whether she was taking her medication and she said she wasn’t because after a year without it, she saw that she didn’t need it.

No, I told her. This past year you were instructed by the Rebbe to give birth to another child and the Rebbe took on the responsibility for you to stop taking the medication. However, after you listened to the Rebbe you have to go back to listening to the doctors and take the medication.

She listened to me and felt fine again.

“THEY WILL MELT AS WAX”

Rabbi Amir Kahane, menahel of the yeshiva in Ramat Aviv, told the following story:

The anti-religious parties Meretz and Shinui were most unhappy with the expansion of Chabad in Ramat Aviv. They even tried various things to undermine the yeshiva and to get it thrown out of the neighborhood. The then-deputy mayor who belonged to

Meretz went to the owners leasing us our building and asked them a number of times to get rid of the yeshiva. They weren't quick to follow through and he offered them, thanks to his position as deputy mayor, a piece of land from the city council as long as they got rid of Chabad.

When I heard about this, I was shocked. This was overt bribery. When all talking proved fruitless, I decided to do something daring. I took a mini tape recorder with me to a meeting with him and, without him realizing, I taped him saying that he would give the plot of land if they got rid of Chabad.

Once I had legal proof that he was offering a bribe, I wanted to announce it to the media, and complain. However, I knew that it was no simple matter. It meant publicly attacking this man. Although, I felt that he deserved it, this is generally not the way Chabad goes about things.

I decided that I couldn't do it unless I got a bracha from the Rebbe. I wrote to the Rebbe. After proclaiming "Yechi" and making a good resolution, I put the letter into a volume of *Igros Kodesh*. The Rebbe's answer was amazing. The Rebbe told us not to engage in warfare but to influence through ways of pleasantness and lots of love, and as far as all the plots they were devising, "they would melt like wax."

Of course, I immediately scrapped my original plan to go to war and anticipated developments that would show us how the "wax" had "melted." A few days later, the media made a big deal about the deputy mayor having illegal construction in his home and he was forced to resign from his job.

But the Rebbe had written that we needed to influence him with love. Hashem helped and this deputy mayor flew to Russia and "by chance" met Rabbi Menachem Mendel

Shagalov on the plane. They spoke and the deputy mayor described his doings with Chabad in Ramat Aviv and they became friendly.

Rabbi Shagalov invited him for Shabbos, where he was going to be staying with the shliach in Russia. The man came and enjoyed it very much. Thus, the part of the letter about influencing him in a positive way was fulfilled and then the first part of the letter, about all his plans "melting like

I wrote the whole story, faxed it to the Rebbe and ended it by asking what to do: as the Rebbe had said in the dream or as the doctors had said. A few hours later, I got a phone call from Rabbi Groner. The Rebbe had circled the words, "do as the Rebbe said in the dream."

wax" was completely fulfilled.

The Shinui party also started up with us. They advertised and called on people to come and demonstrate near the yeshiva about Chabad weaseling into the neighborhood and disturbing the residents and especially about the mikva.

We were quite apprehensive about this, but Hashem helped and nobody showed up to the demonstration aside

from those two "tzaddikim," Yossi Lapid and Yosef Yitzchok Paritzky, who quickly left the scene in embarrassment. The *Kol Yisroel* reporter who was left without anything to report decided to interview the rosh yeshiva, Rabbi Yossi Ginsburgh, about the importance of immersing in a mikva before davening. So we ended up getting free positive publicity on *Kol Yisroel*.

Shinui didn't make peace with its failure and the next time they were smarter. They organized an entire bus of Russian immigrants (apparently, they paid them a few sh'kalim), put Shinui T-shirts on them, placed them near the yeshiva with signs, and had them protest the infringement of democracy.

In the meantime, some neighbors showed up who were actually quite pleased with the yeshiva. They began arguing with them and things heated up. We decided we'd better act quickly.

One of the talmidim of the yeshiva who is Russian also put on a Shinui T-shirt and mingled with the demonstrators. After a few minutes, he announced in Russian: Now's lunch!

The Russians figured this was part of the demonstration and they all entered the yeshiva dining room for lunch. As they ate, things calmed down and the talmidim of the yeshiva put t'fillin on with them. When Lapid and Paritzky showed up, they found the demonstrators with t'fillin on, chatting pleasantly with the Lubavitchers. They had to give up their plans, "they will melt like wax."

Now for dessert, a little story that I heard in Ramat Aviv a few weeks later from Rabbi Menachem Mendel Wilschansky, rosh yeshivas Chabad in Chaifa:

In Chaifa there was a successful Yud Shevat gathering, attended by

many of the chareidim in the city. When I told my father, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Wilschansky, he asked me why we didn't advertise it and I said there was a lot of work to do and we didn't think it was important to advertise.

Nu, said my father, did you write a *duch* (report) to the Rebbe yet?

Yes, I said, I wrote up a *duch* and will give it in to the Rebbe.

A few minutes later, I put the *duch* into a volume of *Igros Kodesh* and the answer was amazing. The Rebbe thanked us for the activities and then wrote, "Surely you will advertise in the newspapers, etc." Naturally, after reading that, we submitted our reports to the appropriate places.

* * *

Time and again we see how the Rebbe is running the show. Even when it seems to us as though things are not going the way we would like them to, we know that this is also part of the G-dly plan.

We need to constantly remind ourselves about what the Rebbe writes in the famous letter (of 15 Shvat 5709, *Igros Kodesh* vol. 3, p. 53) about the *z'chus* and obligation to connect Jews not only to Chassidus, but to the "wellspring" himself, the Rebbe. This is what the Rebbe says:

We have no wellspring through whom the wellsprings of the Baal Shem Tov and the Alter Rebbe are drawn except for one person: the Rebbe, my father-in-law shlita.

And in this letter the Rebbe demands (as a Chassid of the Rebbe Rayatz) that people be told that:

There is a Rebbe in Israel and he is not bound by the limitations of nature, and he who wants to walk in confidence, in business, in running the household, etc., should not lift his hand without asking the Rebbe.

Even in simple, material things,

one should approach another and say:

Israel is not bereaved, G-d forbid, you have whom to ask. Not only that, but you should not wait until your friend comes to you to investigate whether there is a Rebbe, since most of the time he doesn't even know what a Rebbe is. Rather, you go to him and explain that he does not need to rely on his own understanding at all and not on the shadchan and not on the doctor and not on the broker, because all these are questionable and he has a definite way of resolving his doubts. And Chazal say that words that come from the heart enter the heart.

Especially when we have the directive from the sicha of Parshas Shoftim 5751:

You must publicize to all the people of the generation that we have merited that Hashem chose a person of free choice, who, on his part, is incomparably greater than the people of the generation, to be "your judges," and "your advisors," and the prophet of the generation. He issues directives and gives advice regarding the avoda of all the Jewish people and all the people of this generation in all matters of Torah and mitzvos, and regarding daily life and conduct, also in "all your ways [know him]" and "all your deeds [should be for the sake of Heaven]." Until the main prophecy – the prophecy (not just as a wise person and judge but as a prophet, which is with a certainty...) that "immediately to Redemption" and immediately mamash "behold (Moshiach) comes." And along with the privilege, every member of the generation has the responsibility to accept upon himself "your judges" and "your advisors," and to obey his instructions and good advice.

There is also the horaa of the sicha of VaYeishev 5752 to publicize the miracles that Hashem does **in our time** with the knowledge and awareness that this affects the coming

of the true and complete Redemption.

The Rebbe believes in us and trusts us, despite knowing our failings. The Rebbe is absolute good, G-dly good, true and eternal good. He is with every one of us wherever we are, encouraging when we need it and sometimes giving light slaps to those who need it. Only he knows what to give, to whom to give it, how much to give, and how to give each one. And even when sometimes it seems that you haven't gotten any particular personal attention, even then, the Rebbe is standing by your side and watching over you, "and watching over you and examining kidneys and heart to see if he serves him properly."

From his part, it's always like this, in every instance, at all times, in every place, and in every situation. But it's as though he is begging, "Your parting is difficult for me." It doesn't say "our parting," because as far as I'm concerned there is no separation, but there should be no separation on *your* part – separations between Jews in general, and Chassidim in particular.

Know and remember, while sticking to your principles and not conceding an inch, that the truth is that all are beloved, even if I think the other person is wrong and mistaken. And this is what serves as the keili to receive Hashem's blessings and the Rebbe's brachos with "apparent and visible good to eyes of flesh."

So although this has become "daily fare," that people get the Rebbe's answers and see how the Rebbe guides us – don't keep it to yourself! Publicize it! This is one of the ways we have of showing everyone how the Rebbe is running the show and to get people to be mekasher with him and accept his malchus and actually bring about the revelation of his malchus with the true and complete Redemption now!

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ELDEST CHASSID OF OUR GENERATION: RABBI YEHUDA CHITRIK A”H

BY ZALMAN BERGER

*On Wednesday, 17 Shvat (February 8), Crown Heights turned out for the funeral of Rabbi Yehuda Chitrik, z’kan Chassidei Chabad, who passed away at the very ripe old age of 106. He was the last Chassid to see three Admurim; namely, the Rebbe Rashab, the Rebbe Rayatz and the Rebbe MH”M. * Some of his stories are recounted in From My Father’s Shabbos Table: A Treasury of Chabad Chassidic Stories, published in 1991 in Rabbi Eliyahu Touger’s translation from the Hebrew.* He is survived by more than 300 children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great, great grandchildren, all Chabad Chassidim, many of whom serve as shluchim around the world.*

BEGINNINGS

The *New York Times* wrote about Rabbi Yehuda Chitrik one year ago, describing how he got up at five a.m. in order to learn, went to shul at least twice a day, gave a shiur and worked with his partner, 95-year-old Rabbi Meir Itkin.

Rabbi Chitrik was born on Rosh Chodesh Elul 5659 (August 28, 1899) in the town of Krasnaloki, which is in the Borisov district in Minsk, Byelorussia. His parents were Tzvi Hirsch and Chaya. He was born into an atmosphere of Torah and Chassidus. His father went to hear Chassidus regularly at the beis midrash in town. When his son was three, he took him every Shabbos to hear Chassidus even though he sometimes fell asleep there.

When he was eleven, Rabbi Chitrik went to learn in the yeshiva in Borisov, where about fifty talmidim learned in three classes. After about two years, he told his father he wanted to learn in a yeshiva g’dola. He had heard about three famous yeshivos, in Lubavitch, Radin, and Mir, and he and his

father discussed it and finally chose Lubavitch.

At this time, a fire broke out and destroyed three stores and some nearby houses. The financial situation was difficult and his father hesitated to send his son to Lubavitch lest he be unable to support him. When he shared his concern with the Chassid, R' Eliyahu Eber, R' Eber gave the boy a letter of recommendation to the mashgiach, Rav Yechezkel Himelstein (may Hashem avenge his blood).

IN LUBAVITCH

It was 5673 (1913) when Rabbi Chitrik traveled to learn in Lubavitch. "I traveled by train and met two talmidim who were also traveling to learn in Lubavitch. One was the Tamim Pesach Dubov and the other was his friend Shmuel. They were both from Yokshitz in the Minsk region," recalled Rabbi Chitrik about seventy years later.

After a protracted test, young Yehuda was accepted into the Lubavitcher yeshiva and that was no small accomplishment. About 80

boys sought to be accepted into the yeshiva, but only 36 were accepted.

"When I was accepted into Tomchei T'mimim, to learn in the chadarim, for about a month I learned Gemara Bava Metzia with Rabbi Yechiel Komisar, who was the one who tested new talmidim who wanted to enter the yeshiva. Later on, R' Avrohom of Sene was his maggid shiur, as was R' Shmuel Nisenevitch, all outstanding Torah scholars.

At first, young Yehuda was extremely shy and he was



embarrassed to eat with the balabatim as the other talmidim did. The money his father sent him wasn't enough so he ate the weekday meals somehow in yeshiva and on Shabbos, his good friend Yisroel Chaim Zarchi, a resident of Lubavitch, invited him to his home. For two years, he ate at his friend's house without having to accept favors from balabatim he didn't know.

He described this period in his life:

"I once went over to the mashgiach of Chassidus and the mashgiach asked me to explain something in a maamer. I explained it as I understood it. The mashgiach told me that the p'shat was otherwise. I insisted that I was right and was given a fine: for the next two months, the yeshiva would not pay the balabus I ate at. The decree was annulled and the mashgiach conceded only after the balabus himself approached him and told him that my crime was not so severe."

World War I began and the Rebbe Rashab had to leave Lubavitch. After some wandering, he settled in Rostov.

Rosh HaShana 5678 (1918), a group of talmidim traveled to be with the Rebbe Rashab, including Rabbi Chitrik.

"Suddenly, the mashgiach, the mashpia R' Shilem Koratin, called the older bachurim, and told them that the [Rebbe] Rayatz had sent 1000 rubles for the expenses of the trip to Rostov. Since there were 100 talmidim in the large hall at that time, he said that ten rubles would be given to each one for a ticket."

The arrival of 100 talmidim in Rostov all at once created serious problems. Afterwards, the Rebbe's son, the Rebbe Rayatz, said that he had intended for only ten talmidim

to come and that each should be given 100 rubles for the expenses of the entire month of Tishrei, but what happened happened...

PRESENT AT HISTORIC OCCASIONS

Shortly thereafter, the yeshiva in Lubavitch dismantled. Many groups of T'mimim left Lubavitch and went to other cities. One group, which included Rabbi Chitrik, went to Charkov, intending to continue on to Kremenchug. But when they arrived they found that the German army had conquered Kremenchug and the train lines had stopped.

After a public trial, they decided to close the yeshiva. They conducted a search in the home of the Rebbe Rayatz, confiscated many belongings, and put the Rebbe's house under curfew.

The T'mimim remained there for several months until the summer of 5678 (1918) and then move on to Kremenchug as the Rebbe Rashab told them to do, where they continued learning.

However, that was not the end of Rabbi Chitrik's wanderings. At the end of the summer of 5680 (1920), he went with older T'mimim to Rostov, where they learned in the home of our Rebbeim, under the then new leadership of the Rebbe Rayatz. The difficulties were enormous. For a while, the Rebbe was seriously ill and the T'mimim

had to leave for another house. Then typhus broke out and once again they had to move. R' Yehuda and his friends continued to learn in the shul in the courtyard of the Rostov cemetery.

The Yevsektzia were after them. At the end of the winter of 5681 (1921) they began to persecute the Chabad Chassidim in Rostov. After a public trial, they decided to close the yeshiva. They conducted a search in the home of the Rebbe Rayatz, confiscated many belongings, and put the Rebbe's house under curfew.

Rabbi Chitrik was present during these historic events. He himself arrived at the Rebbe's house in the middle of the search and witnessed the horror himself.

He was also present at the wedding of the Rebbe's daughter with Rashag (Rabbi Shmaryahu Gurary) that took place in the month of Sivan of that year. It was a modest wedding, because due to the economic situation, there was no mashke.

"My mechutan, R' Chaim Eliezer Karasik a"h, was busy making lemonade. He prepared it for the wedding and at the Rebbe's house they baked tortes. The Rebbe himself went to the hall and gave out pieces of torte and cups of lemonade for l'chaim, so people could bless the chassan and kalla and the mechutanim."

A few days after the wedding, R' Chitrik and 25 friends traveled to Poltava in the Ukraine. The financial situation of the yeshivos was terrible and as one of the senior T'mimim, he was sent to fundraise for the yeshiva from Anash around Russia. For this task he needed courage and lots of mesirus nefesh, for if he were caught... Nevertheless, R' Chitrik traveled from one community to the next though he didn't raise too

much money. The First World War together with the Communist Revolution had destroyed the economy of the Soviet Union and Anash were poor.

In addition to fundraising wherever he went, he would review maamarei Chassidus and revive the souls of the Chassidim who were far from Beis Rebbe.

“Many of Anash didn’t know that the Rebbe Rayatz had accepted the nesius and said a maamer every Shabbos. The maamarim were lengthy with elaborate explanations. I reviewed them in every city.

“The situation was dismal wherever I went and I didn’t raise money since business was limited. All business was done with gentiles and instead of money, they bartered. In other words they got seeds, wheat, or grain.”

The economic situation was so bad that he didn’t even raise the money to pay for his train ticket.

“Wherever I went they promised me that when the situation improved, they would surely send money to the yeshiva and I didn’t even get money to cover my travel expenses and had to travel without a ticket.”



Rabbi Aharon Tumarkin, rav of Charkov

In 5685 (1925) Rabbi Chitrik began learning sh’chita from R’ Meir Noach Lerman and a year later he married Kaila, the daughter of Rabbi Aharon Tumarkin, rav and av beis din in Charkov. The young couple lived in Charkov, not far from the kalla’s parents. For years, Rabbi Chitrik gave Chassidus shiurim in the shuls and supported himself through sh’chita.

The persecution of religious Jews

increased. The situation deteriorated daily. Nevertheless, when his children became old enough for school, Rabbi Chitrik did not send them to public school where they would be indoctrinated in communism. When the authorities began nosing around, he bought them briefcases. Every morning, at the time that children went to school, his children also left the house with their briefcases. However, they headed for their grandfather’s house. They did the same thing in reverse at the time that all schoolchildren were walking home at the end of the day.

THE G.P.U. PRESSURES HIM TO BE GABBAI

The noose around the necks of Chabad Chassidim in Charkov tightened. In 5699 (1939), there was a clash with the G.P.U., as Rabbi Chitrik wrote in his diaries:

“The goy from the G.P.U. in charge of synagogues greatly opposed the fact that people learned in the Matchanski shul between Mincha and Maariv, or before davening or after davening. He said that the shul was only for praying and not for Torah. The old gabbai, the Chassid R’ Meir Moshe Markowitz, told him it was not so,



The yeshiva in Lubavitch

but the rasha would constantly demand that the gabbai obey him.

“When he saw that R’ Meir Moshe couldn’t do much, and on the list of people responsible for the property of the shul were old people and only two young men: Ben-Tzion Shemtov and myself, the goy found a way to make trouble. When he was told that Ben-Tzion had been sent to Siberia, he decided that I should be gabbai.

“He didn’t have the authority to send me a subpoena through the police, so he sent it through the shamash in the shul. When the shamash came, I told him that my household would sign that he did not find me at home. A month went by and the goy told the shamash that he shouldn’t leave my house until he personally handed me the subpoena.

“When he came to my house I did not accept the subpoena and I told him that he should write that I wasn’t home. The shamash said that the goy told him that he shouldn’t leave my house until he handed it to me. He threw it at me and said that he had given it to me.

“About a year went by, and he continued sending subpoenas and they answered that I wasn’t home, until he stopped calling me in the summer of 5699 (1939) with the outbreak of World War II.”

At that time, something happened and Rabbi Chitrik was nearly caught. Following this incident, he felt that he had to move to Georgia, where the persecution wasn’t as great:

“In 5699 (1939) I looked out the window and saw S.Y.G. (an informer, thanks to whom Chabad Chassidim in various towns were arrested), passing my house. I knew him from Rostov and I said to my wife that I sensed that something was afoot.

THE NY REPORTS RABBI CHITRIK’S BIRTHDAY

Last year, when Rabbi Chitrik was 105, his family gathered to celebrate his birthday. A reporter from the *New York Times* was given permission to attend and he wrote an article about R’ Yehuda Chitrik. His daughter, Mrs. Schneersohn, was quoted as saying that it was hard to give an exact number of all the descendents, “Children don’t need to be counted, since it doesn’t matter how many you have; it’s never enough.”

His grandson Ari Chitrik who lives in Manhattan and has six children was quoted as saying, “He never slows down. He is always reading, writing, talking and making decisions.

Rabbi Chitrik’s family attributed his long life to a bracha he received from the Rebbe. “All three Rebbes gave him a blessing for long life,” said Ari Chitrik.

When a guest asked how he came to live so long, Rabbi Chitrik whispered in Yiddish to his son who said, “He says it’s because he is blessed with wonderful children.”

Mrs. Schneersohn said, “What I think is that he lives like the Rambam. He gets up at five every morning, gets dressed and sits and learns.”

That evening Rabbi Chitrik didn’t touch any of the cake or other treats that were on the table along with s’farim. There was also a bottle of vodka of course, and Rabbi Chitrik toyed with the glass as he listened to the conversation, occasionally interjecting.

The people sitting there that night are shluchim to places like Worcester, Indiana, Nurenberg, Germany, Israel, and Uruguay. They had come to New York for the Kinus HaShluchim.

Also, in honor of his birthday, he received a congratulatory letter from President George W. Bush, with blessings and good wishes from himself and First Lady Laura Bush.



Rabbi Chitrik at the head of the table with a dozen other Chabad rabbis, four generations of Chitriks. On his right is his son Tzvi Hirsh, 77.



Rabbi Chitrik (left) with his mechutan Rabbi Eliezer Karasik, dancing together at the wedding of the children, Tzvi Hirsch and Rivka Chitrik

“At night, some of Anash came to my house and told me that the informer went to the Matchanski shul and there was person who wasn't so smart and G. asked him if there were any alumni from Tomchei T'mimim. The man answered that there was Yehuda Chitrik. If you needed any support or a train ticket, you just had to ask him and he would give it to you. He said there was also Nachum Yitzchok Pinson, and any alumnus of Tomchei T'mimim only need ask him for a place to stay and would graciously get a place. And he led him to Pinson's house, where he slept.

“As he walked with the man from shul, he found out about all the T'mimim who lived in Charkov! We found out the next day that he had left and we were terrified.”

Rabbi Chitrik consulted with his brothers-in-law and they agreed that he had to leave for Georgia. Until then, Rabbi Chitrik did not sleep at home because he was afraid they



R' Yehuda Chitrik with his son Aharon

would catch him. Additionally, he didn't go to the usual shul.

One Shabbos, when he was about to leave the house with his son for shul, a broad shouldered goy

who was clearly a powerful man, entered his home.

“He asked me my name and whether I lived there. I told him and immediately asked him who he was and why had he come to my house? He immediately showed me an official document which said that he was a member of the G.P.U. and I asked him: What do I have to do with the G.P.U. and how do you know my address?

“He answered: Don't be afraid, it's nothing. A guy named Chitrik did something against the government and we're looking for him. They gave me his file and told me to look for anybody named Chitrik.”

At the end of the brief encounter, the G.P.U. agent left. That night, Rabbi Chitrik heard that G.P.U. agents also visited the homes of other Chassidim and questioned them intensively. Because of this, he went into hiding even in daylight hours.

“From that day on I hid even more, in a cave full of shmattes...and that is where I lived from Chanuka until after Purim (1939).”

Motzaei Shushan Purim was March 8, when many countries celebrate Women's Day. Rabbi Chitrik thought the goyim would be busy celebrating and drinking and wouldn't conduct arrests that night. However, the G.P.U. in Charkov wasn't celebrating.

Towards morning, there were knocks on the window of the Chitrik house. The one knocking was a member of the Pinson family, who said that his father, Nachum Yitzchok had been arrested that night, as well as R' Shmuel Katzman, R' Meir Gurkov, R' Tzemach Gurewitz, and Rabbi Avrohom Boruch Pevsner.

Rabbi Chitrik and his wife and

children fled for Samarkand, where he joined the large group of Chabad Chassidim there.

HAFATZAS HA'CHASSIDUS

At the end of the war, Rabbi Chitrik was able to leave the Soviet Union in the famous smuggling operation along with another thousand people. After wandering for a time, he settled in Antwerp, Belgium.

Upon his arrival in Belgium along with R' Chaim Chaiken, the Rebbe Rayatz told them to strengthen Yiddishkait and proper chinuch in their new home:

Blessed is your coming in peace and may Hashem help you settle well and give you success in your holy work of strengthening Yiddishkait and proper chinuch. (*Igros Kodesh Rebbe Rayatz* vol. 9, p. 178).

After a year, the Rebbe told Rabbi Chitrik to visit Holland to see whether Chabad Chassidim could take jobs in rabbanus, sh'chita, or business:

Please briefly visit Holland for the purpose of finding out the details of the circumstances of the orphaned children who are in gentile homes and investigate regarding the number of children, whether it is possible to extricate them and incorporate them in proper Jewish educational facilities, and whether there is anyone working on their behalf. Surely, you will find a way to make contact with rabbanim and askanim in Holland, and will send me a detailed report about this.

Also, inquire while you are there whether there are opportunities for our friends Anash to settle in Holland in positions of rabbanus, sh'chita, and the like or in business.

I hope that with Hashem's help you will be able to obtain a visa for

Holland and will hurry to make this trip as soon as possible. May Hashem help you materially and spiritually

(*ibid.*, p. 350).

In Kislev 5708, the Rebbe MH" M asked Rabbi Chitrik to report about the state of chinuch "in places where your influence extends or can extend." The Rebbe also suggested that he distribute and sell books of Kehos in Belgium.

Rabbi Chitrik taught Chassidus even to those who were far from Torah and Chassidus. He was mekarev them to the light within Torah. He asked whether he should also teach those young people who were under the auspices of Agudas Yisroel, and the Rebbe answered:

You don't explain why your influence will be diminished on your present talmidim if you also take part in the chinuch of the young people under the auspices of Aguda. In my humble opinion, on the contrary (*Igros Kodesh*, vol. 21, p. 81).

A few years later, in 5709, Rabbi

Chitrik moved to Montreal and was appointed by the Rebbe Rayatz as menahel ruchni of yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim there. The Rebbe Rayatz wrote as follows:

In response to your letter of this past 22 Elul, I was pleased to learn that you have begun avodas ha'kodesh as a the menahel ruchni of Tomchei T'mimim Lubavitch in Montreal, may Hashem give you much success.

Certainly, you need to guide the talmidim in the way of Chassidus, but keep in mind their present situation. You must arrange that aside from studying *Tanya* they should also learn the third section of *Shaarei T'shuva*. They should learn it at a time when all the talmidim are obligated to be in yeshiva

(*Igros Kodesh Rebbe Rayatz*, vol. 10, p. 255-6).

THE MAAMER TOOK

After the passing of the Rebbe Rayatz, Rabbi Chitrik became mekushar heart and soul to the Rebbe MH" M. He was one of the members of a delegation of Chabad



R' Yehuda Chitrik (center) with his son Aharon (right) and son Tzvi Hirsh (left)



20 Elul 5747, R' Yehuda Chitrik (center) with his friends R' Avrohom Drizin and R' Chaikel Chanin



R' Yehuda Chitrik (left) at the wedding of his grandson, R' Nachum Gross

Chassidim from Montreal who presented the Rebbe with a *k'sav hiskashrus* signed by the Chabad Chassidim of Montreal. He personally wished the Rebbe “that everything that was not accomplished by the Rebbe Rayatz should be accomplished by the Rebbe,” and it was obvious that the Rebbe appreciated this bracha.

Rabbi Chitrik once related that after the Rebbe said the first maamer on Yud Shvat 5711, he said

to the Rebbe, “the maamer took,” (i.e., the maamer won over the Chassidim). He wanted to bless the Rebbe and the Rebbe said that he should say l’chaim.

For twenty-five years Rabbi Chitrik worked in the yeshiva in Montreal from 1950-1975. His talmidim enjoyed his shiurim, which combined Gemara and halacha with fascinating stories of Chassidim.

“As his talmidim we especially

enjoyed his farbrengens. When he told about the lives of Chassidim in earlier generations the story was alive before our very eyes,” said one of his talmidim.

During this period, he had certain ongoing shiurim at the shul, especially in Chassidus and Halacha.

In 1983, after his wife passed away, Rabbi Chitrik moved to Crown Heights.

PACKED WITH CHASSIDUS

Rabbi Chitrik’s daily schedule was Torah and Chassidus from when he got up, before the sun rose, and until he went to sleep. Before Shacharis, he learned Chassidus for two hours and then he davened at length. In addition to his morning learning, he devoted other hours to his ongoing shiurim in *Likkutei Torah* and many sifrei Chassidus.

When the Rebbe established the daily study of Rambam, Rabbi Chitrik wondered when he would have the time for it! But of course, as a Chassid, he learned Rambam every day.

His schedule on Shabbos was amazing. He woke up at dawn and for many hours studied Chassidus and then he davened at length, sometimes until three in the afternoon. Then he would sit down to farbreng.

One of the special scenes that people who came to 770 saw was Rabbi Chitrik learning with his chavrusa, R' Meir Itkin. Many people would stand and watch the two of them learning while the pair was oblivious to the commotion around them.

PASSING ALONG TRADITIONS

While living in the United States, Rabbi Chitrik wrote his memoirs. He wasn’t only an old Jew who had the privilege of witnessing historic



R' Yehuda Chitrik with his chavrusa, R' Meir Itkin



events and was one of the few who saw the Rebbe Rashab, but he was also a walking Chassidic library. He had stored away in his memory special moments that he had seen of the Rebbeim and great Chassidim. He heard thousands of stories that passed from generation to generation and he wrote them in his four volume *Reshimos D'varim* (part of which was translated as *From My Father's Shabbos Table*).

He wrote *Reshimos D'varim* at the urging of the Rebbe, and he wrote in the introduction, "Some years ago, the Rebbe shlita suggested that I write what I heard and saw from the mashpiim, Chassidim, and men of deeds. This was very hard for me because I hadn't written it shortly after hearing it. It was only in my memory and many years had passed since I had heard it, and who knows whether I would write it accurately.



R' Yehuda Chitrik farbrenging with boys from grade 4-4 Oholei Torah one month ago

"Hashem brought about that I once wrote to the Rebbe shlita a story I had heard from the mashpia and maskil R' Shmuel Grunem Esterman and I received a letter of thanks from the Rebbe and a request that I continue writing what I heard. Some years went by. From time to time I would write to the Rebbe what I heard and material was collected for *Reshimos D'varim*."

* * *

Rabbi Chitrik spoke softly, was particular about order, and had a sense of humor.

"My first hundred years were easier," he once said jokingly. "When you become older suddenly people begin speaking more quietly and the letters in books become smaller..."

Rabbi Chitrik passed away Tuesday night after a heart attack the week before and his funeral was attended by

Anash and T'mimim. He was buried in the Agudas Chabad section of the cemetery in Queens near the Ohel.

He is survived by two sons and two daughters: Tzvi Hirsh, Chaya Lieberman, Sheindel Schneersohn, and Aharon and numerous descendents. The world of Lubavitch has lost a great Chassid, thanks to whom the present generation has a better understanding of the previous generations.

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ב"ה

THE OBLIGATION TO CELEBRATE ON PURIM

AN ADAPTATION OF THE DISCOURSE FOUND IN TORAH OR
BY YITZCHOK DOVID WAGSHUL

*In Likkutei Torah (Vayikra 4c) the Tzemach Tzedek makes an editorial comment to this discourse, in which it is referred to simply as derush Purim, “the Purim discourse.” * In Likkutei Sichos Vol. 7, p. 27, note 55, the Rebbe points out that the reason this discourse is called “the Purim discourse” (despite the fact that numerous other discourses also deal with Purim) is that the subject of this particular discourse expresses the central theme of Purim; namely, the requirement that on Purim, one drink to the point that one no longer knows the difference between “cursed is Haman” and “blessed is Mordechai.” * Part 2*

CHAPTER 3

THE JEWISH COMMITMENT TO TORAH AT MOUNT SINAI AND ITS VOLUNTARY RATIFICATION ON PURIM

Key topics to be presented in this chapter:

- At Mount Sinai, the Jews put “we will do” before “we will understand.”
- Putting “we will do” first demonstrated deference to G-d, a prerequisite for the revelation of the Or Ein Sof.
- G-d had to help the Jews, spiritually weakened from their ordeal in Egypt, reach this consummate level of deference to G-d:
 - a) By revealing Himself at Mount Sinai, G-d overwhelmed the Jews with love.
 - b) This revelation is the symbolism of the “mountain suspended over their heads.”
- Commitment of Purim distinguished from that of Mount Sinai:
 - a) G-d revealed His love at Mount Sinai.
 - b) Hester Panim: G-d concealed Himself on Purim.
 - c) Superiority of the Purim commitment over that at Mount Sinai.

AT MOUNT SINAI. THE JEWS PUT “WE WILL DO” BEFORE “WE WILL UNDERSTAND”

The Jews merited this invaluable gift as a result of the Egyptian exile and of their willingness, upon redemption, to put G-d’s will before their own. This attitude was exemplified by their response²³ to the prospect of receiving the Torah, “We will do [whatever the Torah says] and we will understand [it].” The significance of this declaration was that the Jews put “we will do” before “we will understand,” implying that they were committed to the Torah on a level independent of whether they understood or agreed with it.

Nevertheless, within that context of unconditional acceptance and commitment to Torah observance, the Jews would make every effort to understand the Torah as well, since that, too, is what G-d wants. But under no circumstances would “we will do” be dependent on “we will understand.”

PUTTING “WE WILL DO” FIRST DEMONSTRATED DEFERENCE TO G-D, A PREREQUISITE FOR THE REVELATION OF THE OR EIN SOF.

This reflects the Bittul, or “self-nullification,” of the Jews before G-d. It is impossible for there to be a genuine revelation of G-dliness absent this quality of Bittul. If one takes the attitude that one is “something” in one’s own right (but believes G-d also exists), one is essentially rejecting G-d’s unity. In reality, there is no true existence but G-d. If one truly internalizes this concept, one will naturally put aside all one’s own desires in deference to G-d’s will as a servant who simply carries out the master’s will and has none of his or her own. This, ideally, is what is meant by the Torah’s exhortation,²⁴ “And you shall serve Him.” It is only where this Bittul exists that the Or Ein Sof will be manifest. This is why the Or Ein Sof is expressed exclusively within the Sefirah of Chochmah, as alluded to earlier,²⁵ for this Sefirah alone is characterized by Bittul, as will be explained elsewhere.

This concept brings out a deeper meaning of the phrase “we will do and we will understand” (na’aseh v’nishmah): the word nishmah, “we will understand” literally means, “we will hear” in the sense of one who says, “I hear you, I hear what you are saying.” Hearing is not an active sense, for one does not actively hear things, but passively detects whatever sound reaches the ear. In the same way, one cannot actively cause oneself to understand something. The thing to be understood is outside the person, it either penetrates or it doesn’t. One cannot simply read or study the Torah as though it were a book or a subject area and thereby acquire its spiritual benefits. In order to hear or understand Torah — nishmah — one must first come into a state of total Bittul, absolute deference and nullity before G-d — na’aseh. Otherwise, the awesome spiritual light of Torah, the Or Ein Sof it contains, will not be revealed to one’s understanding. Na’aseh precedes nishmah because na’aseh is literally a prerequisite to nishmah.

G-D HAD TO HELP THE JEWS, SPIRITUALLY WEAKENED FROM THEIR ORDEAL IN EGYPT, REACH THIS CONSUMMATE LEVEL OF DEFERENCE TO G-D.

When the Jews were enslaved in Egypt, they were subjected to the debasing influence of that immoral, idolatrous culture, and sank to a very low level of spirituality. On redemption,

the Jews were still in that state²⁶ and G-d rescued them just in time to prevent what spiritual spark they still retained from going out altogether. But if this is indeed so, how did the Jews succeed in reaching the exemplary level of Bittul implied by the declaration na’aseh v’nishmah? They could not have achieved this on their own so soon after leaving Egypt.

a.) By revealing Himself at Mount Sinai, G-d overwhelmed the Jews with love.

In fact, they did not reach this level on their own. G-d, in His gracious love for the Jewish People, helped them. He pulled the Jews up so that they could move forward on their own. This was accomplished by G-d’s open revelation to the Jews at Mount Sinai. In the face of this direct manifestation of G-dliness, the Jews were utterly overwhelmed by spirituality and the natural, inextinguishable love of a Jewish soul for G-d brought to the fore. Consequently, the Jews wanted nothing but to be united with G-d Himself, so much so that, as the sages teach,²⁷ their souls literally left them and returned to Him with each word G-d spoke. This was the Bittul needed for receiving the Torah.

b.) This is the symbolism of the “mountain suspended over their heads.”

This is what is meant by the teaching that G-d “suspended a mountain over their heads” and forced them to accept the Torah. The Jews were compelled to accept the Torah not so much by fear as by love: the inconceivable love of G-d for the Jews and His direct revelation to the Jews on Mount Sinai literally overwhelmed them, reviving that surviving Jewish spark and igniting it into a roaring flame and “forcing” the Jews automatically into the state of utter nullity that allowed the Or Ein Sof to manifest itself within them.

“Mountain” is used in Jewish mysticism as a symbol of G-d’s love for the Jews, as we find regarding Avraham — the embodiment of G-d’s attribute of Chesed and love — who was called “mountain,” as well as regarding Aharon — who also represented G-d’s loving Chesed — whose Hebrew name contains the word har, “mountain.” The symbolism of G-d’s mountain above the Jews is that He revealed His overwhelming love for them, as explained above, and the characterization of this mountain as “like a dome” alludes to the all-encompassing nature of the love.

In other words, G-d’s love for the Jewish people literally encompassed them from all sides and automatically brought out their natural love for Him in return.

This idea of G-d’s stimulating the Jews’ love for Him by first bestowing His own overwhelming love upon them is hinted at in the verse,²⁸ “I have loved you, says G-d.” It is possible to understand the phrase, ahavti eschem, “I have loved you,” as though “I have loved” were a transitive verb and meant, “I have caused you to love.” This refers to what we have just been discussing: by G-d manifesting Himself to the Jews at

Mount Sinai He awakened their own love for Him in response.²⁹

As³⁰ an interesting aside, this provides an answer to a famous question concerning one of the blessings recited at a marriage ceremony. The text of the blessing in question praises G-d who “sanctifies His nation, Israel, though the “marriage canopy” (Chuppah) and “marriage” (Kiddushin). It is asked, Why is the marriage canopy mentioned before marriage itself (especially in light of the implication of the canopy as the consummation of the marriage)? Surely, the proper sequence ought to have been, “through marriage and the canopy,” not the other way around.

However, the canopy symbolizes the same transcendent, encompassing (Makkif) level as the mountain suspended like a dome over the Jews at Mount Sinai. The giving of the Torah is often compared to the “wedding” of G-d and the Jews. Just as at that original wedding, it was necessary to first experience the canopy — the mountain above heads of the Jews — before we could achieve Bittul and genuine commitment to G-d, so in all Jewish weddings (which also symbolize G-d’s wedding to the Jews), do we mention the canopy before the marriage itself.

COMMITMENT OF PURIM DISTINGUISHED FROM THAT OF MOUNT SINAI

a.) G-d revealed His love at Mount Sinai.

Finally, this is how we are to understand the concept of the Jews’ recommitment to Torah, which can be seen as a renewing of vows, so to speak, during the historic Purim episode. G-d’s suspending a mountain over the Jews’ heads and forcing them to accept the Torah was not, as we have explained, compulsion on pain of death, but instead compulsion by love. It was a result of G-d’s open revelation to the Jews at Mount Sinai. By contrast, the situation in the time of the Purim story was radically different.*

b.) Hester Panim: G-d concealed Himself on Purim.

G-d’s conduct toward the Jews at the time of the Purim episode was in a manner known as hester panim, which may be translated as “concealment.” G-d hid Himself behind the mask of natural events and did not show Himself at all (which is one reason Jews wear masks on Purim — to show that things are not as they outwardly appear; G-d is behind it all). This concealment of G-d’s providence is so much a part of the Purim incident that the sages teach,³¹ “Where [can we find an allusion to] Esther in the Torah? As it is written,³² ‘And I will strongly conceal (haster astir) My face on that day.’” In keeping with this concealment, G-d allowed the wicked Haman to gain the upper hand and decree annihilation upon the Jewish People (G-d forbid). This could hardly be called an open revelation of Divine love!

c.) Superiority of the Purim commitment over that at Mount

Sinai.

Nevertheless, even under those dire circumstances, the Jews sincerely repented and recommitted themselves wholeheartedly to G-d and His Torah. This was considered a superior commitment, in a sense, to that of the Jews at Mount Sinai, for the Jews’ commitment on Purim was not forced by an obvious and overwhelming love. The Jews could not even see the guiding hand of G-d in their lives, but they still chose allegiance to Him over all else—and were willing to sacrifice their very lives for His sake. That is why the commitment of Purim completed the commitment of Mount Sinai, expressing as it did the Jews’ genuine dedication to G-d and the Torah.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

In Chapter Two, we gained an appreciation of what an inconceivably precious gift the Torah is. In this chapter, we answer the question: Why did the Jews merit such a great gift? We are also given the answer to the question in Chapter One: Why was the commitment of Purim any more voluntary than that of Sinai?

When, on being offered the Torah, the Jews replied “we will do [it]” before “we will understand [it],” they showed a sincere commitment to put G-d first: whether they understood the Torah or not, they would do G-d’s will. This deference to G-d is a prerequisite for revelation of the Or Ein Sof, the very Essence of G-d as contained within the Torah. In this merit, they were granted the gift of Torah.

However, the Jews needed help achieving such a pure level of deference to G-d, since they had only just left the spiritually defiling environment of Egypt. G-d reignited their dormant love for Him by directly revealing Himself during the Ten Commandments, which literally overwhelmed the Jews with love for G-d. In the face of such a direct manifestation of G-dliness, who wouldn’t commit to Him? This is what is meant by the teaching that at Mount Sinai, the Jews were “compelled” to accept the Torah.

For this very reason, the Jewish commitment on Purim was superior to that of Mount Sinai. On Purim the Jews were faced with imminent annihilation (G-d forbid) — a far cry from the open display of love G-d showed at Sinai. Despite this, they were willing to sacrifice their very lives for G-d. This commitment to Torah even in the face of hardship “completed” and ratified the Jews’ earlier commitment, given while overwhelmed by love.

NOTES:

23. Exodus 24:7

24. Deuteronomy 13:5

25. see Tanya, gloss to chapter 35

26. see Torah Or, discourse beginning Zachor Eis Asher Asah Lechah Amalek

27. Shabbos 88b

* The verse (Song of Songs 2:6; 8:3), “[G-d’s] right hand [another symbol of love] embraces me” can also be interpreted in this sense.

28. Malachi 1:2

29. (See also the interpretation of “I have loved you, says G-d” given in Torah Or, discourse beginning VeAsisa Vigdei Kodesh.)

30. Note: This paragraph was inserted by the Tzemach Tzedek as a parenthetical gloss to our discourse in Torah Or.

* The former situation was on the order of, “His right hand embraces me.” The latter situation is hinted at in the verse (Ecclesiastes 3:5), “a time to refrain from embracing.”

31. Chullin 139b

32. Deuteronomy 31:18

CHAPTER 4

MORDECHAI AND HAMAN: BITTUL VS. ARROGANCE

Key topics to be presented in this chapter:

- Why are the Jews called “Yehudim”?
- The name “Yehudim” expresses the Jewish quality of deference to G-d.
- Haman represented self-importance. He could not abide Mordechai, who symbolized self-nullification.

To fully understand all the above, we need to consider the Jewish quality of Bittul:

WHY ARE THE JEWS CALLED “YEHUDIM”?

Mordechai, the saintly leader of the Jewish People during the Purim era, was called³³ Ish Yehudi. In today’s Hebrew, the word Yehudi simply means “Jew,” so Ish Yehudi would mean “a Jewish man.” But in Biblical times, when the Book of Esther was written, this was not necessarily the case. The sense of the word Yehudi could, in those days, have referred to Mordechai’s tribal lineage, in which case it should be translated, “a man of [the tribe of] Judah.” Yet this cannot be the sense in which the Book of Esther uses the term, for Mordechai was of the tribe of Benjamin, not Judah.³⁴ Likewise, Haman used this term (in the plural) to identify the targets of his genocidal decree, as it is written³⁵ “to destroy, kill, and annihilate all the Yehudim [G-d forbid].” Here, too, tribal affiliation is not meant, for it was the entire Jewish nation, not only members of one tribe, that Haman sought to destroy. If, however, the word Yehudi is used generically to mean “Jew,” then because other terms were available in those days, the question becomes: Why did the Torah choose the word Yehudim to characterize the Jews? We take this usage for granted nowadays, but in the Book of Esther, it must have been deliberately chosen to convey a particular significance. What was that?

THE NAME “YEHUDIM” EXPRESSES THE JEWISH QUALITY OF DEFERENCE TO G-D.

The answer lies in the literal meaning of the word, as we find³⁶ with reference to our Matriarch Leah naming her son Yehudah: “This time, I will acknowledge [or “thank”] G-d.” The name Yehudah, as well as the word Yehudi, comes from the word hoda’ah, which means “acknowledgment” (and, by extension, “thanks”). This is an essential characteristic of Bittul: the recognition and sincere acknowledgment that although, from our limited mortal perspective, the world is “something” and G-d is like “nothingness,” the truth is just the opposite — it is G-d Who is the only true existence, and the world, ourselves included, that is like “nothing.” The word Yehudim was applied to the Jews precisely because it

sums up the essential quality of Bittul before G-d; the Jews are thus literally the nation of those who acknowledge and concede the reality of G-d’s unity and omnipresence and their own insignificance in deference to Him. Mordechai was described as Ish Yehudi because, as the Jewish leader, he personified this characteristic. He was the very “man of acknowledgment or deference (hoda’ah)” and the source from which all other Jews derived this spiritual trait. Even today, each and every Jewish person has this uniquely Jewish quality of Bittul — at least in potential; we are all Yehudim.

The name “Mordechai” itself hints at this Bittul. The Sages teach,³⁷ “Where [can we find an allusion to] Mordechai in the Torah? As it is written,³⁸ “mor dror (pure mor).” The Aramaic translator Onkelos renders this meira dachya,³⁹ and it is identified by Maimonides⁴⁰ and several other commentators with the creature referred to by the Talmud⁴¹ as mushk. The blood of this animal, when congealed within the hump in its neck, was made into a spice called mor — one of the ingredients of the sacrificial incense used in the Sanctuary.

This symbolizes the spiritual goal of transforming “bitter into sweet”— evil into good. Blood represents the physical, animal life of the body and its capacity to lust after worldly desires. When one refines one’s character and transforms one’s worldly desires into yearning for G-d exclusively, one has made “blood” into sweet “spice,” suitable for offering on the altar of the Sanctuary.

Along⁴² these lines, one can understand a dispute among the Jewish legal authorities with respect to the spice mor. Rabbeinu Yonah⁴³ permits it even for eating, whereas other authorities forbid it as food, on the ground that only its aroma has been transformed but its physical substance remains unkosher. Rabbeinu Yonah’s ruling, in contrast to the latter rationale, is based on the premise that the substance has been transformed in its entirety.⁴⁴

This dispute can be understood according to Chassidus as being the same as that mentioned in the Talmud⁴⁵ concerning the effect of repentance. One opinion is that when a person repents, their intentional sins are considered as though they had been committed unintentionally; the other opinion holds that a penitent’s intentional sins are transformed into actual merits. All of this revolves around the same theme: the degree to which evil is transformed into good.

As explained elsewhere, the effect of repentance depends on the quality of the repentance itself. If a person has repented in the manner known as “repentance motivated by love [for G-d] (Teshuvah MeAhavah),” his or her intentional sins are so thoroughly transformed as to count as merits. (This is the degree of repentance referred to in the well-known teaching,⁴⁶ “In the place penitents stand, [even] ‘perfect saints’ (Tzaddikim Gemurim) cannot stand.”) This corresponds to the opinion that mor is kosher (even as food); in both cases, the evil has been fully transformed into actual good.

On the other hand, if one's repentance was of a relatively inferior quality, not motivated by "great love" (Ahavah Rabbah) of G-d, their intentional sins, although forgiven, are only considered unintentional. This corresponds to the opinion that mor, despite its aroma having been transformed, is not kosher for eating because its transformation only went so far; it was inadequate to convert also the physical substance into good.

HAMAN REPRESENTED SELF-IMPORTANCE. HE COULD NOT ABIDE MORDECHAI, WHO SYMBOLIZED SELF-NULLIFICATION.

Mordechai, whose name is alluded to by the phrase meira dachya — pure mor — was the very source of Bittul. His spiritual root was in the Heavenly Sefirah of Chochmah⁴⁷ which, as stated earlier, is characterized by Bittul. Indeed, as explained elsewhere, the "nothingness" quality of Chochmah is alluded to by the fact that this word can be read, koach mah, "an indefinable force, or the force of mah."⁴⁸ Accordingly, Mordechai was the saintly leader who channeled this capacity for Bittul into the entire Jewish People, and it was he who was therefore described as Ish Yehudi, the "man of hoda'ah," the embodiment of Bittul in deference to G-d.

Haman, by contrast, personified the very opposite of Bittul. He represented arrogance (Gasus HaRuach), as exemplified by his thinking,⁴⁹ "To whom would the king wish to do honor more than to myself?" This quality of Haman's reflected his own spiritual root: he was a descendant of the nation of Amalek, of whom it is written,⁵⁰ "Amalek is first among nations." The "nations" are the seven nations native to the land of Canaan (the Canaanites, the Hittites, etc.); each symbolized one of seven major character flaws (lust, murder, and so on). Amalek represented arrogance, the first among them all, for arrogance is the source of all others. Thus, Haman, the personification of pride and conceit, sought to wipe out all the Yehudim, who embodied utterly selfless dedication and absolute nullity to G-d. Had the Jews renounced their allegiance to G-d (Heaven forbid), that would have satisfied Haman, for it was specifically their being Yehudim, the people of hoda'ah and Bittul, he could not tolerate. Yet they did not choose to save themselves at the expense of their religion. Instead, the Jews remained steadfast, prepared to give up their very lives for the unity of

G-d. This was the ultimate Bittul.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The word Yehudi, "Jew," comes from the word hoda'ah, which means "acknowledgment" (and, by extension, "thanks"). This is an essential characteristic of Bittul, utter self-nullification in deference to G-d.

Mordechai, the Jewish leader, personified this characteristic, and was therefore called Ish Yehudi — the very "man of hoda'ah."

Haman, by contrast, personified the very opposite of Bittul. He embodied the arrogance, conceit, and self-importance of his ancestor, Amalek.

Thus, Haman, the personification of pride and arrogance, sought to wipe out all the Yehudim — the people embodying utterly selfless dedication, absolute nullity, Bittul, to G-d. The Jews could have saved themselves by renouncing their allegiance to G-d, but this was out of the question for them.

NOTES:

33. Esther 2:5
34. see Esther 2:5
35. Esther 3:13
36. Genesis 29:35
37. Chullin 139b
38. Exodus 30:23
39. phonetically similar to Mordechai
40. Hilchos Kelei HaMikdash 1:3
41. Berachos 43a
42. Note: Material from this point until the end of the paragraph concluding, "physical substance into good" on page 49, although also taught by the Alter Rebbe on Purim 5571, was not part of the body of our discourse as taught on that day. In the Tzemach Tzedek's manuscript of our discourse, it appears as an appendix at the very end, and that is where it may be found in Sefer HaMaamarim 5571. In the Mittlerer Rebbe's transcript of our discourse, it appears after the mention of Mordechai as the source of Jewish Bittul (see below, end of Chapter 5). It was inserted by the Tzemach Tzedek, without parentheses, at the present point in our discourse as printe in Torah Or.
43. Berachos ibid.
44. see Tur, Orach Chaim 216
45. Yoma 86b
46. Berachos 34b, Sanhedrin 99a, Zohar I: 39, 129b, II:106b, Vayikra 16b
47. specifically, that aspect of Chochmah known as Yesod Abba
48. Literally, "the power of 'what'" — i.e., something whose existence in its own right is so tenuous that it cannot be separately identified, and is only referred to as "what."
49. Esther 6:6
50. Numbers 24:20

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DON'T FORGET!

On Monday, Chamisha-Asar B'Shvat, the "Matteh HaOlami to Save the Nation and the Land" launched a series of exhibits about the destruction of Gush Katif and the pogrom in Amona. The first exhibit took place in Chaifa and was attended by hundreds of people and Chabad rabbanim. Beis Moshiach journalist, Shai Gefen was there and reports to us about it.

Half a year has passed since the expulsion and destruction of 25 flourishing Jewish communities and yishuvim in Gush Katif and northern Shomron. Thousands of people were expelled from their homes and hundreds of homes were bulldozed. The Jewish cemetery was destroyed and shuls were burned. Kassam missiles have landed, and continue to land in Israeli cities without significant Israeli retaliation. Despite all we have read and heard, it still defies the imagination and yet, some people are trying to get us to move on and forget what happened.

The "Matteh HaOlami to Save the Nation and the Land," which took an active role in the fight against the Expulsion Plan and held enormous protest gatherings, decided to produce a photographic exhibit of the expulsion from Gush Katif. In light of the horrors that just

took place in Amona, the new exhibit also includes photos from that pogrom.

The men behind the exhibit, Rabbi Sholom Dovber Wolpo and Rabbi Kuti Rapp, told Beis Moshiach that the purpose of the exhibit is to get the public to confront the bitter truth of what happened and to become aware of the consequences of the churban.

The exhibit consists of dozens of photographs of the expulsion, pictures that show what really happened. Not the "determination and the sensitivity" that Chief of Staff Dan Chalutz spoke of, but a cruel expulsion in which

children were expelled from their homes by their fellow Jews for no reason.

The opening ceremony of the exhibit took place in the Wizo Center in Chaifa. Hundreds of people from Chaifa attended, including local Chabad rabbanim, Rabbi Gedalia Akselrod and Rabbi Dovid Meir Drukman, rav of Kiryat Mochkin who came to express their solidarity.

Professor Dovid Bukai, a renowned Middle Eastern scholar spoke about the future of Israel being jeopardized because of the Disengagement. Lawyer Meir Hafler described how he experienced the expulsion from the perspective of one who accompanied Knesset members there and spoke about the terrible suffering the families underwent.

"We may not forget what took place there," he said.

Rabbi Dovid Drukman spoke about the obligation to remember and not to forget and Rabbi Gedalia Akselrod thanked the "Matteh HaOlami" for its work in spreading the Rebbe's message of shleimus ha'Aretz.

Two videos were shown of the expulsion, the one called "Tzava HaGirush L'Yisroel" (Israel Expulsion Force) and another called "Paranoia" that was produced by Merkaz Magen. Dr. Sholom Flisser sang some of his protest songs.

The talented Tamim Dovid Kaplan set up the exhibit.



SHLIACH ON THE MOVE

*He lives in Stamford Hill in London but his shlichus extends over dozens of villages and outlying areas throughout France. * This is the shlichus of Rabbi Dovid Partouche, who is a roaming shliach among forsaken Jewish enclaves, where he gathers lost souls who fled their Judaism. He is mekarev them to Torah and Chassidus and to the great light of the Rebbe MH”M. * Numerous stories from a fascinating shlichus.*

Although Rabbi Dovid Partouche lives in Stamford Hill, London, his shlichus encompasses dozens of villages and forsaken Jewish enclaves throughout France. He also flies to the Polynesian islands, which are thousands of kilometers away.

New Caledonia lies northwest of New Zealand and is a French colony. It is actually a cluster of islands in the South Pacific, which are stunningly beautiful. Over the past decade, Rabbi Partouche has been working on six islands that are quite far from one another: New Caledonia, Tahiti, Martinique, Guadeloupe, S. Martin, and Reunion Island.

There aren't too many Jews living in these places and only in some of these locations is there an organized Jewish community. Every so often, Rabbi Partouche visits and ignites new sparks or fans the Jewish sparks that he ignited on a previous visit. Slowly but surely he is covering more territory.

Rabbi Partouche views these trips as a special shlichus, based on the Rebbe's sicha about conquering France:

“These islands belong to the French and my work there on shlichus of the Rebbe MH”M is towards the end of reaching out to even the farthest places,” he says. This work is done under the auspices of the Paratzta-Tzorfas organization that he started in Paris.

He is called the “roaming shliach” by his friends and acquaintances and after spending hours interviewing Rabbi Partouche, I understand why.

His first shlichus was undertaken in 5750. He was learning in Morristown at the time and from there he went to Australia with some friends on shlichus in the yeshiva in Melbourne for two years. They combined learning and outreach with the local Jews but in the summer they would go on Merkos Shlichus to islands in the area in order to meet

Jews and be mekarev them to Torah and mitzvos.

This was when Dovid Partouche went to New Caledonia for the first time, which is a three-hour flight from Melbourne. “It was the first time Lubavitch was making inroads on the island and the Jewish community there was wary of us. But over the years other groups of T'mimim went there and thanks to that a shul was built.”

Later on, Rabbi Partouche went with Rabbi Yisroel Belinov to Tahiti, which is part of the French Polynesian islands midpoint between Los Angeles and Australia (see box). Although they stayed on the island briefly, they made a day camp and put up a large public menorah and many Jews put on t'fillin for the first time. They generated a tremendous spiritual awakening there.

Since then, Rabbi Partouche has been coordinating Chabad's work to

THE FRENCH POLYNESIANS

Rabbi Dovid Partouche works on the Polynesian (“poly” is many and “nesia” is islands in Greek) Islands, one of three clusters of islands (along with Melanesia and Micronesia) in the South Pacific. In the forty million kilometer area which is almost entirely water, are a few thousand islands, with the main ones: Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, and the cluster of islands that are called the French Polynesian islands.

the French islands even though one of them is near Australia and another one is near Africa, a fifteen-hour flight apart! He started about two years after he got married when he moved to Stamford Hill in London.

One day, as he thought about continuing the work he had started with the Jews of the islands, he decided to publish a weekly publication, which he would send to the members of the various

communities. He was nervous about the costs and other details. However, when he kept thinking about the idea, he finally wrote to the Rebbe through the *Igros Kodesh*. The answer was quite clear, for the Rebbe wrote about publicizing the work of the Chabad house through a local publication.

That same night he began to collect material for his magazine and since then, a quality publication is published every two weeks. It includes a sicha from the Rebbe, candle lighting for Shabbos, a story about the Rebbe, Chassidic concepts, and inyanei Moshiach and Geula. It is sent to hundreds of families that live on the islands and is having a tremendous impact on them.

Rabbi Partouche describes his first

connection with members of the Jewish communities on the islands as tentative:

“Our relationship was built slowly. First, I contacted the head of the community with whom I kept in touch by telephone. One time I told him I was coming and he asked me why, but I went without thinking about what would happen and how it would work out. I arrived and began collecting names of Jewish families.

“I started with house calls to the members of the community and putting t’fillin on with them. Before Pesach, I sent them matzos and before Chanuka, I sent menoros. When I visited, I held community gatherings and was interviewed by various media. This publicized my presence and enabled me to contact even more people. This was a massive job.”

On every visit he makes to one of the islands, Rabbi Partouche wants to leave some ongoing positive results. There are communities that did not have organized shuls but now, after his work and with the ko’ach of the Rebbe, shuls have been built, shiurim on various topics are given, public menoros have been lit, and so on.

“In general,” says Rabbi Partouche, “our work on the islands and in the past two years in villages scattered throughout France, has reconnected the Jews living there with Jewish tradition. Ten years ago and more we found communities in an abysmal spiritual state.”

When I asked Rabbi Partouche for some examples, he told me:

“On Chanuka a few years ago, I went to Reunion, off the southeastern coast of Africa, and brought a large menora with me. The first half of Chanuka I was in Reunion and the second half I went all the way to Tahiti! In Reunion, I put the menora on my rented car and it was a tremendous pirsumei nisa. The local paper wrote about the roaming Chabad rabbi’s new toy. When I went



At the entrance to the Chabad house in Martinique

to Tahiti, I planned on putting up a really big menorah in the city center.

“The people told me that I had to get permits from the police, which can take a long time, so that I wouldn’t be able to get the go-ahead before Chanuka. However, I decided to go “l’chat’chilla aribber” and a few hours before lighting I called various government officials and people at the police department and with Hashem’s help, two hours later I got the permits!

“For a few evenings we lit the menorah in the presence of the entire community as the gentiles looked on in amazement. Now the idea has spread to all the communities I work in and each place has its own public menorah lighting.

“I’d like to tell about an incredible miracle that took place with the community in Reunion. It was Erev Yom Kippur three years ago and the head of the community, Mr. Dov Abutbal suddenly decided that the shul wasn’t suitable for Yom Kippur and he rented a hall at a hotel for the t’fillos. Some people were in favor of this while others were opposed to this idea, and since I was there at the time, I was made aware of what he had done.

“In the middle of the davening on Yom Kippur, some policemen entered and told the people davening there that the two story shul had collapsed. On the one hand, the worshippers were sorry to hear the news but on the other hand, they were stunned by the miracle of their not being present at the time of the collapse. Today they are working on building a new shul, which we hope will be finished shortly.

“On that same island, about eighty kilometers away, there is another k’hilla whose leader is a Jew by the name of S. Pierre (who has gotten more involved in Judaism because of my visits). He is very involved in building a beautiful new shul. When I was there on Lag B’Omer, they were

happy to tell me about the construction and with Hashem’s help, we will dedicate the new shul soon.

“When I remember what a spiritual wasteland it was before Chabad came to these places, I can’t help but become emotional. The Rebbe saved these k’hillos from spiritual devastation.

“It’s hard to describe the tremendous impact the bi-weekly magazine has on the people who receive it. People read it avidly and look forward to the next issue. It’s the “Urim V’Tumim” for people in these forsaken places.

“When a group of T’mimim from France traveled the length and breadth of France during the summer, they came back and reported in amazement, ‘Wherever we went they already knew about Chabad and they showed us your magazine.’”

On some of the islands Rabbi Partouche is called, “the rabbi of the children.” When he shows up they happily announce, “Ah! The children’s rabbi has come!” When I asked Rabbi Partouche to explain, this is what he said:

“There are people who became more involved in Yiddishkeit and

CHAIN OF MIRACLES

In Martinique, there is a fabulous family by the name of Zanou. They have become very involved in Yiddishkeit after they saw the Rebbe’s miracles after receiving the Rebbe’s brachos in the *Igros Kodesh*.

The first miracle was with the mother who was very sick and had to be hospitalized. The doctors told her she needed a high-risk operation and if the operation was not successful, her chances of surviving were slim to none. The family had heard about the *Igros Kodesh* from those who had had children, and they called to ask me to write to the Rebbe on their behalf. I did so and opened to an answer for a speedy refuah shleima. The operation was successful and the woman was no longer in danger.

Two months later, when the story had made the rounds of the island, the father called me and asked for a bracha. He had invested an enormous amount of money to buy certain merchandise for a big sale he planned on having at his store. I wrote on his behalf and there was a bracha for success in business. I called him and told him that I was certain he would be successful.

However, two days before the sale, after having advertised the sale in all the local papers, there was a strike and the merchandise didn’t arrive. He was extremely nervous and I continued to encourage him.

The merchandise arrived on Sunday even though that isn’t a work day! So many customers came to his store that within two days his shelves were empty. He made more in two days than he had in weeks.

This family had another miracle which the wife told me about. In their apartment in Paris, there was a large amount of money and she was sleeping there alone. Suddenly she saw the Rebbe in her dream and he told her to wake up! She woke up in a fright and while still trying to recover from the dream she heard noises in the house. She realized that a thief was walking around and she yelled and the thief fled.

This couple is a big help to the new shluchim who arrived on the island whom they support financially.



The publication that is distributed throughout the French islands

committed to various mitzvos. They even wrote to the Rebbe through the *Igros Kodesh* and received answers. Some of them asked to be blessed with children and made proper “keilim” to receive this bracha.

“The following story happened on one of my visits to Martinique in 5763. I gave a shiur in inyanei Moshiach and Geula, which was attended by a few Jews. I told them about how we can write to the Rebbe through the *Igros Kodesh* and receive the Rebbe’s blessings. To illustrate this I told them about some miracles that I personally witnessed.

“At the end of the shiur a woman by the name of Sara came over to me and with tears in her eyes said she wanted to write to the Rebbe and ask for a bracha for a child since it had been many years that she hadn’t had a child. She told me about all sorts of medical treatments she had tried.

“I asked her to gather the women of the community every week for a shiur that I would give via telephone, and said this would certainly be a keili for the Rebbe’s bracha. She agreed and when I got to London, I wrote to the Rebbe on her behalf. In the answer I opened to in the *Igros Kodesh*, there was a bracha for children. I called Sara and was happy



Rabbi Dovid Partouche with a group of Jews at a Chanuka gathering



Gorgeous view from the beach of New Caledonia



“For a few months I would send him a pile of magazines and he made sure to distribute them. He took this job very seriously and each time the mail was delayed, he called to find out what happened. In the letter that I opened to when I wrote on his behalf to the Rebbe, there was also an answer to someone who had asked for a bracha for a child.

“When over a year had gone by and nothing had happened he was worried and he called me. I told him that if the Rebbe had given such a clear bracha it would certainly be fulfilled, eventually. Nine months later, he and his wife had a son. This story and the previous stories became the talk of the day even among the goyim on the islands.

“There was another amazing story with a Jew who lived on Tahiti. His

to tell her about the bracha. Less than a year later, she called me to tell me she had given birth to a son.

“Sara told her story to everyone, Jews and non-Jews alike. The next time I went to Martinique a woman from the community from the Ben Itta family approached me. She also complained about not having a child though she was married for a number of years. She added that she was afraid she would never have children.

“I never believed in mysticism and spiritual powers, but now, after I saw the power of the Rebbe’s bracha, I also want his bracha,” she said.

“I told her about the good hachlata that her friend had undertaken, a hachlata she still keeps till this day, and asked her to do the same. So she too undertook something positive and gave birth to a child a year later.

“A similar thing happened with someone named Yaakov Dahan, a descendent of Baba Sali. He had previously lived in France and had even seen the Rebbe. I stay with him every time I visit the island. For over ten years, he had no child after his first child, and he really wanted another one. He agreed to distribute

the magazine I publish among the Jews of the community.

MIRACLE AT THE AIRPORT

On one of my visits to Martinique, I held a farbrengen with the community and one of the people asked to speak. He asked: Who says Chabad is the best path in Judaism – maybe other paths are better?

Before I could respond, another Jew, a distinguished professor in the community wanted to respond. He said, “Many years ago, when I lived in Toulouse in France, I decided after a year of hard work to take a trip to New York. The shliach who knew me and heard about my plans, asked me to see the Rebbe. At that time, my mother-in-law was very sick and was extremely depressed. No doctor had been able to help her.

“When I got to 770, I saw the Rebbe coming down for Mincha. Afterwards, before going to his room, I dared to stop the Rebbe and asked for a bracha for my mother-in-law. The Rebbe gently said, ‘Surely she has a name,’ and I told the Rebbe her name and her mother’s name. In that split second I felt that before me stood a superior man talking to me on my level.

“To be honest, I didn’t expect anything special to happen and the next day I was on my way home to France. As I waited in the terminal in Paris for the plane that would take me to Toulouse, I met someone who insisted he knew me. We got into a conversation and it turned out that he was a renowned psychiatrist. I said, ‘Come with me to my mother-in-law, she needs you.’

“He visited her at her house and examined her and after following his instructions there was a significant improvement in her condition.”

The professor finished his story and everybody, including me, was amazed.

name was Mordechai and he was a distinguished personality in the community. He and his wife had two daughters and they really wanted a son. When he heard about the miracles in Martinique, he asked that I write to the Rebbe for him.

“The local community in those days wasn’t quite organized and I asked him to take a significant role in running the community to merit the bracha. He happily agreed and took on the job of treasurer of the k’hilla and to be the one responsible for the t’fillos on Shabbos and Yom Tov. A year went by and he had a son. As an expression of his thanks to the Rebbe, he came this year to 770.”

Rabbi Partouche’s work is particularly interesting. Along with the routine shlichus among the Jews of the islands, he constantly seeks out more Jews who live alone. On nearly every visit, he devotes part of his time to seeking out these lost Jews.

“When they see a Jewish rabbi in traditional dress asking about them, they are amazed and they ask how I found them. Usually, these are people who tried to cut themselves off from everything. There were times that Jews would see me, and they put up their hands in defeat, as though to say, ‘I give up, there’s nowhere to run to anymore.’

“A few years ago I went to the island of Reunion, a fantastic tourist spot. At the time, the meteorologists were predicting a hurricane. I stayed with someone by the name of Yosef Hanigog. When I saw how nervous he was, I told him the story about the Rebbe and Hurricane Andrew in Florida in 5753.

“I told him I would write to the Rebbe and certainly ‘emissaries to do a mitzva are not harmed.’

“I wrote to the Rebbe and I opened to a letter in which the Rebbe was writing about Hashem testing us. When I saw that, I felt full of hope and bitachon and said there was nothing to worry about. When the

first warnings about the impending storm came, he asked me about what to do and I calmed him down. In the end, the storm veered off in a miraculous way and all we had were some secondary winds.

“The family was flabbergasted by this miracle and the father told me about a good friend of his, a Jew married to a gentile, who lived on a tiny nearby island called Mauritius. He asked me to visit him so he wouldn’t forget that he was a Jew.

“We went together and the man was waiting for us at the little airport. Together, we went to his house in a small village located in breathtaking tropical surroundings. Nearby was a farm where reptiles were raised.

“During our conversation the man told me about his life and his close

connection with the government so that people didn’t even know he was Jewish. He told me that he had been invited by the Egyptian ambassador to an event attended by notable personalities. When the ambassador mocked the Jews, his Jewish spark flared. He got up and yelled, ‘I am Jewish!’ The ambassador was stunned and instantly asked his pardon.

“When he finished his story I took the opportunity to discuss Judaism with him and at a certain point he cried.

“The next day we went to the cemetery together where I found, to my surprise, dozens of Jewish graves. He told me that these were the graves of Jews who tried to enter Palestine but were exiled to the island. About fifty of them didn’t survive and were



A birthday party for one of the children is used to spread the Besuras HaGeula

buried there. He said that throughout the years, there was a Jew who had watched over the cemetery, but he had died a few years before and nobody had said Kaddish for him.

“I asked him to say Kaddish and after many decades, these neshamos merited Kaddish said on their behalf.

“I keep in touch with this man and he has made significant strides in his religious observance.

“One time, on one of my visits to Reunion, one of the members of the community gave me the address of a Jew married to a gentile who lived in the jungle. When I found him, he was shocked to see me. We spoke for a long time and then he was happy to put on t’fillin. He was very impressed that I bothered to seek him out. I spoke to him about many Jewish topics and also about Geula and Moshiach.

“He told me the story of his life from the day he was born in France until he married a non-Jew. He sought quiet, which is why he had moved to the island. When he put on t’fillin, he burst into tears. He stirred me with his tremendous emotion and I got caught up in the emotions of the moment and together we danced. I thought to myself about this bizarre situation, an assimilated Jew and a rabbi dancing in the jungle ... this could only be the Rebbe’s kochos.

“Since then, he receives my magazine and I keep in touch with him a few times a year.

“Another time, when I finished a trip to Martinique, I decided to conquer new territory and picked S. Martin a tiny island in the Caribbean. I knew there were some Jewish families there and I wanted to find them. There was no organized Jewish community there but I decided to go anyway.

“I arrived at the island on a tiny plane late at night. I had the address of a local Jew that I had gotten from someone in Martinique but I wasn’t sure how reliable and accurate the

“I AM CASTING BREAD UPON THE WATERS”

When I asked Rabbi Partouche to tell me about lost Jewish souls, he thought a bit and then said:

“Most of them are in various stages of t’shuva, and my work is in the category of ‘cast your bread upon the waters.’ I light the sparks and don’t always know what happens afterwards. After I put on t’fillin with a tourist and he cries, and he and I part ways, I have no way of knowing what happened to him afterwards.”

Rabbi Partouche told me the following story, which happened while he was on Merkos Shlichus in Australia, a story that has a wonderful ending:

“One day we went out for Mivtza T’fillin. After a few hours, I left the stand for a few minutes. A young guy suddenly showed up at the stand with earrings all over his face and his hair in long curls. He said his name was Yitzchok and since he spoke French, my friend asked me to wait since I speak French.

“Yitzchok and I got into a conversation. He had a gentile girlfriend but whatever I said made an impact on him and three months later, he began coming to the yeshiva, had left his girlfriend, and then came regularly to yeshiva. Today he is a Lubavitcher who lives in Marseilles and works at the Paratzta-Tzorfas organization.”

address was. I arrived there and found a bar. I asked about the person whose name I had and found him there. He took one look at me and his eyes opened wide in astonishment. He recovered fairly quickly, but reacted aggressively when he said, ‘I came here in order to get away and you’ve come to bother me?’

“I kept my cool and asked him where I could find other Jews. When he saw that I wasn’t scared off, he softened a bit and told me that he was married to a gentile. He called one of his Jewish friends to the bar and I spoke with both of them into the night. The next morning I came to put t’fillin on with them. He gave me more addresses of Jews and I contacted each of them. I even managed to organize a Chanuka party and advertised it in the local papers.

“The afternoon of the party I debated about whether to go out in a hat or not since it was very hot. In the end, I wore it. Not a minute went by when a local goy approached me and asked whether I was a Chabad

Chassid. Although I was taken aback, I said, ‘Yes, I am.’ A few minutes later a Jew came from one of the boats in the area and asked me to put on t’fillin with him.”

Rabbi Partouche sometimes works with gentiles too:

“On one of my visits to Tahiti a local gentile approached me and wished me, ‘Good evening to a son of the Chosen People.’ I got into a conversation with him and told him about the Seven Noachide Laws. In Martinique I met two black natives who said to me, ‘All the blessings in the world are thanks to the Jews, bless us...’ I spoke with them about the Seven Noachide Laws too.

“A few years ago I had a remarkable encounter with a gentile. As you know, I live in London, and when I need to travel to the islands, I go via France. One time I left late and didn’t know if I would make it to the airport on time. I took a taxi and there was a female driver. Out of the blue she said to me, ‘Hey, it’s a long

Exile, isn't it? Why is G-d punishing you so much?

"I was amazed by her knowledge and we began to talk about the Seven Noachide Laws. She was very interested and promised to observe them. When I got to the terminal, I found out that my flight was delayed. I saw it as divine providence so that I could meet that gentile woman."

In recent years, Rabbi Partouche decided to institutionalize his work and more recently, he has been working on bringing shluchim to each island. "The Jewish awakening is pretty intense at this point, and so I've come to the conclusion that the time is ripe for shluchim to live in these places permanently and run Jewish mosdos on a daily basis."

Rabbi Partouche started with the oldest place, Martinique. To his dismay, despite his terrific relationship with the members of the community they turned him down. They were afraid of the consequences of his plan and tried to dissuade him. His clear answers from the Rebbe convinced him to leave a shliach there despite the difficulties and today, the shliach's work is already up

and running, and appreciated by all. Rabbi Partouche describes the beginning:

"It was Sukkos 5764. I was in Beis Moshiach in London. I had returned from a visit to Martinique and told my friend Rabbi Shimon Nimni what a pity it was that there wasn't a permanent shliach on each of the islands.

"He told me that his son Moshe Yehuda had gotten married a year ago and maybe he'd want to go. We wrote to the Rebbe and the answer was a letter that the Rebbe sent to Rabbi Binyamin Gorodetzky about shlichus in Morocco.

"The young couple decided to go before Chanuka. We opened the Chabad house with an impressive kinus, which was attended by the Rebbe's secretary Rabbi Leibel Groner. A big fuss was made but immediately afterwards we began to hear murmurings that grew louder as time went on.

"The residents were afraid that the young rabbi would make a revolution. All my attempts to allay their fears were in vain. They made a clear separation between their

friendship with me and their resolute opposition to the new rabbi.

"In accordance with the Rebbe's answers, the couple decided to stay there which entailed real mesirus nefesh because most of the community kept their distance from them. At first, they lived in a room that they rented in a hotel. The first program they did was a day camp, which had few participants.

"The locals tried to undermine the new shliach but he remained strong, especially since his wife had resolved to stick it out in light of the Rebbe's answers to them. Two months of hardships went by. On Pesach, while they were in London, people broke into their home, robbed them, and destroyed their belongings. The couple was very upset but they decided not to break.

"Suddenly, with no explanation, everything changed. The couple found a nice apartment and the situation improved. They started a Tzivos Hashem club and many kids joined. They also started shiurim for women and for men. The shlucha began baking and selling challos so they would have pas Yisroel. Recently, the leadership of the k'hilla no less, suggested that the shliach himself run the preschools that they had started just to cause the shliach difficulties!

"A few months ago, the shliach was invited by the local government to offer a prayer for several dozen people who had perished in a local plane crash, a prayer that was broadcast on the islands and in France on the TV stations. It created a tremendous Kiddush Sheim Lubavitch."

* * *

Rabbi Partouche is busy these days establishing an ongoing Chabad presence on other islands, villages, and towns in which Jews live. He knows that even the "iyei ha'yam" (the islands of the sea) must belong to Melech HaMoshiach and that it is from these places that the lost Jews will come to the Geula HaShleima.



A program for the children

DAY OF RECKONING

BY SHAI GEFEN

In recent weeks, we've been watching the competition between the parties, seeing who will be more cooperative about giving away land. It began with Zevulun Orlev's announcement two months ago that he is in favor of territorial compromise in Yehuda and Shomron. The Likud no longer opposes a Palestinian state and Lieberman is in favor of dividing Yerushalayim, giving Arab areas to the PA in return for larger settlement blocs in Yehuda and Shomron. He also favors turning over areas of the Galil, which are predominately Arab.

The Chairman of the Shas party, in an interview with the *Jerusalem Post*, said, "Shas would support the uprooting of yishuvim and is in favor of 'painful concessions.'" He added that the opposition to the expulsion from Gush Katif was only because it was a unilateral withdrawal.

One would think that after witnessing the devastating consequences of concessions, people would make an about-face and would demand that Israel re-conquer the land they gave away in order to defend the country.

All the illusions they sold to the Israeli public until now have dissipated. Hamas won (what a surprise). Not only did our self-destruction in the Gaza Strip not placate the Arabs, but Hamas leaders have cut deals with Tehran and want to import the Ayatollahs' police state here. The Kassams continue to land on Israeli cities day after day and Israeli Arabs are on their way towards announcing their independence, as Hamas leaders have already said that this is their next campaign. And the only place in the world where Al Qaeda reigns unchallenged is in nearby Gaza.

Let's put aside the halachic prohibition in giving away land for a

moment and let's apply our logic to the situation. Isn't it clear? Can we still say let's give it a chance when fourteen years of experimentation have gone by with tragic results?

The so-called Peace Agreements failed and led to thousands of dead, wounded, maimed, and bereaved. Israel is in a more dangerous position than it was before any peace agreements and its concessions failed to garner it international acclaim.

After the failed attempts at peace agreements, they brought us the ingenious plan from the beis midrash of Omri Sharon and Dovi Weisglass: unilateral withdrawal!

The politicians are busy trying to gain public favor and they proudly proclaim that they will be part of a government that will divide Yerushalayim and will uproot most of the settlements in Yehuda and Shomron. This includes Jews who say they are religious!

G-D'S HAND

Hamas' unexpected victory in the P.A. elections is only one of the shocking developments following the expulsion. Look what happened to P.M. Ariel Sharon and his son Omri. Just a few weeks ago, Sharon was the uncontested leader who counted on ruling for another four years. His son was all-powerful and the entire political "center" followed them blindly.

If someone would have said, back then, that within a short time Ariel Sharon would no longer be making headlines and his son would be sentenced to jail, he would have been laughed at! "[Hashem] lowers the arrogant to the earth and raises the lowly to the heights." Hashem is running the show and He is deciding who will be on top and who will be on

the bottom.

Rabbi Sholom Dovber Lifschitz related that, at one of the farbrengens held during the Camp David Accords, the Rebbe said that the leaders who took part in the process would not end their rule in the usual way. We see that this is exactly what transpired as President Anwar Sadat of Egypt was assassinated. U.S. President Jimmy Carter lost the election for a second term following the humiliating hostage crisis in Iran. P.M. Menachem Begin (l'havdil) left office in the middle of his term and remained in seclusion until the day he died.

Whoever raises a hand against the Holy Land and endangers the welfare of the Jewish people, as well as those who collaborate with them, is asking for trouble. Look at what happened with Begin, Rabin, Peres, Netanyahu, Barak and now Sharon. It's hard to believe that once upon a time the Sharon family was riding high. May future leaders learn the lesson.

DECLARE YOUR INTENTIONS!

The rabbanim from Pikuach Nefesh asked all political parties to declare their intentions: will they be part of a government that plans on making concessions and giving away land?

Three years ago, right after the elections, Mafdal and Ichud Leumi joined Sharon's government even though Sharon was championing a Palestinian state and the Road Map. The politicians claimed that they wanted to "influence from within," but once they were in it was hard for them to give up their seats. This cost us in blood and the expulsion from Gaza.

Yasher ko'ach to these rabbanim, and we hope that rabbanim from all groups will ask the parties that seek their votes to guarantee in writing that

they will not be part of a government that will endanger our land.

WHITEWASHING

“The State of Israel is white-washing the terminology,” said Diskin, head of the Shin-Bet. “They’re afraid to use the term ‘uprooting.’ They call it evacuation, and other things, but this is uprooting.” Diskin based his opposition to further withdrawals on security considerations.

What Diskin said is well and good, and how nice it is that someone has gotten up to say the bitter truth, but unfortunately, the whitewashing continues, in no small part thanks to the Shin-Bet!

The “enemies” are the settlers, and the hundreds of wounded in the defense of Amona prove that not only terminology but actions are being whitewashed too. Mr. Diskin, no doubt you remember the phrase, “words can kill.” After your de-legitimizing of the settlers, the salt of the earth, look what happened!

The word “terror” has been whitewashed into “peace,” and is quickly leading to war. The word “terrorist” has been exchanged for “Palestinian,” the word “missiles” for “rockets,” which is a softer word, and so on.

If it remained solely a whitewashing of terminology, perhaps we could forgive it, but the problem is that it’s not merely words. These words lead to actions that threaten the continued existence of the Jewish people in our land. As long as the Shin-Bet cooperates, it is responsible for what happens.

The Disengagement was not only a problem with words, but a series of criminal actions that we will pay for dearly and it’s time that the heads of Security stop mollifying and supporting the politicians!

YAHADUS HA'WHAT?

In an interview with Yaakov Litzman of the Agudas Yisroel party, he said that Yahadus HaTorah was against the Disengagement. Litzman said he doesn’t

understand why people are angry at Yahadus HaTorah that entered the government coalition only after most of the votes were ratified in the Knesset and the government.

It turns out that the sheer hubris and brazenness of the politicians knows no bounds. The MKs of Yahadus HaTorah, who pretend to follow the instructions of the G’dolim on their Moetzes G’dolei HaTorah, willfully ignored those voices who cried out against being part of the Sharon government.

Fortunately, their views have been recorded for posterity, and the lies of the politicians exposed. Rabbi Yisachar Rumpel published a book called *Halacha Brura* in which he quotes letters from members of the Moetzes G’dolei HaTorah of Agudas Yisroel, the Admur from Sadigor, the Admur from Boston, and Rabbi Binyamin Zilber. They said that it was prohibited to enter the government and be partners to the expulsion.

The Sadigora Rebbe, member of the presidium of the Moetzes G’dolei HaTorah wrote, “Only our holy Torah and its fulfillment in the Holy Land are what support and give us strength. Therefore, we have no right or permission to expel Jews from anywhere in Eretz Yisroel, especially when there is the prohibition of “*lo sichanem*” (do not give them [the gentiles] an encampment in the land) in giving parts of Eretz Yisroel to gentiles about whom we were commanded, “do not fear and do not break before them.”

If that wasn’t enough, Agudas Yisroel’s newspaper *Hamodia* refused to publicize the letter of the members of the Moetzes that asked Jews the world over to protest the expulsion.

When there was a mass prayer rally at the Kosel, *Hamodia* refused to advertise it and they banned the rally. Now they want to tell us how they were opposed to the Disengagement!

Even on the humanitarian level, they showed no interest in the expellees and their plight. Who can forgive them

when so-called chareidi Jews ignore the Torah and think that everything is measured by the degree to which it can be exploited for political ends?

We will not forgive them for the tremendous chillul Hashem they caused.

ABOVE THE LAW?

The Minister of Education met with students in the school in Beit-El and asked them whether they thought that anything superseded the law. The girls answered, “Torah!”

The Minister was furious and exploded with, “What sort of education are you getting?!”

In the presence of the students, he yelled at the Director of the Education department in Beit El, “What sort of education are you giving here?”

The Disengagement Plan was the first stage in their real plan, to prove that the government is above the Torah. This column has referred to this before, that the Disengagement was part of the government’s fight against the Torah, pitting the law against the mitzvos and orders from the army against the *Shulchan Aruch*.

The cat was out of the bag when Minister Shitreet, one of those who planned the Disengagement, exposed his true intentions. Our complaint is not against Shitreet, who is a “*tinok sh’nishba*,” but against the rabbanim who vacillated and didn’t say soldiers should refuse orders. They set the precedent for loyalty to the Medina to take precedence over loyalty to the Torah. What a chilul Hashem it was when soldiers with kippot expelled Jews and exhumed graves!

Many rushed to denounce Shitreet, but the rabbanim are to blame. They hesitated when they should have been forthright and declared that Daas Torah is uncompromising. Let us hope that now people have learned that disengaging from Eretz Yisroel is synonymous with disengaging from Torah. When the Torah says something, there is no getting around it, even if it entails discomfort and mesirus nefesh.