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THE MISHKAN, MIKDASH, AND THE FUTURE TEMPLE

LIKKUTEI SICHOS VOL. 21, PG. 260-267
TRANSLATED BY BORUCH MERKUR



1. The Zohar [222b] on our Torah portion [i.e., P'kudei] states that when the Ark reached its place (upon the Foundation Rock), “the Arona (Ark) broke forth, saying, ‘This is my resting place forever; here I will dwell, for I have desired it’ [T'hillim 132:14]. Rebbi Yisa said, ‘This verse was uttered by the Community of Israel when the Holy Temple was built and the Ark entered into its place.’ Rebbi Chizkiya said, ‘It is the Holy One Blessed Be He Who utters this verse, referring to the Community of Israel when the latter performs His will (when the Jewish people act in accordance with G-d’s will). For at such a time, the Holy One Blessed Be He sits upon His Throne of Glory and has compassion on the world and blessings and peace and love of all are present, so that He says, “This is my resting place forever.”’”

According to the simple interpretation, the three opinions [FN 4 in the original: see *Or HaChama*, *Mikdash Melech*, *Likkutei Levi Yitzchok on Zohar* that there are three opinions here] in the Zohar can be classified into two categories. The first two opinions are in accordance with the literal meaning of the Scripture, which speaks about the time when the Ark arrived at its place. [FN 5: See Kings I Ch. 8, the chapter that speaks about the bringing of the Ark to its place, fulfilling the saying of Dovid in T'hillim (ibid 13-14). See the following note [i.e., FN 6].]

It is only that according to the first opinion, the Ark

said, “This is my resting place forever,” whereas according to Rebbi Yisa, the **Community of Israel** said it.

But the third opinion, at first glance, has no connection to the literal meaning of the Scripture, which speaks about when the Ark came to its place in the Holy of Holies.

This analysis, however, is not satisfactory. Since the third opinion has no connection to the Tabernacle and the

At such a time, the Holy One Blessed Be He sits on His Throne of Glory and has compassion on the world and blessings and peace and love are present, so that He says, “This is my resting place forever.”

Temple, and the entrance of the Ark to its place, the topic discussed here in the Zohar, the Zohar didn’t need to cite this explanation **here**. Indeed, there are many unrelated commentaries to the verse, “This is my resting place” [which could equally have been cited].

In addition, concerning the first two opinions, it is understood that the distinction is not only regarding the one who says, “This is my resting place forever.” [A closer look at the context of this passage in the Zohar] supports this claim. The discussion in the Zohar begins with, “the world’s beauty and the world’s vision” was not manifest “in the world until the Tabernacle was built and erected and the Ark was brought into the Holy of Holies.” From

that time and on, “the world appeared at its best; it attained its just balance, proceeding through the Tabernacle and through the Ark,” until it came “to that point, that ‘beautiful bowery, the joy of all’ (the place of the Foundation Rock). When that point was reached, the Ark broke forth, saying...” If Rebbi Yisa is pointing out that it was not the Ark that said this but “the Community of

Israel," he only needed to say, "This verse was uttered by the Community of Israel." Since he reiterated the phrase, "when the Holy Temple was built and the Ark entered into its place," it is understood that he is coming to introduce an additional concept to the discussion. Namely, that this [verse] is connected (not only with the Ark itself, but also) with **the time that the Holy Temple was built.**

That is, the difference in the three opinions is both with regard to **who** said, "This is my resting place forever" – be it the Ark, the Community of Israel, or the Holy One Blessed Be He – and also with regard to **what** is being said: concerning its location (the Holy of Holies, upon the Foundation Rock), the time of the Holy Temple, or the time when the Jewish people act in accordance with G-d's will.

However, the following must be understood:

a) The significance of the distinction between the first two opinions: Since according to both opinions the verse is speaking about the same time and concept – "the Ark entered into its place" – what is the significance of distinguishing between the Ark saying [this passage] as opposed to the Community of Israel?

b) In the first opinion, what is the relevance of the preface about the building of the Tabernacle and that "the Ark was brought into the Holy of Holies" in the Tabernacle, when the verse, "This is my resting place forever," speaks about the arrival of the Ark in the Holy Temple, etc.?

[To be continued be"H]

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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. * Part 2*

[Continued from last week]

There are many Lubavitchers who believe that the Rebbe is Moshiach and understand the importance in publicizing and connecting more Jews to the Rebbe MH”M, but they don’t know how to go about it. Can you give us some guidelines?

Generally, effective publicity is comprised of two components: chitzonius and p’nimius. The chitzonius is the wrapping that explains the qualities of the product that you want to publicize, and the p’nimius is your belief in the product.

The rule that applies to the chitzonius part of the publicity is

“when you go to a city, follow its customs.” That means that the style of publicity varies according to your target audience. For example, if you are targeting b’nei Torah, the most effective publicity is through the Rebbe’s teachings.

After you learn the Rebbe’s Torah with them and they see the depth within his sichos, then you show them sichos in which the Rebbe says he is Moshiach and that the beginning of his hisgalus will be in 770. This is the best way to get through to them, to arouse an interest in getting closer to the great light of the Rebbe MH”M.

If your target audience is not

frum, then the best way to reach them is through miracle stories. When people hear of the Rebbe’s miracles, and then hear that the Rebbe said that our generation is the last generation of Galus and the first of Geula and that the Nasi HaDor is Moshiach, and Moshiach “Menachem is his name, as well as Mendel” – they believe it with emuna p’shuta and are happy to be connected to the Rebbe by fulfilling his directives.

When you teach inyanei Moshiach and Geula, which is the straight path to hastening the Geula, and you explain what Moshiach’s role is and what are the changes he will bring about in the world, you have to speak in present tense. While teaching you need to show how the criteria for Moshiach are fulfilled by the Rebbe. When you learn it this way, the material is accepted matter-of-factly, and there is no need to exert yourself afterwards to explain how the Rebbe is Moshiach.

The p’nimius’dike part of the publicity is no less important. When you speak about the necessity of connecting to the Rebbe and following his directives, you have to convey to your audience that you believe this wholeheartedly. If you stammer and stutter when you talk

about this, then people will sense that you yourself are not convinced. How do you expect *them* to believe it? (Though here too the Rebbe does wonders, and often people are inspired despite the fact that the Chassid he speaks to is evasive and uncomfortable with the subject.)

How do you project a sense of emuna?

Real faith seeks expression in and transforms the realm of action. If you're talking about emuna but don't live up to its demands, even if you express your emuna self-confidently, people won't buy it. Real faith is expressed in action and therefore you must be a personal example of what you're saying, as much as possible.

The Litvishe bachur said: I don't believe that you really believe that Moshiach is coming any minute because if you really believed it, then your behavior would be completely different.



Rabbi Zalman Notik

If when you go to shul you constantly speak against those who don't spread the Besuras HaGeula and you worry about whether this one or that one is saying "Yechi," people will look at you and think: If this is what is meant by "living with Moshiach," who needs a Moshiach like that! It's like a specialist in lung diseases who explains to a patient how cigarettes damage the lungs as he himself smokes.

(A grandson of Rabbi Dovid Povarsky, a rosh yeshiva in the Litvishe world, once visited Heichal Menachem and asked one of the Lubavitchers there whether he believed that the Rebbe is Moshiach.

(The Lubavitcher said that he did, and he asked him whether he believed that the Rebbe was about to be revealed any minute. When the Lubavitcher said yes, the Litvishe bachur said: I don't believe that you really believe that Moshiach is coming any minute because if you really believed it, then your behavior would be completely different.)

On the other hand, if you radiate Ahavas Yisroel, even to people who don't think as you do, and even if they hold the opposite of you, and you try to engrave in your mind that the Rebbe said that the entire world and the people of the generation are ready for Geula (not only the kibbutznikim, but also your neighbors the Lubavitchers) – then when people look at you, they respect you and want to join you in living in Yemos HaMoshiach.

What about people who just do the chitzonius part of the publicity and not the p'nimius – is that good or bad?

That's like asking about someone who wears a yarmulke but isn't frum. The fact that he wears a yarmulke is good. The fact that he doesn't live a life based on faith (represented by his yarmulke) so that his faith is internalized and changes his

behavior – that’s not good. The action is good but that’s not enough because: 1) the Rebbe wants our behavior to match our beliefs, 2) our influence on others is limited when they feel that it’s only empty words that don’t express real content.

The problem with chitzonius-type publicity exclusively is that often, even the chitzonius publicity is done incorrectly and it doesn’t achieve the goal! For example, if you hang up flyers with the Rebbe’s picture with the title “Moshiach” in places that are not designated for flyers, superficially – that’s great, because wherever people look they will see the Rebbe. There are even stories about people who were inspired by the Rebbe’s picture to do t’shuva. However, when you think about it some more you realize that hanging up those flyers contradicts the message you are trying to convey!

The Rebbe said that the world is ready to accept everything about Geula, and therefore, the Rebbe said that inyanei Moshiach need to permeate the world within and according to the characteristics of the world. The nature of the world dictates a certain way of doing things, i.e., there are places where you hang up flyers and places where they are not hung. When you hang up flyers in places not designated for that purpose, you must ask permission to do so, otherwise you are destroying other people’s property not to mention stealing.

If you put up flyers in a way that is contrary to the world, you are saying that you don’t believe that the natural order of the world can accept this revelation, which is why you are breaking the rules and hanging flyers up without permission. In short, you are shouting that the world is ready but your actions broadcast the opposite message – that Moshiach is something superimposed on the world and doesn’t permeate it. The fact is that you are afraid to deal with

reality and to convey a Geula message in a way that the reality of the world will agree to the publicity about Moshiach.

It’s important to emphasize: I know a number of Chassidim who hang up pictures of the Rebbe on the street and these are people with fiery emuna and energy to spread the Besuras HaGeula, and they will be blessed for this. In fact, it’s because of this that I find it important to say what I’m saying. If at two in the morning you hang up a picture of the Rebbe on the wall belonging to someone’s store, in most cases the result will be that in the morning when the storeowner will show up, he will be upset about the flyer that

This bus is the Rebbe’s bus and this Jew is connected to the Rebbe, and he is even a shliach of the Rebbe to spread the Besuras HaGeula.

was stuck to his wall. (At that moment he doesn’t really care what the flyer says), and he’ll scrape it off the wall with some choice words for those who gave him the trouble.

When you truly believe that the world is ready, you go to that store at two in the afternoon and explain to the storeowner about the importance of publicizing the Besuras HaGeula and how it will provide him with blessings. This is most likely to be accepted and the storeowner himself will gladly hang up the sign!

Not only that but when people enter his store and ask him why the picture is hung up there, he will tell them about the Besuras HaGeula and

convince them to publicize the Geula too.

Another advantage in publicity that comes from an inner emuna that the world is truly ready for Geula is that the publicity itself is done on a far larger scale. For example, you get on a bus and sit down next to a Jew whose outward appearance indicates that he belongs to the Left and his entire look suggests contempt for anything connected with k’dusha.

You know that your shlichus in the world is to publicize the Besuras HaGeula, but you hesitate. You glance at him and think you’d better leave him alone. You’ll wait for another opportunity when you meet someone who looks more amenable.

Stop and ask yourself: If this man happened to enter 770, would you go over to him and offer to learn with him? If so, why is it that when you meet him on the bus you hesitate?

The answer is simple. When he comes to 770, within the Rebbe’s four cubits, you feel that you’re on home turf. On the bus, you feel it’s his territory and you don’t feel as comfortable.

However, if you internalize the awareness that “*ein od milvado*” and that all of existence belongs to the Nasi HaDor (as it’s brought in s’farim, that the entire world is sustained at every moment by the Nasi HaDor. As the Baal Shem Tov said on the statement, “The entire world was only created for Chanina, My son” – the entire world was created and receives its life force through the pathway and drawing down of the Nasi HaDor). If so, then this bus is the Rebbe’s bus and this Jew is connected to the Rebbe, and he is even a shliach of the Rebbe to spread the Besuras HaGeula.

If you feel that way or at least try to feel that way, you will initiate a discussion and speak with him as one shliach to another. The response



aware that we are already holding in Yemos HaMoshiach and this awareness needs to influence them to change their behavior.

This process takes place in two stages. In the first stage, we learn inyanei Moshiach and Geula. When you learn and know how the world will look in Yemos HaMoshiach, you are able to begin adapting yourself and your environment to a Geula reality. In the second stage, which is more important, we learn the Rebbe's sichos more deeply and understand that the Rebbe is speaking about things going on here in our world. Everything is happening already in the world and the problem is that we are not connected enough to the true Geula reality. This kind of learning, with the mindset that everything is taking place here and now and the question is where we are in this picture, is the direct catalyst for change in our behavior and the full adaptation to Yemos HaMoshiach.

The very commitment to act this way has the power to bring the Rebbe's hisgalus ever closer, in a way that will be seen by all people, on all levels of existence, to the point that the flesh itself will see G-dliness revealed.

you get will reflect this and suddenly you will discover that he too is thirsty to hear and is ready for Geula.

The Rebbe speaks of two things in his sichos: to publicize the Geula and to prepare the world for Geula. How do you prepare the world for Geula?

According to the Rebbe, the avoda now is not to prepare the world to greet Moshiach because the Rebbe said, "the world is already ready." At the Kinus HaShluchim 5752, the Rebbe said that the avoda

today is *"l'kabel p'nei Moshiach Tzidkeinu b'poel mamash."*

What's the difference? When we say that we have to prepare the world, we mean that the world still needs to undergo a process in order to be fit to receive the revelation of Moshiach. Today, says the Rebbe, the world is ready to receive that revelation and what remains is only to bring that revelation to it.

Practically speaking this means that we must create a situation in the world such that people become

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IT'S THE SAME G-D IN HAWAII!

BY DAFNA CHAIM

*Hawaii is a group of small, exotic islands that attract millions of tourists a year. It generally has more tourists than residents, which makes building a community difficult if not impossible. * The physical and spiritual distance make Hawaii a particularly difficult shlichus for Mrs. Pearl and Rabbi Itchel Krasnjansky.*

THE SAME G-D

A few years ago I worked in the office of Lubavitch Yeshiva in Crown Heights. One morning a sweet little boy entered my office. He looked about seven or eight years old. With a pained expression on his face he said, "My head hurts. Can I call my grandmother?"

I suggested we call his mother and he said, "My mother is in Hawaii." When is she coming back, I asked him. He said, "Ummm," and didn't seem to know how to answer me.

After a short discussion I understood the situation. His mother was in Hawaii but not on vacation! "She lives there. I also live there, but now I'm here so I can learn and that's why I live at my grandmother's house."

I was shocked. I had heard many times about this and was used to accepting children of shluchim at the yeshiva who were very young and were living away from home, but a seven-year-old!?

Later on I met a friend who is a relative of Pearl Krasnjansky, the shlucha in Hawaii. When I told her what had happened that day she said, "I will tell you a little story and you will understand who we are talking about.

"We recently had a family event in Boro Park and Pearl was there. We met a frum cousin who is not a Lubavitcher and she was very interested in the shlichus in Hawaii. She said to Pearl, 'Tell me the truth. Do you dress on the same level of tznius in Hawaii as you do here?'

"Pearl looked at her in

amazement and said, "What do you mean? It's the same Oibershter!" (G-d)."

* * *

If you happen to visit Hawaii, don't expect to see a network of schools or a Jewish community. Even a Lubavitcher minyan is a rare commodity. But Chabad is there, operating with constant mesirus nefesh.

Hawaii attracts millions of tourists a year and there are usually more tourists than residents. This makes it much harder, if not impossible, to build up a community.

Where do you get the courage to send a seven-year-old child to learn in yeshiva overseas, more than a twelve-hour flight away?

Pearl: It's very hard. I remember that at the end of the school year, when I had sent my oldest son to New York for the first time, I took all the children to New York for the summer. That's what we did all the years, take the kids for a month so they could absorb the Chassidische atmosphere and get to know the extended family.

The month flew by quickly and when it came time to leave for Honolulu I was heartbroken. I felt that I couldn't leave my young son there for another year, far from home. I was afraid it would make a

negative impact on him for life, to grow up far from his immediate family without hugs from his parents and without daily contact with his siblings.

I asked the Rebbe to direct me. If I knew it was really the thing to do to leave my son in New York I would do so happily. I received the answer a short while later. We went with the extended family to the mountains for Shabbos and my brother brought an issue of *L'chaim* with him. It so happened that it contained a letter that the Rebbe wrote to someone who was ambivalent about sending his sons to learn far from home in order to receive a Chassidische education. He thought perhaps he should keep them home and make do with the existing chinuch. His main concern was the trauma his young children would sustain if they left home at such a young age.

In the letter, the Rebbe encouraged the person to send his children away provided they receive a chinuch al taharas ha'kodesh. The Rebbe also wrote that with chinuch al taharas ha'kodesh the investment is for the long term, even if you don't see immediate results. As far as being apprehensive about traumatizing his children, the Rebbe said that there was nothing to worry about at all since the children were in the best place for them, in an environment of k'dusha and tahara, and Hashem watches over them and



Rabbi Itchel Krasnjansky

he would yet have much nachas from them. That was the gist of the letter.

Baruch Hashem, with many years behind us, I can testify that we have much nachas from our children and we see the brachos from the Rebbe

being fulfilled. About three or four years ago, when it came time to send the younger children, I felt that this was too much, and thought that perhaps I should move with them to Los Angeles for half a year so it would be easier for everyone.

Surprisingly, it was my older children (who are in their teens now), who had been learning away from home for a number of years, who convinced me not to do that. They said, "Mommy, you can't leave, not even temporarily. This is where our shlichus is and if we have to, then we will go to New York, but you have to stay here with Tatty."

They convinced me that leaving home didn't have a negative impact on them. On the contrary, they internalized the importance of their role here.

I send my girls away from home a little older than the boys, for high school. My oldest daughter finished high school in Crown Heights and went to seminary in Yerushalayim. Then she returned home to Hawaii to help us with our shlichus and to teach in our school.

What made you go to Hawaii?

When my husband was a bachur he went to Hawaii for the summer of 5740 on Merkos Shlichus. When he returned to New York he kept in touch with some of the Jews here and they asked him to get them a rabbi to organize the davening on the Yomim Nora'im. Since we had



been married just one month, we couldn't go, but my husband made sure that bachurim were sent there.

In our first year of marriage, my husband learned in kollel in Crown Heights and the following Tishrei we traveled to Hawaii as a couple just for Yom Tov. Since we hadn't considered going to Hawaii on a permanent basis, we looked into other places for shlichus. When another year went by we decided to rise to the difficult challenge and in Tishrei of 5747 we went on permanent shlichus to Hawaii.

It's very far, which makes everything much harder and more complicated. But we have the ko'ach from the Rebbe and that's what keeps us going.

At the end of our first year in Hawaii, my husband and I went to the Rebbe and when we passed by for "dollars," the Rebbe told us that our job is to make Hawaii into a *dira* (dwelling place) for Hashem, and that is what we try and do here.

It's not easy, I imagine.

Well, from a physical perspective, Honolulu is heaven on

I always say that we attribute our successes to the Rebbe, for if not for him, there is no logical reason to succeed in such a materialistic place. When it happens, it's miraculous.

earth. The gashmius here is incredible. There's a reason why people come here from all over the world, mostly to indulge and have fun. One would not think that a Jew would be interested in Judaism here, and when it happens – it's amazing.

Unfortunately, a large number of the Jews here are assimilated and the intermarriage rate is very high. We see this all the time. For example, we have a small Talmud Torah with thirty children. According to local standards, this is a great achievement. We could significantly increase enrollment if we "compromised a bit," because there are plenty of families with a Jewish father and gentile mother who would love to send their children to our school. We've had to make their acceptance conditional on full conversion for the mother and the children.

Despite the great difficulties, there are also successes. A graduate of our school became very strong in her Judaism and married a Chassidishe man and has a beautiful Jewish-Chassidishe home. Of course they left Hawaii and moved to a more Jewish environment.

Another mekureves also established a Chassidishe home and is the mother of six children. In the beginning they lived here, but when they saw how hard it was, they packed up and moved to Yerushalayim.

I always say that we attribute our successes to the Rebbe, for if not for him, there is no logical reason to succeed in such a materialistic place. When it happens, it's miraculous.

What do you about kosher food?

About a month after we arrived in Hawaii, we received an invitation to a meeting of all the Jewish organizations in Hawaii so we could plan a Chanuka event. We were



HAWAII

1.2 million people comprise the population of Hawaii, whose capitol is Honolulu. About 7 million people visit the islands each year, and thus, over a third of the state's economy is based on tourism. The state consists of islands that are spread out over 16,757 kilometers and it is 4,025 kilometers southwest from the nearest land mass, North America.

The weather most of the year is fantastic, which is one of the reasons that tourists flock to Hawaii.

asked to come as representatives of Chabad.

I'm talking about organizations that are far from authentic Judaism, who are Conservative in the best of cases and in most cases Reform. Since we didn't want to tangle with the community at the very beginning, we decided that I would go to the meeting. I was a young woman in my early twenties and knew nobody there. Opposite me sat men who were much older than I and far more experienced in communal activity and in life in general.

As Chassidim, the Rebbe taught us not to be fazed by the world but I must admit that I was nervous! I sat there looking obviously

uncomfortable and realized from what was being said that I didn't belong there. I waited for an opportunity to leave.

When they got to the point where they were ready to eat, and of course it wasn't going to be kosher food, I got up and said: We are talking here about a Jewish celebration and a Jewish holiday ought to be celebrated with kosher food. If there won't be kosher food, we Lubavitchers will not be able to participate in the festivities.

Before I finished talking I was hit with a verbal assault. They attacked me from all directions. What are you talking about? Don't you know where you live? In Hawaii there's no way you can have an

*She said to Pearl,
'Tell me the truth. Do
you dress on the same
level of tznius in
Hawaii as you do
here?' "Pearl looked
at her in amazement
and said, "What do
you mean? It's the
same G-d."*



event with kosher food! Are you dreaming?

I was stunned. I did not anticipate a reaction like that. I felt awful and the only thing I wanted to do was get out of there, the sooner the better! But then, when things quieted down a little, one person got up and defended me. When he finished talking I was given an opportunity to express my view without heckling and insulting remarks.

After explaining a little about the importance of kashrus, I was asked by that courteous participant, "How do you want to organize a kosher event for 200 people here in Hawaii when there isn't even a store that sells kosher food?"

I said that we could plan a vegetarian menu. He said, "Okay, so plan a menu like that with a detailed list of the expenses involved and a workable plan, and let's meet again in three weeks."

The end of the story was a big kiddush Hashem. My

THE GOVERNOR LEARNS CHASSIDUS

The governor of Hawaii, Linda Lingel, graced our son's bar mitzva. We developed a connection with her a few years ago when she served as mayor of a city in Hawaii and for a long time now she has been attending a Chassidus class once a week. Aside from her support of our work, her presence at our events makes a terrific impression on the community.

She participated at the menorah lighting ceremony in our city two years ago. It was a big kiddush Hashem, especially in light of the fact that her swearing-in ceremony as governor was going to take place the next day. Despite her busy day she stayed to celebrate with us until late at night. The media in Israel took an interest in this story and right after the menorah lighting she was interviewed by Israeli radio stations.



husband kashered the hall and the dishes and I supervised the cooking, which was vegetarian. About 200 Jews in Hawaii participated for the first time in their lives in a kosher event. Since then, baruch Hashem, there have been many events like that one.

When we first came to Hawaii we hardly knew anyone. By now, our circle of friends and mekuravim has grown and 250 people came to my son's bar mitzva. In a place like Hawaii this is a big achievement.

It was important to us to show people that you can celebrate with kosher food and serve a culinary feast. We rented a hall at one of the hotels and kashered the kitchen. Two Israeli cooks cooked delicious food. Most of the ingredients we had shipped from New York (which we always do with fish, meat, wine, etc.). There was plenty of good food and I believe that among other things, we conveyed the message that it's not so difficult to keep kosher.



The governor of Hawaii, a proud Jew by the name of Linda Lingel, came to the bar mitzva with a number of her assistants who are also Jewish (see box).

Today in Hawaii we have Mazel's Kosher Land, the only store with kosher food in all of Hawaii.

Please share another experience of your work with us.

One day, I think it was in our third year here on shlichus, I got a phone call from Mrs. Molly Resnick, the wife of the Rebbe's doctor a"h. (Molly had a successful career in the media and after becoming involved with Chabad and the Rebbe, she told her fascinating story to many audiences.)

I have an instruction from the Rebbe, she said, that whenever I travel I should tell the local shluchim of my arrival and I should try to tell my life story. Since my husband and I will be in Hawaii, I am at your service.

At first thought it seemed impossible to organize a nice event on such short notice, but since the Rebbe had told her to do this, I couldn't refuse. I agreed to the idea with mixed feelings though. When our conversation ended, I hung up the phone and pondered one question: How would I bring women to this lecture?

At that time, many Chabad houses around the world organized a seminar called "Week of the Jewish Woman." I decided that in Hawaii we would have, "Day of the Jewish Woman."

In order to generate interest among all kinds of people in Hawaii, I tried to come up with a gimmick. I have a friend in Hawaii, a very well-known woman, and

Before I finished talking I was hit with a verbal assault. They attacked me from all directions. What are you talking about? Don't you know where you live? In Hawaii there's no way you can have an event with kosher food! Are you dreaming?

knew that if she participated in the event she would draw a crowd. I approached her and told her of my plan for a "Day of the Jewish Woman," and asked her whether she'd honor us with her presence as a guest of honor.

She asked about the event and then said, "How many women do you think will come?" I thought maybe ten and that if twenty came, it would be a real success. But I said, "I hope that 200 women will come."

She agreed to come and even helped us a lot with the preparations. Thanks to her I was able to get other women involved because when they heard that this woman would be the guest of honor, they wanted to be

a part of it.

Aside from the educational part of the program, we also thought about the experiential part, which included a fashion show (tznius fashions, of course). My sister came from New York with a collection of impressive clothing. I enlisted models from among the women of all different backgrounds which made the event even more interesting. And of course I had kosher food and Chassidic music.

The event was supposed to take place on a Sunday afternoon at a restaurant that was kashered. Friday morning, in the midst of the preparations, I suddenly remembered that with all the commotion I had forgotten to write to the Rebbe about the event. I looked at the clock and it was after ten, which meant that in New York it was almost Shabbos. In other words, even if I wrote the letter then, it was unlikely that the Rebbe would see the letter before the event. I was very upset about this.

All sorts of scenarios raced around my head. I was taking tremendous responsibility and without the Rebbe's bracha all the work we had put in could go down the drain. I sat down and cried.

I felt relieved after I cried and when I had calmed down I decided to write to the Rebbe and that it wasn't my place to make calculations about when the letter would arrive and how the Rebbe would answer. I thought of the Chassidim of previous generations who wrote to the Rebbe even though the conditions were not conducive for a direct connection and the Rebbe found a way to answer them. This thought boosted my morale.

Fifteen years later, Pearl is choked up again as she recounts what had happened next: Do you know how many women came to



THE ADVANTAGE OF DISTANCE

Hawaii's location makes the time there one of the latest on the globe. Sometimes there is an advantage to being so far away.

A shliach from New York called my husband with a request. One of his mekuravim had turned to him in despair. It was his father's yahrtzeit that day but he had just remembered that evening that he had forgotten to say Kaddish. His conscience bothered him and he wanted to know how he could make up for his omission.

"Did you daven Mincha yet?" he asked the shliach. My husband told him that he could tell his friend that he could relax because the sun had not set yet in Hawaii and he would make sure that Kaddish was said.

the event? 200 women! That wasn't just a successful event but an enormously successful event that far surpassed my expectations. Even in my wildest dreams I didn't imagine we'd have such a turnout.

What is the main focus of your outreach activities?

Since this shlichus is in a tourist area, our Shabbos table is often a Shabbaton. We have between 20-70 guests, but there are always surprises and you can't know how many guests will actually show up. Many of the guests are Jewish tourists from around the world who come here on vacation and these Shabbasos are an opportunity to strengthen their connection to Judaism in general and Chabad in particular.

There are always interesting encounters around the table like the two tourists who came from different places in the world and discovered that their children daven at the same shul.

* * *

As I already mentioned, we have a Talmud Torah with thirty children. Two seminary graduates who came especially from New York are the teachers and after my oldest daughter finished seminary she got involved too.

Before we started the preschool fifteen years ago, I was with my husband in New York which usually doesn't happen since we've always tried to have one of us stay in Hawaii. When we passed by the Rebbe for dollars, my husband asked for a bracha for our new preschool. The Rebbe turned to me with a big smile and said in Yiddish, "Presumably your wife will be more involved with it."

Then the Rebbe asked about my daughters and wanted to know whether they were also attending the new preschool and I said that



they were. The Rebbe smiled again and gave them dollars.

The Rebbe's brachos and the knowledge that every good deed, as

small as it may be, hastens the Geula, give us the strength to continue make a dira ba'tachtonim. And there's no place like Hawaii that reflects this.

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ב"ה

‘AND EVERY WISE-HEARTED WOMAN SPUN WITH HER HANDS’

BY YAALA BEN-ARUYA

We went on a fascinating trip behind the scenes of the spinning of the material for the Bigdei K’huna, speaking with Yehudis Abrams and Tzofia Malka. We learned not only about their work but also about the inner Mikdash of each one of them.

“And every wise-hearted woman spun with her hands and they brought the spun yarn of blue and purple and scarlet wool, and the linen” (Shmos 35:25). Chazal say: This tells us that the weaving of the threads together is work unique to women.

The Zohar explains (vol. 3, p. 259b) that this work was given to women not only because it suits them but because it contains a deeper secret. Rabbi Yehuda said: The world is not run except with two colors whose source is the woman who is wise ... What did the women spin? Rabbi Yehuda said: they wove with judgment, they wove with compassion.

My friend Esther and I went to visit Mrs. Tzofia Malka, an artist and craftswoman who has been spinning yarn for the Machon HaMikdash. She lives in one of the yishuvim that surround Yerushalayim. We wanted to see her work for ourselves, the threads of *tiferes* and the threads of *rachamim* (as Tzofia refers to them) out of which her friend and teacher, Yehudis Abrams, will fashion the Eifod. The Eifod is the colorful garment, which soon with Hashem’s help, the Kohen Gadol will wear in the Beis HaMikdash.

We will be able to say: we were there! We saw the threads being spun. We touched the threads of

blue, scarlet, linen, and purple. We lovingly caressed the threads of gold that are woven into the Kohen Gadol’s garments.

What will they, Yehudis and Tzofia, who actually did the work, say? Not only do they do the work, but they are the *ruach chaim* (the spirit) behind the work. They are not simply the workers, but the connecting thread through which passes the G-dly light into the actual material.

When I visited her, Tzofia was working on spinning the threads for the Eifod, one of the Kohen Gadol’s eight special garments. About nineteen years ago she spun the flax for the weaving of the Avnet (the Belt), which she learned from Yehudis, who got her involved in this work. The four white garments: the Tunic, the Pants, the Hat, and the Belt are made of linen and were woven by Yehudis.

About five and a half years ago, Tzofia was asked by Machon HaMikdash to work on spinning wool for the Choshen. With all the garments that are made, Machon

HaMikdash is particular about using threads that were spun exclusively for this purpose, by hand, in the traditional way using a wooden spinning wheel.

The work is slow, but this is the only way to produce the desired result, threads that were woven without knots but are connected by winding the ends together to extend the length and winding around to create width. “Knots,” says Tzofia, “block off the straight flow of the threads, while the spinning draws the connection into a straight line, allowing the flow of spiritual energy and light.”

The raw lamb’s wool comes to Tzofia after it has been dyed the colors mentioned in the Torah: blue, purple, scarlet, as well as the linen (flax in its natural color – white). The wool then undergoes a process of transformation into spools of colorful threads, each color separately. Then the different colors are spun together in one beautiful, colorful thread.

Each thread of the four colors is comprised of six threads plus one thread of gold. When they are intertwined they are 28 thin threads that make up one thicker thread.

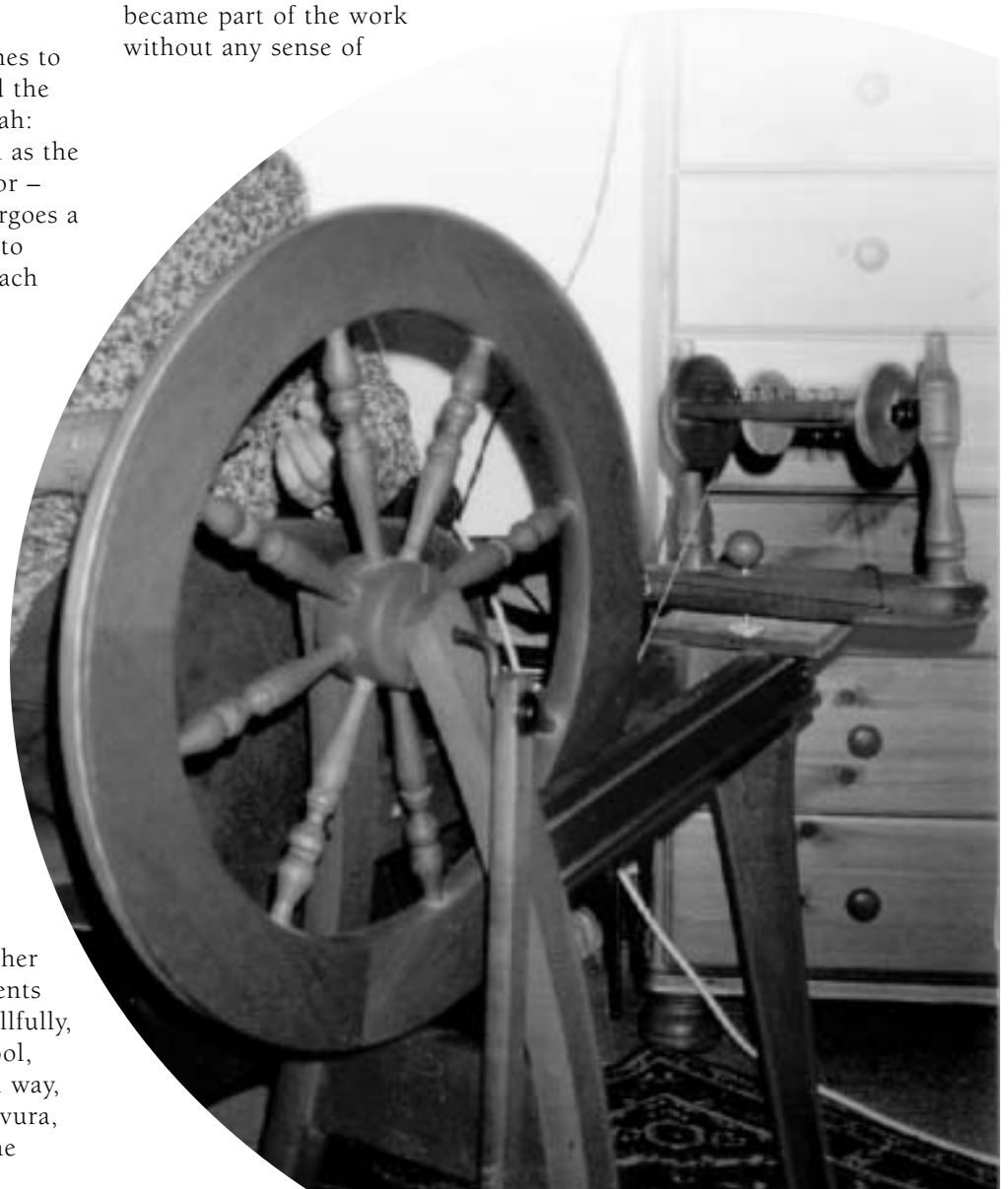
Tzofia sits near the spinning wheel for hours, absorbed, as one with the movement of the spinning wheel. Many hours of sitting in one place making little, almost imperceptible movements – the silent movement of the spinning wheel which is operated by her foot on a pedal, the movements of her hands, gently and skillfully, grasping the dyed lamb’s wool, drawing it this way and that way, right and left, chesed and g’vura, and bringing the fibers to the

spinning wheel. With one, gentle circular movement she tightens and strengthens the fibers into one thin strand, one color out of the many colors used for the Bigdei K’huna.

When I asked whether it’s hard to sit alone for so many hours in one spot with a minimum of movement and suggest that it might be nice to hear niggunim in the background, Tzofia smiles and says, “It’s okay even without something in the background. It’s better when it’s quiet. The work that I do purifies and cleanses and generates a spiritual connectedness, so I became part of the work without any sense of

disconnectedness or tiredness.”

Tzofia has even deeper explanations for the work that she does skillfully, “The blue wool and the white flax express the attribute of chesed. The purple and scarlet wool express the attribute of g’vura. So too with the hands, right and left, chesed and g’vura. The thread is constantly held between the two hands, between chesed and g’vura, and it emerges and is created by the cooperation of the two forces. It, therefore, expresses tiferes and the attribute of



rachamim.”

When she has the privilege of working on details connected with the Holy and Holy of Holies, Tzofia feels as though she is sitting in the king’s courtyard, like a servant before Hashem: “This is also the reason why I have understanding and illumination in connection with my craft as I do the work. The spinning wheel is the spirit that binds me to a world that is a bit above this world,” she says contentedly.

Do you consider this work as a z’chus that fell into your lap?

“I see it as avoda, avoda that I must do because Hashem gave it to me to do. It moves me to think that I am sitting here and spinning the threads for the Choshen that will rest upon the heart of the Kohen Gadol, and the Eifod that he will wear. This is something that hasn’t been done in over 2000 years since

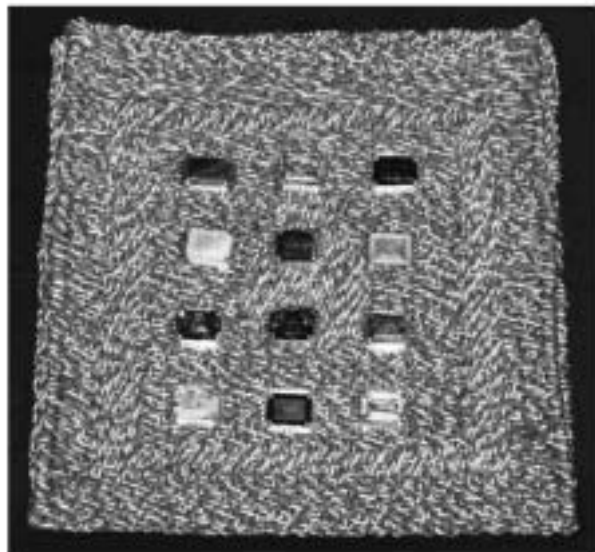
HaMikdash more deeply. If we are impressed by a little of the beauty that we merit to see, how can we not be impressed when we think of the beauty, majesty, and splendor of the Beis HaMikdash and the Kohanim in their glory? It makes you cry and want to see it all right now, rebuilt and complete. These feelings are particularly strong this time of year.”

For Tzofia the month of Av is more meaningful than to most of us since it has personal significance for her. It was in Av that Tzofia completed her conversion and she definitely marks it as a holiday.

“I came to Eretz Yisroel from Holland 26 years ago. At home we always knew we had roots

“About eight years ago I was able to draw for myself the Beis HaMikdash, complete in all its glory, and this made me happy. Today, as I work on these items for the Mikdash, I feel more of the pain and yearning.”

Tzofia prepares the threads on the loom for Yehudis to weave. The *shesi* threads are the vertical threads that are tied on top of the loom and at the bottom. They form the length of the material. Hundreds of



The Choshen

the Churban. It’s very powerful, amazing, and moving when you think about it.

“Through my work, I have also learned to feel the loss of the Beis

among the Jews of Spain from way back. At age 14, I left home and searched for G-d. I knew there was a Creator of the world but did not know His name until I came to the Kosel HaMaaravi in Yerushalayim with my former husband.

“I stood facing the Kosel and cried and cried. I felt that I had come home. I

saw the women around me praying and tried to do as they did but was unable to. Today I am very connected to this place, the Makom HaMikdash and I mourn its loss.

thin threads come down from spools that are tied on top, separating and spreading out to the sides to become thin, continuous strands, standing straight and close together in nice even rows. Each of them moves along the length of the loom through various wooden sticks, going over and under another thread and yet another thread of the *eirev*, the horizontal thread that passes through to mingle and be woven together into one “warp and woof,” the material dedicated for the various needs of the Mikdash.

The Torah refers to *maaseh rokeim* (embroidery) and *maaseh choshev* (weaving that is done on both sides of the fabric so that different patterns appear on either side). They express the connection between the inner world and the



The wool fibers are spun by Tzofia on her spinning wheel

outer world and this takes place through the “wise-hearted women” who do the work of the Mikdash.

If you’ve never sat before a loom you will be unable to understand how much patience, endurance, precision, and love one needs to invest in this labor, especially when you have this sacred task before you, the weaving of the holy garments. They also plan on working on the Paroches and all the rest, all with special attention to each detail and each movement so they are precise and according to halacha.

Yehudis Abrams works according to precise instructions from Rabbi Yisroel Ariel, head of Machon HaMikdash. She has a rare knowledge of spinning and weaving and so she was the first to get involved in this work. She has been

working on a book in which she will share her expertise so that she can be of help to rabbanim who want to teach this topic.

I did not meet Yehudis yet.

“Knots,” says Tzofia, “block off the straight flow of the threads, while the spinning draws the connection into a straight line, allowing the flow of spiritual energy and light.”

When I heard her voice on the telephone as I sat at the work table late one night, the barrier of time and space fell from my heart and the light of Geula entered it. I felt that I had found the neshama of the article, the spark that burst through the barrier of intellect and paved a path for me of “soul light.”

When Yehudis speaks in her compassionate, soulful voice her words are suffused with chayus and love, simcha, anticipation, awe, and prayer. Between her words you can hear the neshama crying out: Father, Father, Hashem!

Yehudis Abrams moved to Eretz Yisroel from the US 28 years ago. She joined the work of Machon HaMikdash when Rabbi Yisroel Ariel was looking for someone who knew authentic weaving techniques. Thus, Yehudis found

herself realizing an innocent dream she had years before and completing another step in preparing herself and the world for the building of the Beis HaMikdash and the imminent Redemption.

When she was in the US, she was very impressed by the weaving done by Native American Indians and she resolved to acquire their knowledge. They did ethnic and authentic weaving. She took a course on weaving at the Indian reservation in Navajo Land.

When she finished the course her husband came to get her. The few minutes he spent at the reservation impressed him tremendously. The sight of this nation sitting on their earth, connected to it, aroused within him a yearning for the earth that was home. That is when he declared: we are Jews and our home is in Eretz Yisroel.

This is how the Abrams began a process of t'shuva. When Yehudis began to read Chumash and learned about the Mishkan, a great light flooded her heart. Here is where she found a description of the weaving that was needed for the holy garments, the Paroches and the curtains. Her soul exulted. It was all familiar to her. She had always sought this beauty.

"I decided that I had to return to the Indian reservation in order to complete the knowledge that I already had. I still did not know how to do *maaseh choshev*. I felt a tremendous obligation to import this knowledge to Eretz Yisroel to do this work," she says with a powerful emuna and emotions that suffuse her entire being.

How does it feel to put the knowledge you acquired at the Indian reservation to use for the items in the Mikdash?

"There were people who really wanted to do the work but didn't



White and purple threads woven into a single strand

have the knowledge and people with the knowledge who didn't want to do it, and I knew and wanted to do it. I feel a tremendous responsibility. With the guidance of Rabbi Yisroel Ariel I began to write a book about my work which can guide others.

Is there a feeling of getting too close to the "Holy" when you weave the Choshen of the Kohen Gadol?

When I do this holy work I concentrate on it so that it will be done right, according to halacha, as well as be beautiful. I feel the glory of Hashem in the beauty of this work.

Is this involvement with the inyanei Beis HaMikdash a way of "touching" the Geula?

"Of course! Part of preparing for Geula is through thought, speech, and action. We must hurry and be busy with it every minute. Sometimes I feel that that the work that I do is too slow; we have to hurry up to be ready. This also entails working on improving one's middos. I feel that the more that I work on improving my middos the better the weaving will be. This

inner work also constructs a Mikdash, our inner sanctuary and from there we go on to building the actual Beis HaMikdash."

* * *

Two women, two worlds. They do the work of joining worlds, combining the material and the spiritual in order to achieve oneness – the material sings with the spirit, the body with the soul.

For these two women the Geula is already here. They are busy with it and they live with it. At Machon HaMikdash in Yerushalayim, directed by Rabbi Menachem Mackover, they are preparing for the Third Mikdash. To date they have prepared dozens of keilim so that when the Mikdash descends all will be ready for the avoda.

Many of the priestly garments are also made: the four white garments, the Tzitz, the bells, the Avnet, the Choshen, and the Eifod. They even have the ingredients for the Incense.

We have done our part, and now what is needed is the actual Mikdash from Heaven.

All pictures thanks to Machon HaMikdash in Yerushalayim

‘THIS IS TZFAS CALLING...’

BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY, TZFAS

A brief eyewitness account from the first two days of the recent Katyusha attacks on the holy capital of the Galilee.

Thursday, the 17th of Tammuz.

Apart from my translation work for the *Beis Moshiach Magazine*, I am also the administrative secretary for the Ohr Menachem Chabad Talmud Torah in Tzfas. This morning began later than usual due to the longer than usual davening for a public fast day. Not long after arriving at school, I learned that one of our teachers, Rabbi **Meir Masas**, Chabad House Director on Moshav Safsufa, would be arriving rather late. He called shortly after eight o'clock to say that he was still in a nearby air-raided shelter after a night of periodic rocket attacks in the vicinity of Mt. Meron. The atmosphere in the region was clearly heating up with Israel Defense Forces operations in both the Gaza Strip and southern Lebanon against frequent Kassam and Katyusha attacks against civilians, plus efforts to rescue three kidnapped IDF soldiers. As a result, my co-worker's call did not come as a complete surprise.

Shortly after noon, I headed home to spend the afternoon with my children and to work on a new translation. After davening an early Mincha, my children went downstairs to the main square of the Kiryat Chabad community to say T'hilim for the missing soldiers and the restoration of calm for the Jewish

residents on both fronts of current military operations.

At around a quarter past two, while working, I heard a whooshing sound and a loud explosion. Needless to say, I immediately suspected what it might be. Fifteen years ago, during the first Persian Gulf War, Tzfas was virtually nowhere near the center of action, and the conflict passed relatively quietly for Galilee residents. A sound like this was not heard back then. I ran to my kitchen window, and saw a large plume of white smoke rising from the direction of the

edge of the Canaan neighborhood, where our building is located. The IDF Northern Command has a major military base on Mt. Canaan, and the Hezbollah was apparently aiming to hit it. What I always knew might happen was finally happening. After decades of hearing about Katyusha attacks on northern cities such as Kiryat Shmona and Nahariya, the war had finally come to the Holy City of Tzfas.

More explosions were heard, and my kids were outside. I immediately had them rounded up - this was obviously no drill. My wife was in town, but baruch Hashem, I knew exactly where she was, and I quickly called her a cab and got her home. The younger children were obviously a bit frightened by all the hubbub, and I did my best to calm them, move them all into one of the



back rooms, and encourage them to start saying T'hillim. Then, I heard the wail of the air-raid sirens. This just made it all the more real. No faraway Gulf War this time - the bombs are falling close to the neighborhood. I soon heard that one Katyusha landed in Givat Shoshana, the newer Chabad building complex slightly down the road from the Kirya. No serious injuries, but the director of Agudas Kiryat Chabad, Rabbi **Chaim Chaikel Kaplan**, was hit by shrapnel while driving his car, and was treated at the Rebecca Sieff Government Hospital in Tzfas.

Despite the initial shock over Hezbollah's brazenness, I was determined not to let these animals control my daily comings and goings. Shortly before Maariv, I went to shul, and there I heard that longer range missiles had hit Haifa. Muffled booms in the background during davening were clear evidence that things were really starting to escalate.

As I went home to break the fast, another Katyusha attack on Tzfas commenced. At one point, I looked out my office window, and I actually saw the fiery impact of a Katyusha as it landed in the vicinity of the Ramat Menachem Begin neighborhood. While I am not a particularly good judge of distances, it didn't appear to me to be more than a quarter of a mile away. Things were starting to get close, but they would soon get closer.

In the meantime, some of my children decided to sleep in the shelter downstairs, and begged me and my wife to join them. We told them that anyone who feels more comfortable sleeping in the shelter is more than welcome to do so, but we are neither ready nor willing to undergo such an upheaval at this time. In the end, all but one went downstairs.

I spent much time on the phone that afternoon and evening with worried family members, both in Eretz Yisroel and abroad. My eldest daughter, on shlichus as a camp counselor at Beis

Chaya Mushka in New York, called, sounding very worried for everyone, but I did my best to reassure her that we are indeed in the safest place. I also spoke to my parents, now retired and living in Marietta, Georgia, who expressed their natural concern for our safety and the safety of their grandchildren. My father, an IDF veteran from the War of Independence, expressed his hope that the government would now let the army do what must be done to rid the country and the world of this menace. I shared his wishes, but knowing the government as I did, I had my very serious doubts.

I wrote to the Rebbe MH" M. The answer was clear: "Our children will be our guarantors." I called in the kids and gave them the Rebbe's orders - if they do their part, our family and our home will be protected.

I went to bed at around one o'clock, constantly keeping my ear to the proverbial ground, as the muffled booming persisted.

Friday, the 18th of Tammuz. I went to shul, and davened at the usual time. School would obviously be cancelled, yet the vice principal, Rabbi **Mordechai Yadger**, asked that I go to the school for an hour or so and make sure that students who may not have heard about the overall cancellations of educational and summer activities should be told to go home. In the end, there was no need. School was deserted.

Upon returning home, I saw that many people were planning to leave Tzfas, at least for Shabbos. While our community and its members are very strong, many simply have parents and other relatives who practically begged them to come for Shabbos and get out of the line of fire for their children's sake. For better or for worse, I didn't have that option. My in-laws live in the Shomron, where it's no "safer", and I wasn't going to land on my sister-in-law in Nachlat Har Chabad with her nine (soon to be ten) children. We were staying put, and G-d will help.

It seemed as if the terrorists were firing at set times - Shacharis, Mincha, Maariv. I went to the mikveh at around two o'clock, and when I got home, the noise intensified. I was watching a live broadcast of a field report from Tzfas via one of the Chabad websites, when the reporter quickly ducked to avoid a Katyusha that landed near the municipal swimming pool. Then, I heard a particularly loud impact. I saw a rising plume of white smoke just a few hundred yards away, and realized that this was a direct hit on a residential building. My computer screen soon showed the frantic and chaotic scene that was transpiring right down the street. The war was really getting closer. My son later came home with a few pieces of Katyusha shrapnel. Souvenirs from the battlefield.

Shabbos preparations continued relatively undisturbed, except for the periodic phone calls from worried family members at home and abroad. We did our best to demonstrate our steadfast faith that everything will be fine. Living in a top-floor apartment was a source of some concern, especially to our children, so shortly before Shabbos, I wrote to the Rebbe MH" M. The answer was clear: "Our children will be our guarantors". I called in the kids and gave them the Rebbe's orders - if they do their part, our family and our home will be protected.

[To be continued be"H]

ON THE FRONTLINES

BY SHAI GEFEN

Shai Gefen accompanied the soldiers in Gaza and shares his diary from the frontlines.

Less than eleven months since the IDF expelled Jews, destroyed Jewish communities and fled from the Gaza Strip, the IDF has reentered Gaza. Their objectives are to retrieve kidnapped soldier Gilad Shalit and to stop the Kassams landing on yishuvim and cities of

the Negev.

In addition to Sderot, Ashkelon and Netivot have also become beleaguered cities with a Kassam rocket landing in the center of Ashkelon and in the area of Baba Sali's gravesite in Netivot.

Tuesday, 8 Tamuz, I accompanied the "Chabad Commando," those amazing guys who ever since the kidnapping of Shalit and the redeployment in Gaza, have been visiting thousands of soldiers. They put t'fillin on with them and sign them up for a letter in a Seifer Torah (as per the Rebbe's instructions in the "Peace in Galilee" war), and bring them a T'hilim and a picture of the Rebbe.

We left for the Strip in the



Rabbi Ritterman putting t'fillin on a soldier before he goes to war



afternoon, to one of the bases established especially for Campaign Summer Rains. As we passed by Ashkelon, one of the men sighed and said, "Let's hope that Kassams don't land in Ashkelon," he said. Two hours later we heard that his request was not granted. A Kassam had hit a school in the center of the city.

We continued on our way towards the base, which up until recently had been a military post manned by just a few soldiers. Now it looked like wartime with dozens of tanks and heavy equipment on the way to the Gaza Strip.

Hundreds of soldiers were standing under the burning sun, anticipating our arrival. Between getting the tanks ready, with grease on their hands, the soldiers rolled up their sleeves and put t'fillin on and said a prayer before entering Gaza.

The Chabad commando doesn't skip a soldier. The commander is Rabbi Yaakov Tzirkes, an old pro who knows just where to go. He goes to the new tent in the cultural corner in order to find more soldiers to put on t'fillin so that the enemies who seek to destroy us will fear us instead. Rabbi Zev Ritterman continued standing under the fiery sun and put t'fillin on with the men.

It's hard to describe the joy and bitachon this gave the soldiers when the hope is that they will conquer Gaza and end the painful operation, once and for all, and remove the malignant growth.

Rabbi Yeshaya Isaacovitz, who has worked for many years with soldiers and has given out tens of thousands of T'hilim to date, keeps going. He's in a race against time. He climbs up on the tanks to the joyous whoops of the soldiers who bolster their defenses with the Rebbe's picture.

Rabbi Tzirkes makes sure to daven Mincha with a minyan by organizing a minyan in the large tent. "Eliyahu was not answered except in the Mincha prayer."

Just as we finish davening, we got the news that a Kassam had fallen in Ashkelon on a school. Tension rises. The soldiers look frustrated. They want to fight, for real, but this is not exactly what the higher-ups have in mind.

Rabbi Ritterman: "Our commando doesn't only operate now, but whenever there is tension or a military action we make sure to show up immediately. The commanders recognize us already and know that our work is an inseparable part of their military preparations. Since the military tension began there hasn't been a day that we haven't gone out to the soldiers. We lack manpower but we do what we can to reach every soldier.

"We have distributed thousands of booklets called *HaT'fillin* to the soldiers. 440,000 have been given out thus far and we hope to print tens of thousands of more copies until we get to half a million copies. These booklets contain the chapters of T'hilim that the Rebbe Rayatz put out for the American soldiers in World War II as well as letters that the Rebbe wrote about IDF soldiers."

The Chabad commando also dances with the Israeli soldiers. During 3 Tamuz they came with mashke and cookies, and the mashpia R' Michael Mishulavin farbrenge with the soldiers and boosted their morale, danced with them and sang "Moshiach, Moshiach" and "Yechi Adoneinu," which even the soldiers who are b'nei yeshivos began singing.

Miracle stories and stories of Hashgacha Pratis are shared. One

"The situation proves to all how the Rebbe's prophecies are coming true, and we are sure that his prophecy about Geula, 'behold Moshiach comes,' will take place immediately. People realize that that we are right before Moshiach's coming. We hope that we immediately see the hisgalus of the Rebbe."

soldier went over to the Chabad team minutes before sunset and said that he had been putting on t'fillin for four years every day and just that day he had been busy and hadn't put on t'fillin. "You came here from heaven!" he exclaimed emotionally. He quickly rolled up his sleeve, put on the t'fillin, and recited the Shma.

From the frontlines we went over to Ashkelon. News of the Kassam that had landed in the center of the city woke up 120,000 residents. The shluchim immediately feel the need to step in.

The Ronson school, which was hit by the Kassam became a "tourist

site,” with people showing up and expressing their anger. They feel they have been turned into a shooting range. We met with the guard named Daniel who was there when the Kassam hit. He told of the great miracle that the Kassam landed just a few meters away from where he sat.

“Just minutes before, I finished my routine walk around and passed near where the Kassam fell.” He promised to go to shul and recite the “HaGomel” blessing.

The blast was heard throughout the city. On the Partition Fence on the road near the school you can still see orange ribbons that remind everyone why a Kassam now landed in Ashkelon.

From there we went to the Chabad house of the shliach to Ashkelon, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Lieberman, along with shliach Rabbi Menachem Mendel Garelick, in whose neighborhood another Kassam landed the next day sending some people into shock. The Chabad house in Ashkelon is busy with summer activities, yet has begun to kick up the pace of activities because of the new crisis in the city. Rabbi Lieberman and Rabbi Garelick welcome us warmly and our conversation takes place with the sound of explosions in Gaza in the background that can be heard clearly in nearby Ashkelon.

Rabbi Lieberman was somewhat agitated when he said, “A year ago we planned things to protest the expulsion. We had car convoys and other activities to protest the government’s plan. People here yelled at us, saying we were doing political activities. Some people stopped us to say we were prophets of doom. The police also tried to stop us. We organized an emergency meeting of all of Anash for the purpose of enlisting them in our work.

“Today people stop me and apologize. ‘Rabbi, we didn’t know it would be like this,’ and I tell them that our protests against the Disengagement was not for political reasons but because the Torah forbids us to give away land and the Lubavitcher Rebbe warned that this is what would happen.

“I said that Chabad would

continue to fight, *davka* because of our Ahavas Yisroel and our concern for the security of our fellow Jews. Sadly, people understand but it’s too late. We who have a Rebbe know what needs to be done.”

Did you know it would happen this quickly?

We’re not surprised. The entire country knew that it’s going to

GO OUT TO WAR!

There is the clear instruction of Jewish law regarding a situation whereby gentiles besiege a Jewish city: “Even if they demand no more than stubble for their animals, even if in truth this is all they want, even if they are only in a state of preparedness having not yet advanced, the Torah commands to take up arms even on the Sabbath and take a firm stand on the borders in order to close off any entry of gentiles into the Land of Israel.” In this command of the Torah, this is not some inexplicable law but one within the dictates of human logic, the intelligence of the Torah – that, may G-d protect us, the land should not be laid open to them. It is an act veritably to save lives.

Anyone who wishes to interpret the law in *Shulchan Aruch* differently is on a collision course with Jewish law, opening up a road of life-threatening danger.

Jewish Law makes no distinction of location of such a city or area of land, be it in the time of exile [such as is now], or whether at the time when the Temple stood; whether outside the land of Israel, whether a city mostly inhabited by gentiles or where gentiles are no more than a minority, or in Israel. The ruling is, that if we are faced with a situation whereby the land lies open [to the enemy], there is no room for human calculations. Only “The word of G-d must stand for eternity,” and, “They may make plots which will be annulled, construe plans which will have no standing, for G-d is with us.”

And so may it be that the Jewish Nation lives and will continue, both in body in soul, with their Torah, the Will of G-d, and will study the Torah, as is G-d’s desire, and those studying with will grasp the correct halachic interpretation as Torah lays down the laws (without taking note of this or that one’s advice, as it is well known who is his advisor and what his personal interests are in offering such advice).

As we have stated, all bad situations will become null and void retroactively, because G-d is with us. As the verse continues, “until old age I [G-d] will hold you,” that all negative situations G-d Himself will shoulder. The verse in Isaiah “Those who trust in G-d will have renewed strength.” Regarding one who trusts in G-d and performs His Will, G-d will exchange his previously weakness for His Powers – an exchange, a gain, as Torah prescribes.

Save the Land of Israel Vol 80.
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www.savethelandofisrael.blogspot.com; shleimushaaretz@btconnect.com



Rabbi M.M. Lieberman and Rabbi M.M. Garelick with residents of Ashkelon

happen except for Olmert. People here in Ashkelon are afraid and children stopped playing outside. Parents are worried about the new situation. We know that this isn't the last Kassam in Ashkelon. Unfortunately, we get used to things very fast.

* * *

Chabad in Ashkelon is impressive with numerous Chabad houses scattered around the city. There are seven Chabad shuls for people who speak different languages and who are of different backgrounds. There are eighteen classes of preschools and school. A high school will be opening. Over 1000 children learn in Chabad schools.

Rabbi Garelick, as the one in charge of programming, how are you handling things?

"All the summer activities have changed. We speak to the children about the situation. There are children who are fearful and of course we encourage them as much as we can. Naturally, under the circumstances, we intensify the spiritual activities that the Rebbe

says to strengthen in times like this.

"We're doing more with Mivtza Mezusa and Mivtza T'fillin. People are very interested in hearing what the Rebbe's view is. We encourage people to remain here and be strong while telling them the halachic position which is to finish the job as quickly as possible. We publicize the Rebbe's view that every concession leads to greater danger for everybody."

Rabbi Lieberman: "The Rebbe spoke a lot about mezuzos in similar situations and so we consider this a very important mitvta now."

Rabbi Garelick: "We have nearly 200 children in day-camp. In another week we will have a special camp in the pediatric department of the Barzilai hospital. We are also starting a special Seifer Torah campaign with the goal being to write a Torah in the merit of all the residents of the city. We hope that Hashem will open the eyes of our leaders so they acknowledge their terrible mistakes and finish this campaign as they must."

How are people taking it, are they despairing?

Rabbi Lieberman: "Yes, and part of the shluchim's work is to encourage them. We have started making house calls. The shluchim Rabbi Uri Cohen and Rabbi Avrohom Kuskos, who operate in the Apridar neighborhood (where the second Kassam fell) have a lot of work to do. Many people go to the Chabad houses in the various neighborhoods."

Has Ashkelon turned into a city at war?

Rabbi Lieberman: "Yes. You constantly hear the shelling in Gaza. The terrorists are getting closer and closer with the Kassams. At first they reached the power station on the edge of the city, then they got to Mekorot, then last Friday they reached the cemetery and now the center of Ashkelon (the second Kassam the next day landed near the Chabad school). The terrorists are advancing towards their goal of throwing us out of Eretz Yisroel. Our response is to expand and flourish."

How does the situation fit with Yemos HaMoshiach and preparing for Geula?

Rabbi Garelick: "The situation proves to all how the Rebbe's prophecies are coming true, and we are sure that his prophecy about Geula, 'behold Moshiach comes,' will take place immediately. People realize that that we are right before Moshiach's coming. We hope that we immediately see the hisgalus of the Rebbe."

At the end of the conversation we went with the shluchim on a tour of the area where the Kassams fell, where we met with the locals. The shluchim are warmly received by people who want to hear the Rebbe's view.

Rabbi Lieberman told us about severe restrictions imposed on the people working at the power plant, not to eat lunch together because of

fear of a Kassam landing and taking many lives, and other instructions. "The public is unaware that we are on the front lines here."

Thursday, the 10th of Tamuz: Military forces entered the northern part of Gaza including yishuvim that were destroyed less than a year ago, Eli Sinai and Dugit. We joined the Chabad commando that goes to Eli Sinai. We arrived on the scene and saw planes in the sky shelling the terrorists' lairs.

We immediately got to work and put t'fillin on soldiers and wrote them down for letters in a Seifer Torah. The place is humming with activity. Journalists from around the world came to watch and report on the evacuation of the wounded. It had been recently announced that a soldier had been killed, Yehuda Basal of Moshav Yinun.

This is the first day of combat and tensions run high. Our hearts sink as we gaze upon the destroyed yishuvim of Gush Katif, the devastation of Eli Sinai, from where the terrorists shoot Kassams. We see the halacha in *Shulchan Aruch*, siman 329, "the entire land is opened before them" in front of our eyes. From the area that Jews were expelled, terrorists are shooting missiles towards cities in Israel and the land is open before them.

We stand within this mess. Rabbi Moshe Ochyan who joined us, met a childhood friend serving as an officer who helps us out. For four hours the forces wait to extricate the wounded under heavy fire from the terrorists. The tanks finally take out the lightly wounded soldier and a helicopter removes the heavily wounded one and flies him to Soroka hospital in Beer Sheva where he dies of his wounds.

Rabbi Tzirkes brought a shofar with him and blows it to inspire and arouse to t'shuva. The Lubavitchers don't rest for a moment. Here too,



Activities with soldiers on base

we continue signing soldiers up in the Torah. The media from around the world notice the Mivtza T'fillin and ask about it and why it is done in the shadow of war. We explain it to them. The soldiers thank us and under the circumstances, what else can we do but wish that they do what must be done and finish off the enemy.

We went to the new command post that was set up where the yishuv Eli Sinai used to be. We met Tzuri. Up until eleven months ago he lived in Eli Sinai and now he came to see what was going on. Tzuri is with his young son and he

points to the ruins of a house that less than a year ago was a home full of joy and life. Tzuri is confident that he will return because "they won't have a choice; we will have to return to Eli Sinai."

And in the midst of this war, it's impossible to forget the tragedy of one year ago, when the men in black made their final preparations for the expulsion, the tension, the civil war that brought the enemy into our homes. Let us pray that this time they will use the momentum to admit their mistake and restore the "pride of Yaakov."

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‘IF WE DON’T LIVE A CHASSIDISHE LIFE, OUR LIVES ARE NOT LIVES’

PREPARED FOR PRINT BY SHNEUR ZALMAN BERGER

*One day, military police came and searched for deserters. They quickly found the entrance to the cellar, opened the door and discovered a man with a beard, black as coal, wild looking and disheveled, staring at them in terror. * An inspiring farbrengen led by Rabbi Nosson Berkahan a”h, in which he related moving stories about mesirus nefesh.*

DAILY MESIRUS NEFESH

Echaim, l’chaim u’li’vracha!

I saw the Rebbe Rayatz seventy years ago when he was in Riga. I have to preface this by saying that we lack the ability to talk about what a Rebbe is. We can only describe his work and by doing so, we can learn a drop about his greatness.

Self-sacrifice is the theme that is woven throughout the Rebbe Rayatz’s work. If you learn his sichos and maamarim you see how permeated the Rebbe was with mesirus nefesh.

The Rebbe Rayatz was moser nefesh back when he was a boy of eleven, when he fought with a police officer in order to defend the honor of a Jew. Thanks to this, he sat in jail, an event which became known as the “first arrest.” From then on, for decades, the Rebbe was moser nefesh in order to prevent the spark of Yiddishkeit in Russia from going out. His activities led to his arrest, which ended miraculously with his release on 12-13 Tamuz 1927.

When the Rebbe arrived in the US with the intent of establishing

Chabad Chassidus here, some told him that America is different. American culture wasn’t conducive to Chassidic life, as was Russia. However, the Rebbe insisted on having his way and worked with mesirus nefesh, albeit a different kind than what was required in Russia. Eventually, Chassidim in America began to conduct themselves as their brethren did in Eastern Europe.

DEGREES OF SUFFERING

What is mesirus nefesh? Those who were born in America, a democratic and free country, will never be able to comprehend what it means to live a life of mesiras nefesh.

Ten years in Siberia, with a temperature of minus 40 or 50 degrees. In cold like that, when you spit, the spittle freezes in the air. In that Siberian cold, Chassidim labored for ten years or more, only because they taught Torah.

Nevertheless, the suffering in Siberia was nothing compared to the terrible misery that was the lot of the Chassidim during their trial, and that

misery was nothing compared to the waiting period before the trial. And beyond all that was the torture, humiliation, and anguish experienced by the Chassidim during their interrogations. It is indescribable.

When we, Chabad Chassidim in Riga, received a maamer from the Rebbe, we learned it over and over, and farbrenged on Shabbos, and strengthened one another. Mesirus nefesh was our daily lot. In order to eat kosher, you had to have mesirus nefesh. In order to educate children to go in the ways of Chassidus, you needed a great measure of mesirus nefesh. And in order to keep Shabbos in the workplace, we also needed mesirus nefesh.

When we farbrenged, each of us described the hardships we were going through and supported one another. One time, at one of the farbrengens a discussion ensued about what mesirus nefesh is. In the middle, the oldest of our group, Rabbi Mordechai Aharon Friedman a"h, said, "To keep Shabbos and kashrus, to learn Chassidus nowadays – that is not mesirus nefesh."

Everybody looked at him in surprise, anticipating an explanation and he immediately said rather simply, "If we don't live a Chassidische life, our lives are not lives."

If so, the question is: what is

genuine mesirus nefesh? Mesirus nefesh worthy of that name was evident among those who learned in the Tomchei T'mimim yeshivos. The T'mimim were educated to mesirus nefesh for the fulfillment of mitzvos and even for things that were "darkei ha'Chassidus."

Those who did not learn in Tomchei T'mimim, even if they were great Chassidim and older men – like Chassidim of the Rebbe Maharash whom I knew personally – were not educated to real mesirus nefesh. Of course, they kept mitzvos, despite everything, but mesirus nefesh was not implanted in their soul as it was with the T'mimim.

The T'mimim knowingly



Rabbi Berkahan, sitting in the center, farbrenging with mekuravim in Russia

renounced everything. They knew they would have no profession and they knew that they were in constant danger, at any time they were liable to be caught and punished. They lived with mesirus nefesh every second.

FARBRENGEN IN THE KGB CELLAR

One of the T'mimim who lived with mesirus nefesh all his life was Rabbi Simcha Gorodetzky. In 1946, I sat with him for a few months in a KGB jail in Samarkand. R' Gorodetzky, on shlichus of the Rebbeim, breathed life into the Jewish communities of Bukhara and this is why he was arrested several times.

I sat with him for a few months in a narrow cell in which eight prisoners were squeezed. One was sitting in jail because of murder, another was in for white-collar crime, and the rest were thieves and assorted criminals. By the way, R' Simcha and I were sure that the prisoner sitting there for white-collar crime was a KGB plant.

Usually, you could not see the nearby street from the windows of Russian jails but for some reason, at this KGB station in Samarkand, we could see the street and the free world. One morning, I saw R' Simcha looking out the window for a while.

I went over to him to see what was going on. He said to me, "From Above they want us to look up to the heavens and say the verse, 'Lift up your eyes and see Who created these, Who takes their hosts out in number. He calls them all by name, by the greatness of His might, and for that He is strong in power; not one is lacking.'"

R' Simcha continued to look out at the magnificence of creation. Only then did he recite the morning blessings. When he got up to the

bracha, "who has not made me a gentile," he was suddenly overcome with emotion until it looked as though neither the jail nor Russia nor Stalin existed.

Another special moment with R' Simcha was the night of 12 Tamuz, Chag HaGeula. At a certain point, it seemed as though he was preparing for a yechidus. He looked like a completely different person and was very preoccupied.

Then we said l'chaim over murky

Mesirus nefesh was our daily lot. In order to eat kosher, you had to have mesirus nefesh. In order to educate children to go in the ways of Chassidus, you needed a great measure of mesirus nefesh. And in order to keep Shabbos in the workplace, we also needed mesirus nefesh.

water and R' Simcha related the story of the Rebbe's arrest and release. We silently sang Chassidishe niggunim. At the end of that farbrengen in the jail in Samarkand, R' Simcha reviewed the maamer, "Ma Yafis."

Those months in the presence of a man of mesirus nefesh will remain with me forever. Despite sitting with criminals and thieves, he was utterly free. Each morning, he got up early in order to be able to daven slowly, and for many hours he was deep in

thought or conversation about the Rebbe.

A ROLE MODEL FOR MESIRUS NEFESH

The mesirus nefesh of the Chassidishe men is well-known, but the mesirus nefesh of the women married to these men was outstanding. To marry a Chassidishe bachur in those days demanded great mesirus nefesh. A girl knew that her chassan could be arrested within a week, and if not, then within the year.

Then, after he was arrested, life would go on and she would remain an aguna and would have to raise her children alone, educating them in the ways of Chassidus despite the enormous pressure not to.

In order to understand what the wives' mesirus nefesh entailed, I will tell a story about a Jew that had the courage to leave his job with the police and do t'shuva, and about a mother who refused to send her son to public school.

After World War II, I went to Moscow and stayed there for some time. I stayed with Chassidim, but after only three days, the neighbors began to take an interest in the new guest. Since I was in Moscow illegally, I immediately left and moved in with R' Reuven and Basya Balshin. They had a small room in which I stayed.

The famous Chassid, R' Avrohom Maiyor (Drizin) stayed in this house, during the war. The Soviet authorities pursued him relentlessly, and so he hid in the cellar of the house whose entrance was under the table in the main room of the house.

One day, military police came and searched for deserters. They quickly found the entrance to the cellar, opened the door and discovered a man with a beard, black as coal, wild looking and disheveled, staring at them in terror.

Mrs. Balshin quick-wittedly screamed, "Leave him alone! He's insane!"

Since that is just the way he looked, the police believed her and left. R' Avrohom knew he had to leave immediately and after much effort, he arranged with a Jewish policeman who agreed, in exchange for a large sum of money, to take him to distant Tashkent, where some of his relatives lived.

The policeman took R' Avrohom like a prisoner needed for an interrogation. The trip took many days and R' Avrohom refused to travel on Shabbos. As a result, the man had to spend Shabbos with him in the train station.

While traveling R' Avrohom discovered that that the man had been a Chabad Chassid in his childhood, but he had gone off the derech. R' Avrohom took the opportunity to speak to him about t'shuva and returning to the ways of his ancestors.

When they parted, R' Avrohom referred him to Rabbi Shmuel Leib Levin in Moscow, who helped the man do t'shuva. He eventually became a full-fledged Chabad Chassid.

So R' Avrohom, despite being in a tight spot himself, insisted on keeping Shabbos and if that wasn't enough, he did all he could to influence the policeman to do t'shuva. That is genuine mesirus nefesh.

Another story about mesirus nefesh:

Once, late at night, there were knocks at the window of the Balshin home. The head of the household opened the door and standing there was a couple who immediately became their guests. After a few days, the woman told about her difficult life:

She had married the son of a rav

and his family was persecuted. Her husband and father were arrested by the secret police, but this did not deter her from continuing to support Judaism. She brought a shochet to the town where she lived and continued to educate her children in the ways of Torah and mitzvos.

Since her family was branded as counter-revolutionaries, all her friends kept their distance from her because they were afraid they would be arrested too. Only on occasion did they whisper to her that for her own good she should send her children to public school. She ignored them and educated her



Rabbi Simcha Gorodetzky while in jail

children as frum Jews. The government also exerted pressure on her to send her oldest child, a nine-year-old boy, to their school.

One day, they informed her that in a few days they would be coming to take him away from her and place him in an institution where he would be reeducated. She remembered a story she had once read about Jews who hid their children during the Cantonist decree and decided to copy them.

On the morning of the day that she expected them to come, she had her son lie down on the floor. She

covered him with a blanket and lit candles around him. They would think he was dead and would leave, so she hoped.

When the police entered the house and saw the weeping mother, they realized what had happened. Without saying a word, they left.

The mother waited until she was sure they would not return and then she removed the blanket from her child. To her shock, the child did not move. She called out to Berel and he did not respond. She shook him and he did not react. All attempts at rousing him failed and she realized that her dear son had indeed died, due to his great fear.

This is an example of the mesirus nefesh that was the lot of the Chassidim under communist rule. The Rebbe Rayatz was moser nefesh for love of Torah and Ahavas Yisroel and he educated his talmidim to be moser nefesh without limitations.

Nowadays, mesirus nefesh is needed to learn Torah. With luxuries available wherever we turn, one needs a great deal of mesirus nefesh to study Nigleh and Chassidus, albeit a different sort of mesirus nefesh.

* * *

In recent generations, there has been a precipitous drop in the spiritual level. There are religious Jews who drop it all. Sometimes, they meet with other religious Jews and somehow their Jewish spark is reignited. I would like to relate three anecdotes connected with this:

The following story happened at the beginning of Nissan 5728 (1968). I was living in Riga and the manager of the factory that I worked in called me over and informed me without prior warning that I had to get ready immediately for a business trip to a distant city in the Urals.

I was taken aback because this meant that I would have to spend Pesach faraway and how would I

manage to keep all the halachos and customs of Pesach there?

I didn't have much choice and so it was with a heavy heart that I flew to the Urals. Although I was supposed to be met at the airport, nobody was waiting for me. I did not know where to go and so I waited there. Perhaps someone would come and fetch me after all.

In the meantime, I met a Jew who told me about himself. He had nearly forgotten about his Judaism. His parents had been somewhat observant but they had long since died and he had married a gentile woman and had no connection with Judaism. We spoke at length and his Jewish spark was ignited.

After a few years, I met him, fortuitously, in Yerushalayim. He had left the gentile woman, had married a Jewish woman, and had established a fine Jewish home.

A similar story happened in 1949, when I lived in a small town in Latvia. This was a Jewish town before the war but the Jews of the town had been annihilated and I was the only Jew. Before Pesach, a Jew came to my home who was visiting the town. He told me he was interested in seeing a Pesach seider. I explained to him that due to my financial plight, I had no food to give him but he insisted on seeing a Pesach seider even though he was not religious.

His neshama was aroused at the seider and he became more involved

To her shock, the child did not move. She called out to Berel and he did not respond. She shook him and he did not react. All attempts at rousing him failed and she realized that her dear son had indeed died, due to his great fear.

in Judaism. Although he wasn't fully observant, his children went further and became fully observant.

SHE IS NOT MY DAUGHTER

Several years ago, I received a phone call from a woman who asked to meet with me. When I asked her about the purpose of our meeting, she found it hard to explain.

"Are you Jewish?" I tried to gently probe.

"No."

"Are your parents Jewish?"

"No."

"Are your children Jewish?"

"No."

"So why do you want to meet with a rabbi?"

She replied, "An old woman comes to me in a dream and asks me repeatedly to go to a Jewish synagogue. She doesn't leave me alone and I don't understand where these dreams are coming from. At a certain point, I was afraid that I was experiencing psychological problems and I went to a doctor. He checked me out and decided that I was perfectly fine."

I asked the woman for her mother's telephone number and called her and told her what her daughter had told me. I added, "I am the rabbi of Latvia. For the sake of your daughter tell me the truth, is someone in the family Jewish?"

The woman emotionally told me, "Many years ago we had Jewish friends who were desperately poor and had no money to support their daughter. We adopted her. My daughter who spoke with you is Jewish!"

Today, the woman who had the dreams is fully observant.

I have no doubt that the people in these stories are the fruit of the work the Rebbe Rayatz did in Russia with tremendous mesirus nefesh. From these stories, we see that what we have left to do is to cut the fruits and prepare the world to greet Moshiach.

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HOW IS IT POSSIBLE TO RULE ACCORDING TO THE RAMBAM WHEN THERE ARE NO CLEAR TORAH SOURCES?

TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY

The ninth 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:

We have found an important founding principle in the Rosh's responsa (31:9): "All those who teach from the words of the Rambam, of blessed memory, and are not expert in Gemara to know from where his words are derived, mistakenly make permissible the forbidden and forbidden the permissible. This is because he did not do as the other Torah authors, who brought proofs for their words, indicating their sources in Gemara, establishing the principle and truth to their arguments. The Rambam

wrote his seifer as if he were a Divine prophet, without reason or proof, and anyone who reads [his writings] thinks that he understands, but he doesn't. For if he is not expert in Gemara, he doesn't understand clearly and truthfully, and thus will fail in judgment and instruction. Therefore, a person should not rely upon his reading of his seifer in order to judge and teach, unless he finds proofs in Gemara. Similarly, I have heard from a great person in Barcelona, who was expert in three sections [of Gemara], who said: I am perplexed by people who have not

learned Gemara, read the s'farim of the Rambam, of blessed memory, teach and deduce from his s'farim, and think that they understand them. For he said: I know myself, since I have learned three sections [of Gemara]. I understand when I am reading his s'farim, but in his s'farim on the Laws of K'doshim and Z'ra'im, I don't understand anything, and I know that's how it is for them in all his s'farim. – *Asher, son of R. Yechiel, of blessed memory.*"

The words of the Rosh are also brought as a rule in the Ribash (sec. 44), and in the Yad Malachi (Principle #20). Even the Kesef Mishneh (on the introduction to the Rambam's *Mishneh Torah*) agrees that it is permissible for a great chacham to inquire into the Rambam's sources and to dispute them. In his responsa *Shoel V'Nish'al* (Vol. 5, Yoreh Deia 1), he states that when the Rambam issues a halachic ruling that is not explicitly clear, rather it is derived from his words, the halacha cannot be according to the Rambam without a clear source.

Thus, this halachic ruling of the

Rambam, as brought by the Rebbe, is still not clear; it comes only from the strength of its precision. Therefore, if the Rambam's interpretation must be according to the words of the Rebbe, then you must say that the halacha in this case cannot be according to the Rambam, and unless there can be found a source for his words in the sayings of the Sages by which we can explain why he refuted other sources, we cannot rule according to this halacha.

ANSWER:

1. The way in which this question is posed demonstrates a very strange approach to Torah study, based upon the impure wellspring of Zionism, which defiles the faith and admiration for the Torah giants and halachic authorities of generations past. When someone comes along today and declares that according to the Rosh, we don't have to accept an explicit halacha in Rambam, simply because he hasn't found its source in Torah, this is an unprecedented case of "breaking the yoke of Torah," a threshold trampled upon by all that is evil.

2. The Rosh obviously did not mean to say that there is no need to accept a halacha in Rambam simply because some ignoramus can't find its source in Torah. The only intention here is that someone who is not expert in a particular section of Gemara cannot understand exactly what the Rambam means, and therefore, he cannot issue a halachic ruling without knowing its source of Torah, **because he might err regarding the Rambam's intention.**

On this very point, the Kesef Mishneh writes in his commentary on the introduction to the Rambam's *Mishneh Torah* that the great Torah commentators have long since come and have found the correct source for every halacha in Rambam. He promised to copy the sources that they brought in his own commentary, adding upon them as instructed to him from Heaven in order to understand the Rambam's

halachic rulings, as he did in every seifer of *Mishneh Torah*.

Thus, since we now have all the necessary commentaries that explain the sources to the Rambam, there is nothing to prevent someone from ruling as he does, even if he finds Gemaras that state the exact opposite (except in cases where halachic authorities after the Rambam differ with him).

3. Even the Ribash and the Yad Malachi did not write *ch"v* that we don't learn according to the Rambam if we can't find a relevant source in Torah, merely that it is difficult to understand Rambam without adequate knowledge



of Talmud. In the words of the Ribash, "And even those who teach according to the Ram, of blessed memory, and did not have prior knowledge of Talmud, they are included among who 'abuse' their authority to give instruction, **as he will not understand the main aspect of the subject matter in its truest sense,** since he did not know where the Ram, of blessed memory, derived that law." But when we're talking about giants of the Torah world, such as the Lubavitcher Rebbe, who understands the entire Talmud and the words of our Sages with the utmost clarity, he obviously can derive halacha from the Rambam and does not need your consent on the matter.

4. If, as the questioner writes, there really are no Torah sources to what the Rambam writes (on the contrary, they are actually against the sayings of our Sages), then why didn't the Raavad, the Kesef Mishneh, and other commentaries criticize the Rambam for this? Isn't anyone as familiar with the Yerushalmi as you are?

5. As mentioned earlier, there are numerous sources stating that **the building of the Beis HaMikdash and the ingathering of the exiles** will be through Moshiach. Furthermore, we have already refuted the proofs brought in Tractate Megilla and the Talmud Yerushalmi, Maaser Sheini, bringing instead prominent and more recent Torah authorities who rule specifically as the Rambam does. The very fact that a person can come and express himself as you have – saying that this halacha in Rambam has no source in Torah and all the sayings of our Sages explain things totally different, and therefore, he has no obligation to accept what the Rambam says – **proves the darkness of this exile beyond all reasonable doubt.**

6. The simple faith of the entire Jewish People for nearly two thousand years of exile has been to wait for the coming of Melech HaMoshiach, who will bring the Redemption. The fact that the questioner did not find a source in Torah for the Rambam's halachic rulings and learned Gemaras in a distorted manner serves as the basis for a new foundation of faith among the Jewish People. According to this faith, we have seemingly been waiting for a group of religion-destroying rebels who establish non-Jewish laws, register complete goyim as Jews, and give portions of Eretz Yisroel to terrorists. The important thing is that they grow fruit – and this is the "revealed end" that we have been waiting for. This is the start of the Redemption for which millions upon millions of Jews have been slaughtered over the generations – all in order to reach this current state of spiritual and physical destruction.

THE LIBERATING L'CHAIM... AND OTHER TALES LIVE FROM MEZIBUZ!

BY CHANA KATZ

It's a tradition to tell Baal Shem Tov stories Motzaei Shabbos, but to share these stories by the river flowing through the timeless Ukrainian townlet of Mezibuz! Mamash, a dream come true.

The idea started when California shlucha Olivia Schwartz wanted to trace a personal connection to the Baal Shem Tov. After getting several friends, including Rav Yitzchak Ginsburgh, fired-up on the idea, it just kind of grew until a group of some 25 souls actually left for the exhausting-but-awesome trip to Mezibuz for Gimmel Tammuz.

* * *

One of the first participants to return from the Ukraine, Chaya Bracha Leiter of Tzfas, led a farbrengen the very next Motzaei Shabbos – Yud-Beis-Gimmel Tammuz – starting with “The Baal Shem Tov’s Niggun” (which was sung many times throughout the trip).

As hashgacha Pratis had it, Chaya Bracha returned to Tzfas in time to share l’chaim with a friend whose daughter just became engaged. The

kalla’s mother brought out a bottle of vodka which she said had been given to her husband by the Rebbe MH”M.

“Vodka from the Rebbe!” exclaimed Chaya Bracha. “Have I got a story for you about vodka from the Rebbe!”

And then she told this story which she heard Olivia Schwartz tell in Mezibuz:

“(About 20 years ago) the Rebbe

“It’s good that the Baal Shem Tov had k’fitzas ha’derech,” she joked, “because the five-hour ride from Kiev to Mezibuz almost took the life from us. We were happy to stay in Mezibuz after that.”

gave someone a bottle of vodka to bring to Russia especially for the chassid, Reb Yitzchak Kagen. When he received the bottle which had come from the Rebbe, Reb Yitzchak was overwhelmed and thought, ‘What would the Rebbe want me to do with this bottle of vodka?’

“He decided that the Rebbe would want him to say l’chaim with all the Refusenik Jews who were in his position, tortured by the horrific clutches of the communist regime.

“He got on a train to carry out his plan when all of a sudden some KGB agents discovered and seized the bottle. He thought to himself, ‘if only I could keep even just the bottle which was touched by the holy hands of the Rebbe himself...’

“He pleaded with the authorities to at least let him keep the bottle, if not the vodka. They thought he was crazy and emptied out the vodka, but gave him back the bottle!

“Reb Yitzchak Kagen said to himself: ‘This is the bottle that the Rebbe’s holy hands touched and sent. At least the vapor is left!’ He filled it

again with vodka and continued with his plan to give it out.

“Every Jew he gave the l’chaim to, got out of Russia that year!”

After telling this story, Chaya Bracha and her friend said l’chaim on the Rebbe’s vodka. First, they made a plea from the heart on behalf of a bachur who was being detained by authorities in a situation which resembled the anti-Torah, communist-style imprisonment of Russia. Within an hour-and-a-half of saying that l’chaim, it was learned that the young man’s situation had taken a turn for the better, baruch Hashem.

* * *

“In Mezibuz, a timeless town, nothing changed since Creation!” said Chaya Bracha, explaining how the water came out of the faucet (when there was water, that is) drop, drop, drop, and had the odor of rust. “There are houses with cows, chickens...no electricity ... it’s out of a storybook. There are no roads except for the main road which is made of cobblestones. A river runs through the town that grows wider the further it goes and there are fish ponds.

“(It was here that) the Baal Shem Tov purified himself and went from one Heavenly level to another until he finally was able to meet with Moshiach and asked when he (the Moshiach) would reveal himself in the lower worlds. ‘When the wellsprings of your teachings spread wide and far!’ was the answer.

“So here we were, 310 years later, learning a sicha before davening and a whole bus filled with goyim came driving up. Until now, we’d seen bus after bus and car after car of all kinds of Jews coming to visit the Baal Shem Tov, but we couldn’t understand what a bus of goyim was doing here! Finally someone had the chutzpa to ask, ‘Does anybody speak English?’ and when two people said that they did, she asked, ‘What are you doing here?!’

“The people she asked replied in all earnestness: ‘The Baal Shem Tov is an important person who taught us a lot about life. We came here to learn his teachings and to pray for salvation!’

“It was then revealed (to our group) that the wellsprings went farther and deeper than even we had thought!”

The busload of goyim made a particular impression on her because the day before she had visited the mass grave in Mezibuz, where maybe

davened with the “minyan” – four old Jews who davened in Russian but said ‘Shma’ in Hebrew.

“It may have been one of the most touching aspects of the visit – to go into a school there where 50 Jews learn. Even though the school was on vacation, my eyes filled with tears when I walked into one of the classrooms. I was overwhelmed at the k’dusha of the place that existed against all odds.

“Three times I felt tears coming out of my eyes in Russia.”



Painting by Zalman Kleinman

some of the fathers of those same goyim killed 3,000 Jews in one day. Chaya Bracha also went to the nearby town of Chmielitsky (“we’ll never be sure how to spell this one,” she says) where 16,000 Jews were killed in one place by the Nazis. Now only 1,500 Jews are left there and one synagogue out of 15 remained – only because it had been turned into a gymnasium.

“But lo and behold there’s a shliach there, Rabbi Yehoshua Raskin, a neighbor from Tzfas.” Chaya Bracha

One was in Chmielitsky. The other was in Haditch by the Alter Rebbe’s *tziyun*, when three new Russian baalei t’shuva boys came in and one boy helped the other two put on t’fillin and say the blessing. In the Beit Knesset that’s mamash built adjoining the room over the Alter Rebbe’s *tziyun*, those two boys came in and said their prayers and left and the third boy, who I assumed had been a *baal t’shuva* a little longer, came in and started saying *T’hillim* in Russian and

then started sobbing from the bottom of his heart. I learned that those three boys are all studying in the Chabad yeshiva in Dneprotrosk

“The third time was in Kiev – we arrived in the middle of the night and Rav Moshe Reuven Atzman, chief rabbi in the Ukraine, showed us the original Kiev synagogue that was made into a puppet theater by the communists until he restored it to its original glory.

“At two in the morning we davened *Maariv* there...and again I was filled with tears just by being in the place where Judaism is surviving against all odds without any reason. What the communists didn't do, the Nazis finished off. And what the Nazis didn't do, the mafia and the revolutions still going on in Russia try to put an end to Jewish life. And here, this synagogue and all the Jewish institutions in Kiev, are alive and flourishing, as Rav Ginsburgh's wife Rumana said, 'like a field plowed over, and in the middle you find one lone beautiful flower.'”

* * *

Stories abound of how a chassid went through strenuous spiritual (and physical) preparations before setting out on a journey to his Rebbe and this was no less the case on this trip. (“It's good that the Baal Shem Tov had *k'fitzas ha'derech* (a Heavenly shortening of the journey),” she joked, “because the five-hour ride from Kiev to Mezibuz almost took the life from us. We were happy to stay in Mezibuz after that.”)

“When a person prepares themselves to go to Mezibuz, you go over all the things you know about the Baal Shem Tov, all his teachings. The main (characteristics) of the Baal Shem Tov was his great love and patience for every Jew. The Baal Shem Tov also emphasized the Divine Providence in every minute detail.”

With Rav Ginsburgh's help, said Chaya Bracha, the group spent several

shiurim delving deeply into these concepts. The intense discussion centered on one simple verse in the Torah: “All the Jewish people looked after Moshe.”

The pasuk refers to Moshe Rabbeinu's taking the tent in which he spoke with G-d and placing it outside of the Jewish camp, after the sin of the Golden Calf. The Baal Shem Tov taught that the pasuk had two contradiction views. Either it could be taken as, “how great is this person (Moshe) who can always be face to face with Hashem” and the critics who complained that from the back view they saw, “how fat is (Moshe's) neck,

“He decided that the Rebbe would want him to say l'chaim with all the Refusenik Jews who were in his position, tortured by the horrific clutches of the communist regime.”

how fat are his thighs – that he has gotten fat from us.”

The deep searching this group undertook to understand this concept, led to numerous details and discussions. Their goal, said Chaya Bracha, was to get to a place – like the Baal Shem Tov (and the Rebbe) where you “never have to turn your back on someone else, meaning that you always have a face-to-face relationship. That's what the Baal Shem Tov's life and all his teachings emphasized, and the same is true for the Rebbeim, especially the Rebbe, who was infinitely busy but always had infinite

time for every single person.”

Chaya Bracha developed a yearning on this trip to return and work to keep that delicate balance. “Usually when a person is busy they don't have time. “*Panim*” – face – is also openness. To turn, *p'nia*, to face someone. In order to reach that balance to be infinitely busy and infinitely have time, you have to be connected to the Infinite One, as were the Baal Shem Tov and the Rebbe. It's really what the whole *Tanya* is about.

“The Baal Shem Tov said don't be afraid of anything and love every Jew. When you're not afraid of anything but Hashem, you're connected to the source of all joy and joy breaks all boundaries.”

Being that Chaya Bracha shared this taste of her experience on Yud-Gimmel Tammuz, she felt it only appropriate to connect this thought by concluding with a story the Rebbe Rayatz wrote about his arrest and liberation from the Communist government, which culminated on this day.

The Rebbe Rayatz wrote that he was overwhelmed by his surroundings at the infamous prison to which he was taken, a place from which many were known to be taken and never seen or heard of again.

As he was walking down the long, dark corridors, there was no consolation except to say T'hillim, and when he got to the verse, “Yamin Hashem...,” he turned right. The corridor then became brighter and the Rebbe Rayatz had time to sit for a few moments, during which he worked himself to a state where he was able to realize that Hashem had led him to this corridor. He affixed himself so much to the thought that Hashem led him there, that he had only Hashem to fear, and by the time he entered the interrogation room he was not fearful at all. He had connected to the source and broken through all bounds.

L'chaim!

IN HONOR OF GUSH KATIF: SUMMER CAMP ADD-A-MITZVAH CAMPAIGN URGES ALL CAMPS TO JOIN

BY ALIZA KARP

Dozens of summer camps have already joined the Add-A-Mitzvah campaign to show their concern for the safety and security of Eretz Yisroel, by urging their campers to take upon themselves an extra Mitzvah. They are writing their name and their Mitzvah on a piece of paper and all these Mitzvah Notes will be sent to the grand event in Yerushalayim for Gush Katif Day (7th of Av, 1st of August), where children from Gush Katif will come on stage and draw individual notes from the collection. They will then read to the audience, names of campers and the Mitzvos they are taking on.

On the Eleventh of Av, in 5720 – 1960, the Lubavitcher Rebbe wrote: “Having just observed the sad period of the Destruction (may G-d convert it to a period of joy), I need hardly emphasize to you that the purpose of such observance is to be inspired to do everything possible to remove the causes with brought about the Destruction and Exile, as we say in our prayers ‘Because of our sins we have been exiled from our land.’ Every activity of ‘Depart from evil and do good,’ helps to offset these causes and to lay the foundation for the Geula Shleima.”

The camps are joining the Add-A-Mitzvah campaign with the above message in mind, that their added goodness will offset evil, to the point of abolishing it.

Camper Shalom Yemini in Gan Israel, Los Angeles says, “I feel so great that I have a chance to help protect

Yidden in Eretz Yisroel. My new Mitzvah is that I am not going to fight with my friends.”

His fellow camper Josh Cohen had decided to wear Tzitzis as his new Mitzvah. He said, “I just heard that missiles fell in Tzfat and I’m scared for my cousins.”

“This makes the kids feel that they have a responsibility for other Jews. When a Jew is in danger, we have to act. For children, taking on a Mitzvah is what they can do independently.”

Their Head Counselor, Zalmy Kurinsky, who is directing the project in camp, said, “This makes the kids feel that they have a responsibility for other Jews. When a Jew is in danger, we have to act. For children, taking on a Mitzvah is what they can do independently. I am also pleased that the project is connected to Gush Katif Day. We all want to see Gush Katif rebuilt with the people who lived there, back in their homes.”

All summer camps are urged to join in the campaign by calling Naami at 718-404-4384 or email addamitzvah@yahoo.com. Immediately your camp will be sent pre-formatted Mitzvah Notes and a stamped envelope to return the notes to a central location so they can be sent together to the event.

This project is being coordinated under the auspices of Dror Vanunu, International Coordinator of the Gush Katif Committee.



Boys writing Mitzvah Notes