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The international weekly facilitating the coming of Mashiach  
**BEIS MOSHIACH**

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# BEYOND THE DESERT

LIKKUTEI SICHOS VOL. 33, PG. 85-94  
TRANSLATED BY BORUCH MERKUR



[Continued from last week]

9. Now, the Rambam, in discussing the one who “acts in accordance with the truth [simply] because it is the truth,” concludes, “and in the end, good fortune will come as a result of it.” At first glance, how is this conclusion relevant here? We are speaking about a sage of the likes who is not at all concerned with the good fortune he will attain from his service!

We may answer that this is understood in light of the precise wording of the Rambam, “in the end, good fortune will come **as a result of it**” (*big'lala*) [FN 63: In several versions the text reads, “*bich'lala*” – “included in it.” (See Rambam *Seifer HaMada* *ibid.*)], meaning that when one’s service is in a manner whereby he “acts in accordance with the truth [simply] because it is the truth,” then the **good fortune** that results is loftier than that of the typical good fortune of the World to Come [being a “result of” or being “included in” this loftier approach to serving G-d]. Conversely, also with respect to his soul’s **connection and cleaving to G-d**, he attains a higher degree of perfection with this [approach] than one whose Torah study and fulfillment of Mitzvos is in a manner that he has the objective of connecting and cleaving to G-d.

Accordingly we can elucidate the continuation of the words of Yehoshua and Kaleiv, who said (prior to this [14:7]), “the land is **exceedingly good**” (*tova ha'aretz m'od m'od*). [FN 68: See *Likkutei Torah* on our Torah portion 37a, 38c; *Likkutei Sichos* Vol. 4 Parshas Shlach; as well as several other places.] [This was said] notwithstanding the fact that through the approach of serving G-d in the desert – Torah study in a manner that they were free to devote themselves to the

pursuit of wisdom – they merit “to see the **goodness** of G-d in the **land** of life” [T'hilim 27:13], a reference to the World to Come, which is “**goodness** that is **exceedingly** great, having no comparison among the good things of this world” [Rambam Laws of Repentance 8:6]. Indeed, “this **goodness is great** beyond one’s ability to fathom, having no comparison or likeness. It is what Dovid said, “How great is **Your goodness** which you have hidden away for those who fear You, and etc.” (as Rambam writes in Laws of Repentance [*ibid.*]).

[Yehoshua and Kaleiv were able to see beyond the lofty service of the desert knowing that] through entering into the

---

*There is a unique  
quality of goodness  
that comes  
specifically as a result  
of this lofty service.*

---

Land of Israel and the fulfillment of the Mitzvos there – that is, the manner of service of “If G-d is desirous of us,” “acting in accordance with the truth [simply] because it is the truth” – they would merit goodness that is even greater. Namely, goodness that is not only “*m'od*” (extreme) one time (signifying a goodness that is so great that it is beyond the capacity of man to accommodate in this world; the goodness of the World to Come) –

which is a result of the service of G-d at the level of “*m'od*,” “a love that is overwhelming, **extremely** powerful, to the extent that his soul is bound in love of G-d and he is constantly engrossed in it” – but “*m'od m'od*,” the word being repeated. As Rambam writes, “he acts in accordance with the truth [simply] because it is the truth and in the end, good fortune will come **as a result of it**,” indicating that there is a [unique quality of] goodness that comes specifically as a result of this lofty service, [a service of G-d that is so great] that even when compared to “a love that is overwhelming, **extremely** powerful,” it is at the level of “*m'od*” (extreme), for this refers to the utter nullification of the person to G-d.

[To be continued be”H]

# TANYA: WHERE TO START FROM?

RABBI YEHESKEL LEBOVIC

## NOT EDITING IS NO COINCIDENCE

It is well known that the *Tanya* is the *Torah Sh'Bichsav* (Written Torah) of *Chassidus Chabad*, in which every letter is “counted” and exact. According to tradition, the *Alter Rebbe* deliberated several weeks even over whether to include a certain *Vav* in the *Tanya* text.

It is therefore noteworthy that the *Alter Rebbe* did not edit the text of the introduction to *Shaar HaYichud*, the 2nd section of *Tanya*, where he states three times: (pgs. 150-151) “*as will be explained in its place (further on)*” regarding topics explained *earlier* (in Chap. 46 etc.. of the 1<sup>st</sup> section). By Chassidic tradition, it is explained that the *Alter Rebbe* initially intended to begin *Tanya* with *Shaar HaYichud*. The *Rebbe* notes (*Sicha of VaYeishev 5744*) that in view of the *Alter Rebbe* not editing, surely not an oversight, these three phrases to read “*as has been explained,*” it can be deduced that he left room for the original sequence to be in place. (If only *one* phrase would have been in question, it would have been possible to invoke a printer’s oversight, as in Hebrew the only difference between the past or future expression lies in only one letter, whether it is a *Yud* or a *Nun*.): “The sequence in man’s service to *Hashem* is that, in order to reach love and fear of *Hashem* – the basic topic of the first

section – he first has to have a pure faith and belief in G-d’s Unity – the main topic of the second section.”

In light of this, it is striking that the *Alter Rebbe* opted, in his final decision, to change a sequence which makes perfect sense!

In some places, it is mentioned that it was due to a *taam kamus* (a “hidden reason”), while elsewhere the *Rebbe* connects this question of sequence to the various order of the *S’firos*.

## SENSING VS. UNDERSTANDING

Attempting to probe into what the *taam kamus* might be about, one might possibly connect this discussion to that which the *Tzemach Tzedek* explains in *Seifer HaChakira* chap. 8 (p. 14), regarding the various proofs advanced by Jewish philosophers for the existence of the Creator, some of which very intellectually convincing. However, he notes that in many *Maamarim*, the *Alter Rebbe* emphasizes the proof that in the same way that we sense that we possess a vivifying soul, so does the great “body,” this universe of ours, also possess a vivifying G-dly Spirit that gives it life.

Though intellectually less compelling of a proof than the other classical proofs adduced towards this end (for it presupposes the soul existing as an entity independent of the

body and existing after the death of the body), the *Alter Rebbe* nonetheless stresses this proof. It is because we *sense* its conclusion more concretely than the proofs involving dry philosophical deductive reasoning. These later may convince our intellect but possibly not touch our inner selves deeply enough. When, however, we observe the Universe as a gigantic body of disparate live parts in motion, we *sense and feel* the presence and existence of a life-giving, coordinating Entity.

This indeed seems to correspond to the highly-developed methodology of the *Alter Rebbe* in *Chassidus Chabad*, i.e., to first get in touch with one’s own spiritual make-up, which is more tangibly and palpably accessible. And only after that, to extrapolate from this spiritual self-knowledge onto one’s source within the G-dly realm. This is based on the *pasuk* (*Iyov 19:26*): “from my own flesh do I perceive G-d.” As opposed to *Kabbala*, which draws parallels between the Sefirotic states of union and inclusion and the human types of (sexual) unions – (widely open to misinterpretation by the masses) – *Chassidus Chabad* is replete with examples of the human soul condition and its existential experiences, readily acknowledged and felt within oneself. And only after having accessed this spiritual self-knowledge do we attempt to project

somewhat towards a better understanding of the on goings within the heavenly spheres.

### FROM SENSING TO UNDERSTANDING ...A BIT

In effect, then, what the Alter Rebbe expounds in the first section of *Tanya* is how to get in touch with our own soul and spirituality.

It is thus only after having offered extensive probing into the ins and outs of the spiritual self that the Alter Rebbe then proceeds with the second section, in which he deals with topics which thoroughly baffle the human mind and shake heretofore firmly-held views at their foundations.

We become exposed to a literal new world view, in which what is seen by the naked eye is in ultimate reality not what it seems to be. We get exposed not only to the G-dly energy inherent in everything, but also to G-d's infinite transcendence. After having come to grips (in the first section) with our own spiritual makeup, reaching a point at which we sense and have become attuned to it, it becomes more accessible to make the leap of faith and accept, not only the Imminent aspects of G-d which are accessible to the philosophical mind and closer to our gut feeling, but also the thoroughly transcendent aspects of G-d – in spite of our not possessing within ourselves any type of remotely similar transcendence which might serve as a stepping stone from which to extrapolate G-d's transcendence.

In a few sweeping strokes, the Alter

Rebbe covers all these articles of faith: G-d's Essence is unscrutinable; His Attributes (term used by the philosophers and interchangeably – see *Toras HaOleh* of the *Ramo* Gate 3, chap. 4 – referred to by the kabbalists as His *S'firos*) don't detract one iota from His Unity, as they are thoroughly united within His Essence; in the same way

*We become exposed to a literal new world view, in which what is seen by the naked eye is in ultimate reality not what it seems to be. We get exposed not only to the G-dly energy inherent in everything, but also to G-d's infinite transcendence.*

that the human mind can't possibly grasp the G-dly power to create ex nihilo, so too it can't grasp these elements of the G-dly Unity.

And paradoxically, the *Alter Rebbe* performs his philosophical tour de force: he leads our limited mind in a "logical" approach to the

unscrutinable, helping us to somewhat fathom that which is really not understandable. But he does that after having anchored our hearts in relating to and sensing our own spirituality. (It is true that he covers some of the topics of G-dly transcendence in chapters 20-22 of the first section, but it only in the second section that he thoroughly expands on them.)

### DIFFERENT WIRING ...SAME PATH

Nonetheless, the Alter Rebbe did not edit the text of the introduction to read "as has been explained," to serve as a hint that for some it might be preferable to start with the second section. Some individuals seem to be wired in a way that they are influenced more readily through exposure to the topics of the second section.

Anyone teaching *Tanya* in a Chabad House or elsewhere has indeed had this quandary: "where should I start from? What sequence should I follow?" With this lack of editing, the Alter Rebbe made room for the instructor to assess the group (s)he is teaching and accordingly opt to start with the first or second section.

The main thing is that, in keeping with the mandate of spreading the wellsprings of Chassidus, *Yafutzu Mayonosecha Chutza*, and the Rebbe's worldwide campaign of printing the *Tanya* in thousands of communities, we should continue to learn and teach *Tanya* to everyone and thereby accelerate *Kah Asi Mar*, speedily in our days.

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# 'THE MASHPIA'

BY SHNEUR ZALMAN LEVIN

*This past Iyar marked thirty years since the passing of "The Mashpia," Rav Shlomo Chaim Kesselman a"h, who educated generations of mashpiim, rabbanim, shluchim, and Chassidim. This was due to his rare ability to influence and thanks to his unusual devotion to every talmid. \* We spoke with one of his close talmidim, an outstanding mashpia in his own right, Rabbi Moshe Naparstek, mashgiach and mashpia in Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in Kfar Chabad, who reminisced about his mashpia.*

Rabbi Moshe Naparstek relates:

R' Shlomo Chaim was a multi-faceted personality but above all else, he was outstanding as a mashpia. If you wanted to understand what a mashpia is, as Toras HaChassidus sees it, R' Shlomo Chaim epitomized the role. The ultimate mashpia, the one who could be referred to as "The Mashpia," was R' Shlomo Chaim.

### **How did you see this?**

Everything that Chassidus says about a mashpia could be seen in him. I am not talking about his spiritual level but his level as a mashpia. In maamarim, there are a number of basic ideas about a mashpia's personality, with the foremost quality being his total devotion to the mekabel. At first glance, the concept of devotion

seems to apply more to the mekabel, for he needs to be devoted to his mashpia. However, the truth is, it's just the opposite. A mashpia must be, first and foremost devoted to the mekabel.

### **Can you give an example of this in R' Shlomo Chaim?**

He would often say: How can you tell whether someone is into something? If he's a carpenter, for example, when he walks in the street he is the first to notice an advertisement about his profession. Dozens, even hundreds of people could walk by who wouldn't notice it, but he would notice it since that is his profession. He cares about it.

This is where the mashpia R' Shlomo Chaim stood out. He was always looking out for his talmidim,

whether they were new or old talmidim. He had the eyes of a mashpia. A hundred boys or more could be sitting in the zal and he would pick out the one boy who needed chizuk and another boy who needed to be more involved. He would spot another bachur regarding whom he realized, after he analyzed the inner workings of his soul, that it was possible to bring him to a certain level of Chassidishkait, for example, to be more of a p'nimi. He had the eyes of a mashpia and could diagnose precisely what was needed.

Often, people thought he had ruach ha'kodesh, saying: How did he know that about that talmid? But the truth is that R' Shlomo Chaim simply had a discerning eye and each talmid was precious to him.

### **How did he handle those talmidim who needed that extra touch?**

He devoted a tremendous amount of time to private conversations with talmidim. He considered this tremendously important until his final day.

When he noticed a talmid not living up to his abilities, he didn't let the talmid alone until he used his talents. He would invite him to his home or sit with him in yeshiva and put a lot into him, the main thing being to be mekarev him and to bring to fruition the abilities that he noticed in him. He held these personal conversations late at night too, and even on Shabbos and Yom Tov.

His devotion could be seen in many ways. In the time and care he devoted to a talmid, not to mention sacrificing the quality of his own learning. He sat and learned a maamer with a simple talmid, bringing it down to terms he could relate to.

You could see how his entire way of thinking was along the lines of being mekarev Chassidus or avodas Hashem, more and more, to the mekablum, as much as it was possible to bring it closer to the talmidim, according to their keilim.

I came to yeshiva at the age of 16. This was in the fifties, shortly after the yeshiva moved from Tel Aviv to Lud and the zal was in Pardes (which was an actual orchard).

**When did you first meet him?**

(Laughing): My first contact with him was when I was still a “*pereh adam*” (wild man). If we take as an example, what we spoke about earlier, his work with me could

*At first glance, the concept of devotion seems to apply more to the mekabel, for he needs to be devoted to his mashpia.*

*However, the truth is, it's just the opposite.*

*A mashpia must be, first and foremost devoted to the mekabel...*

epitomize him as a mashpia. This is what happened:

Among his jobs was sending someone to be the shliach tzibbur

before the amud. He once sent me to daven Shacharis. At that time there was a competition going among some bachurim as to who could daven faster, so I hurried up the davening. R' Shlomo Chaim was really not pleased about this. He recoiled from davening like that and he reacted very sharply. He gave it to me, the way I deserved, and among other things, he said that he didn't believe that I didn't skip anything.

I accepted his rebuke but not the part about skipping. I was even annoyed about that. At a certain point, I went over to him and said that I was ready to be tested. I would daven out loud, and prove I could daven quickly without skipping.

He liked this idea and he sent me to the amud again. This time I davened even faster and finished the davening in just 17 minutes, and out loud! I thought I made the point, but oh boy, did I get it!

He had his way of approaching



## BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF THE MASHPIA, R' SHLOMO CHAIM KESSELMAN

The mashpia, Rav Shlomo Chaim Kesselman was born on 20 Elul 5654 (1894) in Zhitomir, Ukraine. His chinuch began in his hometown in the Talmud Torah, until he reached bar mitzva age.

When he was 14, he was once sitting with two friends in the house of the rav of Zhitomir and learning Torah. A young boy showed up and said: I am coming now from the town of Lubavitch.

The boys asked him: Where is Lubavitch?

The boy continued: What difference does it make? The main thing is, there's a Rebbe, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, who recently started a new yeshiva called Tomchei T'mimim. They learn in a unique way there, and the most important thing is "what" they learn there. They learn Chassidus all day.

The boy grew more animated and described the beauty and special qualities of Tomchei T'mimim in Lubavitch. His enthusiasm aroused Shlomo Chaim's curiosity and he decided to go to Lubavitch and see the wonder for himself.

Shlomo Chaim and one friend decided they had to go to Lubavitch to see the yeshiva. They informed their parents of their decision and made a bundle of their clothes and took some food and left.

Despite the long and difficult trip, the two weren't bothered and within a few weeks they had arrived in Lubavitch in great excitement.

"Everything was new for us," R' Shlomo Chaim related years later to his talmidim. "The large hall, the many talmidim bent over their s'farim, humming a tune quietly as they learned – it all grabbed me from the very first minute."

Above all else was the first moment he saw the Rebbe, the Nasi, the founder of the yeshiva. When R' Shlomo Chaim saw him enter the hall, the light of holiness radiating from his face, and the exaltedness of awe surrounding him, the boy's heart seemed to stop beating and he held his breath.

All at once, he realized that he had come to the right place. He spent six years in a row in Lubavitch, studying Chassidus with great diligence until he had to return home in order to take care of his exemption from the army. He left home as a boy of 14 and returned home as a young man of 20 with the beginnings of a beard.

R' Shlomo Chaim received the job of mashpia from the

Rebbe Rayatz in 1920, when he was 26 years old, since he was one of the older talmidim. His students were the youngest ones in the yeshiva who learned in Tomchei T'mimim in Rostov under the direct leadership of the Rebbe Rayatz.

After he married the daughter of the Chassid, R' Zev Wolf Bronstein (about whom it was said that he was a beinoni according to *Tanya*), he was sent to Polotzk, where he was a mashpia for the Lubavitchers who lived in that city. Later on, in 1926, some T'mimim came to learn in that city and he was appointed mashpia of the yeshiva. He served in this role for three years until his arrest in 1929 when the yeshiva was dismantled and the talmidim scattered to different cities.

With the outbreak of World War II, when the Germans invaded Russia and conquered large sections of the Ukraine and White Russia, R' Shlomo Chaim fled with his family from Moscow and went to distant Tashkent where he and his friends gathered dozens of boys and began learning with them secretly.

At the beginning of Kislev 5707, he and his family left Russia in the great flight. He left on the last train and arrived in Austria. As soon as he arrived, he took no time to rest but immediately founded a branch of Tomchei T'mimim. He gathered the sons of Chassidische families living there, and began learning Gemara and Chassidus with them.

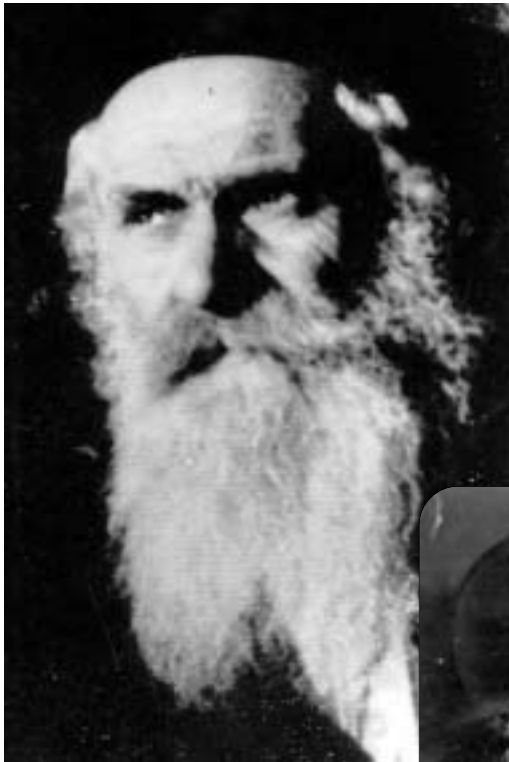
At the end of 5707, he left for France, where he was asked to be mashpia in Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim that had been founded there.

In 5709, the Rebbe Rayatz told him to go to Eretz Yisroel and shortly thereafter, he was told to "take on the running of and learning of Chassidus in Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in Tel Aviv, and reviewing Chassidus in public." He began this job in Elul 5709 and from then until his final day he served as mashpia of the yeshiva, first in Tel Aviv and then in Lud and Kfar Chabad, far from the tumult of the big city.

It was here that R' Shlomo Chaim's spiritual greatness became apparent when he threw himself completely into educating the talmidim, the T'mimim. He himself was a role model and a personal example of what he demanded.

The results of his efforts are to be found all over Eretz Yisroel and abroad. His talmidim are many of the present-day rabbanim, mashpiim, and shluchim around the world.

*R' Shlomo Chaim's  
greatness became  
apparent when he  
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the T'mimim.*



the connection did not end when the talmid left yeshiva. That's a real mashpia, to whom there is no such thing as "no longer being mekabel." His devotion to a talmid was absolute.

(Laughing): I'm an example of this. As soon as he noticed that something could come out of this "wild man," he gave me his all. He put so much effort into me, for a few good years.

He would speak about a certain negative trait of some talmid or another. After drinking mashke, he would speak animatedly about someone about whom he felt anguished and he would cry. And this was despite the fact that he wasn't an emotional person by nature.

The mashpia loved Chassidus and he sat day and night and learned Chassidus. He was also a smart man and over the years his knowledge of Chassidus grew and grew. He threw himself into understanding what he learned. Along with this, he devoted a lot of time to sitting with an average talmid and explaining a maamer to him.

He wasn't fazed by average or below-average abilities, and in general, outstanding abilities didn't mean that much to him. To him, the important thing was when he saw that a talmid was serious. When he noticed this, he invested tremendous kocho into him.

**What was his message in**

the subject. His rebuke centered on my lack of *kabbalas ol*. He said to me, "Do you think that for a bachur like you, who is in Tomchei T'mimim, that *prikas ol* (disobedience, the opposite of *kabbalas ol*) has to entail Shabbos desecration or eating ham? The biggest *prikas ol* can be expressed in a davening like that!"

Rabbi Kesselman certainly knew how to rebuke, but when he saw that the talmid had fallen into despair, he immediately changed his tone to one of hope and encouragement.

**How was he different than other mashpiim?**

I don't know about other mashpiim but he had a fatherly relationship with every talmid. There was no talmid who left the yeshiva that did not remain in touch with R' Shlomo Chaim or with whom R' Shlomo Chaim did not remain in touch.

He always took an interest and was mekarev every talmid. With him,



**What sort of effort?**

He shaped my spiritual life and put me on my feet.

**And what happened when he wasn't successful with a talmid?**

There were times that he cried over certain talmidim when he felt he wasn't successful with them. He usually did this privately but on rare occasions, he would





## farbrengens?

He emphasized learning Chassidus and insisted that it be with avoda. He put a lot into getting the talmidim to learn Chassidus, but for the sake of avoda, based on avoda, and with avoda. He negated the study of Chassidus exclusively for the sake of *haskala* (gaining deep understanding). He considered this an absolute rule.

### **And he himself was an example of this?**

R' Shlomo Chaim was an oved, an oved Elokim. He davened at length every weekday, and more so on Shabbos. On Shabbos, there was a shiur in Chassidus before the davening and after the davening. During the t'filla b'tzibbur he focused on the talmidim in the zal.

You felt that this Yid was mashpia from his neshama. He felt an inner obligation to give of what he had to others. He felt that this was his task and that he owed it to his talmidim.

The more I find on the inyan of a mashpia in s'farim, the more certain I am that he was "The Mashpia," in capital letters.

\* \* \*

Hiskashrus to the Rebbe was in Rabbi Kesselman's bones. Despite the fact that he was first mekushar to the Rebbe Rashab and then to the Rebbe Rayatz throughout the latter's leadership, as soon as the Rebbe took on the nesius he was mekasher to him with all his soul and might. From the very beginning, he corresponded with the Rebbe, and the Rebbe also regarded him as "The Mashpia."

If you see their correspondence, you notice that personal life was not a focus. The topic of nearly every letter is avoda with the talmidim. His personal life took second place to his life with his students.

He also encouraged the talmidim to write to the Rebbe, to be

mekasher to him and to carry out his horaos.

The topic of Moshiach – the Rebbe's main topic – burned in his very being. He lived with Moshiach with the understanding of the great importance that Toras HaChassidus gives the topic of Moshiach and the coming of Moshiach.

In the period before his final illness, he suffered very much from a malignancy. When the month of Adar approached, he said to me, "Soon it will be Nissan and there are so many signs that Moshiach will come in Nissan. Hashem should help that Moshiach comes this month." I saw

*One time, when R' Shlomo Chaim heard that some people were talking about the Rebbe being Moshiach, he said, "Well, could it be anyone else? Of course it's him!"*

his yearning for Moshiach.

At his farbrengens, he spoke enthusiastically about the time after Moshiach comes. He could spend a long time describing how the world will be when Moshiach comes, when everybody recognizes the truth.

He did not just speak this way in the last years of his life but was fervently involved throughout all his years. When the yeshiva was in Tel Aviv, he would speak a lot about Moshiach coming imminently and having to prepare to welcome him.

One of the talmidim remembered, "This made such an impact on us

that when I returned home one day and heard someone tell my father that he was saving up his money and in another half a year he planned on opening a certain business, I looked at him as though he was crazy. What was he saying?! Moshiach was about to come, so why was he making plans for six months hence?"

R' Shlomo Chaim's simple faith along with his anticipation of Moshiach's coming was astonishing.

R' Shlomo Chaim's son, a mashpia in Kfar Chabad, R' Zev Kesselman, relates:

When we were little children, my father would speak a lot about anticipating Moshiach's coming, a daily anticipation, and how the world would look when Moshiach came. I remember one year, before Pesach, my father spoke a lot about Moshiach coming in Nissan to the point that we would frequently glance out the window to see if Moshiach has arrived. It was part of our chinuch.

One evening, he saw my brother with tears in his eyes. My brother was seven or eight years old and my father asked him what was wrong. My brother said he was imagining what it would be like in Yemos HaMoshiach.

One of R' Shlomo Chaim's talmidim relates:

Because of this anticipation for Moshiach, he would demand a lot of his talmidim. There's no doubt that Moshiach is about to come momentarily and when he comes he will ask us, "You are Chassidim? With what?" And will we answer? Is our study of Chassidus the way it should be? Is our davening the way it should be? We will be ashamed!

One time, when R' Shlomo Chaim heard that some people were talking about the Rebbe being Moshiach, he said, "Well, could it be anyone else? Of course it's him!"



This anticipation and emuna came to a peak after the completion of the writing of the Torah of Moshiach on Yud Shevat 5730. After Shabbos, he had a yechidus with a group of men and he said to the Rebbe that since they already had Moshiach's Torah, the time had come for the Rebbe to be revealed as Moshiach.

The Rebbe listened with great seriousness and said, "Go to the

Shver (father-in-law, i.e. the Rebbe Rayatz at the Ohel) and say it there."

\* \* \*

In one of R' Shlomo Chaim's talks with his talmidim he said, "I, like all Jews, want to see the coming of Moshiach, but if G-d forbid it was decreed otherwise, I would want to die on Friday after midday, and that from the moment the neshama departs until the burial, it should not

take more than a few hours."

His request was granted. He passed away on Friday after midday, 19 Iyar 5731 (1971), with his talmidim at his bedside. Within a few hours, he was buried on Mt. Olives in Yerushalayim.

R' Shlomo Chaim is engraved in the hearts and souls of thousands of talmidim and mushpaim around the world.

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# MOSHIACH TIMES: ELECTRONIC BOSSA-NIGGUN?!

BY CHANA KATZ

## SPREADING THE ‘COOL’ WELLSPRINGS ‘FAR OUT’

The stories of today’s *baalei t’shuva* are not as black and white as the hat and outer garments which meet the eye. That’s one way to explain how “The Alter Rebbe’s Niggun” came to be arranged on a fiery flamenco guitar in the mystical Galilee hills overlooking Mount Meron.

But we are far ahead in this story. Surely it has a revealed beginning, and for Rabbi Shalom Pasternak it was when the *chassid*, Reb Itche Meir Lipszyc, took R. Shalom’s father and the young Shalom to meet the Rebbe. “They say when a person sees a tzaddik it affects him the rest of his life,” said R. Shalom. “When I was 13, my father took me to see the Rebbe and we weren’t *frum* in any way...”

\* \* \*

Skipping in time for another moment now, we’re sitting in an apartment on HaAri Street in Tzfas, the street named after the holy kabbalistic luminary, Rabbi Yitzchak Luria. The old stone homes on this winding, ancient mountainside lane overlook a hushed valley with Mount Meron, the resting place of

Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai, in the background.

With an address like this and a fountain of *hashgacha pratis*, R. Shalom bought studio equipment and assembled a band: the **Kabbalah Dream Orchestra**. In a rather amazingly short time, their first recording, “Ancient of Days” (**Attik Yomim**), made its debut. “It’s ancient,” says R. Shalom, “but of days.”

## THE BEGINNING

Alabama was only a transitory stop in life for both R. Shalom’s father and shliach R. Itche Lipszyc (now of the Crimea). But for the sake of *hashgacha pratis* it served as the initial point of meeting between the two souls.

“Rabbi Lipszyc was able to affect my father to the point of bringing him to the Rebbe several times,” says R. Shalom. “After that, my father always talked about a Jew in the world who does miracles...”

“In the (dollar) line, I heard story after story. It didn’t change our behavior much but I remember distinctly my dad decided not to eat *treif*. It sat on me for years, this decision he made.”

Besides hearing some amazing stories around 770, R. Shalom himself experienced the miracle stories.

“My uncle – my father’s brother – was very sick, so my father went to the Rebbe to get a dollar,” R. Shalom recalled. “The Rebbe stopped the line (after my father had moved on) and called him back...”

“I should explain here that before my father even started going to the Rebbe, my uncle had become ill. My uncle on my mother’s side of the family is one of the most respected lung doctors in the world and he (examined) my other uncle and told him he only had a few months to live – he had a serious disease. That’s what urged my father to finally go to see the Rebbe...”

“So the Rebbe called (my father) back and said, ‘This dollar is for your brother to dance at his daughter’s wedding!’ Miraculously he got better and two months later the thing subsided and he danced with vigor two years later at his daughter’s wedding. And shortly after that he passed away. This miracle, I grew up with.”

## A WORLD CREATED FOR ONE – YESHIVA FOR TWO?

“Fast forward seven years and now I was in college, a philosophy major, and traveling two hours each way to go to this jazz teacher – jazz and philosophy, my two loves!

“In college I came across a student of Lenny Tristano, who brought me to his teacher, an 80-year-old jazz master who lived in a little apartment in Yonkers, N.Y. I was *mesirus nefesh* to travel in the snow or whatever, once a week for three years. I felt like that was the precursor for doing *t’shuva*. I learned discipline, concentration. Music is a very mystical thing – it sort of led me into a desire to find my true self.

“I tried to get into an exclusive jazz school but didn’t get in. My



backup plan was to go to Eretz Yisroel. In Israel, I continued to explore philosophy, even though it was secular. When I got back to college, I had to write a thesis and I wrote about why a Jew doesn’t have to be Orthodox nowadays! (There’s not one copy of that (thesis) left in the world today. It just disappeared, *mamash!*)

“Rabbi Lipszyc comes back into the picture now. I graduated college

and was about to go off to the west coast to start a career teaching and playing music in Oregon. A couple of nights before I left, Rabbi Lipszyc came to visit my father. He and I ended up talking until two in the morning about *Yiddishkait*. I was hearing things I never heard before in my life.

Then I spent an hour talking with my father. My father told me I was a bright boy but that I still didn’t know what I was talking about. My father told me to read the Torah twice and then he’d continue the conversation with me. Sort of out of *Kibbud Av* (Honor the Father). I said I’d read it like the Jewish people read the Torah in a yearly cycle – every week the parsha and for two years, two cycles. In short, I became frum. You can’t read the Torah and not become frum!”

In Portland, Oregon, R. Shalom spent less time playing music than he did visiting the Chabad House of Rabbi Moshe Wilhelm – “until he (Rabbi Wilhelm) actually established a whole yeshiva for me and my friend and we sat there and learned for a year before we went to Crown Heights.”

\* \* \*

In Crown Heights, R. Shalom settled in a learning pattern and put his music on hold. Interestingly, his *chavrusa* at Hadar HaTorah was another musician – who later became –known as Matisyahu! The two learning partners teamed up once for a Lag B’Omer performance and R. Shalom says Matisyahu asked him to join his band. R. Shalom had other plans. “I said I don’t want to go there with my life. I wanted to become a Rabbi. Hashgacha Pratis,” he says in retrospect.

As we mentioned earlier, R. Shalom’s journeys took him to both



Rabbi Shalom Pasternak

Eretz Yisroel and Oregon – and in both places he met a woman named Roni and the two decided they were beshert. Settled in Tzfas and raising their two young children, R. Shalom pursued and was awarded *smicha* – and music slowly came back into the picture.

“My wife kept urging me to play music. Since we got married she said you have to integrate who you are with who you are becoming. I didn’t listen then – but I wasn’t happy and we have to serve Hashem with joy!”

### PLAYING WITH FIRE

During the course of R. Shalom’s return to Torah, he had many discussions with Rabbi Lipszyc and other mashpiim on the subject of music and k’dusha.

“When I was first becoming frum, I once asked a Chabad rabbi if I could make music ‘cool,’ to bring the outside influences into Jewish music and translate it into that world. He wasn’t sure, because it’s a very delicate subject. ‘It’s like playing with fire,’ he told me.”

For four or five years R. Shalom did put his music away but he wasn’t happy with the decision. During this period of contemplation, he asked Rav Ginsburgh, “can we elevate jazz” and the Rav replied to him, “I don’t know, can you?” The outcome of his talks with mashpiim eventually came to inspire the opening of his new album, the *pasuk*, “*Adam Ki Yakriv M’kem*” – that is, “when a person brings a *korban*, a sacrifice, it has to come from himself. It has to be you; nothing else will suffice.”

R. Shalom felt like he had personally struck the essence of Chassidus. “My *nefesh ha’bahamis* (animal soul) was made with certain desires and you’re not supposed to kill them. You’re supposed to utilize them,” he explains. “It says you

should put the *nefesh ha’bahamis* on the altar of Hashem and not bury it. However, Rabbi Lipszyc’s words are very poignant and true: You can’t put a *korban* on Hashem’s altar unless you check it for blemishes and it’s done according to strict halacha. “It says in Chassidus the strength of a desire is not a bad



***R. Shalom says Matisyahu asked him to join his band. R. Shalom had other plans. “I said I don’t want to go there with my life. I wanted to become a Rabbi. Hashgacha Pratis,” he says in retrospect.***

thing, it’s just that a desire (*taava*) can go after k’dusha – or the opposite.”

### NIGGUNIM ONLY

As part of the attempt to stay within the realm of k’dusha, R. Shalom says his music features only niggunim – of which there are thousands to keep him busy for

years.

“I just wanted that purity,” says R. Shalom. “Every time I tried to do something else in music, I felt like I was going outside the realm.”

If you take away the music from the soundtrack, there is only R. Shalom singing niggunim such as the ones he selected for his debut tape: “L’chat’chilla Aribber,” “Avinu Malkeinu,” “Poltava Rav Niggun,” “The Beinoni.”

On the other hand, when you add the music you get some orchestral, pop, electronica, soul, jazz or rhythm and blues influences.

### JUST PASSING BY

It should be noted that R. Shalom feels one sign that his music is on the right track is the fast pace in which hashgacha pratis is propelling its success.

First of all, it wasn’t too long after R. Shalom decided to make a serious return to music that “a friend of a friend of one of the students at Machon Alter,” where R. Shalom had recently been offered a teaching position, was passing through Tzfas. This “friend of a friend was just passing through Tzfas and has no intention of staying. He had no revealed connection to Torah whatsoever,” says R. Shalom, “but musically he’s world class.”

More than six months have passed since R. Shalom’s initial meeting with musician Dan Fries, who immediately took to Tzfas and the niggunim to which R. Shalom introduced him. The two hit it off and R. Shalom took care of his new talented acquaintance in true Chassidic style – materially and spiritually – to the point where Fries now has his own t’fillin, learns *Tanya*, and even gives a powerful Flamenco flavor to “The Alter Rebbe’s Niggun” in the new studio which R. Shalom equipped for him.

# ‘YOUR CHILDREN WILL REMAIN JEWS’

BY SHNEUR ZALMAN BERGER

*Shortly before the Rebbe Rayatz boarded the train he suddenly turned to the Chassid R' Zalman Osvitzov and said, "Zalman the Cohen, bless me!" \* The fascinating story of a Chassid whose four children remained frum against all odds, thanks to the Rebbe's bracha.*

It was the morning after Simchas Torah 5688 (1927). At the train-station in Leningrad, a large crowd of Chassidim gathered to say farewell to the Rebbe Rayatz. This was an extremely emotional time. Everybody knew that the Rebbe was leaving and who knew when or if they would see him again?

A moment before the Rebbe Rayatz boarded the train, he suddenly turned to the Chassid R' Zalman Osvitzov and said, "Zalman the Cohen, bless me!"

R' Zalman approached the Rebbe and with his voice choked with tears, he blessed the Rebbe with the priestly blessing. Then as the Rebbe turned to board the train R' Zalman caught himself at the last second and said, "Rebbe, bless me too!" His voice was broken.

The Rebbe turned around and with a serious gaze he responded with a bracha, "Your children

should remain Jews," he said, and entered the train.

R' Zalman returned home with a broken heart. He had always dreamed and prayed with all his heart for sons and daughters who walked in the ways of Chassidus, yet the Rebbe had blessed him that they remain Jews! His mother Shayna, with her deep faith, reassured him, "When the Rebbe blesses, he knows what he's saying!"

It was only years later that the Rebbe's words took on greater significance.

\* \* \*

The Chassid Rav Shneur Zalman Osvitzov was born in 5655 (1895) and was raised in the Chassidic town of Nevel. His father, Rav Menachem Mendel, was a melamed and a sofer, but he did not live long and passed away at the young age of 43 after an illness.

At this point, his grandfather, the old Chassid Rav Yaakov Osvitzov, entered the picture. He stood by his daughter-in-law's side and educated his grandchildren in the ways of Chassidus.

R' Yaakov was born in 5565 (1805) to a Lubavitcher family, Chassidim of the Alter Rebbe. He merited to live in the lifetimes of six Admurim from the Alter Rebbe to the Rebbe Rayatz, since he was a child when the Alter Rebbe passed away, and when R' Yaakov died, at nearly 100, in the year 5660 (1900), the Rebbe Rayatz was twenty years old. He was an ardent Chassid of the Mittlerer Rebbe, the Tzemach Tzedek, the Rebbe Maharash, and the Rebbe Rashab.

When his grandfather passed away, his grandson Zalman continued to learn with Chassidische melamdin.

In the meantime, the communist winds began to blow and dragged many young people into denying religion and the Creator of the world. Shneur Zalman, who had already absorbed a Chassidische atmosphere, paid no attention to the communists' heresy and continued learning Torah and Chassidus underground until he became of draft age.

Then he fled to Petersburg (later



to be known as Leningrad), where he was hospitalized under a pretext of some illness concerning his legs and managed to obtain an exemption from the army.

Although at that time Jews were forbidden from living in big cities, Shneur Zalman was able to obtain a certificate as an expert watchmaker, a desirable profession in those days, and he was permitted to live in Petersburg, the capitol. Yet he did not forget his roots and he often visited Nevel in order to fraternize with the Chabad Chassidim who lived there.

The period of time he spent in Leningrad was probably the nicest years of his life. His son Yaakov said that his father was nostalgic for those days, more than for any other time.

At that time, the Rebbe Rayatz lived in Leningrad and R' Zalman davened in the Rebbe's minyan and participated in his farbrengens, maintaining a close connection with the Rebbe. The Rebbe was the one who named him, "Zalman der Cohen," and for many long years afterward, R' Zalman referred to those glorious days when he was close to the Rebbe.

"I remember how my father would censure me about my davening and would emotionally say, 'I remember the Rebbe davening with d'veikus and so much chayus,' and he would describe it in vivid color. He would conclude, 'And that is how a Chassid ought to daven.'

"That was the feeling after the Rebbe Rayatz left Russia. Everything would remind my father about the Rebbe Rayatz. When we built a sukka, my father would say, 'The Rebbe's sukka was like this,' or 'At a farbrengen, the Rebbe would do like this.'

"At that time we lived on the

main street of Leningrad called Mayevski Prospect. Each time we passed near building 12, where the Rebbe's shul was, my father would speak yearningly of the Rebbe. Since I passed the place with my father a thousand times, I heard many stories about the Rebbe

“My father's most moving moment was definitely his parting from the Rebbe when the Rebbe left Leningrad. The last farbrengen was held the day before he left and was attended by hundreds of Chassidim. My father spoke nostalgically about his memories of that farbrengen.”

difficulties of that time.

“From the day the Rebbe left the country, glory and majesty departed, the sun set for us, clouds gathered and darkness covered the land. From day to day, the darkness intensified and the persecution of our brethren grew.

### LITERAL MESIRUS NEFESH

The Osvitzov family, parents and children, huddle around the small stove in their apartment in Leningrad: Outside it is forty degrees below zero. The central heat hasn't been working in a long time due to lack of fuel. The bombs of the German planes are deafening. The Germans attack the besieged city while the soldiers of the Red Army fight to defend the city.

Starvation and cold are apparent on the faces of the people in the room. It is now many months that they are malnourished because of the lack of food in Leningrad. Hundreds of thousands of people perished due to starvation, disease, and the cold. The yard of the large shul in Leningrad fills each day with hundreds of bodies of Jews who died of starvation.

Suddenly, there are knocks at the door. In the doorway, stands the son of the neighbor, in uniform. He came for a short visit after months of being away. He is stationed to defend the city.

“How are you feeling?” he asks quietly. He does not require their response since he sees their pale faces and their emaciated bodies. Without waiting for a response, he opens his army bag and removes a large piece of meat. Whoever was not there, would not understand.

During the siege of Leningrad, there wasn't even dry bread to eat and he had meat! “Take it so you can survive the coming days.”

The Chassid R' Zalman asked the soldier to keep the meat with the excuse that he would remain without food to eat, but the soldier had mercy on the family. He didn't listen to them but left the meat and walked out.

A moment later R' Zalman got up and threw the meat into the garbage!

This was a life of mesirus nefesh, the life of R' Zalman Osvitzov. This incident penetrated deep into young Yaakov's heart and gave him the desire to keep Torah and mitzvos even at the price of mesirus nefesh.

“At first they tried to get rid of Torah and those who learned it and decreed that there could be no institution for learning Torah down to the youngest of children. Once they succeeded in depriving Jews of the holy Torah the source of our life, they worked to enlarge and expand the breach from day to day, to wreak havoc in all the essentials of Judaism with the desecration of Shabbos, kosher food, family purity, etc.”

The communists began to oppress the spirit of Judaism in the Soviet Union. The first generation was still particular about marrying only Jews, but the second generation, born into communism, was nearly completely cut off. The children were educated in heresy and war on religion in the school. They grew up as communists and intermarriage reached tragic heights, to the point that virtually no home was spared.

In the midst of this darkness shone the Rebbe's bracha to R' Zalman that his children remain Jews. R' Zalman had four children and despite the spiritual darkness, they raised beautiful Jewish families and had the fire of Judaism burning in their hearts.

The Rebbe's bracha was the spiritual aid needed to succeed in the task, but R' Zalman himself gave his children a chinuch al taharas ha'kodesh as much as possible. His sons R' Yaakov of Rechovot and R' Menachem Mendel of B'nei Brak tell of the mesirus nefesh for this kind of chinuch.

Rayatz during his stay in Leningrad. You could see how my father's entire chayus came from the Rebbe. No wonder then, that his fondest dream was to leave the Soviet Union and go to the Rebbe, but he was unable to do so.

\* \* \*

After the Rebbe Rayatz left the Soviet Union, the situation deteriorated rapidly. The Chassid Rav Meir Gurkov (in his book *Divrei HaYamim*) describes the



R' Yaakov, R' Zalman's oldest son, relates:

"I was born in Leningrad in 5694 (1934), a few years after my father married my mother Chaya, daughter of the Chassid, R' Menachem Mendel Novikov.

"I absorbed a Chassidische chinuch at home from when I was very little. Although Stalin tried to stamp out any vestige of Judaism, at home we lived as Jews and Chassidim even though the authorities knew that my father was a Chassid. Of course, we were under constant surveillance.

"In those crazy times we tried not to stand out as religious Jews, yet my father did not forego a single Chassidic custom. My hair was cut at age three with the participation of Chassidim and friends of the family.

"Despite the situation, my father taught us that the ways of Judaism and Chassidus are a part of our

***One thing that R' Zalman was especially protective about was the chinuch of his children. He had heard the Rebbe Rayatz speak sharply, a number of times, against sending children to communist schools and he decided to follow this directive come what may.***

lives. We spoke only Yiddish at home and until the age of five, I couldn't speak Russian. As a small boy, I went with my father to daven on Shabbos and Yomim Tovim, a rare sight even among the Chassidim since the secret police were all over the shul and we had to daven secretly in various apartments.

"Remember that this was in the late thirties when many Chassidim were sent to exile, killed outright, or shipped off to Siberia. It's hard to describe the enormous fear of those days. I remember how men would come to the minyan one by one and the minyan did not take place more than two or three times in one location.

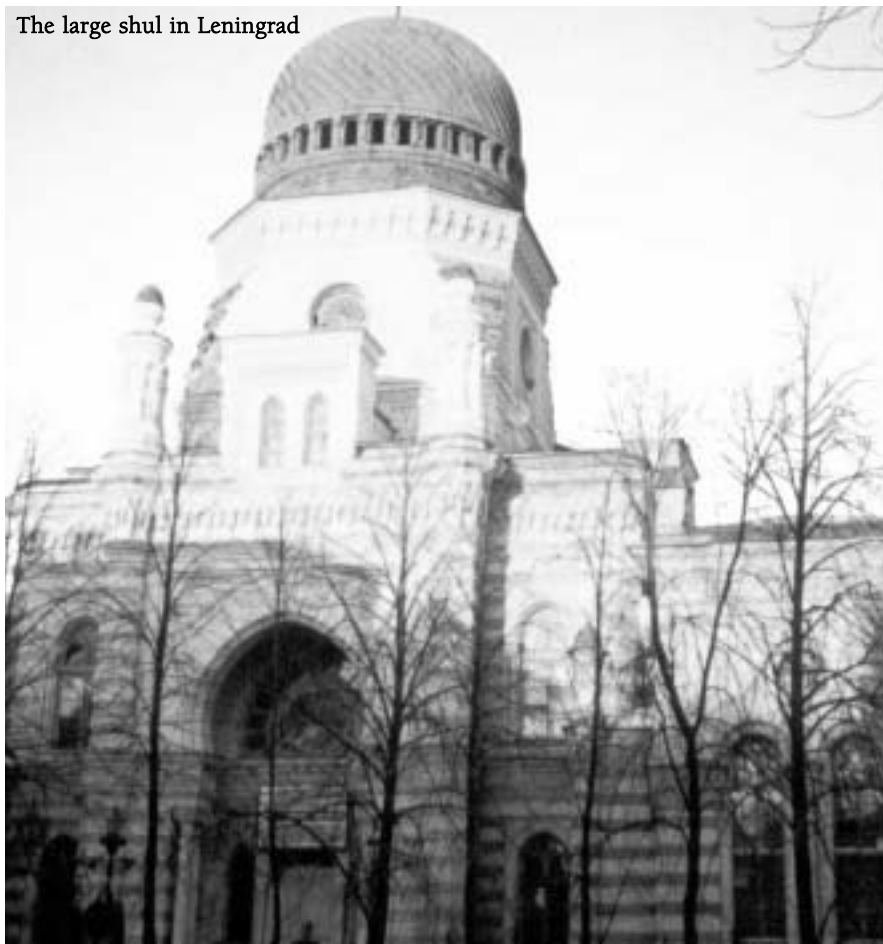
"As my father's oldest child, I went with him to Chassidische farbrengens that took place secretly in the homes of Chassidim and sometimes, in our home. As a small child, I stood and watched the Chassidim with great curiosity. I remember their yearning when they spoke of the Rebbe Rayatz.

"My father's connection with the Rebbe Rayatz was indescribable. Until this day, I remember the bitter moments when we received the underground letter, which informed us of his passing. My father didn't speak much, just murmured from time to time, 'What will be?' He was utterly brokenhearted and found it hard to digest what had happened.

"But a year later, when we heard that the present Rebbe had taken on the nesius, my father was very happy since he had met him a number of times when he was in Leningrad and had even spoken to him a few times."

\* \* \*

One thing that R' Zalman was especially protective about was the chinuch of his children. He had



The large shul in Leningrad

heard the Rebbe Rayatz speak sharply, a number of times, against sending children to communist schools and he decided to follow this directive come what may.

He did not send Yaakov to kindergarten nor did he send him to school. When Yaakov was eight, World War II came close to Leningrad but his father took advantage of the chaos and did not send his son to school despite the great pressure exerted on him. Yaakov stayed home and learned Chumash, Mishnayos, and Gemara with his father.

In later years, the government continued to pressure R' Zalman and threatened him, forcing him to send his son to school but he only sent him on weekdays.

"After Shabbos I would go to school with a note about some illness or about 'important guests' that visited our home.

"This approach didn't work too

long and after several weeks they figured out what was going on and began to threaten me to come on Shabbos too. The students mocked me each time I handed in a note with an excuse. I had no choice but to switch schools and many of them were far from home. The main thing was to preserve the holiness of Shabbos.

"Things weren't simple on weekdays either. I would wear tzitzis to school. Sports were very important in communist schools and we had physical education twice a week for two hours. I remember contorting myself in order to remove my shirt along with the tzitzis without anybody noticing them. Each time I trembled but baruch Hashem the various tricks worked. As a small child, this was engraved in my soul."

### NOT A SPY!

R' Zalman received an exemption from the army but during World War II, there was a severe shortage of soldiers and the Red Army began reviewing those they had previously exempted.

Thus, despite being almost fifty, R' Zalman was drafted into the army and although he was not sent to the front, he had to defend Leningrad from the German bombs.

One of the great trials he faced while in the army was t'fillin. Despite the tremendous difficulties, he managed to put on t'fillin every morning for the two years that he served in the Russian army.

One morning, while his comrades were still sleeping in the bunkers in which they hid from the German planes, R' Zalman got up and left the bunker. He hid behind some tall bushes, took out his t'fillin and began to put them on. Suddenly he noticed some of his fellow soldiers watching him suspiciously. He instantly realized that they suspected him of reporting their location to the enemy and that they would end his life with a bullet momentarily.

He quickly removed his t'fillin and yelled to his friends not to worry. Only afterwards did he have a chance to explain that it was a religious ritual, which he practiced.



The grandfather, R' Yaakov Osvitzov

R' Zalman not only educated his four children to mesirus nefesh, he himself served as an example as one who cared greatly to keep Torah and mitzvos. When it came to working on Shabbos, R' Zalman had to make use of various tactics in order not to work on Shabbos.

He was an accountant, but because of his Shabbos observance, he changed his places of employment frequently, the main thing being not to desecrate the Shabbos. It happened only rarely that he had to show up at work but he didn't actually do any work.

Stalin's persecution was at a peak and there were nights when the Osvitzov family didn't sleep as the younger son, Menachem Mendel, relates:

"We thought they were coming any minute to arrest our father. I was only five, but I understood everything. Fear surrounded us and every knock at the door terrified us."

The family always had a drawing of the Alter Rebbe and a picture of the Rebbe Rayatz along with



R' Zalman Osvitzov

*bichlech* (booklets of handwritten Chassidic discourses). The fear was so great that they decided to remove the pictures and booklets from the house and hide them. Yaakov took them to the home of Jewish friends who were not religious who could watch them until things were safer.

“Even when I attended university I was particular about davening and putting on t’fillin. I said the Shacharis prayers early in the morning and Maariv at home after school. However, Mincha was a

problem. Every day I had to find another solution. Sometimes I would go into a telephone booth or I stood on a street corner with a newspaper and made as though I was reading the paper though I was actually davening.

“And I kept Shabbos. Till today I don’t understand how I managed to attend university for five years without appearing there on Shabbos.”

After he finished studying engineering in university, Yaakov married and began looking for work that would not entail Shabbos desecration. It was hard, especially over the two day of Yomim Tovim, and he used various excuses to avoid work.

Yaakov’s trials were not easy. He worked as an engineer in a key role for a company that built factories, and each time he didn’t show up it interfered with the orderly running of the company, but he withstood the tests and the great danger.

Yaakov doesn’t talk much about those challenges he faced. “Whoever wasn’t there wouldn’t understand the oppression anyway. How can you explain the fear in talking to a Jewish friend in shul? I’m not talking about a stranger, but about your Lubavitcher friend. The fear was lest eyes were watching and the wrong ears were listening and the people conversing would be immediately called to an interrogation and who could know how that would end?”

R’ Shneur Zalman’s four children, Yaakov and Menachem Mendel, Sophia and Tzivia, eventually left Russia for Eretz Yisroel and they are all observant. With his life’s blood, R’ Zalman fulfilled the Rebbe’s bracha before he left, “Your children will remain Jews.”



Inside the great shul in Leningrad

# AS WAVES OF TERROR FLOOD OUR BEACHES

BY SHAI GEFEN

## A HUNDRED SUCH ATTEMPTS!

The events of last week, with the IDF re-entering Gaza, proved for the umpteenth time the bitter truth, the truth of Torah, “that the land will be easy for them to conquer.” The attack on the IDF outpost at the Kerem Shalom border crossing in which two soldiers were killed and one kidnapped, was one in which the terrorists were successful. But as a senior officer in the area said immediately after the event, there were over 100 such attempts since the Disengagement.

Unfortunately, we always wait for something terrible to happen before acknowledging that the situation is serious. However, it came as no surprise for all those who have been following what is going on since Israel gave up Gaza.

We all remember the slogans that if “We leave the area, there will be quiet,” and “We are at fault because we rule over them,” and other hollow slogans with no basis in reality. And while the self-hating Jews brainwash the Israeli public and demoralize them, the halacha is the only thing that gives us a sober view of reality. And the solution to our situation as well is written about explicitly in

*Shulchan Aruch.*

Mind you, the morning that the attack on the soldiers took place the newspapers had big headlines announcing that the police had already delivered 11 out of 13 restraining orders to right-wing sympathizers, to prevent them from approaching various outposts that the army is preparing to dismantle. So the newspapers decried the settlers while the terrorists continue to attack us.

On 4 Tamuz 5740, the Sadigora Rebbe shlita, member of the presidium of the Council of Torah Sages (may Hashem send him a refua shleima) spoke with the Rebbe. In the course of their conversation, the Rebbe spoke to him at length about the fight for shleimus ha’Aretz and said that all the negative things that take place are because of the great darkness, yet Hashem shows us things clearly, so we won’t be in doubt.

It sounds as though the Rebbe said this in Tamuz 5766:

**Jews are in a situation of “siege,” surrounded, may Hashem save us, by 100 million Arabs. If so, it’s an obvious din and it makes no difference if there is “holiness of the land” or not – when 3 million Jews,**

may they increase, are in this area, surrounded by Arabs, Moslems or Egyptians, and the Arabs don’t say they want “hay and straw”; they say explicitly that they want more land.

Since (the *Shulchan Aruch* establishes) this is a situation in which there is a possibility that “the land will be easy for them to conquer,” the din is that you must go against them with weapons, even on Shabbos, and this is the case even if they haven’t come yet but are “preparing to come.”

Now it is clear, for they say explicitly that they want land and not “hay and straw,” and that they want Eastern Jerusalem.

The situation today is similar. First they claimed that there would be peace this way, but now they clearly say that they want the Old City of Jerusalem and Yehuda and Shomron and in addition, they don’t promise peace at all. And even if they promised, Sadat and Hussein both clearly say that they were elected for a designated period of time and cannot guarantee what will happen when they are succeeded by others. And even if they didn’t say this explicitly, we would know this.

Before me I see the words of the Gemara in Eruvin about Nahardaa,



where Jews lived, and the Gemara says that you must determine one thing: if the land is easy for them to conquer or not. And this is how it's paskened in *Shulchan Aruch*.

This is in the category of pikuach nefesh and when it comes to pikuach nefesh, you may not wait until they come and ask but you must go immediately and announce the state of affairs.

We are in a state of doubled and redoubled darkness and therefore Hashem is showing us things clearly, dispelling all sorts of doubts. They thought that when the Arabs hear that we are about to return land, there would be quiet. The reality is that since they began talking about returning land, there have been more terrorists than previously. There were never so many terrorists as there have been since the signing of the Camp David Accords, and it was specifically, in "David's Camp" that they signed an agreement that endangers three million Jews!

### WHAT TO DO?

In that conversation with the Sadigura Rebbe, the Rebbe asked him that when he returned to Eretz Yisroel he should make a "shturm" (commotion) about this subject. The Rebbe said there is no need to innovate but one can merely repeat the p'sak din in *Shulchan Aruch*.

The topic of shleimus ha'Aretz is not just for certain people. Sad to say, rabbanim and other askanim who ought to be crying out are ignoring what's going on and this is bringing on many tzaros.

When you see how the Rebbe asked his guest, the Sadigura Rebbe to publicize this, the question is all the stronger: *Where are the rabbanim?* Where are those who pride themselves on speaking in the name of Torah? Why don't we hear from them? It's 100% clear that if

rabbanim and leading askanim did not collaborate with Sharon (whether verbally, with their silence, or quiet support) in implementing the Disengagement Plan, it wouldn't have happened!

Sharon constantly sought to silence the opposition and he knew that he needed the rabbanim and the religious and chareidi public. He orchestrated meetings with rabbanim and made sure the photographs would be seen all over the world.

His advisors told the media that all the protests against the Disengagement Plan were opposed to the position of the rabbanim.

And in the Knesset, Sharon saw to it to back himself up with the "spodik-wearers" (the Polish shtraimel worn by Gerrer Chassidim) who enabled him to carry out the expulsion. We didn't see the people who wanted to "keep their hands clean" at the protest demonstrations. The question is: Where were they all? Can they now say that their hands are clean of blood?

We don't cry over the past but worry about the future. Rockets are landing in the northern Negev, on strategic targets and on civilian areas. There are hundreds of attempts to sneak in to the country and hundreds of attempted attacks. Weapons stockpiling is constantly going on.

Yet, PM Olmert, Defense Minister Peretz, and Justice Minister Ramon are getting ready to implement another expulsion and ethnic cleansing in Yehuda-Shomron. They are planning to start expelling Jews next week from outposts throughout Yehuda and Shomron.

Nevertheless, despite prior experience, the rabbanim's thunderous silence is deafening. Ad masai? We all blame the government and the prime minister for security failures but why shouldn't we blame

*We all remember the slogans that if "We leave the area, there will be quiet," and "We are at fault because we rule over them," and other hollow slogans with no basis in reality. And while the self-hating Jews brainwash the Israeli public and demoralize them, the halacha is the only thing that gives us a sober view of reality. And the solution to our situation as well is written about explicitly in Shulchan Aruch.*

ourselves? The ones who keep quiet and enable security breaches to take place are responsible for the results!

In this turbulent time when enemies attack us from without and within, each of us must do what we can to fight for shleimus ha'Aretz.

# DOESN'T THE YERUSHALMI EXPLAIN THAT THE BEIS HA'MIKDASH WILL BE REBUILT BEFORE MOSHIACH COMES?

TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY

*In response to requests by our readers, we now present the seventh in a series of questions and answers from the seifer 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.*

## QUESTION:

According to the Lubavitcher Rebbe, the Rambam has firmly established that the first stage of the Redemption must be "a king will arise." We are unaware of the source of this founding principle in any of

the sayings of our Sages. Even the Talmud Yerushalmi (Maaser Sheini 5:2) states explicitly that the son of Dovid will come at the end of the process: "Rabbi Acha says, this means that the Beis HaMikdash will be rebuilt in the future before [the

restoration of] the kingdom of the House of Dovid." The G'vuros Ari also writes (Taanis 17a): "The words of our Sages in the Yerushalmi are reliable to us, and the Merciful One will grant us the privilege of building the Beis HaMikdash and coming to the days of Moshiach." We see clearly from these sources that the Redemption does not begin with the appointment of a king. Based on the understanding of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, the Rambam issued a halachic ruling in contrast to all the sayings of our Sages. Not only do we have a p'sak din with no basis, the words of the Sages show us the exact opposite.

## ANSWER:

1. The fact that the Rambam determined that the order of the Redemption is first the kingdom of Dovid and afterwards the Beis

HaMikdash is not a discovery made by the Lubavitcher Rebbe. Besides the order that the Rambam writes in Hilchos Melachim (11:4) “a king will arise...and he will build the Mikdash in its place,” he also establishes quite clearly at the beginning of the chapter that “Melech HaMoshiach will arise in the future, restore the kingdom of Dovid to its original glory and leadership, rebuild the Beis HaMikdash, and gather the exiles of Israel.”

2. The wording of your question, “We are unaware of the source of this founding principle in any of the sayings of our Sages,” suggesting that you don’t accept the words of the Rambam, stems from a strange form of Torah study: the person studying acts according to his own interpretation. Even that which you were not embarrassed to say – declaring that the Rambam’s halachic ruling is seemingly “in contrast to all the sayings of our Sages” – is the height of insolence, testifying to an incredible degree of ignorance. As we brought in the first section of this seifer, there are numerous sources from the Tosefta, the Gemara (Bavli and Yerushalmi), Midrash Rabba, the holy Zohar, etc., stating that the process of Redemption, the building of the Beis HaMikdash, and the ingathering of the exiles will all be achieved only through Melech HaMoshiach. See the Talmud Yerushalmi (Peia 1:1), where Rabbi Mena says: “For the matter is not only from you, and if it were only **from you**, then why are you not toiling in it?”

3. Also the Maharsha knew the Gemara (Megilla 17b) you quoted. Nevertheless, **a few lines later** (ibid. 18a), he writes: “As is said in Chapter 23, Israel was commanded [to fulfill] three mitzvos upon entering the Land – to appoint a king over them, to destroy the seed of Amalek, and to build the Holy Temple – deducing that the appointment of a king comes

first. As such, **it will be certainly be so in the future as well**, and since it is written, ‘And I will bring them to My holy mountain’ – i.e., the building of the Beis HaMikdash – you must say that Dovid comes first.” This teaches us that the above section in the Gemara brings no proof that the *is’chalta d’Geula* or the rebuilding of Yerushalayim comes before Moshiach.

4. The question from Talmud Yerushalmi, Maaser Sheini, was already explained in the letter from the Rebbe Rashab, who writes that the Talmud Yerushalmi says that the Beis HaMikdash will be rebuilt before



the complete restoration of the kingdom of Dovid over the entire Jewish People. For when the Beis HaMikdash will be rebuilt, before the ingathering of the exiles, the kingdom of Dovid will still not be complete. Only when the exiles have been gathered and the throne of Dovid will be properly established in Yerushalayim will his kingdom be complete.

5. In connection with what you cited from the G’vuros Ari, who agrees with the Yerushalmi that the building of the Beis HaMikdash will precede the kingdom of Dovid, this is essentially the question of the

Gemara in Taanis regarding the fact that Kohanim who know which day their family is obligated to serve in the Beis HaMikdash are forbidden to drink wine on that day, since the Beis HaMikdash might be built on that day, and it is forbidden for someone intoxicated to serve in the Beis HaMikdash. The G’vuros Ari asks: Since Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Yehoshua have differing opinions regarding whether the Beis HaMikdash will be rebuilt in Nissan or Tishrei. Therefore, shouldn’t the entire year be free of the prohibition against drinking wine except for these two months? His answer: The disagreement regarding Nissan or Tishrei is only regarding the coming of Moshiach, whereas the Beis HaMikdash (which according to the Yerushalmi will be rebuilt before Moshiach’s coming) can be built at any time during the year, thus restricting the drinking of wine. Furthermore, the gaon, the Baal Kli Chemda comments on the G’vuros Ari (Parshas Shmini 3): “I am perplexed by the Master, who is all Talmud, as it is clear to him that the whole world reasons according to the Yerushalmi – that the building of the Beis HaMikdash will be before Moshiach comes.” Yet, the Kli Chemda brings a proof against this from the Gemara (Z’vachim 45a), where Abbey asks: “Are all [laws of] **slaughtering sacrifices** now not to be taught; this is a halacha [for the time of] **Moshiach**?” Rashi’s commentary: “He established for us a halacha that we will need in the days of Moshiach **when the Beis HaMikdash will be built**, but now we do not need it.” As is explained, according to Abbaye, before Moshiach comes, there will be no need for the slaughtering of sacrifices whatsoever.” Thus, in Gemara Taanis, Abbaye agrees with the law prohibiting Kohanim from drinking wine (and on the contrary, he deduces as Rabbi [Yehuda HaNasi] does – that were it not for a side reason stated there, a Kohen who

does not know when his family's turn is for avoda, it is forbidden for him to drink wine **forever**), and Abbayei is the one who says in Z'vachim that the laws of slaughtering sacrifices are only relevant for Moshiach. Thus, one can not argue in Taanis that the prohibition against drinking wine is connected with the fact that the Beis HaMikdash will be rebuilt before the coming of Moshiach, **and the position of the G'vuros Ari is rejected.**

### ZIONISM IS A CULT OF HERETICS

In the *Tzafnas Paneiach* responsa (Sec. 69) of the great Torah scholar, R. **Yosef Ruzhin from Rogatchov**, of blessed memory, he writes: "I have received your letter about the depraved cult, which calls itself Zionism. This is not for naught, only because of what Rashi writes in Yuma 77b – that Zion is outside of Yerushalayim, which is in the 'shuk ha'elyon' (literally, higher marketplace), as brought in the Yerushalmi (Sh'kalim 8:1). This is the whole concept of goyim, as brought there – for the known heretics were in the *shuk ha'elyon* of every location."

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# NOW, YOU'RE THE PROJECT!

BY AVROHOM REINITZ

*“I told Yaron that as soon as I arrived in Eretz Yisroel I would go to him to correct it, but Yaron said that every second I waited I was transgressing a prohibition that entails excision of the soul!” \* An amazing story that I heard from the person it happened to, a shliach in Eretz Yisroel who, for obvious reasons, wishes to remain anonymous.*

My story begins three years ago, shortly before Pesach 5763. A representative of the organization Bris Yosef Yitzchok came to the community I live in for a fundraising Shabbos. Bris Yosef Yitzchok performs brissin on young and old around the world and during the Shabbos, the person told us about their work and about the large sums of money, which they need to do their work. He asked people to make a one-time donation or to commit to donations in installments.

People were impressed by what he said, by the thrilling stories of brissin that took place in far-off places or for Jews who are not yet observant, and on Motzaei Shabbos they brought their donations. I decided to commit to making donations in installments and I was happy to have an “investment” in this

wonderful organization.

The next day I went to give out shmura matza to my mekuravim. Among other places, I also went to a certain yishuv in the jurisdiction of my shlichus. Since I arrived very late, I left the matzos with my contact person at the yishuv and asked him to give them out to my mekuravim and to leave one package for the public seider the yishuv would have.

When I left his house for the parking lot, a young man suddenly appeared from a dark side road and he began to walk along with me. I was a little nervous since I didn't know him or what he wanted. It was an awkward situation.

After walking along together for a while, the stranger asked me in English, “Rabbi, maybe you can help me.”

I thought he needed help at the yishuv and I told him that I didn't live there. He said he didn't need help at the yishuv but for something else, a religious matter. He tried to express himself but couldn't find the right words.

Since it was obvious that he wasn't Israeli and I could see that he was so uncomfortable in his attempts to explain himself, and since I had just heard the amazing stories about Bris Yosef Yitzchok, I gently asked him whether perhaps he wanted help with a bris mila.

“Yes, yes!” he exclaimed and he wondered how I was able to figure out what he was trying to say.

I was very moved by this hashgacha pratis. Just the night before I had signed to a commitment to Bris Yosef Yitzchok and here was an opportunity for me to be actually involved with someone who wanted a bris.

I told him that I knew someone who would arrange it all for him – and for free! I asked him to come with me to my car and we would call him.

On the way to the car, I asked where he was from and he told me that his name was Yaakov Marvizi and he had come from Serbia to volunteer at the yishuv. He said the chief rabbi of Yugoslavia knew him and could testify to his being Jewish.

We got to the car and I immediately called Bris Yosef Yitzchok. The director of the organization, Rabbi Yaron Amit, is very practical and he clarified some points. When he heard that Yaakov knew the name of the chief rabbi of Yugoslavia and that he could testify to his being Jewish, he was very excited because he had just spoken to that rabbi a few hours earlier.

He asked the young man to fax him his birth certificate, to give him his cell phone number, and said the organization would take care of the rest.

I was happy to connect the two of

We were all touched, how from a small donation to an organization I had merited to provide them with a “customer” the very next day.

A few months later, I went to South America to fundraise. I was hosted by the local shliach and on Shabbos in shul, I told of the hashgacha pratit I had experienced. One of the people there was very excited by my story and after Shabbos gave me two donations, one for my work and one that he asked me to give to Bris Yosef Yitzchok.

From South America, I went to Miami. I went to The Shul, as Rabbi Lipskar’s beautiful shul is called, and

remained of the six men. For many hours, Israeli soldiers combed the area for body parts in order to bury them.

I heard this news item and a few hours later, when they read the names of the dead, I was shocked to hear that Yaakov Marvizi from Yugoslavia was one of them. I immediately called Yaron Amit and told him about the tragedy. We mourned his death together and the only consolation was that at least he was killed as a Jew with a bris mila.

“Who knows,” said Yaron, “maybe his soul came down to the world just for this mitzva and it was our z’chus to be able to help him.”

Some months went by and shortly before Pesach, I went to Miami again to fundraise. On my last day there, I went to Rabbi Lipskar’s shul in the morning and once again, I met Yaron Amit. We spoke about this and that and then got to talking once again about Yaakov Marvizi

The conversation veered to the topic of the problem of brissin performed on babies from kibbutzim. Yaron told me that often, non-observant doctors perform the circumcision on these babies, which in itself is a problem. In addition, many of these doctors do not circumcise according to halacha and often, even after being circumcised as a baby, they are considered an *arel* (uncircumcised) by halacha.

Yaron said, “Those who know that their bris was not performed by a G-d-fearing mohel, should verify whether they are circumcised according to halacha.”

This last line made me perk up. I was born on a kibbutz and became a baal t’shuva in my youth. I remembered that when I asked my mother about my bris mila, she said that they had not planned on doing it but the doctor who had come to check on the babies born at the kibbutz, suggested that the bris be

### YAAKOV MARVIZI

Yaakov Marvizi was born in 1979 in Novi Sad, Serbia. At the end of the war in Yugoslavia he left the Serbian army, where he had served in an elite unit and decided to follow his dream and make aliya.

Yaakov arrived alone in Eretz Yisroel in the winter of 5762 and a half a year later, he enlisted in the army. He yearned to use his knowledge in order to save Jews from Arab terrorists and he insisted on joining a combat unit.

On 20 Iyar 5764, he was killed along with four buddies when they drove over explosives in the Zeitun neighborhood in the southern part of the Gaza Strip. His mother requested that he be buried in the Jewish cemetery in Novi Sad.



them and to help another Jew undergo the bris of Avrohom Avinu, and I went on my way.

The following Shabbos, at the farbrengen that takes place in my community, I told of the wonderful hashgacha pratit that I had experienced. When I finished, someone got up and said that he works as a driver for Bris Yosef Yitzchok and the previous Tuesday he went to that yishuv to take the Yugoslavian for his bris mila.

“You can relax,” said the driver. “The bris went fine and I brought him back to the yishuv.”

was surprised to meet none other than Yaron Amit, the director of Bris Yosef Yitzchok. I was happy to see him and I gave him the donation that I had received on his behalf and told him why I had it.

A year went by and on 20 Iyar 5764, May 11, 2004 there was a tragic news item of an armored personnel carrier which exploded when driving over a 100-kilo explosive device, killing the six soldiers in it. The story was particularly awful in that Hamas terrorists gleefully played with the body parts they found before the cameras, though nearly nothing

done and they agreed. Now that I heard what Yaron had to say, I was afraid my bris might not have been done properly.

"I was born on a kibbutz..." I said to Yaron. When he heard the details, he said it was important to check it out. Well, after checking, it turned out, to my horror, that my bris was not done properly. I cannot begin to describe to you how awful I felt. I had been living nearly fifty years, many decades as a chareidi Jew, a shliach of the Rebbe, one who helped thousands of Jews perform mitzvos, one who had organized brissin for dozens of families, and I discovered that I was not properly circumcised!

I told Yaron that as soon as I arrived in Eretz Yisroel I would go to him to correct it, but Yaron said that every second I waited I was transgressing a prohibition that entails excision of the soul!

"You must take care of this now!" he said in no uncertain terms.

I still hadn't absorbed the import of what he had told me and I said,

***Yaron stopped me and said decisively, "Forget about your mekuravim and all your projects. Now, you're the project!"***

"But I have a flight to New York in a few hours and have to urgently meet with some mekuravim." However, Yaron stopped me and said decisively, "Forget about your mekuravim and all your projects. Now, you are the project!"

When I recovered a bit from the shock, Yaron was in the midst of making a bunch of phone calls. Within a few minutes, he said to me, "In another two hours there will be a room available for you at a private clinic, here in the area. You'll have an expert mohel, sandek, and a minyan. You are invited to your own bris!"

As Yaron said, at twelve noon I arrived at the private clinic where the surgeon and some other Jews were waiting for me. I underwent the bris that was done with a cup of wine and the brachos. Mazal tov!

A few hours later, I was able to take my flight to New York and for the first time in my life, I walked into 770 properly circumcised.

This Pesach, as I sat with my family, I thought of the hashgacha pratis that had saved me from a severe prohibition. But what about other baalei t'shuva like myself who were not aware of this problem. It's very likely that others have the same problem I had.

I decided to tell *Beis Moshiach* my story so people will know about it and get the message out.

In this merit "May the Merciful One send us His anointed one who walks in perfection, in the merit of the blood of circumcision, to bring good tidings and consolation to a unique people, dispersed and scattered among the nations."

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# MOTHER OF THEM ALL

BY RABBI SHNEUR ZALMAN CHANIN

*Gurewitz, Plotkin, Wilschansky, Labkowski, Altheus, Zarchi, Levin, Minkowitz, Kesselman, and Munitz – all are old-time, well-known Chabad families whose histories are “Chassidische stories” in the fullest sense of the term \* In Tashkent all were saved from starvation and illness thanks to the devotion of Mrs. Chanin (nee Nimotin)*

## A DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this article l'ilui nishmas my mother, Chaya Leah bas Rav Shmuel Nimotin (may Hashem avenge his blood), who passed away on 27 Sivan 5757.

The story of my mother's life depicts an extraordinary woman who was modest and a Chassida, devoted to the Rebbe Rayatz and then to the Rebbe MH”M, who with her characteristic t'mimus tried to fulfill their holy words regardless of the circumstances.

She was my father's right hand and helped him to the best of her ability. She was goodhearted in the full sense of the word and excelled in helping others, which entailed personal danger on more than one occasion. Despite her suffering and poor health, she continued to stand out in the mitzva of hospitality, sometimes with mesirus nefesh.

I hope that these stories will serve as a guide for us, her descendents, and by following in her ways and learning from her actions, she will certainly be a good advocate for our family, for long days and good and healthy years.

## FROM THE PLAGUE OF LICE TO A WARM NEST

I will back up a bit, to the time when numerous refugees streamed into Tashkent, some of them also soldiers who fled the front. I recounted a great deal about my father's work and would like to tell in brief of my mother's part – not only as a help and support to my father but also in her own right in her quiet, personal war against the communist empire.

My mother opened her home, fed and provided shelter, and helped heal numerous refugees on a regular basis, indefatigably and with endless devotion. Many Chassidim owe her their lives.

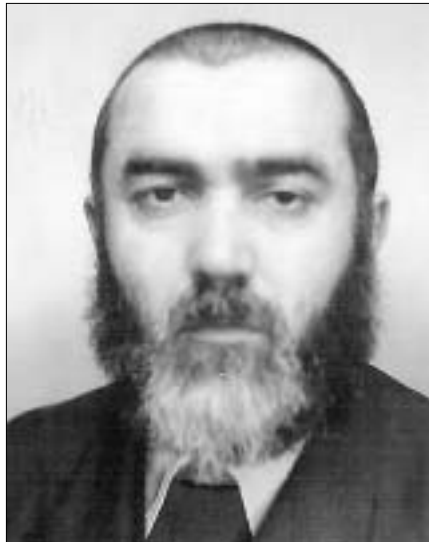
The Chassid, R' Naftali Hertz Minkowitz, his wife Tana (Tanya) and son Leima, for example, arrived in Tashkent starving, after months of not obtaining food except for what they found in the garbage.

R' Hertz Minkowitz was a cousin of my uncle, R' Chaim Minkowitz, the husband of my father's sister. He was also a cousin to Hertz Minkowitz, husband of my aunt Mussia.

As a small boy and even afterwards, I would call my mother's friends “Tzatzte” (“aunt” in Russian), and I called Mrs. Minkowitz, “Aunt Tanya.” I knew she wasn't my aunt



R' Leima Minkowitz



R' Naftali Hertz Minkowitz



R' Chaim Minkowitz

but in my heart I apparently felt the love that she felt for our family.

Aunt Tanya told me on a number of occasions just a little bit of what they experienced on their flight from Moscow and how they arrived in Tashkent, tired, starving, sick, and broken in body and spirit, but then they suddenly saw a ray of light in the guise of my parents. She couldn't properly describe their joy when my father found them at the train station. This is what she said:

"In this strange city we met a friend and not just any friend, but someone from Nevel who was related to us. Your father, who did

not recognize us at first, rejoiced over us as though he had found a treasure. He did not delay but put us in a horse-drawn wagon. He literally revived us.

"The first thing he did was take us to the bathhouse, where we washed after many months of not having water. We were caked with dirt and plagued with diseases and wounds. Can you understand the significance of what he did?

"Your father obtained special soap and disinfectant, I don't know from where, and even got special cream that we smeared on our skin to heal our wounds. Since our

clothes were lice-ridden rags, we had to burn them and he got us clothing. Then he took us to his house and gave us a meal that seemed to me like a meal fit for kings."

### "THIS IS HOW SHE FED US"

"Hertz, my husband," Aunt Tanya continued, "suffered from typhus and had to be in quarantine. Your mother immediately called for a doctor and also obtained medication, which was a headache in itself. Try to get medicine in those days! What can I tell you? You will never be able to understand the situation we were in.

"Thanks to your parents we were literally revived. If our souls remained attached to our emaciated bodies, it's in their merit, for they were Hashem's shluchim ... Your mother devoted herself to my husband because I had no strength to do so. She wasn't afraid of contracting this terrible illness and thus she saved him from certain death."

She went on to say that they lived with my parents for over three months until they had gained strength and took an apartment. Until this day, I don't understand



how my parents were able to make them feel comfortable when they all had to squeeze into a tiny apartment under difficult conditions.

On another occasion, when her son Yosef was in the hospital after a car accident, I went to visit him on Shabbos after the Rebbe's farbrengen. He was in critical condition, burnt on parts of his body, and his mother stood and fed him.

When I walked in she began to cry and she said:

"Now I'm reminded how your mother fed us when we arrived in Tashkent, swollen with hunger. We didn't have the strength to eat on our own. Leima was a skinny baby at the time, a bundle of skin and bones, barely alive, and your mother stood all day and fed him, like this, with a teaspoon, slowly and patiently.

"At first she even had to feed us and to make sure that we didn't overeat and cause ourselves harm. And this wasn't just for a day or two. We stayed in your parents' house for a few months until we regained our strength.

"I was sick with a serious illness and in order to treat me you needed strong nerves and lots of patience. It was only your mother's good-heartedness and patience that saved me. She worked for endless hours and took care of me until I slowly returned to my strength. Until this day I don't understand where she got her strength from and don't think we were the only sick people in her house."

### **THEY THREW IT INTO THE STREET**

My father's friend, R' Shmuel Betzalel Altheus also came with his family to my parents at that time and lived there for a few months. R' Shmuel Betzalel was injured in the war and as a wounded veteran it

was easier for him to move about on the streets of Mother Russia, and so he avoided continued service in the army and arrived in Tashkent.

Likewise, R' Shlomo Chaim Kesselman's two sons, Berel a"h and Velvel, were regular guests of my mother for the duration of the war. The Chassid R' Sholom Ber Vishedsky told me that he would also go to my mother every day and since he was a little boy she gave him not only food but also sugar or chocolate, products that weren't readily available.

"In your parents' house," he told me, "they considered other people more important than themselves."

*When R' Nachum Zalman was forcibly drafted, he vowed to say T'hillim in any free time that he had and asked Hashem to save him in this merit.*

The family of Rav Nachum Zalman Gurewitz stayed with my parents for a long period of time until their father, R' Nachum Zalman, arrived from the front after the war and reunited with them.

I heard from my father that when R' Nachum Zalman was forcibly drafted, he vowed to say T'hillim in any free time that he had and asked Hashem to save him in this merit. One time, when he was traveling on a train and was busy saying T'hillim, someone from the NKVD came in and asked him what he was doing with that book and why he was mumbling to himself.

R' Nachum Zalman didn't lose his cool and said, "I am praying that Hitler lose the war and that Stalin win," and the man left him alone.

I heard from my parents that R' Nachum Zalman arrived from the front decorated with medals of rank and bravery, and was proud of them. On Shabbos Chol HaMoed Sukkos, when the Chassidim had a bit to drink, they ripped off his insignia and medals and threw them into the street.

### **"ENTRY PERMIT" IN EXCHANGE FOR A HAND GRINDER**

The Chassid Rav Avrohom Eliyahu Plotkin with his Rebbetzin and children, came to our house directly from exile. He was sick and emaciated, and stayed in my parents' house until he recovered, thanks to my father who managed to get doctors and medicine.

After a few months of staying with us, he went to Samarkand to his daughter, Luba (wife of R' Yehoshua Pinson). After a short stay there, his younger daughter got sick and he sent her to my father, accompanied by her married sister (Luba) so he could find doctors and medicine for her.

My mother cared for her devotedly for months but sadly, she did not recover and passed away.

Rav Betzalel Wilschansky, one of the elder Chassidim and one of the first talmidim in Tomchei T'mimim, arrived in Tashkent after Pesach with his family and stayed in my parents' house for Yom Tov. They said about R' Betzalel that he was a mekubal and most of what he did was based on Kabbala.

In any case, he was a certainly a G-d-fearing man who was extremely careful in his mitzva observance year round and all the more so on Pesach. He was happy to be with my father after wandering for months

on the road and arriving bereft of everything, yet he was afraid lest the hiddurim of Pesach wouldn't be up to his standard.

Since he was a refined man and a Chassid, he didn't want to offend anyone, especially not those who provided him and his family with a respite, so to simply sniff around the kitchen wouldn't do. What did he do? He went to my mother and diffidently said that since he could not help with the expenses of the Yom Tov, and he did not want to be a parasite, he wanted to offer his special hand-grinder for Pesach. In this way, he thought he would have an excuse to enter the kitchen and check and see whether the hiddurim were up to his standards.

My mother, who was a clever woman, knew what R' Betzalel was up to and she said, "Betzalel, you're concerned about my hiddurim for Pesach? Did you forget where I came from? I was raised in the Nimotin home!"

That year, Anash baked a large amount of matzos for Pesach and it seemed as though the amount they baked would be enough for the entire holiday. However, on Erev Yom Tov so many refugees came, from all over Russia, that on Chol HaMoed they had to bake additional matzos.

(By the way, I heard at home that during the war years, when starvation was rampant, it was not possible to be particular about not eating *gebrochts* (matza that came into contact with water). Every crumb was so precious that my mother and aunt would gather every matza crumb and would put them in the soup so they wouldn't be wasted.)

Rav Nachum Labkowski and his family and son Yisroel came to Tashkent too and lived with us for a few months until my father arranged an apartment for them. We also had R' Yisroel Meir Munitz as a regular

resident. He was an older bachur and had no family and apartment of his own.

## WEDDING FOR A DESERTER

Rav Meir Zarchi was on the wanted list since he was a deserter from the army. He had been drafted during the war, serving as a soldier in the Red Army until he managed to escape the front and arrived in Tashkent. In Tashkent, he had no relatives, so where should he go? Some people gave him Chaikel's address.

R' Meir had to be hidden since



**R' Betzalel Wilschansky**

he was a deserter. My mother took on this task and hid him in her house in a locked room with closed shutters. Only after midnight did he dare emerge and my father took him for a walk outdoors every night to get some fresh air.

R' Meir lived with us for a year or more, until Muma Sarah made a shidduch with him and her niece Luba Raskin. The wedding took place at my parents' house with great pomp, relative to the conditions of those days. My parents were also those who accompanied the couple to the chuppa. My

mother and aunt took care of the wedding and the meal. They obtained ingredients, baked and cooked, and prepared a meal fit for a king.

R' Binyamin Levin (son of Feitel) was from Nevel and since he was a native of Nevel like my father, our home was his home when he came to Tashkent. R' Binyamin was young and strong and since he was of draft age and this was wartime, he was in constant fear of being caught by the military police.

My mother didn't think of the consequences of what could happen if he was caught hiding in her home and he lived with us for a while until he found another apartment.

R' Binyamin had a wonderful voice and he was an exceptional baal t'filla. No wonder that he was the baal t'filla for Anash during the Yomim Nora'im, Yomim Tovim, and on Shabbasos. When my mother remembered his davening, she would shed tears. His davening came from a broken heart. This sort of davening managed to play on the heartstrings of each of the Chassidim, and was definitely accepted On High.

In 1946, after the war, the Chassidim felt some relief since all the members of the police force accepted bribes and looked away from our Torah observance, to the point that we publicly built sukkos without fear. This hadn't been done since the communists rose to power. That year the Chassidim sang and danced, and went from sukka to sukka to farbreng.

The friendship between R' Binyanim and my parents continued for years, even after they parted ways and R' Binyamin went to Eretz Yisroel. In 5716-7, when he came with his brother Leibel to Paris, I think it was to collect money for Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim, they stayed in our house for a few

months. This was despite the fact that our apartment consisted of one room, and all the residents of the house shared the kitchen and bathroom facilities.

### GUARDING THE TREASURE

R' Yosef Motchkin told me that when they arrested him in Tashkent and put him behind bars, they began to interrogate him. They asked him many questions about his father, R' Peretz, what he did, how he supported himself, who were his friends, etc.

Since R' Peretz was the treasurer of the yeshiva and the money for Tomchei T'mimim was in his possession, his son realized that he had to find a way to tell his father, as quickly as possible, that he had to beware, because the secret police were interested in him. Somehow, he managed to convey this message to his father.

R' Peretz heard the news and realized that in order not to endanger the edifice of Tomchei T'mimim, he had to get rid of the money immediately. He urgently needed someone honest, someone who would be above suspicion. He thought of giving the money to my mother since she ran the cheider anyway and was involved with



R' Peretz Motchkin

public monies and guarded them well. Since this was the case, what difference did it make how much money she watched over?

R' Peretz secretly met with my mother and told her that he had to give her the money since they were watching him. He told her that she was considered responsible and trustworthy by Anash and by him and he thought she was the right person for the job. He added that the local Uzbek NKVD officials would not suspect that a woman had the money and was involved with religious matters, and so he

asked her to take the money.

However, my mother was fearful. Not even her own money and my father's money was kept in the house, but was hidden with some widows that nobody would suspect, like Rebbetzin Bracha Morosov, the widow of R' Elchonon Morosov, or Mrs. Chasia Pruss, the widow of R' Shneur Zalman Pruss. In exchange for this, my father supported them.

R' Peretz worked on convincing my mother. He said that she should not tell her husband about it and he promised that the Rebbeim, the ones in charge of Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim, would watch over her. In this merit, he added, Chaikel's money would also be preserved. Since everything had to be done in a natural manner and he did not think she would come under suspicion, and the chance of her being caught was small, he asked her to take the money.

So my mother became the treasurer for the yeshiva until they left Tashkent. And all those years, my mother kept this a secret from my father and he did not find out about it until I told him about it, after I heard about it from R' Yoske Motchkin. He asked my mother and she confirmed the story.

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# RAANAN'S PUPPETS

BY NOSSON AVROHOM

*Raanan Ziv grew up in Kiryat Bialik in a non-observant home. When he became religious, his love for theater is something he set aside, until the time was right. Now he performs with puppets, combining professionalism with Chassidishkai.*

Up until recently, shluchim had to hire performers who were not Chassidish or even frum for their Lag B'Omer parades and rallies. The pickings were slim and when they hired these performers, they had to discuss with them what was and was not appropriate for their audience. Even after a discussion like this, shluchim held their breath throughout



Raanan with his puppets

the performance, praying that nothing would be offensive.

In recent years though, you can find more and more Lubavitcher performers who know their craft and put on not only a professional show but one that is Jewish and Chassidish. It seems as though today the market is rich with producers and kosher productions of a high caliber.

One of these Lubavitcher performers is Raanan Ziv, who has designed a first-rate puppet theater. In the past seven years, he has written and produced puppet shows, all with Torah content. In an interview for the English edition of *Arutz Sheva*, Raanan said, “We, as Chabad Chassidim, look at everything as a shlichus, so that is how I view my performances.”

Indeed, it’s not hard to find the Jewish messages in his shows, even when the plots are not taken directly from Torah sources.

“Generally, the things that are popular lose their Jewish content. I know many artists who started off with Jewish content and when it appeared to them that it wasn’t being well received, they dropped it. I see a lot of *siyata d’Shmaya* in my work and have found myself able to combine professional quality along with a Jewish message that the children take in.”

During the past seven years, Raanan has appeared hundreds of times before various audiences. At many places, he has become the regular performer at local events. His shows leave a big smile on the faces of adults as well as the children. Ask someone who has seen him perform! His creativity and professionalism along with his sense of mission work well together.

“My goal is that each show should be interesting and bring a smile to the children’s faces. I don’t want to do stories about pain and sadness. We have enough of that in real life.”

\* \* \*

Raanan was born 34 years ago in

***“We, as Chabad Chassidim, look at everything as a shlichus, so that is how I view my performances.”***

Kiryat Bialik. Like many of his peers, he had no connection to Torah and mitzvos. He grew up in a home with a Leftist atmosphere. He always loved acting and at the Ort-Bialik high school he attended, there was a program for artists where he studied theater.

When he turned 16, he became acquainted with Chabad for the first time and was mekurav to Yiddishkait, helped along by Rabbi Shmuel Frumer and Rabbi Dovid Drukman. His friends, who had predicted greatness for him in acting, told him how disappointed they were, but he knew what he wanted.

He went to the yeshiva g’dola in Kiryat Gat and spent his K’vutza year in 770 in 5752, an experience he

describes as, “a year that had the greatest impact on my life.”

After he married, he moved to the yishuv Karmel, located in Har Chevron. They quickly learned of Raanan’s special talents in working with children and he was appointed as Director of Torah Culture for the local council. Raanan approached this position as a shliach would, in every way. For example, when he took the job there were fifty shiurim and Torah activities for the children. When he left the job, there were 250 activities!

Since his work with children was informal and out of school hours, he had to think of many creative ideas to attract them. After many years of abandoning the world of acting, he was back into it again.

After leaving Har Chevron for Arad in the south, Raanan decided to work with puppets. “A puppet can be used to convey any message that you like and this fascinated me,” he explained to me as I reviewed some of his shows.

He started his performances with a few makeshift puppets. After a few years, when his mother retired after having worked for years in education, he tried to convince her to learn how to make puppets.

“Puppets can be divided into a

## SHLICHUS IN THE SOUTH

Most of Raanan’s performances take place in the center of the country. When I asked him why he lives in Arad in the south that is so far away he answered that he lives in Arad because of clear answers from the Rebbe.

“Just recently I wrote to the Rebbe that the long trips to the center of the country are exhausting and in the answer I opened to the Rebbe explains the advantage of the south.

“Lately, as I have begun to work along with other actors in the area, I am starting to understand the Rebbe’s answers. It’s the kind of answer that you can’t understand at first.

“In Arad there is an artists’ quarter, which looks like a plane hangar, where each artist gets his or her own space. I also got a place like this and being there is a shlichus in itself. I work on performances with the local TV and only recently I began working with an actor by the name of Inbar Tzabari, who became a baal t’shuva.”

number of categories. There are marionettes (puppets moved by string or by hand), puppets with moveable mouths, and hand puppets worn as gloves or on the fingers. I decided to use mouth puppets.”

At first, his mother wasn't interested. She wanted to relax. But Raanan took the Rebbe's approach that retirement is no good, neither spiritually nor physically, and that a person must find something to be occupied with. She finally gave in to his request and went to a special school for theater in Cholon.

“Her initial plan was to study for

lives in Arad and to whom I owe a lot of my expertise (in general, our community is blessed with artists). The first performance we did was about Avrohom Avinu and was called ‘Chasdei Avos.’

After Raanan's brief review of his background, we asked who his intended audience was. Raanan immediately responded, “Everybody. From plays in Yiddish for chareidi Talmud Torahs in Yerushalayim to places without Yiddishkai. I adjust my scripts for each type of audience, choosing scripts that suit them, because what suits one does not

and were likely to think of it as another way that chareidim extract money. So we turned the tz'daka into 'helping others.' Hachnasas Orchim is something very accepted among even the non-observant Jews in Israel.

“Since I don't rely on prerecorded voices for my shows, I can easily make changes. The only thing I play that is prerecorded is the background music.”

For seven years, Raanan has been working in theater in various productions and has worked on comedy and children's videos for the chareidi crowd. We asked him about feedback he has received.

Raanan smiled and said, “The feedback is encouraging, baruch Hashem. There are different sorts of reactions. There are emotional ones, when I see people with tears in their eyes. There are times that I do a show and it all works like a dream with everybody laughing at the right places and clapping when they're supposed to, and this is also a measure of success.

“I recently produced a CD called *Haflei VaFeleh*, which is about the need to see the good in people.

“I came to realize that every script that I write is affected by my study of Chassidus every morning with my chavrusa, the actor Michael Vigel. The idea for the CD came after weeks of our learning sichos of the Rebbe on the topic of Ahavas Yisroel. On the jacket of the CD it says that children who wrote to me about a limud z'chus that they did would get a prize.

“One day I got a letter from an eight-year-old girl from a yishuv in Yehuda-Shomron, saying that for six months she did not speak with her classmate because she had gone ahead of her in line for bus. After seeing the CD, she decided to be melamed z'chus and make shalom with her. That's an example of a reaction that touches me, and there are many more.”

How do you combine the two, the professional quality and the Jewish content?



**Raanan Ziv receiving kos shel bracha from the Rebbe.**

only three months, but her creativity drew her into learning more and she ended up staying four years! She studied with the biggest experts in Eretz Yisroel in this field. I myself became an expert through my mother's knowledge and through private lessons that I took with the same teachers.

“As I said, I work primarily with mouth puppets. It's a relatively new genre, which has become very popular recently in the US.

“I started out together with actor Yehuda Katzenstein, a Lubavitcher who

necessarily suit another.

“Sometimes I take a certain scene and make slight but necessary changes to it. I'll give you an example. I often appear in kindergartens and schools in Raanana for Chabad in that city. Before Pesach I showed the kindergarten children all the components of the seider night and the various customs, all of this in an experiential way, of course. One of the displays was the mitzva of tz'daka, maos chitim.

“The teachers and students in that school didn't understand it too well

“It’s difficult but possible. The market today is very shallow. To combine humor that is clean and tasteful but not create a ‘moshav leitzim’ is a bit of a challenge, but like I said, I feel that my work is a shlichus. And baruch Hashem, I am successful.

“In the movie I produced there is a part about limud z’chus in which you see a person on the phone with a clown who looks and speaks like a child, and proceeds to drive him crazy. The clown is melamed z’chus time after time but when the man continues bothering him, he decides to stop being melamed z’chus.

“In the end, when the clown gets home he realizes that the person who bothered him only wanted to help him. The ending is very funny and the idea is that kids should learn to be melamed z’chus on one another, even if at first they don’t understand.

“By the way, I heard that people call each other and act out that part of the movie. That in itself encourages me. I realize that people have gotten the message and this is what I pray for and hope I am able to continue doing this.

“At nearly every children’s rally, I make sure to say the 12 P’sukim with the children, as the Rebbe said to do. Obviously, in many places it is

***“To combine humor that is clean and tasteful but not create a ‘moshav leitzim’ is a bit of a challenge, but like I said, I feel that my work is a shlichus. And baruch Hashem, I am successful.”***

impossible because the children will not cooperate, so I have a puppet say the p’sukim and then the children participate.”

When Raanan performs in a place that is not religious, not only is the program full of Jewish content but his very appearance makes an impact. Raanan shows them that religious Jews don’t bite but can even be funny, and this is a great achievement as far as he is concerned.

And how does Raanan prepare the world for Geula with his puppets? Raanan answered this question with no hesitation.

“First of all, in every performance

there is a lot of Ahavas Yisroel, tz’daka, limud z’chus, and of course all these things hasten the Geula. Secondly, I’ll tell you about a special performance that I do year-round, especially during the Three Weeks. The show is about Yirmiyahu based on the Midrash about the churban. I end the show on an optimistic note because we are Chassidim of the Rebbe and cannot end on a sad note. When it’s finished, Yirmiyahu davens with the children for the Geula and for Yerushalayim to be rebuilt. The show makes things real and it draws the children into the wonderful atmosphere of Geula, not only from the perspective of hoping for it.”

What are Raanan’s plans for the future?

“First, Moshiach needs to come! Second, I also learn in the kollel in Arad and I seek to progress in my learning. As far as professional ambitions, I would like to make puppet shows for adults too.

“In the secular world it’s a trend that’s taking off. Obviously, it has to be very high quality and handled seriously, but I believe that if it’s done right, you can convey any message and the puppets are a terrific tool that enable us to convey messages of inyanei Moshiach and Geula.”



Raanan performing with his puppets

# LIVING IN THE SHADOW OF THE FIGHTER JETS

BY NOSSON AVRAHAM

TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY

*Since the establishment of the Israel Defense Forces, there have been many air force pilots and commanders who live in personnel neighborhoods together with their families, in order that the pilots can be ready to be called suddenly into action at any moment. Over the years, the claims have continued to grow that “raising children in a military atmosphere is most unpleasant.” With such expressions in the background, various suggestions have recently been examined for alternative living arrangements – a matter that the Rebbe spoke about decades ago with much dissatisfaction.*

In recent months, there have been numerous reports originating from the offices of top-ranking officers in the Israeli Air Force, discussing a revolutionary proposal to transfer the families of pilots and their commanders from their living quarters on the military bases to

special off-base neighborhoods that will be erected for them.

As is known, the large air force bases have personnel neighborhoods, where the pilots live together with their families, in order that they can be ready to be called suddenly into action at any

moment.

Over the years, the claims have continued to grow that “raising children in a military atmosphere is most unpleasant.” With such expressions in the background, various suggestions have recently been examined for alternative living arrangements, including a most serious proposal currently under consideration to erect a civilian neighborhood for pilots, located near one of the bases in the southern region of the country. The willingness of the air force commanders and the high command to take the pilot families off the base has increased significantly in recent days, due to a variety of entangling affairs for the air force and these base families.

This interesting development reminds many of the yechidus that the Rebbe MH”M granted in 5735 to Brigadier General Ran Pakar, air force commander in Tel Nof and one of the highest ranking IAF pilots at that time. During that yechidus, the Rebbe discussed the matter of the pilot families’ living arrangements (as transcribed by

Gen. Pakar himself):

“The Rebbe asked that I should tell him about my personal life. He wanted to hear about my wife and children, and inquired particularly into the on-base lifestyle and the difficulties in educating children within such a framework. He claimed that it is not good to educate and raise children on a military base. Even if we plant flowers and grow grass, they are still in the shadows of the jets. How can we educate them for peace if they grow up in an atmosphere of war?”

“I explained to the Rebbe about the problems and importance of preparedness. He did not accept this, claiming that a solution can be reached through a duty roster for on-base personnel. The families must be taken off the base and place them in a nearby civilian settlement. The problem of the defense alert can be solved through technological innovations.”

While this subject was raised every few years in the past, it was always ruled out immediately thereafter when the air force commanders stubbornly declared that despite the difficulties, the reality of the situation demands that high-ranking officers and pilots must actually live on the bases.

In contrast, the Rebbe saw things quite differently, and as in many other instances, everyone sees now how right the Rebbe was. During Ran Pakar’s amazing yechidus with the Rebbe, lasting more than two hours, the Rebbe related to many subjects on life in Eretz Yisroel, including military matters.

A few months ago, Ran Pakar was interviewed on a radio program hosted by several chassidim on the Eilat-based Voice of the Red Sea radio station. During the course of

***“He claimed that it is not good to educate and raise children on a military base. Even if we plant flowers and grow grass, they are still in the shadows of the jets. How can we educate them for peace if they grow up in an atmosphere of war?”***

the interview, he repeated what he had said in the past: If people would have asked him to describe the experience of meeting with the Rebbe, he might compare it to the experience of flying in an F-15 fighter jet, where he spent most of his time during his military service.

It was very exciting to hear his impressions after he left yechidus: “I especially felt the magnitude of this event when I left, and I saw the faces of the young men learning there. The expressions on their faces seemed to tell me: ‘We’re here for an entire year, and when we are finally privileged to go in to see the Rebbe, we write our requests on a slip of paper, and the meeting lasts from one to three minutes. Yet, this ‘apikores’ from Kfar Vitkin suddenly comes along, a brigadier general in the air force, and sits





with the Rebbe for two hours and twenty minutes!’ This was indeed a great honor.

“The Rebbe didn’t take his eyes off of me during the entire meeting. The subject matter was very interesting. I was pleased that I could have a discussion with him. This was a surprise for me, as I was not expecting that the Lubavitcher Rebbe would speak about strategic, tactical, or political issues. Yet, he was quite expert in details and names. I would like to point out that the connection that began then continues to this very day. In every place I have been, Chabad chassidim have remembered to send me shmura matza for Pesach, made sure that I had kosher mezuzos, etc. Before I went out on a government mission, I participated in a seminar in Kfar Chabad, going

through all the relevant subjects in Jewish tradition. When I landed in the United States, I received a prayer kit: kippa, siddur, tallis, t’fillin, etc. I see Chabad’s work reaching every location, as they preserve the existence of Judaism.”

It turns out that now many military families no longer live on the bases. In an article from about a year ago by *Maariv*, correspondent Itzik Saban, under the headline, “A New Air Force Phenomenon,” writes: “Pilots are abandoning the on-base living quarters, once considered prestigious, preferring instead to live in rental apartments off the base. Among other things, the on-base neighborhoods were designed to enable pilots and key military officials to be close by and ready in various situations of preparedness for military action.

However, in recent years, the quality of life in these settings has worsened. In contrast to the past, when the base provided all local services, families living on base now must carry the burden, even paying for expenses such as electricity, telephone, tuition, and maintenance – all supplied by local authorities.

“The dwellings themselves have neither changed nor been renovated in decades for lack of funds. According to air force sources, the demand for places in these on-base neighborhoods has been dwindling. ‘Off the base, you can find more spacious apartments and a better quality of life,’ they say. ‘Unlike in the past, you have to pressure and convince the army personnel to stay.’”