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The international weekly heralding the coming of Mashiach
BEIS MOSHIACH

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U.S.A

744 Eastern Parkway
Brooklyn, NY 11213-3409
Tel: (718) 778-8000
Fax: (718) 778-0800
admin@beismoshiach.org
www.beismoshiach.org

ERETZ HA'KODESH

ת.ד. 102 כפר חב"ד 72915
טלפון: (03) 9607-290
פקס: (03) 9607-289

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF:

M.M. Hendel

ENGLISH EDITOR:

Boruch Merkur
editor@beismoshiach.org

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BEYOND THE DESERT

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



[Continued from last week]

10. Now, from the fact that the Torah, which is (an) eternal (teaching), relates the story about the spies and the generation of the desert, as well as the response of Yehoshua and Kaleiv to their claim, it is understood that it is within the power of every single Jew to conduct themselves according to what was required of Yehoshua and Kaleiv, surpassing the heights of the service of the spies (and the generation of the desert), which is [described as being] “an extremely lofty level.”

That is to say that this advantage of fulfilling Mitzvos that require action in the land they were entering – “the land is exceedingly good” (“*tova ha'aretz m'od m'od*,” [the word “*m'od*” being] repeated) – is not only for those whose entrance into the land comes after being in the desert (and for forty years), but it exists within every single Jew. For when one fulfills Mitzvos with acceptance of the yoke of Heaven, because so does G-d command, this obedience entails an additional advantage over the cleaving to G-d stemming from the love of Him.

We may assert that this as well is alluded to in the wording of the Rambam:

In continuation of his words regarding “the virtue of Avrohom our Father, whom the Holy One Blessed Be He called ‘His Beloved,’ etc.,” Rambam writes, “This is the virtue regarding which the Holy One Blessed Be He commanded us through Moshe, as it is said, ‘You shall love the L-rd, your G-d’ [VaEschanan 6:5]. At the time when a person loves G-d with a love that is appropriate, immediately he will do all the Mitzvos out of love.” (And in the following law, Rambam continues to explain “How the appropriate love [of G-d is expressed].”) At first glance, however, it is not understood: After writing that “The virtue of this approach is exceedingly great. But not

every Sage merits it,” how does it fit to say, “This is the virtue regarding which...He **commanded us** through Moshe?” All the Jewish people are commanded [to strive to attain] it!

The explanation is that Rambam is coming to relate to us that that which he writes, “But not every Sage merits it,” means **of his own capacity and effort**, but (through and) with the power of the **commandment of G-d** (through Moshe), **every single individual** is capable of attaining it.

11. However, at first glance, further investigation is required. Love [of G-d] is an emotion of the heart, attained through contemplating G-d’s greatness, as Rambam discusses at length at the end of the chapter (likewise in the Laws of the Foundations of the Torah [Chapter 2, beg.]). What then is the meaning of saying that every single Jew is capable of attaining “a love that is appropriate,” a love that is comparable to the especial love of G-d attained by our patriarch Avrohom?

This will be understood in light of what Rambam writes in Law 4: “The Early Sages said: Lest someone say, ‘I hereby am learning Torah in order that I will be wealthy, in order that I will be called “Rabbi,” in order that I shall receive reward in the World to Come,’ the Torah says, ‘to love G-d,’ [meaning that] all that you do should only be out of love [of G-d]. Furthermore, the Sages said, etc., Thus did the great Sages command their understanding disciples, etc.: ‘Do not be as servants who, etc.’”

At first glance, it is a wonder: Why did Rambam wait until after discussing the greatness of the virtue of service out of love (the virtue of our patriarch Avrohom (in Law 2), described as “a love that is appropriate” (in Law 3)) before ruling out the intention of “in order that I will be wealthy and etc.,” and he did not include it in Law 1 in the context of serving out fear, [where it says] “One should not

say, 'I am doing the Mitzvos of the Torah, etc., in order to receive all the blessings, etc.'?"

(For since this is a very low level of serving G-d "not for His sake" (as discussed in Section 6), therefore, he should have ruled out this level of "not for the sake of G-d" before the lengthy discussion about the great virtue of our patriarch Avrohom, "a love that is appropriate.")

We may assert that in this way Rambam emphasizes that the service out of love "which the Holy One Blessed Be He commanded us through Moshe" is relevant to every single Jew, even one who still is at an extremely low level, one who **of his own accord** would "learn Torah in order that I will be wealthy, etc."

The explanation of the matter:

Regarding "a love that is appropriate," there are two levels:

a) The feeling of love in the heart, regarding which it says, "The virtue of this approach is exceedingly great." This is the virtue of Avrohom's distinction, as Rambam elaborates in Law 3: "How is the **appropriate** love [of G-d expressed]? It is that one should love G-d with a love that is overwhelming, extremely powerful, to the extent that his soul is bound in love of G-d, etc."

b) Even regarding one who has not attained the level of Avrohom, to love G-d with a love that is **appropriate** (which brings the person to a state whereby he "acts in accordance with the truth [simply] because it is the truth"), but of his own accord he is at the level whereby he says, "I hereby am learning Torah in order that I will be wealthy, etc." – the Torah instructs even him that "All that you **do** should be **done** only out of love." That is, even one who does not feel in his heart the appropriate love, can, nevertheless, effect in himself to **act** out of love, on account of the fact that thus did the Holy One Blessed Be He command. [This level, whereby one lacks the feeling associated with the appropriate love of G-d, but he

nonetheless acts in accordance with it] resembles the level of "The virtue of this approach is exceedingly great," "he "acts in accordance with the truth [simply] because it is the truth."

And this is what Rambam continues with in the next law (after discussing the concept of service "for the sake of G-d" and "not for His sake": "One should always be involved in Torah and Mitzvos even if it is not for G-d's sake, for as a result of [doing so] not for G-d's sake he will come to [doing so] for G-d's sake"): "Therefore, when educating children and women, as well as ignorant people in general, they are only educated to serve out of fear and

in order to receive a reward, until they are rich with knowledge and they become wise with an abundance of wisdom. Then this secret may be revealed to them little by little. They are to become accustomed to this concept gently, until they grasp Him and know Him and serve Him out of love." For at first glance [this is redundant in that] he had already written in Law 1 that "they are educated to serve out of fear – until their minds expand and they may [then] serve G-d out of love." Why then is this concept reiterated?

The explanation is that this comes to emphasis that even "**this secret**" – meaning the most lofty virtue of "a

love that is appropriate" of "Avrohom, My beloved" – is within the power of children and women, as well as ignorant people in general, to attain (it is just that they must be accustomed to this "little by little...gently"). For after "the Holy One Blessed Be He **commanded us** through Moshe," then through the Torah study and the fulfillment of Mitzvos of every single Jew on account of the fact that they were commanded by G-d, even if he doesn't have love revealed in his heart, certainly he will come to be involved with and study for the sake of G-d, etc., and he will serve Him out of love.

(From the address of Shabbos Parshas Shlach 5746)

The service out of love "which the Holy One Blessed Be He commanded us through Moshe" is relevant to every single Jew, even one who still is at an extremely low level.

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By the Grace of G-d
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Blessing and Greeting:

Your letter was duly received, but for various reasons connected with pressing duties my reply was delayed.

You ask, on the basis 66 what you have heard about the students 66 the Lubavitcher Yeshivoh, what special qualities distinguish them?

Although I assume that those who spoke so highly of them must have also indicated wherein lies the distinguishing characteristics of the Lubavitcher students, I will not leave your question unanswered, and will note down at least some points in which they stand out. I trust that if you will find these points in agreement with your views and feelings, you will draw the right conclusions therefrom.

As we recently observed the Yahrzeit-Hilulo of my father-in-law of saintly memory on the 10th of Shevat, it was surely an occasion to reflect on his world outlook and way of life. Being, together with his saintly father, a co-founder of the Lubavitcher Yeshivoh and standing at their head all his life, he spared no effort to see to it that the students be educated and trained in the spirit and ideals of the Lubavitcher Yeshivoh. The essential characteristic and purpose of the students, as expressed by his father when the Yeshivah was created, was that the students should be *נרדף אור*, that is candles that are illuminated for themselves and illuminating all around, and that these two things go hand-in-hand together. In other words, not merely to endeavor to perfect themselves more and more and incidentally, when they find the time, to do something also for somebody else; but with the same devotion with which they dedicate themselves to their own spiritual advancement, they would dedicate themselves also to the spiritual advancement of others at the same time. Thus while diligently observing their Yeshivah curriculum and personal commitments to their own education, the Lubavitcher students take time off to take care of thousands of children via the Release Hour, Mesibos Shabbos, and similarly activities, as you well know, something that requires real self-sacrifice. And so they are expected, and do, go through life as "illuminated and illuminating lights."

-2-

Needless to say, this world outlook and way of life corresponds to the teachings of Chassidus in general, as was taught and practised by its founder the Baal Shem Tov, whose 200th Yahrzeit will be observed this year. For even before he revealed himself as the founder of Chassidus he devoted himself to the education of very young children, while at the same time teaching the profoundest secrets of the Torah to the great scholars and Rabbis who considered themselves privileged to be among his close disciples.

As I mentioned earlier, I trust that if you consider this distinguishing characteristic of the Lubavitcher students as being in harmony with your own views and feelings, I trust that you will, from now on at least, join the ranks of their admirers and adherents.

At any rate, I hope that on your part you are doing everything possible for you to do for the strengthening and dissemination of Yiddishkeit in your environment.

Hoping to hear good news from you,

With blessing

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LIVING NOW IN THE TIMES OF MOSHIACH

INTERVIEW BY AVROHOM REINITZ

*“If he lives with the knowledge that the Rebbe is alive and he must give the Rebbe an accounting, who can stand on the sidelines and not do what the Rebbe wants?” * An interview with Rabbi Zalman Notik, mashpia in Yeshivas Toras Emes in Yerushalayim and a sought-after speaker on Inyanei Moshiach and Geula.*

What does it mean to live our lives in a way that demonstrates the Rebbe’s eternal life?

It’s not about lofty things but simply, our daily behavior. If we’re talking about the T’mimim, when a bachur walks in the street and encounters a *nisayon* (test), he has to examine himself and see. Does he have the same feeling that every Chassid felt before Gimmel Tamuz – that the Rebbe is standing right there next to him and watching him like a compassionate father watching his only son, pleading, “My son, continue to be connected with k’dusha and don’t be enticed by the yetzer!”

Or does he consider the Rebbe to be a big tzaddik who lived in the

previous generation and he (the Tamim) only tries to follow in his ways?

Another example. Sometimes more effort is demanded of a Tamim – that he rise above himself and break his habits. If he lives with the knowledge that the Rebbe is alive and he must give the Rebbe an accounting, who can stand on the sidelines and not do what the Rebbe wants?

In general, most of us remember passing by the Rebbe for dollars and we all remember the great excitement in the days preceding the encounter with the Rebbe, how we tried to improve ourselves so that when the Rebbe looked at us, we would be less ashamed.

Someone who lives with the feeling that the Rebbe is *chai v’kayam* and at any moment he will reveal himself to all and then we will all pass by the Rebbe, “as a shepherd examines his flock,” and the Rebbe will look at each one of us and ask what we did to hasten the Geula, his behavior needs to be just like that of someone in the days before a *yechidus* or before getting dollars, and even more than that!

What about *balabatim* who work for a living. How do they live with the Rebbe as *chai v’kayam*?

In the *sicha* of Simchas Torah 5752, the Rebbe spoke about how the *avoda* of a Jew in daily life needs to be “literally like the life of the Jewish people in Yemos HaMoshiach.”

Each of us must take a look at ourselves and see how we are running our homes, do we have a *k’vius itim* (set times) for Torah learning, and a *chayus* for all the Rebbe’s *inyanim*, especially *inyanei Moshiach* and *Geula*? We need to ask ourselves: Does all of it resemble life in Yemos HaMoshiach or is it somewhat distant from it?

Of course, you can’t jump from Galus to Geula in one leap, but when

you make the commitment to go in that direction, you can go slowly and improve in each area.

Obviously, the Rebbe didn't tell us that we are on the threshold of the Geula just in order to cheer us up a little, but so that our awareness of the era we are living in will bring about a practical change in our lives.

Can you give us an example?

In his sichos, the Rebbe explains the difference between Galus and Yemos HaMoshiach as the difference between the avoda of "all your deeds should be for the sake of Heaven" and "know Him in all your ways," and the avoda in a way of "I wasn't created except to serve my Maker."

When the avoda is in a way of "all your deeds should be for the sake of Heaven" or even on the higher level of "know Him in all your ways," **the world and Elokus are two separate things but the world is a means to reach the G-dly goal.**

However, when the avoda is in a way of "I wasn't created except to serve my Maker," **the things of this world are themselves Elokus**, and therefore, there is no other reality because "*ein od milvado*" (there is nothing but Him). In other words, "I wasn't created" means that man does not exist at all (I was **not** created) and the only inyan that exists is "to serve my Maker."

In Galus, Elokus is something

superimposed on the world and the maximum that can be attained is that the creations of the world serve G-d, fulfilling His will, but in Yemos HaMoshiach the world itself will demonstrate that it has no independent existence except to carry out G-d's will.

So how do you begin to live Geula in daily life? Think about an ordinary supper meal. A good Jew, whose deeds are for the sake of Heaven, who knows G-d in all his ways, will eat in order to have the strength to learn later on and to say Krias Shma with kavana. His supper remains utterly ordinary but it serves as a means to an end of k'dusha. In contrast, a Chassid who wants to live like in Yemos HaMoshiach will transform his supper into a family farbrengen. One of the children will say something about Moshiach and Geula, another one will tell a story about the Rebbe, and a third child will say a d'var halacha.

In fact, this is stated explicitly in the Mishna in Avos, "Three who sit at a table and say words of Torah, it's as though they ate from the table of G-d." This means that if three people sat and ate in order to have the strength to learn afterwards, the meal was mundane but it served a higher purpose. If, however, they said divrei Torah at the meal, the meal itself turned into something of k'dusha, Hashem's table!

In this manner, everything can be transformed into k'dusha, even the food itself becomes food of k'dusha. It is another dimension in the internalizing of the inspiring words said at the farbrengen. It's like the way the Rebbe explains the special quality of the Seudas Moshiach – that inyanei Moshiach become your flesh and blood.

This seems strange, because what became flesh and blood was the physical food, while the words spoken about Moshiach remain on a



Rabbi Zalman Notik

spiritual plane. However, from this we learn that the food at a Chassidische farbrengen absorbs what is said and when it is eaten, it brings the k'dusha into his flesh and blood.

This idea about living in Yemos HaMoshiach in the family setting is something I've spoken about at many lectures to many audiences. First we learn what is meant by "ein od milvado" and in general, the idea of "a dira for Hashem ba'tachtonim," and then we break down the topic into small, practical steps.

After a few weeks, people come back with reports that they began doing this at home. Suddenly, the screaming and tension disappear, because when the family sits down together to a Chassidische farbrengen, a wonderful result is a united family.

You can take the same idea and apply it at work. When you want to run your business in a Jewish way, you know you need to tithe from your earnings or even take off a fifth. There is nothing intrinsically holy about the business. It remains absolutely mundane, and its advantage lies in the fact that it is a means to achieve k'dusha goals.

Contrast that with a Chassid who wants to run his business in a Yemos HaMoshiach way. He transforms the business itself into k'dusha. How? When a customer walks in, he looks for a way to connect him with the Rebbe, whether by putting t'fillin on him or talking to him about setting aside times for learning Torah or registering his children in a proper school, and mainly by talking seriously about Geula.

If that is how the store is run, it's really a "Chabad house," which runs by *also* selling clothing/jewelry/house wares, etc. From a means (a store) to an end (tz'daka), the store becomes a goal unto itself, a center from which the wellsprings spread forth.

I once went into a store like that of a Lubavitcher Chassid in

Yerushalayim. Whoever enters his store knows that he won't leave without getting a brochure or booklet on inyanei Moshiach and Geula. He took a clothing store and made it into a Chabad house. Like the Chassid, who we read about a while ago, Yitzchok Nemes a"h, who was ostensibly a businessman but who was actually a shliach who posed as a businessman! The Rebbe

Each of us must take a look at ourselves and see how we are running our homes, do we have set times for Torah learning, and a chayus for all the Rebbe's inyanim, especially inyanei Moshiach and Geula? We need to ask ourselves: Does all of it resemble life in Yemos HaMoshiach or is it somewhat distant from it?

had to remind him to take care of his business!

Where does that come from? From the knowledge that "ein od milvado" and the sole reason that customers walk into the store is in order to hear him talk about the imminent Redemption.

You can apply this approach to many topics and aspects of daily life.

You just need to learn inyanei Moshiach and Geula in order to understand the true significance of Yemos HaMoshiach and to adapt Geula ideas into your daily life.

When publicizing the Besuras HaGeula, why must the identity of Moshiach be publicized too?

Before talking about the need to publicize, there's a simple premise that we are working with – that the Rebbe is Moshiach. That is the reality and this is something we wholeheartedly believe. The fact that Lubavitcher Chassidim believe that the Rebbe is Moshiach is clear in light of the Gemara that is quoted many times by the Rebbe about the talmidim of those who were worthy of being Moshiach. They would point to their teachers and say they were Moshiach.

The Rebbe himself, in referring to the Rebbe Rayatz, quoted the Gemara a number of times about the talmidim who expounded on their teacher's name as the name of Moshiach and concluded, "We follow them": Yosef is his name and Yitzchok is his name. So it's clear that every Lubavitcher Chassid who associates himself with the Rebbe, says and believes that "Menachem is his name."

Another premise that is engraved in the soul of every Lubavitcher Chassid is the need to connect Jews to the Nasi HaDor. In letters from the Rebbe, as well as in his sichos, especially in the first years of his leadership, the Rebbe says that spreading the wellsprings is not enough; one should do everything possible to connect Jews to the Nasi HaDor.

In a well-known letter to Anash in Paris, the Rebbe is very critical about Anash there who did not connect Jews to the Nasi HaDor.

After the Rebbe explained, in the early years and on many occasions, how the Nasi HaDor and Moshiach

are one and the same person (“Nasi Doreinu Moshiach Sh’b’Doreinu” or “Nasi Doreinu Moshiach Tzidkeinu”), when we connect a Jew to the Rebbe, we are connecting him at the same time to Melech HaMoshiach.

Aside from the obligation each of us has to connect additional Jews to the Rebbe MH”M, it is a wonderful z’chus, both for ourselves as well as and especially for the Jews we connect to the Rebbe. As soon as a Jew is connected to the Rebbe, he fulfills his instructions and then he merits an abundance of blessing and success in his life, with regard to both material and spiritual matters. We see ourselves that when we are mekushar to the Rebbe and follow his guidance, things happen miraculously.

Once we have this as our starting point, the question about why to publicize is a bit strange, to say the least! Let’s say you owned something very precious that could bring about incredible changes for the good in the world, wouldn’t you market it? We have the most precious thing in the world, as it were, the Rebbe, and each Jew we connect to him has an awesome change for the better taking place in his life, both spiritually and materially. So what logic is there in *not* publicizing this?!

When someone has something that can bring a positive change to the entire world and he doesn’t publicize it, there can be one of two reasons for this: 1) he is not aware of the value of what he has, 2) he doesn’t know how to market it. So

too, if you see a Lubavitcher Chassid who doesn’t publicize that the Rebbe is Moshiach, there is one of two reasons: 1) he is unaware of the tremendous change for the good he can bring about among his mekuravim if he connects them with the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach, 2) he simply does not know how to market valuable commodities.

How do you know whether the lack of publicity is because of reason number one or reason number two? Does this Chassid sleep peacefully at night or does it bother him that he still hasn’t publicized it to everybody he knows, connecting them to the Rebbe MH”M and redeeming them from an inner galus in avodas Hashem and bringing them an abundance of bracha and success?

If he is aware of the tremendous good that he can share with his mekuravim, and he is bothered by the fact that he doesn’t know how to publicize it to them properly, the natural thing would be to look for a solution. If he tries hard enough, he will find the right way to publicize it. As it says, when the topic is one that pertains to them, even women who are uneducated can come up with the deep reasoning of Tanaim and Amoraim.

Furthermore, and no less important, each Jew that you connect to the Rebbe hastens the Geula! How? Very simple. Since the Rebbe is the yechida klalis, Moshiach, when a Jew connects to the Rebbe and fulfills his directives, his own yechida is revealed. When a Jew who connects to the Rebbe knows that the Rebbe is Moshiach and he fulfills the Rebbe’s directives, he is thereby connecting the spark of Moshiach within himself to the actual Moshiach, and when a Jew reveals his own spark of Moshiach, it hastens the revelation of the actual Moshiach.

[To be continued be”H]



WELCOME TO CHABAD OF ITAIM

BY BENZION SASSON

*Chassidim say that whoever ate from the kasha of Tomchei T'mimim will surely do t'shuva someday. A modern version of that statement would be that whoever tastes of the kosher "feijoada" of the Beis Chabad of the Itaim neighborhood of S. Paolo, will end up dancing on the tables in 770. He will believe in Hashem and the "Moshe of the generation" and will see wonders and miracles, of the sort that seem to take place lately in Brazil. * The story of Rabbi Yossi Schildkraut, who single-handedly built the Chabad House and Chabad community in Itaim.*

ANOTHER DEAL CLOSED

On the Sunday morning that I arranged to meet with Rabbi Yossi Schildkraut, I arrived at the Chabad House a few minutes after Shacharis. The sight which greeted my eyes was both interesting and puzzling. A large number of congregants sat around the Rabbi's table engrossed in serious conversation. At first, I tried to make out the topic of conversation, but despite being conversant in the local tongue, I was

unsuccessful even though the discussion became quite heated.

After a bit, the people began to slowly get up and trickle out, all of them wearing big smiles. Rabbi Yossi also stood and patted a few of them on the back and even hugged some of the men. I stood on the side, impatiently, waiting to hear an explanation for what I had just witnessed. Rabbi Yossi, noticed me standing in the corner and with a big smile welcomed me, and then

guessed what was on my mind. As we walked to his office, he explained.

It had been quite some time now that he and the other congregants of the Chabad House had been trying to convince certain businesspeople who come to daven to close their businesses on Shabbos. Some of them already did so, but there were still a few stubborn holdouts, fearful of losing income.

"What is interesting is that those who already made the move are the very ones working so hard to convince the others to follow their example. I always get pulled in to the argument, and express my view so that hopefully one more Jew will stop desecrating Shabbos. What happened today is that one of the business owners began grumbling about the very idea of closing his business on Shabbos, and the other congregants started giving it to him. In the end, I calmed down the heated atmosphere with the help of a fascinating story on the subject. Finally, the Jew in question announced publicly that he agrees to close his business on Shabbos."

This is the story of Rabbi Yossi Schildkraut, the Rebbe's shliach to the Itaim neighborhood in S. Paolo. Rabbi Schildkraut "denies all allegations" regarding special talents which have brought him the tremendous success that he enjoys.

He has only one explanation. Very simply: everything is due to “the ko’ach of the meshaleiach” (the power of the Rebbe).

GREECE, BRAZIL OR AUSTRALIA?

Twenty-four years ago, Rabbi Yossi and his wife decided to go on shlichus. The first suggestion which came their way was Greece. He traveled there to check out the territory firsthand, with Rabbi Gershon Mendel Garelik of Milan providing all necessary assistance to assure the success of the trip. His onsite research led to some serious misgivings. The Jewish community in Athens is not centered in one area, but is spread out throughout the city. There was also a personal problem. He felt that he didn’t speak modern Hebrew well enough to communicate with the local Jews.

A few days after he returned to New York, he visited the home where Rabbi Shabsi Alpern was lodging. Rabbi Alpern tried to convince him to come to Brazil and join in the activities there. On that same day, Rabbi Groner from

Australia approached him and said that he wants to open Chabad Houses in every neighborhood throughout Melbourne, and would like him to join the army of shluchim in Melbourne.

Rabbi Yossi inclined towards Australia, where he would have the opportunity to open his own Chabad House rather than joining existing activities in S. Paolo. However, he still felt overwhelmed



Rabbi Yosef Schildkraut

by the glut of offers. He consulted with Rabbi Chadakov, who told him that it would be superfluous to write to the Rebbe. Since he already visited Greece and became a serious candidate for a shlichus under Merkos, that is where he must go.

“THE SUGGESTION OF BRAZIL IS MORE FEASIBLE”

However, Rabbi Yossi’s wife decided to ask the Rebbe anyway. On Chai Elul, 5742, she received an answer, which surprised the two of them: **“Based on all of the above, the suggestion of Brazil is more feasible and shows more promise. Azkir al ha’tzion, and to add the name,”** and the Rebbe wrote out her husband’s name.

As Rabbi Yossi says, “After such an answer, I understood that this was my shlichus, and we began organizing our trip to Brazil.”

In Sivan of 5743/1983, the couple landed in Brazil, and joined the work Beis Chabad Central in S. Paolo.

Rabbi Yossi tells me with a wide smile on his face that on occasion he



Computer image of the new shul built as the Kosel HaMaaravi

reminds his wife that she is the one who asked the Rebbe, and received the answer regarding shlichus in Brazil, so she can't complain about life on shlichus there.

He continues, "The beginning was challenging, primarily because my wife and I did not speak the language, Portuguese. My family is

picked up enough of the language to be able to converse in Portuguese.

In the early years, he worked primarily with children and the youth, through Tzivos Hashem and running the summer camps, which were a novelty to the Jews of Brazil. Everything was done together with Rabbi Dovid Weitman and Rabbis

landscape. The regular visits began to produce tangible results, and the youth Shabbatons of the Beis Chabad in S. Paolo began attracting two full busloads of kids from Rio. This set the stage for the shliach Rabbi Yehoshua Binyomin Goldman, who received a warm welcome from the local Jews when he arrived on shlichus to Rio a few years later.

MEZUZA FOR THE PRESIDENT OF BRAZIL

In reaction to the rise in anti-Semitism in recent years, an organization was founded as part of the World Jewish Congress effort to combat anti-Semitism in the UN. In preparation for a discussion on the topic at a full session of the UN, members of the organization worked on getting a large number of heads of state to sign a petition against anti-Semitism. This was intended to arouse world opinion.

Six months ago, members of the organization arrived in Brasilia, capitol of Brazil, along with the president of the World Jewish Congress, Mr. Israel Singer, and president of the Jewish Congress in Latin America and member of the board of Chabad House of Itaim, Mr. Jacques Tarpin. Other guests included the former president of Hebrew University, Mr. Yaron Dinstein, and Director of the Office of Prime Minister in Brazil, Mrs. Clara Annette – a Jew who has one of the most important positions in the Brazilian government. One moment, we nearly forgot, the Jewish Congress in Latin America also invited Rabbi Schildkraut.

During the conference, a meeting took place with the president of Brazil, "Lula" da Silva, who is considered the most important leader in Latin America, for the purpose of having him sign the aforementioned declaration. His signature was influential in getting all the other presidents in the region to sign. To the surprise of the members of the delegation, he agreed to sign it immediately.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the president said that in his opinion more Jews work in his offices than in the Israeli government! The meeting concluded with the placing of a mezuzah on the office doorpost of the main office in the government building, in the presence of all the guests. Rabbi Schildkraut's picture was featured in all the newspapers on the continent.

third-generation American, and the new language made it difficult for me to develop a connection with the locals, and in general, to acclimate to the place." At first, Rabbi Schildkraut took private lessons to learn the language, but he lacked the patience to see it through. Nevertheless, after two years, he

Yitzchak Michaan, who arrived before him.

For two years, he traveled three times a month with Rabbi Weitman to run activities in Rio de Janeiro. The city, which had a large, unaffiliated Jewish population, welcomed the pair of rabbis, who rejuvenated the desolate Jewish

FROM CHABAD CENTRAL TO ITAIM

Despite his success, Rabbi Schildkraut never lost sight of his dream to open his own Chabad House in his own community, until the day when it finally became a reality. In those days, before the advent of the International Shluchim Convention, each year, a group of shluchim who would happen to be in New York, would gather for a smaller version of the convention. On one such occasion, Rabbi Yossi participated in the informal gathering, where he heard a lecture that had a profound impact on him.

The speaker offered an analysis of the work of Chabad to that point:

"In the Lameds (the seventies), the shluchim focused on opening branches in universities and on campuses throughout the US and Europe. In those years, the university was the focal point in the lives of young people for a number of years, and that is where they went searching for meaning in life. Therefore, the most effective place to encounter them was in the centers of higher learning.

"However, now, in the Memes (the eighties), times have changed. The young people go to college mainly to learn a lucrative profession. This has caused a growth spurt in schools, which offer specific degrees to commuter students or even through night courses. Additionally, due to the low cost of tuition for these colleges, students no longer have to



Purim time



Elul time



Rabbi Schildkraut with members of the group in front of 770

work to support themselves, and as such, they have a lot of free time on their hands, which leads to moral and spiritual decline.

“These young people can’t be approached in the university, because they are based at home and in their local communities. Therefore, we need to focus on creating a community-based infrastructure to interest them, thus providing the parents and family members with an alternative. This is the challenge that we face today,” the shliach concluded, “creating Chabad Houses for communities.”

These words gave Rabbi Yossi no rest. When he returned to Brazil, he saw that the analysis of the shliach was accurate. The broad range of activities he oversaw dealt exclusively with children, youth, and students, and did not target the community or families.

The final push came at a regional shluchim conference in Buenos Aires, Argentina. There, he met his old friend Rabbi Shlomo Kissel, the first to open an independent Chabad House in Buenos Aires in a new neighborhood far from the main community. Rabbi Kissel told him at length of the challenges and initial steps in building a community, and Rabbi Yossi decided that he would undertake the same thing in S. Paolo.

During the banquet at the convention, Rabbi Kissel introduced him to the wealthy supporter who pushed him to open a Chabad House and funded the activities. After a brief conversation the man told him that he has many business dealings in Brazil, and he was interested in contributing to the expenses of a Chabad House geared towards serving the Jewish community in the city.

The only remaining obstacle was to convince Rabbi Alpern. Whoever read the previous articles can guess

that Rabbi Alpern is easily convinced when it comes to expanding the work of Chabad. The two of them began searching for a suitable area, and they concluded that the most appropriate location would be the Itaim neighborhood. This was a growing neighborhood with a significant Jewish population and no Jewish center or shul.

Side problems, such as funding, resolve themselves in Brazil with the help of miracles. They didn't even have one dollar to fund the new activities, and then, once again, the philanthropist from the shluchim convention got involved. He informed Rabbi Alpern that he wanted to fund the entire operation of the new Chabad House.

Before Purim of 5747/1987, there took place the regional shluchim convention for South America in Brazil, and part of the program was the inauguration of the new Chabad House. The event drew an eminent gallery of rabbis and public figures. Rabbi Yossi Schildkraut delivered the keynote address, and explained the importance of building a community, particularly in such a spiritual wasteland. Quite a few locals scoffed at the fantastical notion of a "Chabad community in Itaim."

CLEAR TARGETS AND GOALS

Even though there was a place to work from, the actual work unfolded gradually. During the week Rabbi Yossi continued his work at the Chabad House Central, as well as working on developing the newly established community. Each Friday night he held a Kabbalas Shabbos service with a small number of participants. It was clear that it was necessary to move to the place of his new shlichus, but he found it hard to let go of the many connections formed with the mekuravim of the

"Today, almost every Jewish movement and organization is involved in 'outreach.' What sets us apart is connecting Jews to the Nasi HaDor and preparing them for the imminent Redemption."

main Chabad House.

Slowly, he began to hand off his various jobs to others and to lay the groundwork for building his own community, through classes, home study groups, and regular visits. After some time, they started a

minyan for Shabbos morning and Mincha. Starting with only three observant families, it grew into a full-fledged community of mekuravim. Today, eighteen years later, the Chabad House congregation numbers 350 families and is the largest Ashkenazi community in S. Paolo.

Rabbi Yossi explains that just as building the community is of supreme importance to him, he holds the pride in being a Lubavitcher Chassid and shliach of the Rebbe to be of equal importance. He says, "Despite the fact that there are some who are afraid to emphasize this, to me it is of vital importance to display and take pride in it. In my regular talk before Kabbalas Shabbos, everything I say is drawn exclusively from the sichos of the Rebbe. Even when I am invited to speak elsewhere, in every venue, the content is always the words of the Rebbe. The nusach of prayer in the shul is Nusach Ari, and most of the tunes sung by the

KOSHER FEIJOADA - IT PAYS TO TRY IT

For a long time the worshippers at the Chabad house suffered from a neighboring restaurant, especially in the summertime when they wanted to open the windows but could not because of the smell of the "feijoada," a well-known treif Brazilian food which includes pork among its basic ingredients.

Things changed once the Chabad house began making chulent each Shabbos. The fragrance from the giant chulent pots overpowered the smells from the restaurant. The owner of the restaurant, a friend of Rabbi Schildkraut said, "It won't help, because ultimately, you will eat my feijoada."

Rabbi Schildkraut said, "Why don't you come and taste our 'feijoada'?"

To his surprise, the man agreed and after tasting the chulent, the shliach asked him to try to create a kosher "feijoada." For eight months, the chef tried to create a kosher version of the dish, until he finally succeeded.

As usual, the story made its way to the newspapers, to the food column, and gourmands in Paulo think that the kosher version is quite a delicacy!

cantor and congregation are Chabad niggunim.

“Our ultimate goal as shlichim is to bring the Rebbe here, to each one of the congregants, and to connect them to the Leader of the Generation. This pride is exceedingly important, because today, almost every Jewish movement and organization is involved in ‘outreach.’ What sets us apart is connecting Jews to the Nasi HaDor and preparing them for the imminent Redemption.”

On the past Yom Kippur, for example, the main hall of the shul was packed with over a thousand people. Moments before beginning the service, Rabbi Schildkraut stood on the Torah-reading platform and asked all assembled to rise. He addressed the crowd:

“Honorable congregation, as you all know, I am a shliach of the Rebbe. Each Yom Kippur eve, the Rebbe would bless his flock with a blessing for the New Year. As his emissary, I am taking this privilege and I want to bring to you a blessing in the name of the Rebbe.” Hundreds of men, women and children, stood, and you could see the awe in their eyes.



Rabbi Schildkraut in an interview with the media in an exclusive mall

A UNIFIED COMMUNITY

The community in Itaim is quite diverse and interesting. The members display great pride in their community. One can find amongst the crowd leading academics, lawyers, doctors, businesspeople, as well as actors and media types.

Twenty percent of the members previously attended the local Conservative synagogue, however, mostly due to concerns about their children’s education, they switched to a more secure environment. The Conservative “rabbi,” upset over the drift from his congregation to the other side, tried various tactics to win back his clientele. However, he

did not succeed, and the number of his congregants decreased from Shabbos to Shabbos. A while later, he gave up the fight, and decided that he needed to be on good terms with Rabbi Yossi, who had absorbed many of his former congregants.

The community is very close-knit, and they provide assistance for families in case of a birth, or G-d forbid, an illness. The Chabad House handles the spiritual side of things, such as brissim, special programs for boys and girls of Bar and Bas Mitzva age, seasonal day camps, and much more. However, all services are geared exclusively for those registered as members of the

community.

Rabbi Yossi explains, “It might be that at first, it doesn’t sound like the way of Chabad, but if you want to build a proper community, it is important to be particular about such things.”

The newspaper published by the Chabad House every month or two, adds to the sense of community. A recent edition contained the pictures of twelve couples from the community who married in the past year! Rabbi Yossi showed me the issue, and said, “When I look at these pictures, I am overcome with memories and emotion. I attended the bris mila and Bar Mitzva of each

one of those young men who recently married. I have been involved in their lives and that of their families from the moment they entered the world. These are children who grew together with the Chabad House.

Just yesterday, I received a call from a young man with whom I had a connection from the first day the Chabad House opened. He called to invite me to his wedding which will take place next week. Such things inspire me anew, and prove the value of investing into the building of a community.”

The holiday activities of the Chabad House reach all of the Jewish schools in the city. Even the Reform and Conservative schools want these activities for their children. The activities include shofar making, producing olive oil, matza baking, Purim activities and more. Each activity is arranged for all of the children of a particular age-group from all the schools, and so, throughout the year every Jewish child in the schools participates in at least one of the activities.

The Chabad House staff works to produce various theatrical productions and learning aids. For example, plays with a Torah message for the holidays, video productions and educational CD's, crafts kits for the local schools with Jewish content. There is also a kitchen and special dining hall in the Chabad House for classes to come each week and participate in a Shabbos experience, through baking challos and setting up a Shabbos table.

Two years ago, the Chabad House kicked off an Internet site for South American Jewish singles, called Ahava, in order to encourage Jewish marriage and combat intermarriage. The success went beyond anything they anticipated, and within a short time the site became the largest Jewish meeting site in all of South

America. The site has over one thousand registered members, with hundreds of daily visitors.

A few hundred Jewish marriages have already taken place, thanks to the site, and Rabbi Yossi adds, “We will never know how many couples we saved from intermarriage due to this website.”

THE GREAT CHALLENGE AND MIRACLE

Ten years back, Rabbi Schildkraut endured a difficult trial: A number of rabbis in the city took a jaundiced view of the huge success of the Chabad House and they did all in their power to besmirch his name and undermine his position.

His opponents eschewed no methods; they spread dozens of nasty letters throughout the city sullyng his name. The confused

populace chose to believe the rabbis who signed on these letters, many who were fooled into doing so. Matters came to a head when they managed to draw in a certain prestigious rabbi, who wrote a strong letter opposing him. Rabbi Yossi felt the ground burning underfoot and decided to write a letter to the Rebbe.

At that time, the Schildkraut couple yearned for another child after eight years since their previous child. In the Rebbe's letter, which he opened to, they received a blessing for children, and a while later, they merited to bring a Jewish daughter into the world. Over time, they saw the fulfillment of the Rebbe's bracha: His opponents left him alone and even that influential rabbi realized his mistake. He contacted Rabbi Yossi to apologize and he sent a letter of apology asking forgiveness.

PREPARE FOR THE BRAZILIANS

Everybody who has participated in the Gimmel Tamuz farbrengen in 770 (or watched it on 770live.com) can't miss the large group of Brazilians who burst in, each year during the course of the farbrengen. They sing “Yechi” and dance and sweep everybody along with their fervor.

This project began in 5759, when a number of shluchim from Brazil, including Rabbi Schildkraut and Rabbi Danny Ashkenazi, who had gone to the Rebbe for Yud Shevat, farbrenged in one of the homes of Anash in Crown Heights, with many mekuravim. At the end of the farbrengen, Rabbi Shamai Ende, rav of a Chabad community in Paolo, asked those present to bring fifty people to the Rebbe the following year, in honor of the Rebbe's 50th year of leadership.

The shluchim rose to the occasion. Brazilians are used to warm weather and can't handle the wintry New York weather of Shevat and so they decided to bring them for 3 Tamuz. The first year, nearly 20 guests came, the following year 40, and each year the number of people grows. This past year, over 100 men and women came. The cities in Brazil from where the guests come, include: Paolo, Rio, Porta Alegre, Curitiba, Belem, Recife, etc.

One of the wealthy men who comes each year told the organizers of the group that nobody had ever come from the city of Le Arizonati, and so he agreed to pay the plane ticket of a representative from that city!

You can well imagine the impact such a visit has on the guests, their families, and the communities they return to.

Today, years later, Rabbi Yossi says, "All those rabbis who waged war against us are now on good terms with us and applaud our success. That was a difficult time, but it paid off as we merited to receive a bracha from the Rebbe for more children."

WHY LOOK FAR AWAY?

A few years ago, a lot was purchased to construct a new Beis Chabad. After the construction work began, it turned out that the project faced numerous hurdles due to the difficulty of acquiring work permits for that area. The wife of the shliach, seeing the situation, sat down to write a letter to the Rebbe. The response she received was clear: In a situation where a shliach encountered difficulty in construction, he should be cautious and not take chances. That very same day, Rabbi Schildkraut contacted the builders and asked them to halt construction.

Time passed and the situation remained the same. Once again, the wife wrote to the Rebbe to ask for his bracha. Again, the Rebbe's answer was clear: If you are successful in your current location, why look in another place, one that is distant from there?

The answer inspired Rabbi Yossi with new hope, and he awaited good news. Sure enough, a short while later, he heard about a suitable place. It was on the corner of the block which houses the current Chabad House.

The story goes as follows: The original building became too small to hold all the congregants, despite the work done to expand. On holidays, for example, it was a bit difficult to fit 350 people in a room with 200 seats, and so for Tishrei, they decided to rent a larger space. After some searching, they discovered a suitable place on the corner, a large building, which had



The present shul



Constructing the new shul

belonged to a bank that went under. It was currently for sale by another bank, which had foreclosed, and it seemed ideal. It contained a large open hall, full bathroom facilities, and central air conditioning.

One of the board members of the shul looked into the possibility of renting the building, but was put off by the high price. The president of the shul – a wealthy man in his own right – decided to visit the location. He was so excited by what he saw that he called the owner, a man he did business with, and told him that he wants to **buy** the building. The owner quoted a price, and the president told him **that he wants the key that very day**, because he plans on moving in the next day. He arranged for a payment plan in six

installments.

That same day, the president of the shul gave the owner a \$50,000 deposit, for which he got the keys to a building worth at least two million dollars.

This took place about two weeks before Rosh HaShana. The place impressed the members of the congregation, and over the High Holiday prayers, they raised close to the full amount, so that two months later, the building was bought and paid for. The lot purchased previously was sold for a handsome profit.

The Chanukas HaBayis of the new shul has yet to take place, due to ongoing construction on various sections of the building. This winter,

there was a special dinner held to raise the necessary funds to complete the renovations. The building will contain, G-d willing, aside from all the facilities of a Beis Chabad, a beautiful, state-of-the-art mikva and a huge hall for events. There are also massive renovations underway in the existing shul, which includes the construction of a large, magnificent aron kodesh. The entire front wall will be covered with stones from Yerushalayim, creating the appearance of the Kosel HaMaaravi, and the floor is being redone in wood.

OUR JOB

Before I left Brazil, I joined the Chabad House of Itaim for the Friday night prayers. It was an experience, which will remain engraved in my memory. The main hall filled up with close to three hundred people, at the appointed time. At first glance, looking from above, it seemed as if everybody was dressed alike, because of the unique yarmulkes distributed by the Chabad House, which has the

symbol of the shul emblazoned on it.

When the chazan approached the lectern and began kabbalas Shabbos, the entire shul seemed like a philharmonic orchestra bursting into song. The quiet and attentiveness during the speech given by Rabbi Schildkraut were extraordinary. At the end of the services, all the congregants approach the rabbi, and each one receives a "Good Shabbos" and some personal comment, sometimes accompanied by an embrace. From there, the crowd goes to the Friday night Kiddush held in the lobby. I left with the feeling that when Moshiach comes, it will be in part, due to this unique community.

When I parted from Rabbi Yossi, I shared my thoughts and feelings. He responded, "That is our job. That is our very existence and what encompasses our entire lives, to cause as many people as possible to come close to the Rebbe, and to do everything in our power to speed up his revelation."

CHABAD? HERE'S A VOLUME OF IGROS KODESH!

One of the mekuravim was an older single. His mother, who lived in Eretz Yisroel, heard of an idea from a friend, to ask the daughter of Rabbi Abehsera, the Baba Sali, for a bracha. When the Rebbetzin heard that her son davens at the Chabad shul, she asked the mother to write a letter with her request for a bracha and then she took out a volume of Igros Kodesh and put the letter in it! "Be careful with the shiurim of Chitas," was the answer.

The woman didn't know what Chitas is so she asked Rabbi Yossi, who gave her a Chitas. The son began taking a T'hillim, Chumash, *Tanya*, and a *HaYom Yom* with him, wherever he went. Two months later, Rabbi Yossi got a phone call with the good news that the son was engaged.

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SHLICHUS IS SHLICHUS

BY C. ALON

“We were in the midst of a heat wave, one of those days when standing outside in the sun, particularly midday, is exceedingly unpleasant. Nevertheless, shlichus is shlichus.” A series of hashgacha pratis events lead to a wonderful ending.

Many readers undoubtedly are familiar with that awful feeling that nothing is going right that day. A series of unplanned events is what G.B. experienced and it was only at the end of the day that he realized where Heaven was leading him.

“In my position as a worker at a Chabad house, I run most of the Chabad house events. On the afternoon of the day when this series of events took place, two bachurim came to the Chabad house to help. Since there wasn’t anything urgent to take care of at the Chabad house, the shliach asked that I go with them to the center of Tel Aviv and put t’fillin on with the passersby.

The shliach put his hand in his pocket, pulled out some bills and gave them to me, saying, “This is for a taxi.”

We were in the midst of a heat wave, one of those days when standing outside in the sun, particularly midday, is exceedingly unpleasant. Nevertheless, shlichus is shlichus. The

three of us went out to get a taxi. After some minutes spent in the sun, the car of one of the Chabad house’s mekuravim stopped near us.

“Where are you heading?” he asked with a smile.

“To the center of Tel Aviv,” I answered.

“I’m sorry, but I’m heading in a different direction,” he said.

I said, “One minute, I have money for a taxi. If you take us to the city center, even though it’s out of your way, I’ll pay you for your trouble.”

He thought for a moment and then said, “Okay, get in, but I’ve got to hurry in order to get to the shiur on time.”

We got in and rushed towards the center of Tel Aviv, but as we got closer to our destination, we saw that he wouldn’t be able to take us exactly where we wanted to go because of changes in traffic patterns. We had to get out at some distance from our destination.

Things were not going smoothly. We had a ten-minute walk, which was rough in that hot weather. If that wasn’t enough, after walking for a while we realized we had made a wrong turn and this necessitated walking extra blocks.

“This is not my day,” I thought. “The heat, walking, taking a wrong turn, what’s going to be?”

We continued walking and there, walking towards us, was a typical Tel Avivian guy, dressed in Bermuda shorts, a T-shirt, and sunglasses. He looked like he was either on his way back from the beach or was heading towards the beach.

Although I did not anticipate a positive response, I decided to try my luck. I asked him, “Would you like to put on t’fillin?”

He stopped, looked at me, thought it over and then said with a shy smile, “Yeah, why not?”

Without further ado, I opened my t’fillin bag and began putting the t’fillin on him. While doing so I briefly explained to him about the mitzva and its significance. I saw that he was listening.

“This is my first time,” he said. “I’m a bit excited about this.”

I gave him the page with the Shma on it and he began reading it with an Ivrit tinged with a European accent. In the meantime, I told the bachurim not to wait for me but to continue walking

and that I would be in touch with them.

When I unwrapped the t'fillin from the young man, it was clear that he had been moved. I saw that the time was right to talk to him about Judaism.

He told me that his name was Kevin, from Holland, and that he loved Israel. He visited at least once a year and wouldn't give it up for anything. He didn't know anything about Judaism. All he knew was that his mother was Jewish and that she was orphaned at a young age and raised in a convent but had guarded her Judaism with mesirus nefesh.

He had married a non-Jewish woman but after a few years, they had divorced. He wanted to remarry but couldn't decide between two women. One was Jewish and living in Israel and the other was Asian and waiting for him in Holland.

At some point in our conversation I blurted out, "Kevin, were you circumcised?"

"As a matter of fact, for years I've been thinking that I should do it!"

Kevin said that he was in touch with a rabbi in Holland who told him he would arrange a circumcision but it had been delayed for so long and he was being asked to pay a lot of money.

I suddenly remembered that two

weeks earlier Yaron Amit of Bris Yosef Yitzchok had visited the Chabad house and left his business card in case we needed to reach him. I considered this amazing hashgacha pratit and I immediately took it out and called him.

I told him of my meeting with a Jew from Holland who wanted to have a bris but hadn't done so yet. R' Amit said, "Ask him if he has documents that prove that he's Jewish."

I asked Kevin and he said he did.



Preparing for a bris. Inset: Rabbi Yaron Amit, director of Bris Yosef Yitzchok

He added that since he had started the aliya process, he had all the documents that proved he was Jewish.

"He has it all," I told R' Amit. "When do you think you can do the bris?"

"He should come to Yerushalayim today," he replied.

"Today?!" I exclaimed.

"Yes, we have a mohel and an operating room until five o'clock. It's a

shame to waste time. He should come today."

It was all so unexpected, but R' Amit was decisive and so I said to Kevin, "He says you should come and have the bris done today!"

"Today!?" said Kevin, shocked. "Today— I don't know..."

"Okay, listen, I'll get back to you," I told R' Amit. I was also taken aback by our conversation.

"Listen, it's not so simple. I'm not ready for this. I have to think about it," apologized Kevin. "Aside from that, how will I get there? I don't know the buses here—"

"I'll take you there. You have nothing to worry about, the bris will take a few minutes and you'll be out of there," I said, somewhat beseechingly.

I saw that Kevin was still hesitating. "Kevin, Divine Providence arranged our meeting and who knows,

maybe it's for this purpose?"

"What do you mean?" asked Kevin uncomprehendingly.

"I wasn't supposed to meet you altogether. The car left me off and I had to walk and I made a wrong turn and all this happened so that I would meet you!"

Kevin looked at me thoughtfully and said, "I live a few blocks from here. Come with me and we'll sit over

a cup of coffee and talk about it.”

Of course, I happily agreed. We walked together to his house and as we walked, I tried to explain to him the importance of a bris mila, adding explanations according to Chassidus.

When we got to his apartment his girlfriend Galit was waiting for him. She was surprised by the whole story, but fortunately, she encouraged him “to go for it,” and to take care of it once and for all.

Kevin sat on the couch, lit a cigarette and thought. Then he turned to me and asked about a name.

“I have to choose a name, right? What name do you suggest?” He looked towards Galit and they began mentioning various possibilities.

“My grandfather’s name was Aharon. Maybe I should pick that,” said Kevin.

“Good idea,” I commented.

“Aharon is an old-fashioned name,” interjected Galit. “Pick something else.”

They continued discussing it until Kevin got up and said, “Okay, I’m gonna take a shower and then we’ll decide what to do.”

I prayed for a miracle to take place in the interim. In the meantime, my cell phone rang and it was R’ Amit. He said, “I have a driver who is coming from Tel Aviv to Yerushalayim at three o’clock. Be in touch with him and he’ll pick you up.”

“Okay,” I said, hoping for a positive answer from Kevin.

I called the driver and we arranged that he would pick me up on the street where the bachurim and I were supposed to put t’fillin on people, and that afterwards we would go and get Kevin.

When Kevin came out, he smiled and said, “Fine, I’ll do it. I waited so long, it’s a shame to miss this opportunity.”

I was thrilled. “Great,” I said and told him that we had a driver who would take us to the clinic at three. “Be ready with all your papers on the main

street and we’ll come and pick you up at three!”

I left the apartment and later, a few minutes before three, R’ Amit’s driver picked me up and we drove to the main street, as planned, but didn’t see Kevin.

“Where is he?” asked the driver.

“He’s supposed to be here,” I said as I scanned the passersby. “Drive a little further and let’s see...”

I began to think that Kevin had panicked and changed his mind, but then I suddenly caught sight of him standing on a different corner than we had agreed upon. He looked confused, as though he was looking for something.

I suddenly caught sight of him standing on a different corner than we had agreed upon. He looked confused, as though he was looking for something.

“Kevin!” I shouted. “We’re here!”

Kevin turned in my direction and began walking towards our car. I warmly shook his hand and we got in.

“You won’t believe what happened. It’s a miracle,” mumbled Kevin.

“What happened?” I asked.

Kevin told me that he had thought we had arranged to meet on a different street, and because he wasn’t familiar with the streets he hadn’t managed to get there and each time he tried he got lost. He ended up walking in a circle and returning to the main street on a different corner.

“I figured that if I didn’t meet you, it was a sign that I didn’t have to do the bris. I was standing there,

confused, when I heard you call my name. When I saw you I realized that I was doing the right thing, or like you told me before, it’s Divine Providence.”

At a certain point, I parted ways with Kevin and Kevin continued with the driver to the clinic in Yerushalayim. At four-thirty, I called him to find out what had happened. Someone from Bris Yosef Yitzchok picked up the phone and said all was well and that the bris had been done.

I was extremely happy about this great z’chus in helping a fellow Jew enter the covenant of Avrohom Avinu and I was curious as to what name he picked.

I called him the next day. “So? What’s your new name?”

“Yishai!”

“What made you pick that name?” I wondered.

“I wasn’t sure what name to pick. When I got to the operating room I asked the mohel what his name was and he said his name was Yishai. It had a good sound, so I chose that name.”

We spoke about his ongoing path in Judaism and life in general and promised to keep in touch.

Yishai returned to Holland and after two months of not hearing from him, he called to tell me that he and Galit had married and he was making aliya.

A year later, Yishai called me and said he was a proud father of a son. He had an interesting request. He wanted the mohel who had circumcised him to be his son’s mohel too. We agreed that I would call Bris Yosef Yitzchok and locate that mohel.

So sometimes we have the feeling that nothing is going right, that things aren’t going according to plan, but we must remember that Hashem is in charge. He leads us to where we have to go in order to fulfill our shlichus in the world, on shlichus of the Rebbe MH”M, to refine and prepare the world for Moshiach.

GAZA IS CROSSING THE BORDER, GOING OVER AND UNDER IT

BY SHAI GEFEN

SINGING A NEW TUNE

The terrible situation Israel finds itself in, less than a year after the Disengagement, has apparently sobered up even those who fervently supported Sharon and his plan. Unfortunately, it's always late in coming, but the very fact that writers and journalists are starting to raise questions about the Disengagement plan and plans for additional withdrawals is definitely an indication that finally, some people understand that something has to change. The time has come to acknowledge that the only way to preserve Israel's security is by following *Shulchan Aruch*, siman 329.

Let's hear what Yaron London, columnist for the daily *Yediot Acharonot*, one of the most passionate supporters of Sharon's disengagement policy last year, had to say on June 27:

It should be recognized that the warnings of the opponents of the disengagement from Gaza have materialized. Disengagement did not reduce the intensity of the confrontation, and we are unwillingly being forced to send the army back to the places it abandoned. Huge quantities of weapons were smuggled through the breached entrances to the Gaza Strip, and as we learned on Saturday night, the operational ability of the terrorists has also improved.

The fence has stopped hundreds of infiltration attempts, but it does not ensure quiet. The Kassam rockets pass over it, and terrorists can dig under it. What is more severe is that the Palestinians did not use their relative freedom to rehabilitate themselves. The area where the Jewish settlements resided, about one fifth of the area of the Gaza Strip, with hothouses that could have served for the residents' welfare, is not being cultivated. Nothing was built on the ruins besides training camps for terrorists. Palestinian society did not pass the test of autonomy that was granted to it and it is as divided, wild and combative as ever before.

Yaron London is not the only one to speak up in dismay. Popular singer and actor, Yehoram Gaon also enthusiastically supported the Disengagement. Yet, on his radio program, he said:

The last thing, or better put, the last word we want to hear now is "convergence." Yet, incredibly, we are hearing about it time and again, as though nothing is going on, as though it's quiet on the border, no Kassams, as though they didn't infiltrate and kill two soldiers and kidnap another one, as though Eliyahu Asheri wasn't murdered.

Listen, I understand that what created (I don't have a better word) Kadima was the Disengagement. That very same

Disengagement following which there weren't going to be any more Kassams landing on Sderot and Ashkelon because there would no longer be any reason for them from the moment we left occupied territory, right?

This Disengagement was going to guarantee that we would never, but never, return to Gaza. This was a Disengagement following which there were not supposed to be any attempts to penetrate beyond the border, for this was already Israel within the Green Line. Disengaging enabled us to proudly proclaim to the world: see, we returned to our rightful area and now, any shooting at us will be seen as an attack on our sovereignty, and if it happens, oooh will we react! We will react harshly and the world will justify this! This is what we told ourselves in order to justify the Disengagement, remember?

So we had all the logical reasons for Disengagement and most of the nation supported it, and so they disengaged without any blessings from the other side. And the truth is that they no longer shot from the other side, they only shelled cities, and they respected the sovereignty of the IDF's positions aboveground and instead dug tunnels, broke through and killed soldiers and kidnapped one, and we didn't really return to Gaza but are hovering around it.

And suddenly you think, what was this



story about the Disengagement? What was it about? Was it at all permissible to take such steps without anticipating the future and the reactions of the side that wasn't a partner to the Disengagement? Was it permissible? Who was it good for? Who did it help? How did it help?

Now we hear a new word, "convergence," like a sick child to whom you add another name so he recovers, as though with the original name his sickness was understandable. And we go towards Convergence after an unsuccessful attempt that they called Disengagement.

Additionally, Lt.-Gen. Moshe Yaalon, IDF Chief of Staff until the implementation of the Gaza withdrawal, says that the entire Disengagement was conceived to save PM Sharon from legal troubles. As reported on Arutz Sheva:

"The Disengagement was not the result of thorough strategic analysis, but the result of (then-Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's) political distress," Yaalon said in an interview to be published in full in HaAretz this weekend (Parshas Balak). "It was a disengagement from reality and a disengagement from the truth."

Though such a claim has been made in the past, including by two prominent journalists, Ofer Shelah and Raviv Drucker, in their book Boomerang, this is the first time an official who was privy to the Sharon regime from the inside has cited such motives.

"There is no doubt that the Disengagement failed," Yaalon said. The entire withdrawal and expulsion of 10,000 Jewish residents from Gaza and northern Samaria "was an internal Israeli game that ignored what's going on outside Israel."

Yaalon has harsh criticism for those in the IDF and defense establishment that bought into the withdrawal as a viable strategic move. "The Disengagement was a strategic mistake of the first order," Yaalon said. "It brought about the Hamas victory. It emboldened terror groups. It has fueled the Palestinian struggle for

years. It created a feeling among the Iranians, the Muslim Brotherhood and al-Qaeda that Israel can be beaten... Therefore, the Disengagement not only harmed us badly, but also harmed America's strategic war on terror in the region. It created a feeling among Muslim extremists that as it defeated the Soviets in Afghanistan, it defeated us in Gaza and it will defeat us in Tel Aviv. As such, as they destabilized a superpower, they will destabilize the West by defeating Israel."

Israelis have a short memory. They will quickly get used to the fact that the south of the country is a war zone. Then they will sell us the Convergence Plan. Just the other week, Ehud Olmert spoke proudly about the Disengagement Plan!

The public is starting to wake up and understand that it was led astray, but in order not to repeat this tragic mistake it's not enough to understand the previous error, the public must be given a real alternative. We have to bring the truth to the people. We have to announce that any concession, no matter how small, endangers the welfare of the entire country and the entire world.

Since the Six Day War, they have tried everything, all sorts of peace and agreements; all the prime ministers from all the parties, but the results have been uniformly abysmal. The only solution is following Shulchan Aruch.

RE-CONQUERING GAZA

Just two or three days after the soldier Gilad Shalit was kidnapped and 11 months after we left Gaza, the army woke up and entered Gaza, taking up position in the former Jewish communities of Dugit, Nisanit, and Elei Sinai. For months, we knew about tunnels being dug and huge numbers of weapons being smuggled through, but the government and generals preferred to turn a blind eye.

Even after the soldier was

The public is starting to wake up and understand that it was led astray, but in order not to repeat this tragic mistake it's not enough to understand the previous error, the public must be given a real alternative. We have to bring the truth to the people. We have to announce that any concession, no matter how small, endangers the welfare of the entire country and the entire world.

kidnapped, the prime minister and defense minister tried the diplomatic route in the hopes of gaining the release of Gilad Shalit, but it didn't help. The military operation had to get underway.

Whoever thinks that they learned their lesson is mistaken. This is reminiscent of the mess created in Lebanon, when they didn't go in and

decisively finish the campaign; they hung around and hung around, with hundreds of soldiers killed in vain, and instead of finishing the operation the patient continued to bleed for years.

The situation in Gaza demands one solution: the re-conquering of the entire Gaza Strip. For decades, the establishment spoke about leaving Gaza. The Israeli dream was to leave the area, and that's what they finally did.

What did we get in exchange? A branch of Al-Qaeda, terror, and Kassams. A Kassam missile landed in the heart of Ashkelon! And weapons are being constantly smuggled with no one to stop them.

The IDF has "retaliated" by shooting at open fields, arresting some Hamas politicians, and buzzing the Syrian president's palace. Not only will this not resolve anything, it will make matters worse. Even after the signing of the Camp David Accords and the assassination of Sadat, the Rebbe said Israel had the opportunity to re-conquer it all and to stop giving away land.

The world has seen the results of the Disengagement after less than a year. Let us take this opportunity to re-conquer the Gaza Strip. It will be hard but as in the example the Rebbe gives of an operation, if the doctor suddenly has mercy on the patient and stops the operation in the middle, he is culpable!

This is precisely the situation we face. Our leaders have tried all the experiments on Israel the guinea pig. The only thing they haven't tried is the

only thing that will work!

You didn't want to rule over a foreign nation? The foreign nation is pursuing you.

You wanted to flee from Gaza? Gaza is crossing the border, going over and under it.

CHANGE DIRECTION!

Eleven months after the destruction of Gush Katif, the one who devised the horror is comatose. His son Omri, one of those involved in the Expulsion

*Stop playing around
with our security!
Change direction!
Hashem, in His
mercy, is showing us
the way and all we
need to do is follow.*

crime, is about to be thrown into jail. Hamas rose to power and showed the world the bitter truth and the results of the Disengagement.

The United States, which was going to fund the Disengagement, suffered catastrophic hurricanes and flooding and told Israel it cannot pay for the expulsion. Hundreds of Kassams landed in Israel, and the infiltration, murder and kidnapping in Kerem Shalom took place in the same area where the army trained to expel their

fellow Jews from Gush Katif. Most of the previous government ministers who were partners to the expulsion crime have disappeared from the public arena. Entire parties were wiped out and others combined, started anew or split.

All this is designed to lead us towards one conclusion: Stop playing around with our security! Change direction! Hashem, in His mercy, is showing us the way and all we need to do is follow.

The infiltration in Kerem Shalom was the event that led many to acknowledge the truth. As quoted in last week's column, the Rebbe told the Sadigura Rebbe that Hashem shows us the results immediately so that we see where our actions lead us.

WHAT WILL LEAD TO CHANGE?

In an astonishing letter from the year 5728, the Rebbe writes that sadly, what will lead to real change will be mistakes on the Arabs' part:

Changes in the thinking of the Jewish public will not bring about change, but mistakes of the Arabs and their supporters will. As in the past, these mistakes compelled, this past year, the pursuers of peace to finally agree to defend, which led to a preemptive war.

If only in the future it will be easier and will not, G-d forbid, entail the harming of a nefesh nor a body and not even the money of our brethren, the Jewish people, wherever they are.

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PERSONAL FREEDOM WITH THE REBBE'S BRACHA

BY NOSSON AVROHOM
TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY

“After waiting in line for two hours, I came to the Rebbe, accompanied by my mother. As I was standing before the Rebbe, he blessed me and asked that I make certain to place a ‘Shir HaMaalos’ under the pillow of the expected child. Afterwards, he said something to my mother that she didn’t understand, and the sadranit translated that the Rebbe had requested that she should say a few chapters of T’hillim at the time of the birth. The Rebbe gave his patented smile and we left. Five hours later, I arrived at the hospital to give birth.”

“Ever since the day that I first met the Rebbe, I haven’t taken a step without asking for his bracha.” With these words, Mrs. **Chana Chagiel** begins her amazing story.

Chana, a former Israeli, today lives with her children in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. As with many others, she also came to the special activities that take place at the city’s Moshiach Center,

run by the shliach, Rabbi **Mordechai Anati**. “Whenever I come to a Chassidic community,” she says, “I am happy to tell my story.”

Several months ago, such an opportunity presented itself at the Moshiach Center, and she decided to tell her unbelievable story.

“I emigrated from Eretz Yisroel to New York twenty years ago, at the age

of fourteen. As the average Israeli, I absorbed Jewish tradition at home. When I was only seventeen, I got married and established a standard Jewish home with a strong attachment to the path of our forefathers. In those days, the name of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, as one who did miracles and wonders, was well known. Many spoke about him, accompanied by miraculous stories that happened to countless people, even those who had lost all hope of salvation.

“As with many other people, I became most excited when I first heard about the Rebbe. Even as a young child, I had heard much about the great power of tzaddikim, so in 5745, I came to 770 for the first time. It is safe to say that from the moment I first saw the Rebbe, I turned into one of his devoted chassidim. When you stand facing the Rebbe, you feel that there is nothing that you can hide from him. He knows everything, and it makes absolutely no difference what you tell him. In general, I remember that I was a very nervous woman in those days, yet the moment I stood before the Rebbe, a sense of calm and tranquility encompassed me. From that meeting, I came to the Rebbe again several dozen times. I requested

a bracha from the Rebbe on virtually every subject imaginable, and I knew that everything would come to a proper conclusion.

“Back then, with G-d’s help, I was fortunate to start a very successful taxi service. Whenever a problem developed with the business or in some other matter in my life, I would come for Sunday dollars, stand for several hours, rain or shine, lay out the problem before the Rebbe, receive a bracha, and after a while, I saw clearly how everything worked out. Obviously, when I saw all the Rebbe’s brachos fulfilled, I became a devout follower of the Rebbe.

“All this is merely an introduction to the story that I would like to tell. Seven years had passed since I had

I prayed to G-d with all my heart that He should release me from my husband’s bonds. I didn’t want to be an aguna my whole life. This went on for eight long years. I was left in a terrible dilemma, broken and crushed.

given birth to my first child, and I had still not merited to have more children. I went to the most prominent doctors in New York City and the metropolitan area, and they said unanimously that if I wanted to bring more children into the world, it would require that I undergo lengthy and complicated medical treatment. I didn’t flinch. I have a Rebbe.

“I came to the Rebbe for Sunday dollars. He asked me for my mother’s name, and blessed me with ‘Bracha v’hatzlacha’ (blessing and success). Just a month after receiving the bracha, I learned that I was pregnant.

“After nine months, around the time of my due date, I decided that I would go to the Rebbe and ask for a bracha before the birth. In those days,



I wouldn't do anything, large or small, without asking for the Rebbe's bracha. People standing in the long line thought that I gone out of my mind due to my condition. Everyone asked to clear a path for me, saying, 'Make room – lady with a baby.'

"After waiting in line for two hours, I came to the Rebbe, accompanied by my mother. As I was standing before the Rebbe, he blessed me and asked that I make certain to place a 'Shir HaMaalos' under the pillow of the expected child. Afterwards, he said something to my mother that she didn't understand, and the *sadranit* translated that the Rebbe had requested that she should say a few chapters of T'hillim at the time of the birth. The Rebbe gave his patented smile and we left.

"Five hours later, I arrived at the hospital to give birth. Before entering the delivery room, I demanded that the doctors and nurses place a 'Shir HaMaalos' under my pillow and under the pillow of the baby. After the fact, it turned out that my insistence to come to the Rebbe prior to the birth was something of Heavenly proportions.

"During the birth, I was lacking oxygen and didn't cooperate. The baby and I were now in a life-threatening situation. I was certain that the Rebbe knew all too well that I was in serious condition, and therefore, he instructed my mother to say chapters of T'hillim. In fact, my mother said the T'hillim that they told her to say, and I am sure that I was

saved in the merit of these words of prayer.

"After the birth, I came to the Rebbe, deeply moved, and I asked him to suggest a mitzva that I should accept upon myself as an expression of thanks to G-d for the miracle. However, the Rebbe left that choice to me. I decided to keep the Laws of Family Purity with the utmost precision. During this time, I even taught the halachos to several of my friends who had no connection

traveled to faraway Florida with my children, for the purpose of starting a new chapter in my life and breaking away from the very difficult circumstances that had engulfed me. In the process of moving to Florida, I asked my husband to give me a divorce.

"However, I found myself faced by a steadfast wall of opposition, as he refused categorically to honor my request. I turned to various rabbanim, friends, and acquaintances, asking

that they speak to his heart, but all my pleas went unanswered. I prayed to G-d with all my heart that He should release me from my husband's bonds. I didn't want to be an aguna my whole life. This went on for eight long years. I was left in a terrible dilemma, broken and crushed.

"At a certain point, Rabbi Gidon Duk of the Moshiach Center started coming to my place of work. He would arrive every day and put on t'fillin with the employees and I would bombard him with complaints and questions. 'How can G-d possibly leave me an aguna? What sin and what

crime have I committed? Am I such a bad woman to deserve this?' While he always tried to give me good words of encouragement, I had already digested the fact that I would apparently have to remain this way for the rest of my life.

"One day, I heard R. Gidon explain to my work supervisor about the possibility of turning to the Lubavitcher Rebbe today via *Igros Kodesh* and receive his holy bracha.



Gidon Duk at a Moshiach Center farbrengen

whatsoever to the subject, and they agreed to become stronger in these and other matters of Torah observance."

* * *

"This is the first story," Chana said in her voice clearly tinged with emotion. "The second story is no less incredible."

"During the nineties, my marriage encountered some serious turbulence, and I decided to get a divorce. I

When I heard this, I was thrilled. A drop of hope entered my heart. I never used to take a step without asking for the Rebbe's bracha, yet after eight years as an aguna, it never dawned on me to turn to the Rebbe now and ask for a bracha?

"I approached R. Gidon and practically begged him to bring a volume of *Igros Kodesh*, so I could write a letter to the Rebbe. He gladly agreed, and came back a few days later with one of the volumes. With a great sense of fear and love, I sat down to write a letter to the Rebbe. Brokenhearted, I asked the Rebbe if and when I will ever get a divorce. R. Gidon opened the seifer, however, the answer was in Yiddish and he didn't how to translate it properly. He suggested that I ask someone at the Chabad House.

"I came to the Chabad House, and one of the bachurim who learns there read me the answer in a tone of calm and confidence. He said that he understood from the answer I had received that by Pesach, the Holiday of Freedom, I will also have the freedom that I require.

I laughed to myself. Pesach was in another two months. I had been waiting for eight years and nothing had happened. The deep despair that I felt over my situation deprived me of any hope for optimism.

"Two weeks after receiving the answer, I had forgotten all about it and continued my normal daily routine.

"Then one day, I received a telephone call from a Mr. Allan Haber,

a very prominent and influential Jew of Syrian descent living in Brooklyn. He said that he had heard about my story and was deeply touched by my plight. I remembered him as a very pleasant man who had been one of our regular customers when we ran our taxi company. He then said that he wanted to serve as a mediator between me and my husband.

"Why should you care if I get a divorce?' I asked despondently.

"I remember you as a very fine woman,' he replied. 'My heart goes out to you, and I want to do a mitzva

"I left the rabbi's office, crying uncontrollably – but this time, shedding tears of joy."

to help you get out of this terrible situation.'

"I told him that I don't want alimony and I have absolutely no problem that my husband sees the children whenever he wants. The main thing is that he should give me a divorce. He said that he will make every possible effort and he'll get back in touch with me as things develop.

"Indeed, I discovered afterwards that over a period of several weeks, he would call my husband every day to try and pressure him to give me a divorce. Periodically, he would call to

let me know that I will need to have a lot of patience, and that he is working on the matter. I didn't want to get my hopes up too high, only to suffer a big disappointment. I said T'hillim, bitterly crying as I davened that G-d should have mercy upon me.

"Then, one cloudy day, I received a fax for me to sign. Apparently, my signature on this document would assist in obtaining what I had long been waiting for. A small beacon of hope began to penetrate my sea of despair. A week later, I received a telephone call from an important rabbi in Florida who dealt with divorce cases, inviting me to see him. Accompanied by my mother, I entered his office, where he told me, 'You will receive your divorce today. Your husband faxed us everything. We have the witnesses, and everything is arranged.' He went to the shul located near his office, brought two witnesses, and afterwards I received my divorce, sent by my ex-husband."

Chana then completed her amazing stories in an undisguised display of emotion:

"I left the rabbi's office, crying uncontrollably – but this time, shedding tears of joy. It was exactly a week before Pesach, the Festival of Freedom. The Rebbe's answer, as read to me by that bachur, was ringing in my ears. I had actually gone free in its truest sense. The unbelievable had happened, thanks to the Rebbe's bracha. Suddenly, I felt a deep sense of longing to see the Rebbe again..."

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A LITVISHE ROSH YESHIVA IN LUBAVITCH

BY RABBI SHNEUR ZALMAN CHANIN

*Why did the Gaon, Rav Yechezkel Abramsky visit Lubavitch? Which bachur made the greatest impression on him and how did he become closely connected to the Rebbe Rayatz? * The story of a Litvishe gaon who sat in jail in Russia for his mesirus nefesh for Judaism.*

FOOD PACKAGES DURING THE FOOD SHORTAGE

By way of introduction and background to the following story, I must provide some historical notes of the times in which this story took place.

About 650,000 Jews lived in Eretz Yisroel before the War of Independence. Right after the war, when the gates opened to Jews to enter the country, immigrants came from many countries.

In the early years of the State, most of the new immigrants were war survivors who had remained in Europe after the war, while in the years that followed, entire communities of Jews came from Asian and African countries. In the

first three and a half years, until the end of 1951, about 700,000 new immigrants arrived in Israel and the fledgling state doubled its

population.

Because of the massive influx of people, there were serious shortages in apartments, food, and medicine. The State treasury simply didn't have the money to import basic items and the country's own agricultural industry wasn't supplying enough for its needs.

Due to this economic crisis, the government announced an "austerity discipline," in which the State promised to provide its citizens with basic products such as milk, eggs, meat, oil, flour, sugar, and even vegetables. These could be purchased in stores with coupons, a



coupon for each item.

The shortage of milk and eggs was made up for with powdered milk and powdered eggs. Instead of meat, frozen and filleted fish was imported. Each resident was allotted a portion worth 6 liros per month, which included, among other things, a dozen eggs, 500 grams of fish and 750 grams of meat or chicken for an adult – per month!

The designated allotments were small and did not provide sufficient nourishment and so food parcels sent from abroad were greatly appreciated.

Among Lubavitchers, there were some lucky ones who received food packages containing sausage, smoked meat, or preserved packaged meat from abroad. Whoever went to Eretz Yisroel at this time would take a lot of preserved meat and since the trip in those days was by ship, there was no limit on how much luggage you could take.

My father told me on various occasions that when he lived in Paris and had a meat-preserving factory, he would send meat to Eretz Yisroel every month for Anash and for Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim, which was in Lud at that time. The meat was kosher l'mehadrin and was under the hashgacha of the Chabad rabbanim of that time.

I have some letters from the Chassid, Rav Efraim Wolf in which he thanks my father for the meat he sent to yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim (which will be mentioned further in later installments).

MEETING AT A TRAIN STATION

One day, in 1951, my father received a telegram from the Gaon, Rav Yechezkel Abramsky (1886-1976), informing him that the latter was about to leave England in order to settle in Eretz Yisroel and he would be going via Paris. He asked

my father to send someone to bring him preserved meat from the Lubavitcher sh'chita, which was known as a sh'chita l'mehadrin.

R' Yechezkel gave the details as to which day and time he would be arriving at a particular train station. He was planning to take the train to the port city of Marseilles and from there to sail to Eretz Yisroel.

My father had heard about R' Yechezkel and his work in Russia. He admired him and so he decided that it wasn't right to send the package via a messenger and that he would go to the train station himself. He wanted to ask R'

“I had also written s'farim on Tosefta (which hadn't been printed yet). The position in Lubavitch interested me very much and I considered it a challenge.”

Yechezkel a question that had preoccupied him for a long time, as will be related shortly.

My father went to the train station on the appointed day and met R' Yechezkel. When R' Yechezkel saw my father, he apologized for bothering him and said that he had asked in his telegram that a messenger be sent. He hadn't dreamed of disturbing my father to have him come with the package of meat.

My father said it was his pleasure, privilege, and honor to accompany a Jew who was traveling

to the Holy Land, especially a gaon and spiritual giant as R' Yechezkel, who was leaving his position and community after many decades in order to settle in Eretz Yisroel. A Jew who was a baal mesirus nefesh for spreading Torah and Judaism, who worked hand in hand with the Rebbe Rayatz in Soviet Russia and sat in jail for his work.

My father gave him the meat and paid for a taxi to take R' Yechezkel to the train station for the train to Marseilles. When my father saw that R' Yechezkel was pleased with his service, he took the opportunity to ask him the question on his mind.

“I am a Lubavitcher Chassid, and the Chassid Rav Avrohom Eliyahu Plotkin was a dear friend of mine. I know that you too were a friend of his and that since you left Russia and settled in England you sent R' Avrohom Eliyahu food packages in Russia. If you would be willing to tell me, I'd be interested in hearing how your friendship developed.”

“AUDITION” FOR TORAH GIANTS

Rabbi Yechezkel Abramsky told him the story.

In 1909, they were looking for a rosh yeshiva in Lubavitch and an announcement was made in the Torah world that whoever wanted to be rosh yeshiva had to give a sample shiur in Lubavitch.

It was known that in Lubavitch, the bachurim studied diligently and there were scholars among them, experts in Shas and Poskim. The students of Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim were also known as G-d-fearing and as *marbitzei Torah* (those who spread Torah). I was already a well-known gaon in the yeshiva world and had a good reputation as a scholar and innovator. I had also written s'farim on Tosefta (which hadn't been printed yet). The position in Lubavitch interested me

very much and I considered it a challenge.

I packed and left for Lubavitch. The trip was difficult and took nearly two weeks but when I got to the yeshiva's office, the Rebbe Rayatz, the acting menahel of the yeshiva, graciously welcomed me and arranged suitable lodging for me. I was supposed to give a shiur to the talmidim in the big zal a week later.

The week that I spent in Lubavitch was quite an experience for me. I spent most of the day in the zal in which the bachurim learned. They made a tremendous impression on me. All had beards, which wasn't what I was accustomed to in the yeshivos I had learned in and in which I had taught until then. All wore long jackets.

(As I found out later, in Lubavitch the bachurim wore a long jacket (3/4 length) in order to cover their tzitzis, because the Rebbe Rashab once saw a bachur whose tzitzis stuck out from his jacket and he said, "This is chitzonius." From then on, the bachurim wore longer jackets.)

I saw how they were immersed in their learning, in refining their middos, their yiras Shamayim, and their avodas ha't'filla. The inyan of t'filla and the study of Chassidus were foreign to me, but I admired their refinement and the earnestness on their faces, as well as their daily conduct. I was very impressed

I had a wonderful opportunity to speak with the talmidim in learning since I knew that among them were outstanding scholars, but in Lubavitch these bachurim were modest and didn't pride themselves on their knowledge. So I wasn't able to readily identify them.

I was told that among the bachurim was a sort of committee that told the hanhala their opinion on the shiur and the maggid shiur,

whether he was a fitting candidate for rosh yeshiva or not, but I did not manage to uncover this information.

Because of the underdeveloped communications of that time, I did not know which masechta they were studying in yeshiva and I prepared a shiur in a different masechta. A few days before the shiur, the bachurim were told which masechta I would be giving a shiur on and on which topic. I provided the sources upon which I would be constructing my pilpul so that the bachurim could prepare for the shiur.



Rabbi Yechezkel Abramsky

The zal was full when I began my shiur. A few hundred bachurim sat respectfully and listened. I spoke for two hours or more. Bachurim asked questions that proved quite challenging. I enjoyed giving the shiur as well as the talmidim's participation.

SURPRISING CONCLUSION

I finished the shiur, well satisfied with myself. I had worked hard on preparing it, had conveyed many chiddushim and had answered all

the questions that had arisen during the course of the shiur, so I was sure that I would be accepted as rosh yeshiva.

The next morning I met with the menahel, the Rebbe Rayatz. He thanked me for my efforts and said that in a few days, there would be a meeting of the hanhala and afterwards they would tell the Rebbe Rashab their decision and write me a letter telling me whether I had been accepted as rosh yeshiva.

The yeshiva office provided me with funds for my travel expenses there and back. They hired a wagon to take me to the train station in Rudnia and out of respect they sent a bachur, R' Avrohom Eliyahu Plotkin, to accompany me.

We began talking in learning and I felt that R' Plotkin, despite his young age, was extremely knowledgeable in Shas and Poskim, a gaon and baki in all parts of Torah. While speaking, R' Avrohom Eliyahu politely referred to the topic upon which I had based my shiur. He asked me some questions and when I tried to answer him it suddenly struck me that that this young man had actually destroyed the entire edifice upon which I had built my pilpul.

I realized (or better put, I felt) that R' Avrohom Eliyahu was one of the bachurim who would probably convey his opinion of the shiur to the hanhala. According to the difficulties he had raised, I understood that it wasn't likely that I would be accepted as rosh yeshiva in Lubavitch.

My fears were realized. To tell the truth, I was very upset. I was accustomed to my knowledge being respected by my colleagues, friends, and family, but in Lubavitch, I had failed.

However, I did not forget the derech eretz, the refinement, the Ahavas Yisroel of the bachur who

accompanied me to the train station. A bachur like that, if he had been in another yeshiva, would have asked those questions publicly, would have embarrassed me and crushed me in front of everybody. Instead, he didn't ask anything in the zal but traveled with me in order to have an opportunity to speak to me alone. It was only in a casual manner that he began asking me about the shiur and in a roundabout way he showed me, respectfully, that I had been mistaken and that my structure had been missing a foundation.

That is when our friendship began. I am grateful till this day for the kindness he showed me and therefore I feel it my responsibility and privilege to help R' Avrohom Eliyahu since I was able to leave Russia, with Hashem's help, in 1932. Over the years, I sent him food packages so he and his family would have food to eat and I still send his wife aid.

SIGN LANGUAGE IN A RUSSIAN JAIL

R' Yechezkel also told of the connection he had with the Rebbe Rayatz in later years, which developed because of his visit to Lubavitch:

I wasn't born to or raised in Chassidic ways but my visit to Lubavitch, despite everything, resulted in a deep connection between me and the Rebbe Rayatz. I was captivated by his awesome personality and whatever he asked of me, I did with kabbalas ol, to the point of mesirus nefesh, to strengthen Torah and Judaism, in building chadarim and mikvaos and aiding rabbanim.

I worked with the Rebbe Rayatz from 1926 until I left Russia in 1932. I was involved with underground activities. In letters that the Rebbe wrote to me or about me, he used my code name "Yemin

Hashem Romema V'Tosefta." (The first three words are the beginning of the pasuk alluding to the name Yechezkel, said before stepping out of Shmoneh Esrei, and Tosefta, because R' Yechezkel had written a commentary on Tosefta).

R' Yechezkel went on to tell my father about his imprisonment. When the Rebbe Rayatz was already in Riga in 1930, Rabbi Abramsky was arrested for his work in strengthening Torah and Judaism. He was given ten years with hard labor in the Ural Mountains. The Rebbe worked tirelessly to have him released.

In jail, he met the Chassid, R'

"They hired a wagon to take me to the train station in Rudnia and out of respect they sent a bachur, R' Avrohom Eliyahu Plotkin, to accompany me."

Refael (Folye) Kahn, as R' Refael writes in his memoir:

"One day, as we walked in the yard, I suddenly noticed that near one of the windows of the jail stood Rabbi Abramsky. He noticed me too among the other prisoners and motioned to me with his hands and facial expressions: What did you get?"

"I responded by holding up three fingers, to say that I had gotten three years. He continued asking me, with signs, whether they would send me to hard labor (he did this by making motions as though he was chopping wood), or would only

send me to exile. I answered him, motioning that I wasn't sentenced to hard labor.

"Suddenly one of the guards accompanying us noticed a prisoner at the window, motioning with his hands and face at one of us. He called out, 'Stop!'

"We all stopped and stood silently. He asked, 'Who is communicating with the prisoner standing at the window?'

"Nobody answered. Even though many of the prisoners had seen me talking with the rav, nobody tattled. All said they didn't know who it was. The guard yelled, 'If you don't tell me who is disobeying the rules of the jail, you'll be penalized!'

"That didn't help. All pretended innocence. The guard kept his word and for four days we were not allowed to go out and exercise."

THE REBBE WENT ALL OUT TO SAVE HIM

When the Rebbe heard that Rabbi Abramsky had been arrested, he immediately began pulling strings through diplomatic channels to achieve his release. The Rebbe put in enormous effort to save him and used his connections with government figures in Latvia, Poland, and Germany.

With the help of some well-to-do Chassidim who were influential and had government connections, and with the tremendous help of certain rabbanim in Germany, the Rebbe spared no effort until he saved the rav.

R' Yechezkel related how the Rebbe enlisted the famous Gaon R' Chaim Ozer Grodzenski, rav of Vilna, who spoke to politicians and members of the Parliament in Poland and Germany, to obtain his release. In a meeting between Stalin and the prime minister of Germany, the prime minister of Germany

mentioned R' Abramsky's release and they decided on a prisoner exchange between the two nations: the release of 7-8 communist prisoners from German prison for Rabbi Abramsky in Russian prison.

At the beginning of 1932, R' Abramsky was released and then expelled from the country. However, this was not the end to his suffering because the Russians did not allow his wife and children to leave with him but kept them as hostages. If R' Abramsky spoke negatively about communist Russia, they could take their revenge on his family. Years

later, R' Yechezkel was able to obtain their release.

R' Abramsky said that he maintained a correspondence with the Rebbe and continued to send packages to Jews in Russia after he settled in England.

When my father told me all this, he said that R' Abramsky had spoken enthusiastically as though he was living the events once again. His love for the Rebbe was apparent. My father was amazed by the strong connection between the Rav and the Rebbe. Although it wasn't the

connection that a Chassid has with his Rebbe, it was a connection between a gadol b'Torah with the Manhig Yisroel.

WHEN TWO GAONIM MEET SECRETLY

R' Plotkin once told my father how he met with R' Abramsky in Leningrad in 1930 when he was wandering here and there in fear of the NKVD before being arrested and leaving Russia. R' Avrohom Eliyahu worked as a simple laborer in a weaving factory and he dressed accordingly, while R' Abramsky was living under a false name so he wouldn't be recognized.

When two Jews meet, even if they don't know one another, they began to talk. The two met and the conversation became a learned discussion. R' Avrohom Eliyahu realized that the man he was speaking to wanted to tell him who he was but was hesitating. R' Yechezkel suddenly said that he sensed that he was speaking with a Lubavitcher Chassid and asked whether R' Plotkin knew who he was.

When R' Plotkin said that he didn't, R' Abramsky told him that he was R' Yechezkel Abramsky and said that he had come to Leningrad on a mission of the Rebbe but had to hide because of the NKVD.

Once he disclosed his identity and it turned out that they knew each other from Lubavitch, R' Avrohom Eliyahu told him who he was. They fell upon one another in great excitement.

"I am sure," said R' Avrohom Eliyahu to my father, "that the few days that R' Abramsky spent in Lubavitch and his one meeting with the Rebbe Rayatz had an effect to the point that R' Abramsky was willing to endanger himself for the Rebbe's mission and for Klal Yisroel."



R' Avrohom Eliyahu Plotkin

A CLARIFICATION ON THE REBBE RASHAB'S EXPLANATION OF THE YERUSHALMI

TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY

In response to requests by our readers, we now present the eighth 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:

The Rebbe Rashab's explanation of the Yerushalmi (stating that it refers to the **complete** kingdom of the House of Dovid in Yerushalayim, and also admitting that Melech HaMoshiach will come long before and build the Beis HaMikdash) is difficult to comprehend. In order that my question can be understood properly, I quote here from the gaon, HaRav R. Shlomo Zevin, of blessed memory:

"In this process, when will be the time of the building of the Beis HaMikdash? We have discovered some

contradictions: We have learned in the Mishna (Maaser Sheini 5:2): R. Yosi says, when the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed, there was this condition. (That is, a regulation was instituted that fruits of the fourth year would not be redeemed within a day's distance of Yerushalayim in any direction. Rather, the fruits themselves would be brought to Yerushalayim in order to adorn the local marketplaces. But after the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed, this regulation was nullified.) The condition was that when the Beis HaMikdash would be rebuilt, speedily

in our days (in the language of the Mishna in Yerushalmi), things would be restored to the way they were before. The Yerushalmi states there: 'Rabbi Acha says that this means that the Beis HaMikdash will be rebuilt in the future before the kingdom of the House of Dovid.' That is, if Melech HaMoshiach will come beforehand, why should we place conditions on what will be afterwards? Moshiach will instruct us what to do. But the Beis HaMikdash will be rebuilt before Moshiach comes.

"In this regard, how can we possibly say that according to the Yerushalmi, Moshiach will come beforehand? For if that be the case, there still remains the question that we can ask Moshiach after the building of the Beis HaMikdash (prior to [the restoration of] his complete kingdom). So why will we need a regulation?"

ANSWER:

1. This interpretation of the Yerushalmi – that "if Melech HaMoshiach will come beforehand, why should we place conditions on what will be afterwards? Moshiach will instruct us what to do" – is the

personal interpretation of Rabbi Zevin. The P'nei Moshe, however, explains the Yerushalmi in a totally different manner: "This textual reference means that the future building of the Beis HaMikdash will be prior to the **spreading forth** of the kingdom of Dovid in Yerushalayim... and what's the point to adorning the marketplaces before [the kingdom] returns to tranquility, as this will only be when Melech HaMoshiach conquers the nations and the kingdom of Dovid returns to its place in Yerushalayim." He then concludes: "So it will be in the future. First the Beis HaMikdash will be rebuilt, and afterwards, **the kingdom of the House of Dovid will blossom and ascend**, and there will be **complete** salvation." Thus we are indeed talking about the complete kingdom of Dovid, and only then will Yerushalayim be in tranquility.

In fact, according to the precise language of the P'nei Moshe, there is a proof to the Rebbe Rashab's interpretation: "The future building of the Beis HaMikdash will be prior to the **spreading forth** of the kingdom of Dovid in **Yerushalayim**... and the kingdom of Dovid returns **to its place**...and there will be **complete** salvation." (See another interpretation by the students of the Vilna Gaon, as brought in the Ridbaz, which also explains how the complete kingdom of Dovid will be upon all Israel.)

2. Even according to the interpretation of the Maleches Shlomo brought in the Ridbaz, the question is that "then there will be all the **[Torah] greats of the world**" and not that they will ask Moshiach himself. Yet, since there will still not be the complete kingdom of Dovid, and certainly not *T'chiyas HaMeisim*, not all the world's Torah giants will be there at that stage.

3. Furthermore, and this is the main thing, you will see the end to this section of the Ridbaz that according to the interpretation and language of the Maleches Shlomo, the **conclusion** drawn by the Yerushalmi is not as

Rabbi Acha, rather, the coming of Moshiach Tzidkeinu will indeed be before the building of the Beis HaMikdash. Thus, not only is the Yerushalmi's proof not against the Rambam, even the very conclusion of the Yerushalmi itself is the source of the Rambam's halachic ruling that the kingdom of Dovid precedes the building of the Beis HaMikdash.

4. Even the aforementioned Kli Chemda writes that the simple interpretation of the Yerushalmi is not that the Beis HaMikdash will be rebuilt before the coming of Moshiach, but that "the building of the Beis HaMikdash will be before the kingdom



has been firmly established. For immediately when the kingdom of Dovid comes and redeems us, there will be more wars with the other nations until victory has been achieved over the entire world and his kingdom has been reinstated. Thus, the Yerushalmi teaches us that the building of the Beis HaMikdash will not be delayed until the kingdom has been fully established; the Beis HaMikdash will be rebuilt immediately upon Moshiach's coming." See there how he explains the entire process according to the Yerushalmi. Thus, his answer is exactly as the Rebbe Rashab's.

5. Also, the Turei Even (Rosh

HaShana 11:1) brings the Gemara (Eruvin 43b) stating that if a person declares, "I am a Nazir on the day that the son of Dovid comes," it is forbidden for him to drink wine all year round, whereby he brings the disagreement between Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Yehoshua regarding whether the Redemption will be in Nissan or Tishrei, asking why he is prevented from drinking throughout the year. In the responsa *T'shuva M'Ahava* (written to his student, the Noda Bihuda), he writes in Sec. 211: "In my humble opinion, there is no question here whatsoever, because there will be no Redemption on the day that the son of Dovid comes, rather things will be as the Rambam writes (Hilchos Melachim, Ch. 11), i.e., after he will compel all Israel to walk in the path of Torah, successfully fight the wars of G-d, and **build the Mikdash**, etc., then there will be the Complete Redemption." Similarly, he brings proofs in the name of the Pis'chei T'shuva – Yore Deia (239:106). See also the S'fas Emes on Rosh HaShana, and the responsa of Maharam Schick – Yore Deia 213.

6. From all the aforementioned, you can see all these Torah authorities agree on one thing: the question of the Yerushalmi is moot. This is because while the Beis HaMikdash will indeed be rebuilt before the restoration of the complete kingdom of Dovid, this will not take place before the coming of Moshiach ben Dovid, who will begin his activities to compel all Israel, fight the wars of G-d, build the Beis HaMikdash, gather in the exiles, and then the complete kingdom will be in Yerushalayim.

7. Now you will understand how strange it is for you to make the suggestion that there is seemingly no source for the Rambam's halachic ruling that Moshiach builds the Beis HaMikdash or that the Yerushalmi appears to prove that the halacha is not according to Rambam.

NATIONAL HITCHHIKING DAY

BY ALIZA KARP

Following the attempted abduction of two girls and the abduction and murder of Eliyahu Asheri, may Hashem avenge his blood, there has been discussion on what should be done to deal with the question of how to keep the youth from the danger of being kidnapped while hitchhiking. The suggestions include: no more hitchhiking, hitchhiking within security fences only and never hitchhike alone. One solution would be to increase bus transportation in the area.

A few years ago I decided I was ready to drive to Chevron by myself. When I asked for directions I was told to drive through Yerushalayim to the turn off to Gush Etzion. There would be a number of bus stops and I should go to the one marked Kiryat Arba and pick up someone standing there and they would show me the way.

That was my introduction to picking up travelers, at bus stations and hitchhiking spots.

Since then I have picked up and dropped off hitchhikers in Yehuda, Shomron, and Aza, may it be speedily rebuilt. Although I would never pick up a hitchhiker in the city, I have no problem picking them up in Yesha.

From my point of view I am not

worried about picking up someone suspicious from the hitchhiking stations. I pick up hikers from groups standing together. These youth would know immediately if there was someone who was not one of them. When they all stand together comfortably, I have no doubt that I am safe.

But, are the hitchhikers safe? That is not a question that an outsider can answer. Outsiders have associations with the word hitchhiking which do not apply to what is happening in Yehuda and Shomron, where hitchhiking is a common mode of transportation. It is very efficient. It is part of the lifestyle for the youth, and adults, of Yesha.

The argument that it is safer to get into a bus, than into a car with a stranger, is hardly an argument in this particular case. Residents of Yesha know which cars to get into and which are dangerous. They have to be forced into the 'wrong' car. So it makes no difference whether the hitchhiker is waiting for a ride or a bus, it is the fact that they are on the road that makes them potential victims. To tell them not to be on the road is to tell them not to do what has to be done. They have to be able to get from place to place.

A few months ago I was driving up to the Shomron and back to Chevron on Erev Shabbos. North of Yerushalayim there were dozens of youth at numerous spots hitching rides, all going to their Shabbos destinations. I picked up as many as my car would hold and wished I had rented a van so I could have picked up more. By the time I was headed back south, I was pleased to note that almost all the youth had been picked up.

Although I don't get a chance to schmooze with all my passengers, I learn a lot from the ones I do speak with and I enjoy coming in contact with all of them. These are the hilltop youth. I respect their healthy lifestyle and their dedication to Eretz Yisroel. It hurts to see their environment threatened by the government – a part of that environment being their mode

of transportation, i.e., hitchhiking.

A hidden advantage of picking up hitchhikers is the chance to do Mivtzaim. One time a soldier got into my car in Kiryat Arba and rode all the way to Yerushalayim. When we first started speaking he told me that he had just started serving at the Tel Rumeida base in Chevron and that in his opinion there should be no Jews living in Chevron. By the time we got to Rehov HaNeviim, where he got off, he realized how important it was for Jews to be in Chevron. I gave him compact Siddur-T'hillim-Tanya-Pushka and he really appreciated the gift.

Following the attempted abduction of two girls and the abduction and murder of Eliyahu Asheri, may Hashem avenge his blood, there has been discussion on what should be done to deal with the question of how to keep the youth from the danger of being kidnapped while hitchhiking. The suggestions include: no more hitchhiking, hitchhiking within security fences only and never hitchhike alone. One solution would be to increase bus transportation in the area.

Women in Green said that just as we did not stop riding buses when they were being bombed, we cannot stop hitching rides. Women in Green seem to have the best understanding of the situation.

Increasing bus service sounds good but is not sound. The hitchhiking system is very efficient. Supplying enough busses to duplicate the number of passing cars, willing to take in passengers, will never happen, so the youth would actually be waiting longer by the side of the road if they wait for busses. As mentioned above, terrorists do not care if their victim is waiting for a passing car or a bus. And once there is a bus schedule, then the terrorists will know the best time at each location to stage their attacks.

The youth cannot just stop hitchhiking. It would affect their

everyday life. Their freedom of movement is part of their culture. These youth are very precious. They represent a brighter future in Eretz Yisroel.

Immediately following the news of Asheri's disappearance, a P'sak Din was declared by a few rabbis, led by Disengagement facilitator Rabbi Aviner, forbidding hitchhiking. This P'sak Din is comparable to closing down Machne Yehuda, the main open market in Yerushalayim which has been the site of bombings for decades. No rabbi ever said to close down Machne Yehuda. They expect the government to increase the security, which is what has happened. The Shomron is not a vast area. It can also be secured.

In the last few months there has been a reduction of security on the roads of Yesha, which has brought the corresponding increase in terror activities. Rather than tell the youth to stop hitching rides, tell the army to send more soldiers back to guard the roads.

A second P'sak Din has come out, this one by Rabbis Avraham Shapira and Dov Lior, which is more reasonable. Instead of forbidding hitchhiking it forbids standing in dangerous places.

Two things will happen if the youth do not hitchhike. First, not all will stop and the ones who continue will be in greater danger and second, stopping the hitchhiking undermines the routine of the youth. It risks making life in Yesha less appealing to them. They may choose to live elsewhere if they cannot even travel the short distances between communities in Yehuda and Shomron.

It is no secret that the government wants to make these areas Judenrein. If they can make life difficult enough, through reducing security, they might get the population to move out for their own reasons. Then the government will not be saddled with the responsibility of caring for them.

The P'sak Din of forbidding hitchhiking seems to be falling into line with government policy of making living in Yesha more difficult.

With the hitchhikers gone, the roads will be relinquished to the Arabs, whereas if there is an increase in hitchhiking there will have to be an increase in security and the nation will be safer. I wish the rabbis had called for a National Hitchhiking Day, where everyone has to either become a hitchhiker or give rides.

Crown Heights is not a safe place. It is safer than it used to be but it is still far from safe. In the 1970's, Jews were being murdered here. The Rebbe never said to change our lifestyle or to run away. We were to pressure the police for better protection and form our own security watches. The Rebbe instructed us to have a Siddur, T'hillim, Tanya, and Tz'daka box in our homes and our vehicles as extra spiritual protection (in addition to Kosher Mezuzos.) We had to do what ever we could to protect ourselves and stop the crime without canceling events and going into hiding. If the Rebbe did not want us running from our community in Brooklyn, how much more so would this apply to communities in Eretz Yisroel! Our homeland!

Due to the success of the Rebbe's advice to have the Siddur, T'hillim, Tanya, and Tz'daka box, the books have been printed in one compact volume with a cover that has a pouch for the Tz'daka. It now comes in a size that fits into a pocket, and it is still readable. It is popular with soldiers. As extra protection, hitchhikers should carry this, again, in addition to Kosher Mezuzos on their homes.

In T'hillim it says: *Sur meira, v'asaei tov* (do away with evil and do good). We have to stay focused. Terror is evil. For the youth in Yehuda and the Shomron, hitchhiking is good. Do away with terror; keep hitchhiking!