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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]

11. From all the above we also derive an instruction relevant to the **study** of the Description of the Supernal Chariot and the Description of Creation:

Rambam writes in the Preface to his work (in “The Enumeration of the Mitzvos According to Rambam’s Order of the Laws”) that in *Seifer HaMada* he includes “all the Mitzvos that compose the main thrust of the law of Moshe Rabbeinu, peace unto him. **The person must know them first, before everything [else].**” From this it is understood regarding *Seifer HaMada* itself that the topics that Rambam arranged in **the beginning** of *Seifer HaMada* and which are called “Laws of **the Foundations of the Torah**” must be studied before learning the other topics in *Seifer HaMada* (how much more so regarding topics from the later thirteen books of *HaYad*).

And in Laws of the Foundations of the Torah itself, we must first of all know the “**foundation** of the foundations and the **pillar** of wisdoms.” Since that all “The subject matter of these four chapters regarding these five Mitzvos...which the Early Sages called ‘Pardes’” is necessary in order to fulfill the “foundation of the foundations, etc., to know that there is a primordial Being, etc.” (as discussed above at length), it comes out that, in addition to the **obligation** to study these matters in general, we must **preface** the study of **these** matters to the study of other Torah matters. [FN 75: Also see the Rambam’s *Letter Regarding the Resurrection of the Dead*, end of Ch. 1 and Ch. 2, beg. And see *Rosh Amana*, Ch. 19. Above pg. 34.]

12. Based on the above, at first glance, an in-depth look into the following words of Rambam is required: “I say that it is not fitting for one to stroll in the Orchard (*Pardes*) unless his belly is **full** with bread and meat ...[i.e.] to [first] know the [laws of the] prohibited and the permitted, etc.” [Laws of

the Foundations of the Torah 4:13]. That is, the topic of *Pardes* (discussed in these four chapters) may be studied only after we know many laws of the Torah (bread and meat).

Moreover, the Rambam writes in the Preface to his work: “A person reads from the Written Torah first and thereafter he reads from **this**. From this he will know the entire Oral Torah; he will not have to read another book **among them**.” After [study of] the Written Torah, one need not study other books of the Oral Torah (and obviously not “the [legal] investigations of Abaye and Rava” nor filling one’s belly with bread and meat). But the **first thing** the Rambam begins teaching is [none other than] the Description of the Supernal Chariot and the Description of Creation!

Furthermore, **Rambam** arranged these four chapters in his work, regarding which he says in his Preface – that it is “for [both] the small and the great.” Obviously, the “small” person’s belly is not **full of bread and meat**.

13. The explanation of the matter is that Rambam actually forewarns of this [confusion] with his precise choice of words: “it is not fitting for one **to stroll** in *Pardes*” (**departing** from the terminology of the Sages, “they **entered** *Pardes*” [Chagiga 14b], which he himself cites). “To stroll” does not at all mean to enter, but rather, being in *Pardes* **at length** and in a manner of strolling, **having pleasure** [see Chagiga *ibid*], delving into these topics with a deep and expansive contemplation, to the extent that one **takes pleasure** in the matter. **This** manner of the study of *Pardes* must be only after one’s “belly is **full** with bread and meat.” Also, as Rambam rules [in Laws of the Foundations of Torah 4:10-11; 2:12], “The Early Sages commanded that we may not teach these matters in public.” [FN 84: And see Rambam’s introduction to *A Guide to the Perplexed*. Therefore, (since we do not teach the Description of the Supernal Chariot nor the Description of

Creation in public) he writes (in *A Guide to the Perplexed*) only outlines of the various chapters in the discussion, and this too, only by way of **allusion**, etc. Look there.]

This is not so, however, with regard to the matters discussed in the four chapters in Rambam; they are without lengthy explanation **and etc.** [Thus, their study cannot be considered as “strolling.”] The Rambam himself **emphasizes** that it is merely “like a drop from the ocean of that which needs to be elucidated on this topic” (similarly with regard to the Description of Creation, it is “like a drop from a bucket”), as explained above. In fact, they are not even classified as “outlines of the chapters” (for even the outlines of the chapters regarding the Description of the Supernal Chariot may not be taught in **public**; how much more so is it not “for the small and the great [alike]”), but only as general information (albeit **foundational**). Thus, it is not at all

*...delving into these topics with a deep and expansive contemplation, to the extent that one takes pleasure in the matter. It is this manner of the study of Pardes that must be only after one's "belly is full with bread and meat."*

classified as “to **stroll** in Pardes.”

14. On the other hand, concerning the study of these matters in **this** manner (general information), as the Rambam arranges them in his work – **on the contrary**: This must be studied “**first of all**,” for the “foundation of the foundations and the pillar of wisdoms” is that we should have **knowledge** of G-d. Indeed, the other laws of the Torah stand on this **pillar** and are founded on this **foundation**.

And from being involved now in the matter of knowledge of G-d, we will soon merit “the Days of Moshiach,” when (in the wording of Rambam, mentioned above) “the sole occupation of the entire world will be to know G-d alone...for the earth shall be full with the knowledge of G-d as water covers the ocean.”

*(From the addresses of Yud-Alef Nissan, Acharon Shel Pesach, and Shabbos Parshas Emor 5744, Shabbos Parshas VaEira 5745)*

### GREAT NEWS TO ANASH AND TEMIMIM

Just as in the previous years, there will be this year, G-d willing, a Vaad to select the Rebbe's niggun for the auspicious day  
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# IT'S NO JOKE, MOSHIACH IS COMING

COMPILED AND EDITED BY SHAI GEFEN

*Since the Rebbe's Besuras HaGeula, the sichos focused on the imminent arrival of Moshiach and the preparations for his coming. \* At the distribution of dollars, the Rebbe MH" M urged many of the passersby to prepare for the coming of Moshiach. It's amazing to see how the Rebbe made efforts to persuade others that the Geula is only moments away. \* Beis Moshiach presents quotes from the Rebbe from "dollars" that have to do with inyanei Moshiach and Geula, between the years 5750-5752. \* Part 2 of 2*

[Continued from last week]

## BRING THE S'FARIM TOGETHER WITH MOSHIACH

To Rabbi Shlomo Cunin of California and one of the men sent to Russia to retrieve the s'farim, the Rebbe gave four additional dollars and said: **it should be double,**

**"kiflayim l'tushiya."**

Rabbi Cunin: May the Rebbe's bracha be completely fulfilled so that the s'farim arrive before Shabbos.

The Rebbe: **Bring it as early as possible along with Moshiach Tzidkeinu, and may there be good news.**

## A FREE SPACE IN THE NEWSPAPER

Rabbi Yekusiel Rapp introduced Mrs. Yehudis Mazuz, one of the owners of the *Yediot Acharonot* newspaper.

Mrs. Mazuz: You blessed me a year and a half ago and since then the newspaper has been successful and has grown.

The Rebbe: **Your agency is called *Yediot Acharonot* – what will take place at the end (*acharon*), that Moshiach Tzidkeinu will come. So prepare a free space in the next issue, since this itself will hasten his coming. Since he will know that the announcement is already prepared, it will pave the way for him.**

The Rebbe gave her another dollar and said: **Much success for the *yedia ha'acharona* very soon.**

## GOOD ADVERTISING FOR MOSHIACH

Rabbi Yerachmiel Benjaminson introduced someone who had done the advertising for a number of things for Tzivos Hashem. The Rebbe gave him an additional dollar and said: **For all the advertising and**

this is the best advertising for Moshiach Tzidkeinu.

### SEND MOSHIACH ANOTHER INVITATION

A woman said to the Rebbe that she had sent Moshiach the first invitation to her son's wedding. The Rebbe said: **Yes, that's a good thing.**

The woman: But he didn't come.

The Rebbe: **Send him another invitation when you have a simcha and surely, he will come before that.**

### USE THE KETORES TO PUBLICIZE ABOUT THE MIKDASH

To Rabbi Burstein who brought the Rebbe *ketores* (incense), the Rebbe gave an extra dollar and said: **For the book based on what it says in [tractate] Sanhedrin.**

The Rebbe turned to his secretary, Rabbi Leibel Groner and said: **You have to give the ketores back to him.** And the Rebbe said to Rabbi Burstein: **You need to have the ketores since you have to show it to others, so someone else can use it. If it remains here, it will go to waste. If it's with you then from time to time you will use it to publicize the inyan of the Mikdash and the Mishkan.**

### LEARN A LOT OF TORAH

A child asked the Rebbe what he could do to bring Moshiach. The Rebbe said: **Learn a lot of Torah so he will come sooner.**

### BEFORE MY BIRTHDAY

To Rav Michel Kramer, who blessed the Rebbe in honor of his upcoming birthday, and informed the Rebbe that the NCFJE will

double all their activities in all areas in honor of the Rebbe's birthday.

The Rebbe: **Perhaps you will bless me so Moshiach will come before my birthday and then I won't have any particular burdens on my birthday because Moshiach will arrange all these things.**

Rav Kramer said: Moshiach should come.

The Rebbe: **Before my birthday.**

Rav Kramer showed the Rebbe what it says in a book, "behold a nation like a lion getting up,' this is coming into the land, and 'like a lion rising,' is the coming of Moshiach."

The Rebbe: **Try to talk about Moshiach in every environment. The Gemara says that Moshiach needs to come with *hesech ha'daas*, and the Rebbe, my father-in-law, said that *hesech ha'daas* means above intellect. So you need to think and talk about Moshiach until he comes and then he himself will thank you.**

Rav Kramer: The Rambam paskens in Hilchos Melachim—

The Rebbe: **that there must be "I await him every day that he comes."**

### YOU MUST HASTEN HIS COMING

The Rebbe said to Deputy Foreign Minister Binyamin Netanyahu: **Since we last met, there were some issues, but what happened then and what remains now is that Moshiach still did not come and you must do something to hasten his coming.**

Netanyahu: We're doing.

The Rebbe: **Apparently, it is not sufficient, for a number of hours of the day have gone by and he still hasn't come, and since a few more hours remain until the end of the day, try today too. May there be good news with joy and *tuv leivav*. Chassidim are particular that everything should be with simcha.**



## HERE THEY PASKENED THE OPPOSITE

Rabbi Feldman said that in Australia some said that they would hear about Moshiach's coming first.

The Rebbe: **In Australia?**

Rabbi Feldman: Yes

The Rebbe: **Who said that?**

Rabbi Feldman: This is what people said.

The Rebbe: **In Australia?**

Rabbi Feldman: Yes.

The Rebbe (smiling): **Nu, gornisht. May Hashem take their p'sak din in Australia for Australia and since here they paskened the opposite, may Hashem fulfill the p'sak din like they paskened here, and since Hashem decrees both simultaneously, may it be in a good way, and that is most important.**

## PREPARE TO PASKEN THE LAWS OF THE NEW MOON

To R' Yosef Yitzchok Keller: **Soon they will have to figure out the laws about sanctifying the new month with witnesses. That cannot be done now since we need a beis din with smicha but try to prepare yourself so you will be able to pasken these questions immediately.**

## GET IT DONE BEFORE MOSHIACH

The Tzaddik, Rabbi Simcha, leader of the Ashlag followers: **I will try to print the s'farim.**

The Rebbe: **You ought to arainchafen (grab the opportunity) before Moshiach comes since I don't know what the order will be like then.**

## HE IS WAITING FOR THE REMNANTS TO BE FINISHED

To Rabbi Peretz Tuvia Deitsch, av beis din Chalisa in B'nei Brak who blessed the Rebbe with long life, the

Rebbe said: **Amen, with all Klal Yisroel.**

Rabbi Deitsch said that he wanted to open a beis midrash in B'nei Brak. The Rebbe said: **May it be in an auspicious time and when another beis midrash is added, Moshiach will come sooner. He is waiting for the remnants to be finished. A shul isn't a remnant but a complete entity. May it be in an auspicious time.**

## TO BE WITHIN

Mr. Yehuda Levy, editor of *The Jerusalem Post* gave the Rebbe a

*So prepare a free space in the next issue, since this itself will hasten his coming. Since he will know that the announcement is already prepared, it will pave the way for him.*

book published by *The Jerusalem Post* and said they were distributing it in Eretz Yisroel and abroad. The Rebbe said: **I am right now out of Israel, but I hope very soon to be in Israel together with Moshiach. (The Rebbe added, smiling) Surely, you will publicize this in your newspaper, when I come with Moshiach.**

## MAKE SURE THAT JEWS DO SOMETHING TO BRING MOSHIACH

A distinguished (non-Lubavitch) woman said to the Rebbe that

whenever she comes to the Rebbe, Hashem gives her a thought of what to say. This time she doesn't know what to say and so this is a sign that the Rebbe has something to say to her.

The Rebbe said: **What I have to tell you is that you should make sure that Jews do something to bring Moshiach, and not to send them to me, may there be good news.**

## IT IS NOT A JOKE – MOSHIACH WILL COME SOON

To a friend of Lubavitch the Rebbe said: **It has been a long time since I've heard from you. Surely you have been busy with good things. May there be healthy news and go from strength to strength in all matters of Torah and mitzvos. You must "grab" – Moshiach is coming soon and so you must grab now.**

The man smiled and the Rebbe said: **It's not a joke. Moshiach is coming soon.**

## ONE BLOC TO BRING MOSHIACH

To Likud representative in New York, Yoram Ben Sholom who asked for a bracha for Yom Yerushalayim, the Rebbe gave an additional dollar and said: **Give this to tz'daka in the Holy Land and travel with success. May all the forces of good be unified (yitlakdu), and there will be one bloc to bring Moshiach Tzidkeinu and it should be soon.**

## WHAT PURPOSE IS THERE?

To Mr. David Chase, who spoke about establishing a Jewish community in Poland, the Rebbe said: **I believe that the true and complete Geula will come soon and therefore, what purpose is there in the plan, to start now to establish Jewish life in Poland for fifty years**



Righteous women present a tambourine to greet Moshiach to the Rebbe at dollars.

minutes until Moshiach comes, then the approach must be like his [then PM Shamir's] approach – that it is impossible to concede even one inch of all the territories.

### TO PREPARE THE CITY TO GREET MOSHIACH

Council leader Ariel Ron Nachman: I would like to ask for the Rebbe's bracha for the elections that will take place in another few weeks, that I be elected as council head for another five years.

The Rebbe: **What is your name and your mother's name?**

Ron Nachman: Ron ben Rochel.

The Rebbe: **Rochel prays for her children. The main thing is that it should all be with simcha and rina, great simcha to prepare the entire city to greet Moshiach Tzidkeinu in the Holy Land.**

Ron Nachman: Amen

### PREPARING TO BE KOHEN GADOL

To Rabbi Y.Y. Gutnick: **You are a Kohen and probably preparing to be Kohen Gadol, like all Klal Yisroel, who ought to be Kohanim G'dolim, as it's explained on the pasuk, "a priestly kingdom," a kingdom of Kohanim G'dolim. That's what the Baal HaTurim writes.**

from today?

### PRIME MINISTER – MOSHIACH TZIDKEINU

To Israeli television reporter, Oded Ben Ami: **I don't mix in to**

politics, and furthermore and most importantly, I hope that immediately [we merit that] Moshiach Tzidkeinu will become the prime minister there [in Eretz Yisroel]. But in the remaining

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# INCREASING JOY – WHY?

RABBI YOSEF KARASIK, SHLIACH AND DISTRICT RAV BAT CHEFER - EMEK CHEFER

*The descriptions of simcha in Jewish communities of previous generations are incomparable to the simcha of our generation. In a tiny home with few rooms and many people, there was true simcha, and today – in our affluent generation? Many people are depressed and this engenders quarrels in families.*

Chazal say, “When Adar enters, we increase joy.” In Adar, simcha itself is a mitzva! The Rebbe explains that it’s not only when we’re involved in something good and holy, Torah and mitzvos, that we need to be happy, but throughout the month, even when busy with mundane things. “When Adar enters ... the main thing is simcha.” (Likkutei Sichos 4, p. 1724)

## THE EASIEST MITZVA IS ALSO THE HARDEST

“It’s a great mitzva to always be happy” – the easiest mitzva as well as the most difficult mitzva is simcha:

Ask anybody which is the easiest mitzva to fulfill and he’ll say: to be happy. The rest of the mitzvos – getting up and davening, giving tz’daka to the poor, putting on t’fillin, fasting on Yom Kippur – are mitzvos that require our exertion, which is not the case with simcha. Nu, you just choose to be happy!

Yet, from another aspect, the mitzva of simcha is the hardest to

fulfill because simcha is not about a cup of vodka or other pleasures – eating, music, a beautiful view – but inner joy! A happy person is serene and seems to float a bit above the ground as he forgets or sets aside all his worries!

This is why simcha is also the hardest mitzva to fulfill, because although it’s possible to physically perform certain mitzvos, it’s harder to control our emotions and to chase away all those thoughts that sadden or upset us so that we are truly happy.

## THE SIMCHA OF PREVIOUS GENERATIONS AND IN OUR GENERATION

Jewish history is full of human tragedies: the decrees of *shmad* (forced apostasy), expulsions, and dire poverty. In the previous century, tens of thousands of Jews died of starvation and poverty-related illnesses, in addition to the millions murdered by Hitler and Stalin.

Now, in our generation, we are

blessed with material abundance in a world where it’s almost impossible that a Jew die of starvation. One would expect that our generation would be much happier, but it’s not that way. The descriptions of simcha in Jewish communities in generations past are incomparably greater than the simcha of our generation. In a tiny home with few rooms and many people, there was true simcha!

Today, in our affluent generation, many people suffer from depression and other emotional and mental ailments, which cause suffering and quarrels in family life.

The “mother” of all spiritual and material failure is sadness and depression, and the “mother” of all success is simcha.

## SADNESS AND A GUILTY CONSCIENCE – GOOD OR BAD?

In *Tanya* (chapters 26-29), the Alter Rebbe addresses the problem of guilt in the person who neglected a certain mitzva. Is the source of this guilt from the good inclination or the evil inclination? The Alter Rebbe says it comes from the evil inclination!

One would think that if a person did not daven properly or did not do a certain mitzva, and afterwards feels pangs of regret, that this is a good thing, but the Alter Rebbe says it’s not, for it comes from the forces of evil. He asks: how is it that during business his conscience bothers him with regret for his sins? If he has thoughts of mundane matters even in



shul while wearing tallis and t'fillin, would he have thoughts of true repentance and returning to G-d later on while walking down the street?

Certainly, these thoughts are from the evil inclination, for sometimes the evil inclination gives a person thoughts of regret! Why would the evil inclination do this when its goal is to cause the person to sin? The reason is that feelings and thoughts of regret pull a person down spiritually in two ways.

First, it makes a person sad and depressed, lacking energy, and in the guise of holiness and religion. He says to himself: what are you worth when you didn't do the mitzva properly? You are far from G-dliness! And the person is weakened and dispirited.

Second, later on, when the person does another mitzva, the evil inclination will whisper friendly counsel in a religious guise to him: why are you doing mitzvos when you're not worth anything anyway? You are very low spiritually and you and your deeds are worthless. What a waste for you to invest yourself in doing good deeds which are not worth anything anyhow.

This is like being on a diet and being very careful to avoid unhealthful food. If you eat something you shouldn't eat and feel guilty afterwards, this ruins the diet because you figure: I blew it already by eating that junk and so I'm no longer on the diet. I may as well gorge myself...

## REASONS FOR HAPPINESS

On many occasions, the Rebbe gave numerous reasons for every Jew to be constantly happy. Among them are:

1) Among the billions of creations that exist in Hashem's world, Hashem chose us, the Jewish people, the few in number, to be his special nation. Hashem, the King of kings, chose to dwell in our homes and our bodies. What pleasure and joy this ought to engender in every thinking person.

How happy a person would be if a

great king would come visit him in his home; how he would prepare for his visit! And we are not speaking of a king of flesh and blood, but the King of kings, Hashem, Who comes to dwell in the home and body of a Jew. Nu, we ought to be happy!

2) We live in an affluent generation in which Hashem, in His great compassion and kindness, gives us material abundance in all facets of life. For example, in the field of medicine, where there are a wealth of discoveries and amazing advancements. Fortunate are we that we have merited to see and enjoy all



this, and certainly to use them for holy purposes.

In previous generations, they did not have the spiritual abundance we have. Today, anybody can buy s'farim and things used for mitzvos (esrogim, t'fillin, etc.). The Rambam had only 80 s'farim in his library while today, many ordinary Jews have hundreds even thousands of s'farim.

3) The main thing is, "sisu v'simchu b'simchas ha'Geula," the prophetic announcement of the Rebbe that we are the last generation of Exile and the first generation of Redemption.

This ought to cancel all forms of sadness and arouse tremendous simcha in our hearts. In another few seconds, all the Exile and all suffering will disappear. *Hinei, hinei Moshiach ba!*

## STORY OF A SAD CHASSID

In Niezhen lived a Chassid, Meir Zalman, who was a merchant and a G-d-fearing man, who was punctilious about his mitzva observance in the ways of Chassidus. He davened with a minyan, had set times for Torah study in Nigleh and Chassidus, and on Shabbos he spent a long time on his davening and reviewed Chassidus in public.

One day he began to think that he wasn't doing enough in his avodas Hashem, that he wasn't properly devoting his time to Torah and mitzvos, and bit by bit, Meir Zalman became deeply depressed.

Feeling so down, he went to his Rebbe, the Tzemach Tzedek, and poured out his bitter heart to him. The Tzemach Tzedek said: these thoughts are from the evil inclination. "You were caught in the net of the animal soul which instills *mara sh'chora* (depression) within you," to confuse you in your holy avoda. You must cease these thoughts and increase simcha and this is how you will ascend in your avodas Hashem (*Igros Kodesh*, Rebbe Rayatz, vol. 8, p 658).

Think about it. A Jew is truly sad about his spiritual state, which requires correction, to the point that he is depressed over it. Is there anything better than that – a person who feels badly about his spiritual weakness? But the Tzemach Tzedek told him that this anguish came from the "net of the animal soul" and "from the counsel of the forces of evil." Sadness over one's avodas Hashem is the counsel of the evil inclination! As Dovid, the "sweet singer" said (chapter 100 of T'hilim), "serve Hashem with joy, come before Him with exultation."

# CARE FOR KASHRUS

P. ZARCHI

*This is the story of a Chassidische young couple who received a bracha from the Rebbe with a note that said they should be careful about kashrus! They tried and tried to discover what the Rebbe could be referring to but kept on receiving the same instruction until...*

I heard the following story from Mrs. M.A. Here it is as she told it to me:

5744-1984. We were a young couple just starting out, expecting our second child. As is customary, we wrote to the Rebbe about the good news and asked for a bracha for a healthy pregnancy, an easy birth, and a healthy baby, the usual requests for a couple anticipating a birth.

Time passed and no answer was forthcoming. I continued to write to the Rebbe every month and did not receive any replies, not in writing, not through the secretaries, nothing.

Since Chassidim have strength and stubbornness, I continued writing every month, but for some reason the Rebbe did not respond. It was so strange, especially considering that with the first birth I had gotten the usual bracha from the Rebbe. I could not figure out why it was different this time and this disturbed my peace of mind and made me very nervous.

I was young and expecting, and I felt I *had* to have the Rebbe's bracha, so I dared to write another letter, worded slightly differently, in the hopes that I would get a reply. I had the nerve to write that I would not give birth without the Rebbe's bracha!

It was only very close to my due date that I finally received a reply. I was thrilled – until I saw the mysterious response. The Rebbe blessed us in the customary way he blesses every future mother for an easy birth, etc., but at the end of the letter, the Rebbe added a little note. The note said: **be particular about the kashrus of food and drink.**

In order to understand why we were so baffled by this note about kashrus I must introduce my family. My husband and I are a Chassidische couple from a frum and Chassidische background that keep all chumros and hiddurim according to Chassidus. We built our home on a foundation of Torah and Chassidus, and we are very particular about our religious observance.

The kitchen was kosher l'mehadrin (or so we thought) and we lived in a place where all food products are approved by Chassidische rabbanim. There are mashgichim appointed over every store. This is why the Rebbe's note was unfathomable to us. How did the Rebbe's instruction apply to us? We didn't know, but were apprehensive since the Rebbe found it necessary to point out something that we thought we were doing b'hiddur!

Not only were we shaken by the note, I would say it was the shock of our lives. What were we doing wrong? What area needed correcting? However, if the Rebbe was writing that to us, then for sure there was room for improvement. We reviewed everything we did but didn't find anything to correct.

Every Chassid knows that if the Rebbe says something then it is ruach ha'kodesh, so we went to work to discover the meaning of the Rebbe's message. We spoke to a rav in B'nei Brak, Rabbi Moshe Yehuda Leib Landau. He met our criteria of someone who could help us since he is an expert in kashrus and is of Chassidic stock.

Rabbi Landau asked us questions about our purchases. One of his questions concerned dairy products, whether we used products with a certain hashgacha (specifying one by name). When we said that we used them he recommended that we stop.

We agreed to that for we were ready to do anything in order to

correct the problem. We were sure we had fulfilled the Rebbe's instruction and happy that we had resolved the problem, I gave birth and everything was fine. The Rebbe's bracha was fulfilled and life went back to normal.

Some time went by and I was expecting again. I wrote the Rebbe about the good news and asked for a bracha. We expected an answer, this time with no additions. We were sure that this would happen since we were even more careful about kashrus than others!

There are no words to describe our horror when we received the Rebbe's letter with a bracha for the pregnancy and birth along with a note: **be particular about the kashrus of food and drink.**

What was wrong now?! Weren't we doing *everything*? We had consulted with a professional, an authority in kashrus. Who else could we speak to? What should we do? What did the Rebbe see from 770 that we couldn't see in our kitchen in

*The kitchen was kosher l'mehadrin (or so we thought) and we lived in a place where all food products are approved by Chassidische rabbanim. There are mashgichim appointed over every store. This is why the Rebbe's note was unfathomable to us. How did the Rebbe's instruction apply to us?*

Eretz Yisroel?

Our decision made in the

previous pregnancy had sometimes made us a laughingstock. Not using dairy products under that particular mehadrin hashgacha had generated comments, but we hadn't broken and we kept to our commitment.

Furthermore, our baby needed formula, and because of Rabbi Landau's advice we didn't use milk powder from the company under that hashgacha, a hiddur that made life difficult for me since I had to prepare special food for the baby out of ground almonds because of her digestive problems.

It was a lot of work but it was worth it since the Rebbe had told us to be particular about the kashrus of food and drink and no matter what that entailed, we would do it! And the results? The Rebbe gave us the same instruction again!

Now what? Who could solve this mystery? What was still not mehudar enough? It was hard to even think the question: *what wasn't kosher in our home?*



We didn't stop thinking and talking about it and we told others about it too. Someone told us that we weren't the only Lubavitchers who had gotten this instruction and that it would be a good idea to consult with R' Zushe Wilmovsky a"h, the "Partisan." With his Chassidische sense, he would certainly be able to solve the mystery to the Rebbe's satisfaction.

My husband went to consult with R' Zushe and he heard an incredible story from him. A Lubavitcher couple had not had children and they asked the Rebbe for a bracha and advice. The Rebbe gave them the same answer he gave us: to be careful in kashrus of food and drink. Their reaction was like ours – shock. They also lived in a Chassidische environment and were mehader in everything.

When they examined things more closely they realized that the woman was a descendent of the Shalo HaKadosh and he had written in his will that his children should not eat turkey. The will was for the male descendents, so her father and brother did not eat turkey while the girls did. They thought that perhaps this was what the Rebbe was referring to when he asked them to be particular about kashrus.

There was only one way to know, to try it out and see what happened. They stopped using turkey products and were blessed with children. It sounds incredible but that's what happened. There is no rational reason why she, a female descendent, required this chumra that was directed at the males, but we know good and well that our Rebbe knows what we don't know. What he sees from there, we don't see here. However, we weren't descendents of the Shalo and that chumra did not apply to us.

Our search wasn't over yet. We lived with the feeling that something

wasn't right which is a very unpleasant feeling, to say the least. Here we were, trying with all our might, doing things to an extreme, and yet we hadn't solved the problem.

We didn't rest for a moment as we feverishly searched for an answer. Rabbi Landau suggested that maybe we weren't careful about washing our hands after taking a daytime nap. Then the food we ate wasn't mehudar. That was a possibility,

***What was wrong now?! Weren't we doing everything? We had consulted with a professional, an authority in kashrus. Who else could we speak to? What should we do? What did the Rebbe see from 770 that we couldn't see in our kitchen in Eretz Yisroel?***

something to think about, but no; we washed our hands. Another dead end.

We decided to attack the problem a different way. We would not eat anything that wasn't under Rabbi Landau's or the Badatz HaEida HaChareidis, and we waited eagerly for confirmation that the Rebbe was satisfied and we had done what he wanted.

Our hopes were dashed when the

next letter from the Rebbe came. Yes, the usual letter with the familiar addition, but with yet another addition that broke, confounded, and devastated us: **be particular with the kashrus of food and drink in daily life.**

Is there another word that I haven't yet used to describe our feelings? Not only were we the odd birds who didn't use the best mehadrin products but we also refrained from using most of the hechsherim even when we were guests, at simchas, etc. And the hardest and worst thing of all was that after all the effort and investigation, the difficult commitments and carrying them out, *we were still getting the same answer from the Rebbe!* Not only the addition that we had gotten used to seeing, somehow, but yet another addition! The Rebbe was pointing out that something in our daily lives was not up to par.

Yes, we were a Chassidische couple who sought to fulfill all halachos with hiddur, who had taken on additional chumros without hesitation, and not only hadn't we managed to find and fix the problem, the Rebbe was saying it was applicable to our daily lives!

We were enormously frustrated. It was a nightmare. Each time we were sure we had gotten to the bottom of it and had discovered the problem and had fixed it, the Rebbe said: not yet, you still haven't scratched the tip of the iceberg. That last answer really threw us.

I wrote to the Rebbe about our new resolutions, how we only ate from the best hechsherim. Rabbi Landau asked to see a list of the products that we used. Maybe there was something which had slipped past us. But no, he didn't discover anything wrong. Everything was mehadrin min ha'mehadrin. Now what?

We felt trapped. We had done our best and it wasn't good enough. The Rebbe was demanding and we couldn't see how to meet his demands, and it was in an area that was fundamental, the kashrus in eating and drinking in daily life! What did the Rebbe see that we did not? Why weren't we able to fulfill the Rebbe's demand?

Who would have dreamt that a couple whose only desire was to build a home on the foundation of Torah and mitzvos as illuminated by Chassidus would stumble in the area of kashrus, and any possible hiddur didn't fix the problem!

We heard about a family simcha. My sister-in-law was engaged. Preparation for her wedding was in full swing and I got involved with the shopping. As someone with experience, I went off to buy all her kitchen equipment for her.

I bought it all, from A to Z, so she could begin married life with the best and most up-to-date equipment. I shopped for dishes, pots and baking pans, the best of whatever was available for the Israeli consumer in those days.

My sister-in-law happily went through the purchases. She examined every item. When she saw the sifter, used to check for and remove bugs, she asked, "What's this? Why this sifter?"

I didn't understand why she was commenting about the sifter. Did the color not match her kitchen? Was a newer model out? It's not something you use every day and even if so, it's not something you put on display anyhow, so what was wrong with it?

"Why didn't you buy a silk sifter?" she asked.

"What's that?" I asked her, as Jews do, answering a question with a question.

My sister-in-law explained something I hadn't known until then, that it was necessary to sift flour with a very fine sifter and only a sifter made of silk fit the bill.

Why didn't I have a sifter like that? Very simple. When I got married, it didn't exist. Everybody used the sifters with the smallest holes, with plastic netting.

I was happy to learn about the silk sifter since I hadn't heard of it before and I bought one for myself. We thought that maybe this was what the Rebbe had been referring to.

We held our breaths and hoped that maybe, this time we had done it. But we knew that we had been sure on previous occasions and had been disappointed.

That very week, the week I bought the sifter and began using it in my kitchen, I received a letter

from the Rebbe. A bracha for the pregnancy. When I opened the letter the familiar tremor in my hands returned but to my great joy, the letter was completely routine, with the familiar bracha for a healthy pregnancy and an easy birth. That's all. No additions.

A stone rolled off our hearts. We felt that we had finally done it and the Rebbe was satisfied.

To conclude my story, I will add that at that time there was the annual kinus for Chabad women in Rechasim. Rabbi Levi Bistritzky a"h said that Lubavitcher couples had received letters from the Rebbe with instructions about kashrus and it turned out that all of them were not using silk sifters.

The lesson for us all is that sometimes it seems that the Rebbe's answers are routine and not specifically for us, for he tells everybody to check their mezuzos and t'fillin and my mezuzos may not necessarily have a problem.

But this isn't so. When you get an answer from the Rebbe, it's because the Rebbe knows and sees that you need to correct a certain thing or that the channel for success is through a particular mitzva. Every word and instruction from the Rebbe is accurate. It is our obligation and privilege to fulfill them.

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# THE GREAT WASTED OPPORTUNITY OF 5708

TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY

*The first\* installment of Between Light and Darkness, 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 SAVING OF JEWS IN ERETZ HA'KODESH

It has been about sixty years since the beginning of the great ingathering of Jews into Eretz Yisroel, the land that "the eyes of G-d are always upon it, from the beginning of the year until the end of the year" (Devarim 11:12). A certain portion of these residents, or their parents and grandparents, came to Eretz Yisroel after the Holocaust in Europe, when reaching this place of rescue and the victory in war over those who rose up to destroy them were all achieved through great and revealed miracles, bringing a sense of recognition to each and every one of them that the Guardian of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps. It was He Who paved

the way for them to reach Eretz Yisroel and He Who gave the Israel Defense Forces the strength and fortitude to protect them. There can be no room left for doubt that the possibility for rescue was created by G-d Himself, the Source of goodness and kindness, the Master of miracles and wonders on every battlefield, Who brought about the circumstances that led to all these miracles and the great salvation of millions of Jews.

## THE MIRACULOUS FOUNDING AND ESTABLISHMENT OF JEWISH RULE

As is known, there were many Torah leaders of their day who opposed in principle the

establishment of Jewish sovereignty in Eretz Yisroel, whether due to the prohibition of "the three vows" (Kesubos 111a) or the intention of the leaders of the Zionist movement to settle for a national definition of Judaism and to throw out the traditional Jewish identity of Torah and mitzvos. However, this question was only applicable during that period when the matter was within the limits of a theoretical concept. But after many years, when the population of Eretz HaKodesh has increased, while on the other hand, Arab plotting and scheming continues to grow, it is clear and obvious **according to Shulchan Aruch** that there was a need to organize and establish Jewish rule.

Since we're discussing the laws of pikuach nefesh, there is no connection to the issue of **nationalism**. Thus, even if there was a situation where Jews were being killed *r'l* in the Diaspora, and it would be possible to stop the pogroms through establishing a local Jewish organization, there would be an obligation to do so. Therefore, when Jewish administration was established in

*\*We regret that last week's installment appeared out of sequence. The following should have preceded it.*

Eretz Yisroel in 5708, it merited the help of Heaven and open miracles. The withdrawal of the British from the country, the establishment and founding of Jewish rule (despite the fact that some of the Jewish leaders claimed that according to nature, they wouldn't be able to hold out), the victory over enemies who declared war immediately on all fronts – all this happened in a most unnatural and miraculous fashion in order to save the lives of many Jews.

### A FITTING TIME FOR REDEMPTION

However, besides G-d's desire to save His people, there was another inner purpose here. Those years represented a fitting time for Redemption and an auspicious time from Heaven. There have been several occasions during the time of Exile that in His great goodness and kindness, G-d gave Jews opportunities in the places of their dispersion **to prove that they were worthy of the coming of Moshiach**, when the possibility was miraculously created for them to live in peace and security, and to lead their lives as they wished without disturbances. All this was in order to see if they would act appropriately and establish their conduct in accordance with the Torah. There have been numerous examples of such circumstances throughout history, e.g., during the era of The Council of Four Provinces, when previous trials were regrettably never passed because the Jewish People did not seize the opportunity.

### REHEARSALS BEFORE THE ACTUAL PERFORMANCE

This can be compared to the behind-the-scenes rehearsals that are made prior to raising the curtain on the actual performance before the audience. The order is that after the final rehearsal, when they see

that everything is being done on cue and everyone is playing his part correctly, only then is it possible to raise the curtain and start the real show. This is also how it was during the period after the Second World War, when G-d saw the oppression of His people Israel, who were murdered and slaughtered *r"l* through terrible and frightful decrees, and brought tens and hundreds of thousands of Jews to a place of refuge in Eretz Yisroel, saving them from death, and freeing them from their slavery (in relative terms).

At that same time, the Jewish



People were given the total possibility, through their free choice and good will, to conduct themselves **during the time of Exile**, in an organized manner through their own institutions, as a “holy nation” should act, in accordance with the teachings of our holy Torah from the source of holiness. In His great kindness, our Father in Heaven wanted this opportunity to come specifically in Eretz HaKodesh, in order that the holiness of the land will assist in the fulfillment of Torah and mitzvos, on the level of “for Hashem your G-d

tests you to know” if they are truly worthy of Redemption.

### A MISSED OPPORTUNITY

If the Jewish People would have taken advantage of this auspicious hour and conducted themselves according to Torah and mitzvos, this would have been a marvelous opportunity for them to prove that the time had already come “to raise the curtain.” (NOTE: It's not that this appropriate conduct would have marked the beginning of the Redemption, as this can come only through Melech HaMoshiach as will be mentioned, however, it would have proved that the Jewish People, **while still in the Exile**, were already worthy and prepared for the Redemption.)

Instead of doing this, however, the Jewish leaders argued whether they should mention G-d's Name and other expressions of Judaism in Israel's Declaration of Independence, or if they should remain dependent upon the kindnesses of Moscow and Washington, while forgetting and neglecting the main thing: the G-d of Israel and the Torah of Israel.

**In 5708, a crime was committed against the Jewish People!** The founders of the regime took a page out of the book of non-Jewish life and governing and applied it to themselves. They brought an even darker exile to Tel Aviv and Yerushalayim, claiming that it was freedom and independence. Instead of acting in accordance with the laws of Torah, they left the British constitution and the laws of other nations in force. They decided to be “as all the nations” inwardly and outwardly, basing the existence of the tremendous ingathering of Jews to Eretz HaKodesh upon foundations not according to Torah and holiness, many of which are against G-d's Will *r"l*. Thus, to our great regret, the Jewish People again failed to reach greater heights, to

take advantage of the opportunity, and to prove that the Redemption can be revealed.

**THE CONSTANTLY REPEATED ERROR**

More opportunities to repent and bring the Redemption were again wasted. For example, in 5717, during the Sinai Campaign, had the Jewish People believed then that what had brought their salvation was not the British and French planes, but their Merciful Father, Alm-ghty G-d, this victory would have been a fitting time for the Redemption. Furthermore, just before Shavuos 5727 (the Six Day War), there was **never** a better time and awakening for t'shuva. At that time, the Jewish People were in a state of incredible unity and in a manner of "we will do and we will hear." The leaders approached the young people and told them, "Take

*In 5708, a crime was committed against the Jewish People! The founders of the regime took a page out of the book of non-Jewish life and governing and applied it to themselves. They brought an even darker exile to Tel Aviv and Yerushalayim, claiming that it was freedom and independence.*

an 'Uzi' and head for El-Arish and the Egyptian border," and everyone did so with enthusiasm and devotion in order to protect the Jewish People. There, down on the Gaza Strip and in the Sinai desert, the Shechina was present with every soldier who stood on the battlefield and the border. The awakening to t'shuva during that time stemmed from the revelation of the "great shofar" that arouses the Jewish People to repentance at the end of the time of Exile. If the Jewish leaders would have told those young people that those strengths of "we will do and we will hear" that they had revealed in the war should now be utilized for Torah and mitzvos, the Jewish People would have done t'shuva, and the situation today would be totally different. However, the leaders were silent and wasted another opportunity.

[To be continued be"H]

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ב"ה



עזל-טוב טוב-עזל

On behalf of the staff of the English and Hebrew departments of *Beis Moshiach Magazine* and its readers all over the world, we would like to congratulate and extend our warmest blessings and wishes to our beloved editor of the English department

Rabbi **Boruch Reuven HaLevy Merkur**

and his dear wife **Channa** sh'yichyu

on the birth of their son yichyeh

May you merit much Chassidishe nachas and joy from all your children and may they grow up to be true chassidim, yerei Shamayim, and lamdanim, true soldiers of the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach shlita, and may we merit to see the true and complete Redemption NOW!

Long live the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach  
forever and ever!

*The Beis Moshiach Family*



# LEARNING AT THE FEET OF THE GREAT CHASSIDIM

RABBI SHNEUR ZALMAN CHANIN

*While living in Tashkent during the war, it wasn't only chesed that R' Chaikel was involved with. \* These were also years of learning from the great Chassidim of that generation. \* From R' Peretz Mochkin he learned about p'nimius; R' Asher Sossonkin was exemplary in his Ahavas Yisroel; R' Dovid Horodoker demonstrated how a Chassid is above the matters of this world; and R' Yochanon Gordon, menahel of the chesed fund in 770, is also "remembered for good."*

## EREV SHABBOS RESCUE

One Friday, someone told my father that he had seen the Chassid R' Dovid Horodoker at the train station and that he was mortally ill. Without tarrying for a moment, my father rented a car and traveled to the train station to find R' Dovid, his friend from Leningrad. He walked the length and breadth of the station, but did not find R' Dovid.

Suddenly, he heard someone

calling him in a weak voice, "Chaikel, Chaikel." When he turned in the direction of the voice he saw a distinguished looking man with a long beard, all skin and bones, barely standing on his feet he was so weak. The man yelled towards my father again, "Chaikel! Chaikel!" and motioned to him to come over.

Only from up close was my father able to recognize that this was R' Dovid, who had fled the front and had come with his wife

and son to Tashkent. My father took him home.

R' Dovid was sick and famished as it had been weeks since he had eaten. He weighed only 80 pounds. My father washed R' Dovid, and his clothes, which were filthy and torn, he burned. My father got him and his family new clothing and brought a doctor.

My father always knew that R' Dovid was an extraordinary man, but the first Shabbos that R' Dovid spent in his house proved it. When they ate the Shabbos meal, he saw that R' Dovid was not in this world at all but in the higher worlds. As my father put it, "You were able to see on him that he was all spirituality; he lived from spirituality."

After being treated for a month or more, R' Dovid recovered his strength. My father asked him to remain in Tashkent and said he would provide for all his needs, but R' Dovid preferred to go to Samarkand to live with his son, R' Avrohom, who was himself a lofty young man. My father tried to convince him to stay in Tashkent because there was nothing to eat in Samarkand, but his efforts were in

vain. Despite his importuning, R' Dovid decided to go to Samarkand and he suffered from hunger there.

The Chassidim there saw that R' Dovid was starving and they divided the obligation and privilege to support him amongst themselves. Each day of the week, a different Chassid provided him with food.

As the Chassid, R' Yisroel Noach Blinitzky told my father, twice a week it was his turn and R' Dovid came to him. But despite their efforts, R' Dovid only lived a few months more before passing away.

### HELPMATE

My mother was my father's helpmate. She visited her friend, Golda, the wife of R' Ben-Tzion Shemtov, in order to see what was happening at her house and if she could help her. One Erev Shabbos, when starvation was at a peak, my mother met Golda, who complained that she did not feel well. Since Golda was pregnant at the time, my mother decided to visit her house together with my father on Shabbos.

They went to the Shemtov's house and were pained by what they saw. R' Ben-Tzion and his family, like many other Lubavitchers, were terribly poor. Their home was dark and poverty-stricken and the children were cold, starving, and crying. What could their father do but pray?

When my parents walked in, R' Ben-Tzion was in a corner, face to the wall, davening, trying to concentrate on his t'fillos and forget a bit of his sorrows.

His wife lay in bed, in pain, and told my mother that she couldn't bear the suffering of her children any longer. My mother's heart went out to her. She immediately went back home, gathered some food and bread over which to make Kiddush, and sent it back to the Shemtovs

with a gentile woman.

When R' Ben-Tzion finished davening and did not allow himself to even dream about a slice of bread to share with his family, he was shocked to see an entire loaf of bread for Kiddush and other food! He was sure a miracle had taken place.

### "THE CHIEF BAKER" DISTRIBUTED CLOTHING

I heard amazing stories of Ahavas Yisroel from my father from those days in Tashkent. The Chassid R' Asher Sossonkin (who was called R' Asher Batumer for his city, Batum, where his father was a



shliach and Rav) was a precious Jew who considered others' welfare ten times more important than his own welfare. He lived with other Chassidim in Samarkand.

R' Asher worked in a large bakery, which supplied bread to the entire city and its environs. The fact that a fellow Chassid worked in a bakery was a boon to Anash and the T'mimim since R' Asher helped them obtain bread. Often he endangered his life, providing more than he was able.

His job was a relatively good one and he began to earn a little money. When he became "wealthy,"

he allowed himself to buy new clothes to replace his old, patched ones. R' Asher took good care of his new clothing and didn't allow even a speck of dust to settle on them, but this great pleasure was not long-lasting.

After a few days, he met a Jewish refugee from Poland who had come to Samarkand from Siberia. The man's clothing contained more holes than fabric and the man was starving. The refugee figured that this well-dressed man was well-to-do and he asked R' Asher for a donation so he could buy food and clothes. R' Asher didn't think twice but took off his new clothes and gave them to the man he had just met, happily donning the man's rags.

### MORNING OF TORAH

Many of Anash went to Tashkent and settled there and supported one another materially and spiritually. After the famine subsided somewhat and life established a certain routine, my father arranged a learning schedule for himself. Every morning, from five to seven o'clock, he learned with R' Yisroel Neveler, one hour Nigleh and one hour Chassidus. My father loved to learn and was very diligent by nature, so the moment he was able to, he set regular times for learning and enjoyed it tremendously.

Rabbi Abba Paltiel, the grandson of R' Yisroel Neveler, told me that he stayed with his grandfather in Tashkent for a few months. Although he was young at the time, he clearly remembers that my father would come to his grandfather every morning in order to learn. He remembers that on a few occasions my father would wake up his grandfather, stand outside, and wait until he opened the door.

He still recalls the singsong tune from when they learned together, "with a *geshmak*" (great pleasure),

and he would wake up to that niggun. R' Abba Paltiel told me that his grandfather once said to him that R' Chaikel was a great masmid who knew how to learn well, and it was a great pleasure to learn with him.

After the shiur, my father went to daven with a minyan. When he returned home to eat something before heading out again, all sorts of people were waiting to talk to him. While eating he would listen and offer advice, lend money, and distribute tz'daka.

Breakfast time was also when he heard from his fellow Jews who needed help with the authorities regarding a job, a place to live or problems with the army. For my father, getting involved in these things entailed great danger and mesirus nefesh because he could never gauge what awaited him from his communist "friend" and what his involvement would entail.

## STARTING A YESHIVA

My parents' home served as the place where the great Chassidim gathered. Especially, askanim like R' Peretz Mochkin, R' Nissan Nemenov, R' Yona Cohen (may Hashem avenge his blood), who was the menahel of the yeshiva, R' Mendel Futerfas, R' Ben-Tzion Shemtov, and Mrs. Sarah Katzenelbogen (Mumme Sarah), who organized the transfer of funds for Tomchei T'mimim and the maamud money to the right place.

As soon as a number of Lubavitcher refugee families arrived, they founded Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in Tashkent, the capitol of Uzbekistan. However, when the number of available apartments became limited and expensive, and mainly because it was dangerous to obtain an apartment for the yeshiva, some of Anash went to Samarkand. Samarkand was a smaller city and

the N.K.V.D. wasn't there in full force. It was easier to obtain apartments and a building for the yeshiva and that's where the yeshiva moved.

During the war, there was terrible starvation there and many Chassidim died of hunger. Their only source of help was from Anash in Tashkent who were better established and were able to manage even during the famine.

R' Nissan Nemenov, who was appointed mashpia of the yeshiva, went to Samarkand and would visit my father once a month in order to consult with him regarding communal work, but when he still lived in Tashkent, he came to see my father every day. When they had to discuss weighty matters, my father would go see him in Samarkand.

Nearly every day after work, my father would meet with R' Peretz Mochkin. R' Peretz was an extraordinary person, and my father, like many others, considered him a mashpia and a close friend. He learned many life lessons from R' Peretz, mainly during farbrengens, and tried to always be in his proximity.

R' Peretz was the treasurer of the yeshiva in Tashkent and when the yeshiva moved to Samarkand, he also took charge of supervising the maamud money. R' Peretz was a Chassidische man, distinguished looking, clever, and unusually good at keeping a secret. My father consulted with him in connection to communal matters and the yeshiva and together they found ways of transferring the yeshiva's money from Tashkent to Samarkand in the most secure manner.

My father consulted with him regarding aid for individuals who needed a job or who needed papers to work legally. Often, it was necessary to gain the release of Jews

who had been caught by the police with illegal goods or for black marketeering. These Jews were immediately thrown into jail and action needed to be taken on their behalf, wisely and swiftly. My father relied on R' Peretz, who cleverly aided him in devising plans to help these Jews.

As I wrote, my father loaned money to many Lubavitchers. One time, as he spoke with R' Peretz, he complained that many Chassidim who had taken loans did not pay him back as promised.

R' Peretz replied: Chaikel, what are you complaining about? You should be happy about that! Baruch Hashem, they owe you and you don't owe them.

This line from R' Peretz guided my father for the rest of his life.

## A POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE BALANCE SHEET?

When my father told me what R' Peretz had told him, he recalled what he had heard from R' Yochonon Gordon a"h, the gabbai of 770.

The Rebbe gave money towards the free-loan fund, Shomrei Shabbos, that R' Yochonon ran. Every year, on Parshas Mishpatim, the Rebbe would tell R' Yochonon to say a few words on behalf of this fund in the middle of the farbrengen. The Rebbe also sent him a special letter in honor of the annual Melaveh Malka that he made on behalf of the organization.

At the end of the year, R' Yochonon sent the Rebbe an annual report, specifying how much money the fund had loaned, how much money had been returned, how much money had been given as a deposit, how much money had been given as a donation, and how large the fund was.

R' Yochonon once had a yechidus in which he gave the

Rebbe the annual report. The Rebbe began reading the report and R' Yochonon, who was known for his perspicacity, sensed that the Rebbe wasn't satisfied. Before the Rebbe reacted to the report, R' Yochonon said that he saw that the Rebbe wasn't satisfied but he didn't understand why when the report showed that the fund had grown and that everybody who had taken loans had paid them back!

The Rebbe said: The fact that there is no loss and that all the loans were repaid shows that loans are made only to those who can pay back, but what about those who really need a loan but you don't think they can repay it? Why didn't they receive money from you?

A chesed fund that has no losses means that you aren't devoted enough to it, because if you were devoted enough then the capital could be used to lend money even to those who can't pay it back in time.

When R' Yochonon related this story to my father he added that only then did he understand the Rebbe's view of a free-loan fund and how it ought to be run.

## TO INVEST IN TRAVELING AND NOT IN TOOTING

R' Peretz Mochkin, as a true Chassid, recoiled from someone whose "inside wasn't like his outside," and he despised those who were ostentatious or those who exerted themselves to make public displays. He did not tolerate those who were called Chassidim who, as soon as they had a bit to drink, lost their rationality and began to speak sharply in a manner that bordered, to a degree, on impure speech. He maintained that it wasn't possible for someone who learned Chassidus and who called himself a Chassid to have mashke affect him in such a way as to demonstrate that his

"inside" was not Chassidus at all, but foolishness and arrogance. R' Peretz insisted that these "Chassidim" should not farbreng and have any influence on the T'mimim, and he was very upset when someone acted this way at farbrengens.

One time, when R' Peretz farbrenged and demanded p'nimius, there was a Chassid sitting there who had taken some mashke, and it showed. R' Peretz said to him, I will tell you a story:

***He maintained that it wasn't possible for someone who learned Chassidus and who called himself a Chassid to have mashke affect him in such a way as to demonstrate that his "inside" was not Chassidus at all, but foolishness and arrogance.***

When the steamship was invented and many simple people didn't understand what it was about and did not believe that it could move without sails, the government announced that on a certain day one of these ships would come into port in Odessa. Whoever wanted to see the great wonder would be able to watch the ship sail from Odessa to the Black Sea. The government wanted to prove to its citizens that the steamship really worked.

That day, thousands of men,

women, and children waited for the great moment when they would see the amazing sight with their own eyes. The captain came out and announced that the ship would toot its horn five times and then it would leave the port and sail out to sea.

The horn sounded once and the crowd cheered. Five minutes went by and the horn sounded again. The people cheered even louder. After the third and fourth toot, the cries of bravo rent the heavens and were audible at a distance. Excitement ran high as the crowd knew that in another few minutes a historic event would take place.

They all held their breath and focused their gaze on the ship. Silence. One minute went by, then five minutes, ten minutes, half an hour, but the ship didn't budge. Some skeptics began to shout: You fools! We knew all along that it was a farce! It's impossible for a ship to move without sails. What will move it along if not the wind?

A commotion ensued but all quieted down when the captain came out and begged people's pardon and explained rather uncomfortably that all the steam had been used on the tooting of the horn and none was left for sailing.

That is a chitzon, said R' Peretz, someone who wastes his energy in outward displays. All his efforts are for naught, just "air." When the time comes and the ship must sail with the power of the steam, in other words, the times comes to learn Chassidus in depth and to daven properly, no strength remains.

At this farbreng, R' Peretz sat all night and demanded that people not waste their energies on nonsense but use the strength and warmth of the study and ways of Chassidus in order to travel and ascend ever higher.

# LEIBEL COMES HOME

BY G. YANKELEVITCH

TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY

*As Bubbe Rivka was standing near the Rebbe, she broke into uncontrollable, heart-rending sobs. When the Rebbe noticed that she was crying, he turned to the secretary to ask for an explanation. The secretary replied that the woman is not in a good state of health, and apparently this is the reason why she has broken into tears. However, Bubbe Rivka found it appropriate to correct the secretary.*

We heard the following story at the bar-mitzva of HaTamim **Moshiach Kupchik**, son of the Rebbe MH"m's shliach in Poona, India, HaRav HaChassid R. **Alter Betzalel Kupchik**:

This story took place in the times of the Rebbe Rayatz. The Rebbe's shluchim in Montreal were acquainted with a couple who had a twelve-year old son. They had tried to convince the parents to send the boy to the Rebbe Rayatz's yeshiva in Crown Heights. After intensive urging, the parents agreed. During this period, the boy's father was not in the best of health, and therefore, it was the mother, who over the passage of time was known as Bubbe Rivka, who traveled with her son to register him at the yeshiva and help him in the initial acceptance process.

While in Crown Heights, she

arranged an appointment to go in for yechidus. Her request was granted, and she received the privilege of having a private audience with the Rebbe. As was customary in those days, due to the Rebbe's difficulty in speaking, the secretaries would sit in an adjacent room and assist in giving over what the Rebbe had said to the person who was in yechidus.

As Bubbe Rivka was standing near the Rebbe, she broke into uncontrollable heart-rending sobs. When the Rebbe noticed that she was crying, he turned to the secretary to ask for an explanation. The secretary replied that the woman is not in a good state of health, and apparently this is the reason why she has broken into tears.

However, Bubbe Rivka found it appropriate to correct the secretary.

"In fact," she said, "it's my husband who is ill, but that's not the reason why I'm crying. I'm crying because I want a bracha from the Rebbe that all my children should grow up to be *"erlicher Yidden."*

(At this point, R. Betzalel paused in his story to explain to those listeners who were not so fluent in Yiddish the meaning of the expression *"erlicher Yidden."* He did so with another story: When Rabbi Yoel Teitelbaum, the Satmar rebbe, who was famous for his opposition to the Zionist state, arrived in Eretz Yisroel for the first time, they removed all symbols of the state from the train and the station, in order that he will agree to ride the train. At this same opportunity, he met one of his acquaintances who had long since joined the religious Zionist movement. The acquaintance was accompanied by his young son, a sweet little boy, who he presented to the rebbe. "My son wears a kippa and even tzitzis," he said to the rebbe, as if to show proof that it's possible to be both a Zionist and a good Jew. "He also speaks an excellent Yiddish," he added.

"A Zionist boy who speaks Yiddish?" Rabbi Yoel replied. "If so, have him translate two words for me from Yiddish to Hebrew as a test of his knowledge."

Rabbi Yoel turned to the boy and asked, "How do you say *'erlicher Yid'* in Hebrew?"

The boy tried to find the definitive words to express the

concept “*erlicher Yid*,” but to no avail. This expression has no authentic translation in Hebrew. Thus, Rabbi Yoel sought to prove that in Hebrew, there are no “*erlicher Yidden*.”)

In any event, the Rebbe Rayatz blessed Bubbe Rivka in the following words: “*Zei velen zain erlicher, un zeire kinder nach erlicher, un zeire kinds kinder nach mer erliche*” (they should be *erlich*, and their children should be more *erlich*, and their children’s children should be even more *erlich*).

Needless to say, Bubbe Rivka walked out of *yechidus* with a feeling of lightheartedness and a confident step. She had a clear and holy bracha that her children would walk in the path of G-d for generations to come!

Time passed, and as happened often during those years, one of Bubbe Rivka’s children, her son Leibel, began to depart a bit from spiritual matters. Day after day,

month after month, year after year, he proceeded to “go off the tracks,” as his situation continued to deteriorate. At a certain point, he moved to California and all contact with him ceased. His way of life grew farther and farther from how he had been educated, and the physical distance in S. Francisco merely intensified the spiritual distance from the way of his parents.

The years continued to pass. Leibel had left a deep scar upon the hearts of his family members. They were afraid for him, but they also had no way of getting through to him. The rift was deep and painful, remaining in the minds of his whole family.

As time wore on, one of his family members went to the mikveh one morning before davening. In the midst of his preparations, an unfamiliar face entered the mikveh – a Jew he had never seen before. As Jews are known to do, the two soon found themselves in the midst of a

friendly chat. As they were talking, it turned out that the guest was a resident of S. Francisco – the city where Leibel lived!

As the conversation continued, the family member asked the guest if he could find his uncle Leibel and inquire about his welfare. Maybe – just maybe – something concrete will come out of this connection to bring him back to his roots...

At first, the guest was not happy about getting involved in a delicate family matter, however, he eventually agreed to jot down Leibel’s address.

The family member soon forgot all about the quick and sudden meeting in the mikveh with the Jew from S. Francisco.

One bright day, the surprise came. One of the sisters, Bubbe Rivka’s daughter, telephoned her brother with an exciting piece of news: Leibel called – he wants to come for Pesach!

Pesach arrived – and so did Leibel himself. After the holiday, the sister called her brother again. “You won’t believe it,” she said, “but Leibel came in with a kippa on his head!”

The brother wasn’t particularly surprised by this. After all, he knew that every Jew shows respect for himself and the Seider night by showing up wearing a kippa. That was very nice of him, but it’s nothing to get overly excited about...

However, the sister hadn’t finished her account of what had transpired. This time, it was something completely different – Leibel was wearing tzitzis!

Tzitzis?! That already demands an explanation. People don’t put on tzitzis just to show respect. Wearing tzitzis is a declaration of commitment to Torah and mitzvos.

Leibel was indeed very happy to



be reunited with his family, and he even let them in on the great revolution that had taken place in his life – a virtual 360 degree turnaround.

“Please tell me,” Leibel’s brother asked him upon meeting one another, “how did all this happen?” Leibel didn’t quite understand the question.

“What do you mean, ‘how’? This all happened because of you!”

“Because of me? I haven’t had anything to do with you for years. How could I possibly have had something to do with this?”

“Nu,” Leibel reminded him, “the Lubavitcher that you sent me...”

The brother wracked his brains, but Leibel had all the details: the exact date that the brother had met the Lubavitcher in the mikveh, and

how he literally compelled him to write down Leibel’s address and promise that he would try and help him.

“Ever since that day, that *chevraman* clung to me. He wouldn’t leave me alone – not even for a moment. The results stand before you – the old Leibel that used to know has returned.”

And so Leibel found his way back to the life of his extensive family, as an “*erlicher Yid*,” just as the Rebbe Rayatz had promised to Bubbe Rivka. Sooner or later, “none of your words return in vain.”

\* \* \*

One of the elder chassidim, Rabbi **Moshe Eliyahu Gerlitzky** of Montreal, once came to Eretz Yisroel for a visit. It was a particularly hot summer’s day, when he arrived at

the Western Wall and met there members of his family, descendants of Bubbe Rivka. He inquired about the family in general, and particularly about the subject of our story, Leibel. When he heard the happy news of how Leibel had returned home, he broke out in joyous chassidic dance, in the heat of the day, in the middle of the Western Wall square.

On-lookers didn’t exactly understand what made him dance with such overflowing enthusiasm, and he explained: He knew the whole story about the Rebbe Rayatz’s bracha, and over the years, he had followed the developments on what was happening with Leibel. Now that he was privileged to know that the Rebbe’s bracha had been fully realized, how could he possibly not dance?

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# THE OBLIGATION TO CELEBRATE ON PURIM

## Part 4 of 4

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

### CHAPTER 9

#### PURIM AND YOM KIPPUR

Key topics to be presented in this chapter:

- Two further questions
- In one respect, Yom Tov is superior to Purim.
- While the Holy Temple stood, the Middos of Atzilus were revealed, allowing for open miracles.
- The Temple's destruction meant a departure of open miracles.
- Each condition has an advantage over the other.
- The relative advantages of Yom Tov and Purim
- Mordechai sought to endow Purim with both advantages.

#### TWO FURTHER QUESTIONS

We are now confronted with an apparent difficulty: If, indeed, it is spiritually unnecessary, even inappropriate, to refrain from Melachah on Purim,<sup>72</sup> why did Mordechai seek to proclaim Purim a Yom Tov, complete with proscription of Melachah? Also, in many places we find an equivalence between Purim and Yom Kippur, which is referred to in the Torah as Yom HaKippurim — a phrase that can be interpreted as “the day that is like Purim.” On Yom Kippur, the sacrificial service included drawing lots (to determine which goat was to be sacrificed for what purpose); similarly, Purim itself (which means “lots,” as in “lottery”) is so named to commemorate the lots drawn by Haman to determine when to annihilate the Jews (G-d forbid). This equivalence is further underscored by the teaching<sup>73</sup> that in the Messianic “Future to Come” all the holidays will be nullified except Purim and Yom Kippur. Now, Yom Kippur is more stringent in its prohibition of

Melachah than any other Yom Tov. How is this consistent with the fact that Melachah is actually permitted on Purim?

#### IN ONE RESPECT, YOM TOV IS SUPERIOR TO PURIM.

The answer is that, while it is true that Purim brings a higher Divine revelation than does Yom Tov, there is nevertheless a certain respect in which the sanctity of Yom Tov is superior to that of Purim. This will be understood by first explaining why, in times of exile, most miracles and Divine wonders are hidden within the natural order of things, as was the case with the Purim story, whereas in the times of the Temple openly supernatural miracles were the rule.

#### WHILE THE HOLY TEMPLE STOOD, THE MIDDOS OF ATZILUS WERE REVEALED, ALLOWING FOR OPEN MIRACLES.

We mentioned above that G-d manifests Himself in the universe in ten principal ways, known as the ten Sefiros. These ten spiritual levels are divisible into the three highest — the intellectual attributes of Chochmah, Binah, and Da'as mentioned above—and the lower attributes, referred to as the “emotional attributes,” or Middos. All are present (as explained in detail elsewhere) in each of the four broad categories of successively lower Divine manifestation, known as the realms of Atzilus (emanation), Beriah (creation), Yetzirah (formation), and Assiyah (action). While the Holy Temple stood, the Middos of Atzilus were openly revealed and were openly perceptible in the world. This unimaginable degree of G-dly revelation allowed for open miracles and wonders that transcended the limits of the natural order.

## THE TEMPLE'S DESTRUCTION MEANT A DEPARTURE OF OPEN MIRACLES.

The Temple's destruction and the consequent state of exile meant a departure of the Middos of Atzilus from open manifestation within the world. Under those circumstances, G-d's conduct of the universe could no longer be accomplished through these attributes as they were no longer openly present. Instead, the world had to be directed from a higher vantage point, as it were, a spiritual plane so lofty that it was unaffected by the worldly circumstance of the exile. However, as a consequence of this, miracles could no longer be perceived, because these higher spiritual levels were themselves too high for open revelation. G-d's influence could now only be concealed within the seemingly natural flow of events.

## EACH CONDITION HAS AN ADVANTAGE OVER THE OTHER.

It thus develops that each state of affairs has an advantage in one respect. In one sense, the miracles and Divine Providence "encloded" (hislabshus) within nature actually stem from a loftier spiritual plane than revealed miracles, and are therefore superior. In another sense, though, there is clearly an advantage to being able to directly perceive G-dliness in our affairs, as is the case with miracles that are openly "revealed" (hisgalus).

## THE RELATIVE ADVANTAGES OF YOM TOV AND PURIM

This parallels the distinction between the sanctity of Yom Tov and Purim. Jewish mysticism teaches that on weekdays, the spiritual life-force of the universe comes by way of investiture within the realm of Assiyah, while on Yom Tov, it flows from the relatively higher realm of G-dly manifestation of Beriah. In other words, on Yom Tov, when the entire universe experiences an elevation in spirituality, as discussed above, we directly experience (in the manner of hisgalus) G-dly "transmissions" from the elevated plane of Beriah. This is the advantage of Yom Tov over Purim, when no perceptible increase in holiness is felt. In keeping with this, we refrain from Melachah on Yom Tov, for this symbolizes this spiritual elevation. Even so, the increased holiness manifest on Yom Tov is still a feature of Seder HaHishtalshelus. The spirituality of Purim, though, stems from that sublime level of G-dliness elicited by the Jews' unconditional, supra-rational self-sacrifice. On Purim, the holiness derives from the Or Ein Sof, G-d's very Self, far above the Seder HaHishtalshelus. This is Purim's advantage.

Accordingly, Melachah is permitted on Purim. Since this level cannot be directly perceived within creation, G-d's conduct at that time was likewise hidden (in the manner of hislabshus) within the natural order. Still, the concealment was not total. Although G-d did not openly reveal Himself, any reasonably perceptive person could recognize His hand in the amazing string of fortuitous coincidences that made up the Purim episode. This only partially masked revelation of the Or Ein Sof itself is bestowed upon each and every Jew on Purim.

A similar idea may be found in the teaching of the ARI, of blessed memory,<sup>74</sup> to the effect that a tallis possesses even greater holiness than the tzitzis attached to it. According to Jewish law, tzitzis are considered holy and may not be used for everyday purposes, whereas a tallis has no such restriction. Yet the tallis embodies a holiness of such a lofty degree that it cannot be contained within a physical item. This is what accounts for the fact that the physical tallis is not itself holy and thus not restricted to Mitzvah-related use. The physical tzitzis, by contrast, are endowed with sanctity for they stem from a level that is able to be contained by a physical object.

## MORDECHAI SOUGHT TO ENDOW PURIM WITH BOTH ADVANTAGES.

Mordechai, in proposing that Purim be declared a Yom Tov, sought to endow Purim with both advantages. Yom Kippur, which is indeed compared to Purim, has both qualities. Its holiness stems from a level that transcends Seder HaHishtalshelus; this is alluded to by the lots drawn on Yom Kippur. The symbolism of the lottery is that the items from which one will be selected are absolutely equivalent: there is no rational basis for distinguishing one from the other and only by random lottery is a choice made. This is characteristic of Yom Kippur, when that aspect of G-dliness is manifest regarding which there is no difference at all between high, low, good, evil, etc. Our sins, even the most heinous (G-d forbid), can be utterly eradicated by sincere repentance on Yom Kippur, for to G-d Himself, even the worst transgressions are of no consequence and can be looked upon as actual merits if G-d so wills it. At the same time, Yom Kippur possesses openly revealed sanctity such that Melachah is strictly forbidden.

However, Mordechai's suggestion was not accepted by the Sanhedrin, the Supreme Court of Torah law. There were several reasons for this. First, Yom Kippur and its aspects are ordained by the Torah itself, and nothing — not even the seeming incompatibility of the two qualities we have been discussing — can contradict

that. This cannot be said of Purim, which was Rabbinically ordained. Second, Yom Kippur is observed only after intense spiritual preparation during the preceding Ten Days of Repentance, and on the holiday itself we fast and otherwise live a totally otherworldly existence. We do not possess the ability to draw down the same level of holiness in a revealed manner on Purim. Finally, the events of Purim occurred during the period of exile, which, as noted above, by definition entails concealment of G-d's providence within the order of nature.

Still, one should not wonder how Mordechai could have thought it was even possible to have the best of both worlds. As explained above, it is not meaningful to speak of prohibiting Melachah on Purim, since its revelations stem from that level at which there is no distinction. We nevertheless find that it is meaningful to prohibit Melachah on Yom Kippur, which is spiritually comparable to Purim. This is because while the revelations of both days are indeed too lofty for Melachah, there is a difference between the nature of the light — the revelations — in their native state within their heavenly source and as they are finally expressed. The sublime holiness of Yom Kippur must take the forms appropriate to each successively lower stage of spiritual manifestation before it finally ends up illuminating the holiday of Yom Kippur as celebrated by us finite beings. The light itself is just as lofty as we have said, but by the time it reaches us all the way down here, so to speak, it can be observed by refraining from Melachah. After all, Yom Kippur is a Yom Tov, and in that respect, it is characterized by manifestations from the realm of Beriah. In the end, though, Melachah was not prohibited on Purim, because then, we do not experience open revelations from Beriah, as already discussed.

## CHAPTER SUMMARY

In the previous chapter, we learned that it is spiritually unnecessary, even inappropriate, to refrain from Melachah on Purim. Why, then, did Mordechai seek to proclaim Purim a Yom Tov, complete with proscription of Melachah? Furthermore, Purim is likened to Yom Kippur, yet Melachah is forbidden then. How is this consistent?

Notwithstanding what was said in earlier chapters about Purim's superiority to Yom Tov, there is a certain respect in which the sanctity of Yom Tov is superior to that of Purim after all. This is similar to the relative advantages of openly revealed miracles and miracles hidden within the order of nature:

While the Holy Temple stood, the G-dly attributes known as the Middos of Atzilus were openly revealed, actually perceptible in the world. This unimaginable degree of G-dly revelation allowed for open miracles and wonders that transcended the limits of the natural order.

After the Temple's destruction, G-d's conduct of the universe could no longer be accomplished through these attributes, since they were no longer openly present. Instead, the world had to be directed from a higher vantage point, as it were, a spiritual plane so lofty that it was

unaffected by the worldly circumstance of the exile. However, as a consequence of this, miracles could no longer be perceived, since these higher spiritual levels were themselves too high for open revelation. On the one hand, there is an obvious advantage in being able to perceive open miracles as we did in the Temple's time; on the other hand, it is also clearly advantageous to benefit from loftier spiritual levels, as we do in exile.

On Yom Tov, when the entire universe experiences an elevation in spirituality (as discussed in Chapter 8) we directly experience G-dly "transmissions" from the elevated plane of Beriah, higher than the source of weekday revelations. This is the advantage of Yom Tov over Purim, which is a weekday. In keeping with this, we refrain from Melachah on Yom Tov, for this symbolizes this spiritual elevation.

On Purim, by contrast, the holiness derives from the Or Ein Sof, G-d's very Self, far above the Seder HaHishtalshelus — in accordance with what was taught in Chapters 5 and 6. This is Purim's advantage. However, this degree of G-dliness is too lofty to be openly perceptible, and Melachah is permitted on Purim.

Mordechai, in proposing that Purim be declared a Yom Tov, sought to endow Purim with both advantages, similar to Yom Kippur, which has both qualities. However, this was not feasible in practice.

72. although, as mentioned above, it would still not be proper to conduct one's business affairs then

73. Midrash Shmuel 9:2; see also Pirkei DeRabbi Eliezer 46; also Jerusalem Talmud, Ta'anis 2:2, Rosh Hashanah 19b

74. see Likkutei Torah, Shelach 44b.

## CHAPTER 10

### NO DIVINE NAMES IN THE MEGILLAH

Key topics to be presented in this chapter:

- The parable of the bridegroom and the tannery
- Why there are no Divine names in the Megillah
- The Megillah's superiority over other prophetic books

Finally, in light of all the above, we can appreciate why the name of G-d is not mentioned in the entire Book of Esther.<sup>75</sup> This does not indicate any lesser sanctity to the Megillah (as the Book of Esther is called) On the contrary, the Megillah of Esther is even holier than the other books of the Prophets even though these are replete with Divine names. This is consistent with the teaching,<sup>76</sup> that "the [books of the other] Prophets will be nullified in the Future to Come, but the Megillah of Esther will not be nullified."

### THE PARABLE OF THE BRIDEGROOM AND THE TANNERY

This paradox is explicated by the parable related in the Zohar<sup>77</sup> concerning a bridegroom whose bride resided near a tannery, which is a vile-smelling place. Although he would not otherwise have gone there, he visited her there anyway out of love for his bride.

The Shechinah (Divine Presence) is identified with the

Sefirah of Malchus (sovereignty) within the realm of Atzilus, and in times of exile, this G-dly attribute descended from on high and enclotted itself within the non-holy forces of this world,<sup>78</sup> as it is taught,<sup>79</sup> “[When the Jews] were exiled to Babylon, the Shechinah accompanied them.” In Jewish mysticism, the Shechinah is allegorically compared to G-d’s “Bride,” and the Divine attribute of Chesed (kindness) — the highest of the Middos of Atzilus — is, in this context, compared to her “Bridegroom.” As a general rule, G-dliness is transmitted to us through the various Sefiros only as they are first packaged within the Sefirah of Malchus. Thus, for Divine benevolence to reach mortal Jews in exile, even the higher attribute of Chesed — the Bridegroom — must descend to the level of the Shechinah, Malchus, as it is found within the murky depths of this lowest world. This is what is alluded to by the Zohar’s parable: out of love for the Bride, who is here with the Jews in the vile “tannery” of worldly exile, even the Divine “Bridegroom” descends to this level. This condition of exile means, however, that the holiness invested within is unable to shine forth openly, but is hidden away within the world.

### WHY THERE ARENO DIVINE NAMES IN THE MEGILLAH?

The same can be said of the Megillah of Esther. Mystically, Esther herself represented Malchus of Atzilus (as concealed within the highest level of Beriah). The Megillah contains no Divine names, but this is not because it lacks the holiness they represent. On the contrary, these names represent the various higher attributes and, as just stated, these Sefiros have descended into the very depths of exile to be with the Shechinah, and are thus utterly imperceptible. The apparent lack of holiness in the Megillah is thus far from indicative of Divine disinterest but is in reality just the opposite and is itself a poignant expression of G-d’s love and willingness to descend to wherever the Bride is.

### THE MEGILLAH’S SUPERIORITY OVER OTHER PROPHETIC BOOKS

This is why it is said that the Megillah contains even greater G-dly light than the books of the other Prophets, and why it will never be nullified. Although the form of the Megillah is that of a mere story, that is just its “Purim mask.” In reality, the Divine light hidden within that form is of an order far superior to any Divine name. A name is merely descriptive; it is not the actual thing. But on Purim, the Jews’ total devotion and self-sacrificing Bittul brought down upon them a

corresponding response from G-d’s actual Self, the Essence of the Blessed Ein Sof. Reading the Megillah, which Jews do twice every Purim (in the evening as Purim begins, and the following morning), is called *keriah* in Hebrew, which also means “calling”—through reading the Megillah, the revelation of this holy light is called forth.

### CHAPTER SUMMARY

The Zohar relates a parable concerning a bridegroom whose bride resided near a tannery (a vile-smelling place). Although he would not otherwise have gone there, he visited her there anyway out of love for his bride.

This symbolizes the mystical conditions prevailing in exile, when the Purim story took place.

It is taught, “[When the Jews] were exiled to Babylon, the Shechinah accompanied them.” This means that the Divine Presence (which is allegorically described as G-d’s “Bride”) descended from on high and went with us into the spiritually desolate world of exile (represented in the Zohar’s parable by the vile-smelling tannery).

As a general rule, G-dliness is transmitted to us through the various G-dly attributes only as they are first “packaged” within the attribute of Malchus, identified with the Divine Presence—the “Bride.” Thus, to reach us in exile, G-d’s lofty attributes, each associated with a particular Divine name (symbolized by the “Bridegroom” of the Zohar’s parable) must also descend into the “tannery,” for that is where the “Bride” is.

A consequence of this inconceivable descent is that the Divine names and the holiness they transmit are not openly manifest within the lowly condition of exile. That is the inner significance to the fact that there are no Divine names mentioned in the Megillah. This apparent lack of holiness in the Megillah is thus far from indicative of Divine “disinterest,” so to speak; just the opposite, it is itself a poignant expression of G-d’s love, His willingness to descend to wherever the Bride is.

This is why it is said that the Megillah contains even greater G-dly light than the books of the other Prophets, and why it will never be nullified. Although the form of the Megillah is that of a mere “story,” that is just its “Purim mask.” In reality, the Divine light hidden within that form is of an order far superior to any Divine name.

Reading the Megillah is called *keriah* in Hebrew, which also means “calling”—because by reading the Megillah, we call forth the revelation of this holy light.

75. This chapter, although included by the Tzemach Tzedek in our discourse as printed in *Torah Or*, is based on a separate discourse of the Alter Rebbe delivered on Purim 5565.

76. Jerusalem Talmud, Megillah 1:5

77. end of Bechukosai, 115b

78. i.e., Kelipas Nogah, a “neutral” state between good and evil—and even beyond

79. Megillah 29a. Bamidbar Rabbah 7:10. Sifri, Masei 35:34.

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Shlomo when he was in the army



A Chassid who revolutionized his life

“I went back to Eretz Yisroel every so often for brief visits and I would study, take a test and do projects, and then go on to my next mission. My studies were such that I was able to combine work and school.”

Shlomo loved the money he earned and his job. He was earning nice money for a man his age. He lived in fancy hotels and lived a lavish lifestyle. He made many friends, “but I was always alone.” He didn’t have real friends. It was all fleeting.

### THEY'RE SHOOTING!

Shlomo doesn't say much about his Security work because of security reasons. After I pressed him, he told me a few stories that illustrate what his job entailed:

“I was in Jordan for a while, guarding the embassy there. Security in an Arab country is completely different than in other countries. We knew that terrorists were swarming everywhere. Occasionally, they attacked, throwing Molotov cocktails at the embassy. We Security people were on high alert and worked from morning until night. No diplomatic movement was left to chance. The diplomats were escorted from their house until the embassy and back. Before leaving the house, we had to check out the area. Only after we gave the okay could they leave their house.

“One Monday, in September of 1997, as I did every morning, my friend and I got up early to open the embassy. Opening up the embassy included checking that everything was as it should be. We had nearly finished combing the place when we heard screams over our radios, ‘They’re shooting, they’re shooting at us near N.’s house!’

“We closed the embassy, jumped into the car, and raced over to the house while reporting to the

work. I was grateful for being given the opportunity to work at a job that I enjoyed and I felt a sense of mission in protecting Israeli embassies abroad. It's interesting that just at the time that my living

conditions were more complicated, I tried to preserve what for me were ‘red lines’ in my traditional observance. I only ate meat from kosher birds and animals though I didn’t think about kosher slaughter.



Working as a guard at the Tzemach Dovid school in Tzfas



members of the embassy. Some were told not to leave their house and others, those involved in Security, were told to come down to the scene of the attack.

“When we got there, we found two Security men dripping blood. They said that terrorists driving by had shot at them. Their car was full of holes and miraculously, only their feet were injured. The terrorists fled the scene of course, and we immediately began investigating the incident.

“After a few days of investigation a sad picture formed and I realized how great was the miracle that had happened to **me**. A Hamas cell had followed the Security men for a long time. They saw the routes we took and the official and undercover cars we used. In short, they knew everything about us. When they realized that Sunday, which isn’t a

work day, some of the diplomats and Security men don’t work, they decided to carry out the attack that day.

“Their plan was to attack the day before at the location where the attack took place, but the Security detail wasn’t there. They didn’t know that in the days preceding that Sunday, I had traveled with friends to Petra and I had rented a jeep which I used on Sunday to do my work. The terrorists had not recognized my vehicle because it had never been used in Security work before, and as a result, they postponed their attack for the next day, Monday!

“In reaction to this attack, the Mosad tried to rub out Halad Mishaal, the political head of Hamas, but failed. However, in my line of work, success is not measured in the help of the wounded and in the

investigation that takes place *after* an attack. Success is measured in preventing attacks!”

**Did you have successes like that?**

“When I was in Ecuador, one day I noticed a seemingly innocent couple that had parked their car opposite the Israeli embassy and began videotaping it. For a second I didn’t catch on but I soon realized what was going on and raced over to them. They saw me running and sped off. It was too late for them though because I had leaped into the car and forced the driver to stop. The police were called and the couple was handed over for interrogation.”

## REVOLUTION

One day, it was suddenly all over. It was on a flight back to Eretz Yisroel. During the flight, thoughts such as these disturbed Shlomo: I

am 28 and where am I? How much longer will I continue wandering the world, living constantly out of suitcases, without friends or a supportive family nearby?

At that moment of confusion and inner pain, an unpleasant incident took place at the airport and when they discovered that he was carrying a diplomatic passport, someone made sure to report this to the right people. He was called to his superiors who yelled at him for “unseemly behavior for a Security agent working on behalf of Israel.”

This was the straw that broke the camel’s back. “I saw that everything I had done until that day didn’t matter when I had a temporary fall. Even my tough job of serving as a human barrier between terrorist bullets and Israeli diplomats didn’t help me when I made a mistake. It just added to my wondering about who I am and where was I heading. I resigned from my job.”

Adjusting to civilian life wasn’t easy but Shlomo was soon accepted to the marketing department of the Sano Company and he got back into the swing of living the good life. However, this didn’t assuage his longing for something else, for meaning.

“Along with other friends who had traveled the world, I began to consider a life of Judaism. We thought about how to study Judaism in a serious way and we didn’t know how. We had all grown up in Dimona and came from traditional homes. We had tasted of this world of materialistic pleasures and were ready for spirituality.

“One day I ended up at a four day Arachim seminar. It was during vacation from my one-month Reserve duty. At the end of the seminar, I decided with some friends that from then on we would not desecrate the Shabbos. This was a

very hard commitment to stick to but we resolved to meet the challenge, come what may!

“I went back to the Reserves at a base near Beit Lechem. The security situation at the time was terrible. We walked bent over in trenches from the mess hall to the living quarters so they wouldn’t shoot at us. How ironic it was to know we were so close to Yerushalayim but under such dismal conditions.

“Then came my first test in

***I realized how great was the miracle that had happened to me. A Hamas cell had followed the Security men for a long time. They saw the routes we took and the official and undercover cars we used. In short, they knew everything about us...***

Shabbos observance. It was an off Shabbos and I went to Yerushalayim, where I got into my car to head to Rechovot, where my parents lived (they had moved). In the middle of the trip, my car stopped and I couldn’t get it to move. There wasn’t much time until Shabbos. The towing company promised they would come within an hour and a half, but I knew that it would be Shabbos by then.

“Now I was really stuck. Should I wait for the tow truck and then travel home on Shabbos or stick to my resolution to keep Shabbos and stay with a friend in Yerushalayim. It wasn’t easy to decide because after being in the Reserves in a dangerous situation, I wanted to feel close and protected with my family, but I knew that I would almost definitely end up desecrating the Shabbos.

“After a few minutes I called my friend and told him that I would spend Shabbos with him. At that moment, I felt a tremendous sense of relief for having withstood the test. I felt that I had gotten a sign from Heaven when the tow truck showed up within minutes and instead of towing the car, he was able to fix the problem within two minutes. I was able to get home before Shabbos began while having withstood the test.

“That Shabbos I went to shul with my father. I davened and kept Shabbos as much as I knew at that time.”

### **DEEP STUDY OF THE TOPICS OF “REBBE” AND “MOSHIACH”**

“When I finished with the Reserves, my friends from Dimona and I began looking for lectures on Judaism. A friend told me that there was an interesting lecture on *Tanya* at the Chabad center on Dizengoff. I went to the shiur and loved it. I even left my phone number with the shliach, Rabbi Dovid Aziza.

“From then on, each time there was a shiur, he called and invited me to come. After four shiurim, he didn’t have to call me anymore. I enjoyed the classes and regularly attended the evening shiurim for half a year.

“In addition to the shiurim I continued to take on more mitzvos. I davened, kept kosher, and stopped

living wildly. I eventually started wearing a kippa and tzitzis. When my boss at Sano warned me that my tzitzis would prevent me from doing my job well I switched from a knitted kippa to a big, black one and proved to them all that my work as a senior agent didn't deteriorate because of what I wore.

"One of the things I found very hard to accept was the fact that the Rebbe is Moshiach. Although I attended the *Tanya* shiur and other shiurim, I didn't agree with the way of thinking about Moshiach that was prevalent at the Chabad house. After every t'filla, they danced and sang 'Yechi,' but I didn't understand why they called the Rebbe Moshiach.

"At a certain point I even thought to myself that they should all be committed, as soon as possible! They knew how to teach but what they thought was just not realistic or normal!

"Then I was reminded of my studies at college when one of the lecturers would present an idea to the students and ask them to discuss it. He guided us in the process, because to instantly say that an idea is wrong takes no great intellect. The students usually wanted a few hours to examine an idea in depth before deciding.

"I used this approach and began to research the topic in depth, looking into various s'farim. Rabbi Chaim Sasson's *Ata Yodaati* was a big help. I studied it, along with all the sources he quotes. When I finished learning the topic, I began to understand, a bit, about what is the Nasi HaDor, and what is the "neshama klalis" and "Moshiach of the generation." I still wasn't at peace with the idea that the Rebbe is Moshiach.

"After half a year of study at the Chabad house, I accepted a senior position at Sano as director of sales

in the southern district. It was a great job, but I quickly realized that the more advanced a salesman is, the better he has to be at lying in order to sell his product. I wasn't willing to do this, so I told Rabbi Aziza that I was leaving the job I had just taken a few days earlier. He was opposed to my quitting. After writing to the Rebbe, I went to learn at the Chabad

yeshiva in Katamon in Yerushalayim.

"When I told my family that I had given up the terrific new job, they were stunned. My father said how disappointed he was and my mother was also upset. But I calmed them down and said it was only for a short time and that I would go back to work soon."

## CHABAD T'FILLIN – A GIFT FROM HEAVEN

At the time I was learning in Tzfas, I made the trip to 770. The day I arrived I felt that I could no longer continue putting on the t'fillin I had gotten at my bar mitzva. They were small and definitely not mehударos, and since I had bought them they were never checked, in addition to the fact that they were not according to Chabad custom.

I wrote to the Rebbe that I wanted new t'fillin and put the letter into a volume of *Igros Kodesh*. When I opened it, I saw three letters on the two pages that were each about hiddurim in t'fillin!

That same day I borrowed Chabad t'fillin from a friend and davened my first Shacharis in 770 with them. I also began thinking seriously about how to get a pair of mehudar Chabad t'fillin when I couldn't afford them. I tried to get help from some Lubavitchers in Crown Heights but didn't get too far.

One evening I met a dynamic fellow named Moni Bistritzky. When he heard what I wanted he committed to getting me the t'fillin. "And do you have Rabbeinu Tam t'fillin?" he asked. I hadn't even dreamed of getting Rabbeinu Tam t'fillin.

I told him that if I had a pair of Chabad Rabbeinu Tam t'fillin I would be ecstatic. He gave me his phone number and asked me to call him the next day. I couldn't wait – I hugged and kissed him with tears in my eyes.

The next morning I called him. "Go to Sofer X and he will give you t'fillin mehударos," he said. Within a short time, I was holding beautiful Rashi and Rabbeinu Tam t'fillin in the Alter Rebbe's k'sav. The sofer told me that the two pairs cost \$2000!

A few days later, I ordered t'fillin bags with the words, "Gemach M. Bistritzky" on it. Whenever someone asks me about this gemach I tell them about a goodhearted Chassid who bought these beautiful t'fillin for me.







In Reserves with his weapon – a pushka



Mivtza Geula initiated by Shlomo



Shlomo and his father

## AT CHABAD YESHIVOS

“After learning for a while in Katamon, Rabbi Aziza started a yeshiva in the Chabad house on Dizengoff Street, and I went back there. A group of guys formed at the yeshiva, men who had been in elite units, all with good heads on their shoulders with the motivation to work hard. We learned Nigleh and Chassidus together, went on Mivtza T’fillin together, but I still felt that I didn’t belong.

“I decided to stay with Chabad after some friends left the Chabad house. They had decided they couldn’t stand the different characters that frequented the Chabad house. They wanted to learn in peace and quiet without disturbances by ‘riffraff.’

“I, who had protected the lives of other Jews, knew that it wasn’t right

to make social distinctions. It was important to me to sit with the others, of all levels, around one table. I worked for seven years, with mesirus nefesh, to protect other Jews, and felt how in Chabad there is mesirus nefesh for every Jew, and it’s all about the other guy, without qualifications. These insights convinced me that I had come to the right place.

“This beautiful period of learning was broken by Operation Defensive Shield in April 2002. I was drafted into a special mobile unit that defended Netzarim. With great miracles, we managed to wipe out terrorist cells and our unit received a citation.

“After Reserves I continued learning, this time in the yeshiva in Tzfas. Rabbi Yaron Ne’eman’s shiurim were fascinating. I traveled

to 770 for the first time.”

## CHESED BUILDS THE WORLD

A chain of events that joined together to form one big hashgacha pratis led to Shlomo’s marrying his wife Ayelet. She had become frum through Chabad in Tzfas.

After a year in the Tzemach Tzedek Kollel in Tzfas, Shlomo looked for a job. He accepted a position as a security guard at a school.

**Some will say that going from guarding an embassy abroad to guarding a school is a big drop in status.**

“First of all, I thought of what I can do to grow spiritually and not about attaining status. Second of all, protecting Jewish children is not just any old job. And I established a rapport with the kids. This was the Tzemach Dovid school in Tzfas. During recess, the children would gather around me and I saw that I could be a good influence on them.

“I would tell them a Chassidische story once in a while. To a boy who said he didn’t want to daven, I would tell a story about t’filla. When the children realized I was a Lubavitcher, they asked me lots of questions about the Rebbe. Not only did I answer them, I gave out papers with the 12 P’sukim and Moshiach flags.

“The principal said that although they love having me there in the yard, it was not a Chabad school and I couldn’t continue doing this. So I sadly went back to being a guard and only said hi to the kids.

“I felt that I could contribute much more and came up with a great idea which I suggested to the principal. I said she should run an Olam Chesed Yibaneh contest under the slogan, ‘Tzemach Dovid (the name of the school) Mavie L’Gilui

Tzemach Dovid' (brings about the revelation of Moshiach). The contest would entail doing many acts of chesed and the children would get prizes.

"The principal loved the idea and said she would do all she could to ensure its success, and the contest was underway. Every day I gave out pieces of paper on which the children wrote the good deeds they had done that day. The notes and flyers were decorated with slogans that had to do with Geula, so at least they were talking about Geula and Moshiach even without names.

"Every morning the children came back to school with a note which said what they had done in the afternoon and evening hours. The note was put into a special box and every ten days the children got raffle tickets and won prizes. I told the children that at the end of the contest there would be a raffle for expensive prizes and all the children got busy for the big mitvza to bring the Geula and the hisgalus of Melech HaMoshiach.

"The contest was the talk of the day and thousands of acts of chesed were done thanks to it. So in addition to my work as a guard, I ran the contest that was more successful than we ever dreamed it would be. The letters that I wrote to the children and the parents were signed, 'Shlomo HaShomer.'

"I wrote to the Rebbe about it and opened the *Igros Kodesh* to volume 17, p. 163 to a letter written to Camp Gan Israel:

**Surely, they will continue their efforts in this with the energy suited to the enormity of the matter. And our Sages promise that if you toil you will find, especially in a matter like the aforementioned. Namely, to introduce Jewish children, about each one of whom it says, you are children to Hashem your G-d, into an atmosphere of living in the spirit of our Torah, the Torah of life, for a number of weeks. Surely, the impact will be apparent in the months and years to follow, and matters of goodness and holiness make fruits and fruits of fruits... Fortunate is each person who takes part in leading this work, and I await good news in all the abovementioned and that the camp continues to grow both in quantity and quality until it becomes very great.**

"The answer, with all the special brachos, was photocopied and hung in the secretaries' office. It amazed all the staff members.

"At the end of the contest which took over a month, I held a Yom Moshiach U'Geula with the principal. Rabbi Refael Malka and musician Nissim Ben Shimon prepared a special program and the schoolyard was beautifully decorated with the exhibit made for the graduation of the sixth grade: a beautiful drawing of the Beis HaMikdash. During the program great prizes were raffled off and certificates were given out which said, 'Es Tzemach Dovid Avdecha M'heira Satzmiach' on top.

"At the end of the celebration I sat with the yeshiva's educational

## FLAMES FROM BELOW

Wherever I went, I took lots of pictures. I visited 28 countries on five continents and everything was recorded on film. A short time after going to the yeshiva in Tzfas, my mashpia Rabbi Yaron Ne'eman suggested that I cut myself off from my past.

So one day I went to an abandoned factory, put my pictures, negatives, and letters from those years in a big pile, and set it on fire.

Only a long time later did I discover that my mother knew what I planned on doing and she kept a few pictures as a memento. Some were used in this article.

staff to sum up the school year. The principal surprised me with two requests. Since I was leaving the city, she wanted me to find a Lubavitcher guard to replace me. She also asked that the talmidim of the yeshiva in Tzfas visit the school throughout the year!"

## GOING HOME

"In Elul my wife and daughter and I moved to Dimona. I returned home. I'm involved in spreading Judaism and helping the local Chabad house which is run by Rabbi Yisroel Gliss. I feel that there is much more that can be done to hasten the hisgalus of the Rebbe MH"M."

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# 'THE PARTIES MUST DECLARE THAT THEY WILL NOT JOIN A GOVERNMENT THAT WILL GIVE LAND TO THE ENEMY'

INTERVIEW WITH RABBI YAAKOV YOSEF BY SHAI GEFEN

*Due to the deteriorating political situation and the impending elections, Rabbi Yaakov Yosef, one of the leaders of the Pikuach Nefesh Committee and rav of the Givat Moshe neighborhood in Yerushalayim, calls upon all parties to declare that they will not join a government that will give away land, so that we prevent further tragedies such as the Disengagement Plan. \* An exclusive interview with Rabbi Yosef about the current situation and how to prevent further withdrawals.*

**You were one of the rabbanim who opposed the Expulsion Plan. Today we see where that plan got us: the rise of Hamas, Kassams in Ashkelon...**

Hashem scattered the Jewish people among the seventy nations. We are one lamb among seventy wolves, but the Shepherd is great. The One Who watched over us for 3000 years, will watch us for all eternity. Although in the natural order of things the situation is very bad, close to hopeless, still every Jew must pray and take action, and we hope that Hashem will send us good emissaries who will lead us properly.

It says that when Hashem is

angry with us He acts as a shepherd who is angry with his flock. He doesn't take a stick and beat them; he places a blind goat at the head of the flock and he falls first and the rest follow. So too, when the Jewish people do not do G-d's will, the leaders are like the blind and they cause harm to us all.

We hope that this month will be transformed from sorrow to simcha. The mazal of the month brings about goodness for all the Jewish people. May we hear good tidings regarding our leadership so that all the terrible things we've experienced, disappear.

**Do you connect the rise of Hamas to power with the expulsion and**

**concessions?**

It was obvious that when you give them a finger, they ask for a hand. We said that concessions will lead to even bigger tragedies and not to calm in the region. On the one hand, it's good that Hamas rose to power since they openly proclaim their intentions and their ideology. (Sighing deeply): Woe to us that we've reached this point.

**How do you explain the fact that the very same party that gave us the Disengagement Plan is likely to gain a majority of the votes?**

I'm not fazed by the polls. 22 years ago, I was a candidate for the Knesset from the Shas party that was running for the first time in the Knesset. In the polls, we didn't even pass the required minimum, but after the elections we got four seats. So I don't despair. Despite the polls I still believe the situation will change for the better, although we don't hold out big hopes for the Knesset. We hope that our nation will get good leadership that will hasten the Geula.

**It's no secret that after the Disengagement Plan, which you opposed, something happened to Am Yisroel. A large number of the nationalist, religious, and even chareidi parties participated, in some form or another, in advancing the Disengagement.**

The Disengagement Plan is a blot on the history of the Jewish people.

It will be very difficult to rectify the severe damage it caused.

As far as their participation, the Tashbatz, the Beis Yosef, and the Rema in siman 388 wrote as p'sak halacha: If you send someone as your emissary who transgressed a prohibition three times, then the law of "there is an emissary to do a sin" applies. There is usually no such thing as an emissary to do a sin but when a person has failed three times, there is a chazaka (halachic certainty) that he will do it again. Therefore, even the one who sent him is culpable.

If tomorrow there would be a vote about whether to give Abu Dis to the Arabs, and we already have a government resolution from Barak's time about this, then obviously the same parties that failed previously will fail again.

We can't say, "Well, they are religious Jews who wear a kippa." We have to examine their past history to know what they are likely to do.

**Is that why the rabbanim of Pikuach Nefesh decided to ask the heads of the parties to declare their intentions regarding future cooperation with a government that announces it will give away land?**

That's right. We need to know *now* what the parties that claim that they run in the name of Torah and Eretz Yisroel intend to do. We want to know whether they will follow halacha. We don't want surprises this time around like the last time when we voted for a certain party on the basis of their platform and got something else entirely.

We really want a party whose party leaders are interested in standing up for Torah and Eretz Yisroel, who will say so explicitly and emphasize that they will not concede anything when it comes to halacha; that they will not cooperate with any government that does things against halacha.

I am not a political person. Far from it. I am only interested in halacha. Therefore, all the excuses and explanations won't help. Supporting a party that does not openly declare its intentions cannot be voted for.

**Has there been a response to this request of the rabbanei Pikuach Nefesh?**

The fact that the parties aren't rushing to declare their intentions tells us how far they're willing to try and keep their options open. Whoever votes for these parties is a full collaborator with whatever happens. These are not my words but an explicit p'sak halacha in



**Rabbi Yaakov Yosef**

*Shulchan Aruch* and nobody can argue with it.

If a Kassam kills a Jew, Heaven forbid, then those who voted for the parties, some of whom said they would cooperate with governments that continue to give away land, is a full partner to the act of murder! Because there is an emissary to do a sin when it comes to human life and nobody can say, "Our hands did not shed this blood."

The leader of Kadima is saying that his government will expel Jews from Yehuda and Shomron. It's

shocking to think that anybody would support a government like this, after we all saw where all those withdrawals got us.

**What do you say about those who cooperated with the Disengagement Plan?**

Whoever cooperated with it will pay the price. I won't get into this but there are already those whose punishment is "eating of their fruits in this world." I truly hope that this will serve as a warning to all parties and their leaders not to tamper with Eretz Yisroel.

**During the period of the Disengagement, you initiated a din Torah against the chareidi party that entered the Coalition and you tried to prevent it from entering.**

Sadly, it's religious Jews who did such severe things. That was a terrible affront to the Council of Torah Sages of the party. Entering the Coalition brought about the destruction of settlements and the destruction and burning of shuls and we thought that this should be clarified immediately in a din Torah in order to stop the process that askanim brought against g'dolei Yisroel.

I tried to stop it by asking them to sit down and talk through the issues. They did not want to come to beis din. I'm sorry to say it but in this we had no *siyata d'Shmaya* (help from Heaven).

I can say unequivocally that the opinion of most of the g'dolei Yisroel was against entering the government and we wanted to prove this, black on white, before a beis din, but they did not allow us to prove it.

**What do you think should be a G-d-fearing Jew's main concern in the elections?**

First and foremost: to refrain from that which is prohibited; to warn people not to vote for those who are not religious because then

it's an issue of "do not place a stumbling block before the blind," and it makes no difference which party it is. Furthermore, even those who wear a kippa don't always do the right thing and there are serious questions about them too.

Each person must look to see which parties supported giving away land or collaborated in endangering Jewish lives by being part of the Coalition. Whoever collaborated, in one form or another, cannot get our support. According to halacha, we assume that he will collaborate again, as I mentioned earlier.

**Many say that there is nobody to vote for and so you have to vote for the party that is *ha'ra b'miuto* (the lesser evil).**

We try to do things right and don't look for the best of the bad. In Torah, there is no such thing as *ha'ra b'miuto*. It sometimes happens that someone who is considered "ra b'miuto" turns into an utterly wicked person, worse than other parties. So we must make sure to **do good**, and I really don't want to say names of parties. Let each person ask his rabbi.

**What about concerns over reaching the required minimum votes regarding those parties that we do trust, do we need to be wary?**

I have yet to see in *Shulchan Aruch* a problem with required minimum votes...

As I mentioned earlier, whoever is nervous about this wouldn't have voted for Shas the first time it ran, when we got four seats against all the

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prognostications. There are always questions about something new.

In general, voting often serves as a means of protest. There are many G-d-fearing Jews, who are mekuravim of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, who did not vote, like Rabbi Ben-Tzion Abba Shaul z"l. Just this week I heard that Chacham Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu is considering not voting in the elections. Rabbi Yehuda Tzadka z"l always said not to vote, "remain passive and do not take action," like the p'sak of the Tashbatz.

Obviously, we do otherwise and we do vote as the Rebbe asked, but these days – and it must be said clearly – it's hard to say that you can vote, especially when all the parties that are supposed to be doing their jobs, aren't!

**As you said, the situation is only deteriorating.**

We do not despair. As I always say, this is the sign that we have gotten to the final station and the Geula is coming. Today we see that everything the Rebbe said is happening. When the Rebbe spoke, Kassams weren't falling on Ashkelon and there was only **talk** of giving away land. Today we see they are selling us a bowl of lentils.

The situation is dire, but within the darkness, we see the light. I don't give up. Hashem's salvation is like the blink of an eye; all the more so in this month.

The thousands who came with Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu to Slichos and the prayers of the multitudes are always heard. Just as Hashem saved us from the many Hamans of the past, he will save us now too, while we are still in the month of Adar, and Am Yisroel will witness great wonders.

**What needs strengthening today?**

We need to increase and strengthen Torah. Torah saves us from many tribulations and much suffering. A little light dispels much darkness. Every Jew should commit to adding a few minutes to his Torah study and with Hashem's help, didan natzach (our side will win).

"The Jews had ora (light) – this is Torah." Through Torah we will transform everything to the good and merit to see the complete Redemption this month, through Moshiach Tzidkeinu.

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# THE LAWS OF SECLUSION

BOOK REVIEW BY CHANA SHLOUSH

**TITLE: THE LAWS OF YICHUD: PERMISSIBILITY AND PROHIBITION REGARDING THE SECLUSION OF A MAN AND WOMAN**

**AUTHOR: RABBI NISSAN DOVID DUBOV**

**PUBLISHER: SICHOS IN ENGLISH**

“There is nothing in the Torah that is as difficult for the majority of people to avoid as *Arayos* and forbidden relationships. The Sages said that when *Klal Yisroel* was commanded with the prohibition of *Arayos*, they cried and accepted the *mitzvah* with complaints and with tears, as it states: ‘crying for the families’ – meaning, over family matters. And the Sages have said, ‘The soul of man craves theft and *Arayos*.’ One does not find a community in any generation in which there are not those who breach the laws of *Arayos* and forbidden relationships. Furthermore, the Sages have said, ‘The majority are guilty of theft, the minority of *Arayos*, and all are guilty of *Avak Lashon Hara*.’ Therefore, it is fitting for a person to subdue his inclination in this matter and to train oneself to conduct oneself with utmost purity and pure mind and correct state of mind in order to save oneself from them. **And he should be careful about Yichud, for it is the greatest cause.**”

— Rambam, *Hilchos Isurei Bia*, Ch. 22:18

The *halachos* of Yichud are on my top ten list of *mitzvos* that every new Baal T’shuva should learn within a reasonably short time after becoming Torah observant but usually doesn’t. There may also be a few yeshiva-

educated folks, as well, who up until now have had only a fuzzy knowledge of these laws.

No longer. Rabbi N.D. Dubov, a London-based scholar who has authored a number of well-received works of *halacha* and *hashkafa* in English, has combed the sources for the rulings on Yichud which are widely scattered throughout *Shas* and *Poskim*, including the *Acharonim*. He has translated these laws into English and organized them in a format which makes them easily accessible to the layman. A boon to the scholar and all the rest of us are the copious footnotes which both lend perspective and give practical advice for resolving problems which can arise in any – yes, any – of our lives.

How does a teenage babysitter avoid Yichud with the children’s father who returns home before the mother? Does a man who visits a female doctor need to take precautions to prevent Yichud with her? What if a Jewish businessman and a secretary both show up for work early one morning before the other employees arrive, or both need to work late? Why is it that some religious women are almost never seen sharing a laugh with a man outside of their close family circle? Rabbi Dubov deals with topics ranging from houseguests and *Au Pairs* to subways and taxis, from cleaning ladies and *Tz’daka* collectors to business relationships and the Internet. After reading this book, no doubt many parents and teachers will make the chapter on babysitting required study for every teenage girl in their family or class at

school.

The material which I believe will pique the interest of many **Jewish Press** readers is the potentially explosive information relating to dating, *Shidduchim* and mixed socializing after marriage. Given the ongoing dialogue in these pages regarding the *Shidduch* crisis and *Shalom Bayis*, it may be fascinating, controversial and perhaps an opinion-bending experience for the reader to review his/her opinions on dating and socializing in light of how our Sages perceive the topics of Yichud and *Arayos*. For example, what I found to be one of the most sobering pieces of information in the book relates to the custom among the pious to fast *Bahab*, the Monday, Thursday and Monday following each of the three Festivals. The purpose of fasting *Bahab* is to atone for the sins of *Arayos* committed in the community during the holiday when people were relaxed and happy, had leisure time on their hands, and engaged in extra mingling and socializing after *shiuirim* in the synagogue.

This book grew out of *halacha* classes the author taught to his female high school students. Like other halachic works, it is best studied in bite-sized pieces so that one does not acquire a spiritual stomachache from trying to absorb too much life-changing information at once. Another good idea is to consult with one’s own personal rabbi or *mashpia* (spiritual adviser) in order to determine when and how to, or not to, personally apply the *dinim*.