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BEIS MOSHIACH

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Beis Moshiach (USPS 012-542) ISSN 1082-0272 is published weekly, except Jewish holidays (only once in April and October) for \$130.00 in Crown Heights, \$140.00 in the USA & Canada, all others for \$150.00 per year (45 issues), by Beis Moshiach, 744 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, NY 11213-3409. Periodicals postage paid at Brooklyn, NY and additional offices. Postmaster: send address changes to Beis Moshiach 744 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, NY 11213-3409.

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IF EXILE IS NO GOOD, WHO NEEDS IT?

LIKKUTEI SICHOS VOL. 24, PG. 167-176
TRANSLATED BY BORUCH MERKUR



1. The commentaries on the Torah explain that the matters of the opposite of blessing in the “Rebuke” in our portion [i.e., this week’s Torah reading, Parshas Savo] are not only rebukes and warnings, which come “if you do not listen to the voice of G-d your L-rd”; they are prophetic statements which have been fulfilled. As the Abarbanel puts it: “It is appropriate to know that the curses mentioned in this portion are not intended to be threatening and to overwhelm, to frighten the hearts of men; they come, rather, in a spirit of G-dly holiness, relating what will be in their end. Indeed, they have all been fulfilled, etc.”

The verses of the portion of the Rebuke speak in general about the punishment of exile: “G-d will disperse you among the nations, etc.” The commentaries explain in detail how all matters of the opposite of blessing have been fulfilled after the destruction of the Second Temple (the Forth Exile), or even after the destruction of the First Temple (the Exile of Bavel and etc.).

It is understood that the intent and purpose of the afflictions of exile and etc. of the Rebuke is not for the sake, G-d forbid, of vengeance against Jews or simply for the sake of punishing them. Rather, it is for their benefit. As Rashi puts it: “The curses and the afflictions sustain you and stand you up before Him.”

[However] we must understand: The Gemara says that “There are four things which the Holy One Blessed Be He regrets having created. These are they: The Exile, Kasdim [i.e., the Exile of Bavel – see Footnote 13 in the original], Yishmaelim [i.e., the Forth Exile – see Footnote 13], and the Evil Inclination.” The inference here is that the Exile is not good for the Jews. For if the Exile would have some benefit, which were it not for the Exile we would miss out on this benefit, why would it be “regretted”?

In the [Talmud] Yerushalmi we actually find that only

“three things” are cited; “Exile” is not mentioned.

However, it is very difficult to say that on account of the latter quandary the Yerushalmi omits reference to Exile – and this comprises a dispute of the [Talmud] Bavli against the Yerushalmi: whether or not the concept of Exile is somehow beneficial – for the latter question applies not only to Exile, but also to the other three items: “Kasdim, Yishmaelim, and the Evil Inclination” [i.e., why are they regretted?]

Indeed, “**All** that which the Holy One Blessed Be He created in His world He created solely for His honor.” **All** that G-d created – including, “Kasdim, Yishmaelim, and the Evil Inclination” – is “for His honor,” and consequently, [it was all created] for a good purpose. Now, how is it possible to say also with respect to the three items (in the Yerushalmi) that the Holy One Blessed Be He regrets them (and in the terms of the Yerushalmi, “He regrets (*taha* [a stronger term, connoting being astonished]) that He created them”)?

2. To resolve the above we will cite the principle that “We do not give credence to a possible [explanation that proposes a (Talmudic)] dispute” so long as there remains the possibility to explain [the subject at hand] in a manner that precludes the dispute (even if it is a stretch). Accordingly, it is logical to say in our case that there is no dispute between the Bavli and Yerushalmi regarding whether the Holy One Blessed Be He also regrets the Exile.

Exile is not something that is manifest unto itself. It is, rather, a result of the Evil Inclination. When one is seduced by the Evil Inclination and he succumbs to sin, this brings about Exile: “On account of our sins we were exiled.”

Thus, even according to the opinion of the Yerushalmi, since the Holy One Blessed Be He “regrets (*taha*)” [the creation of] the Evil Inclination, this includes within it the concept of Exile, which comes as a result of the Evil Inclination.

And since [the approach and style of] the Yerushalmi is to discuss matters in a more **general** way than the Bavli, so it is in the case at hand: it does not enumerate the result (Exile); it mentions only the cause (the Evil Inclination).

Whereas the Bavli, which speaks in detail, enumerates the Evil Inclination unto itself and the Exile unto itself.

This is connected to the general distinction between the exegetical approach of the Talmud Bavli and the Talmud Yerushalmi:

With regard to numerous topics, the discussion of the Talmud Yerushalmi is concise and general. These topics are elaborated in greater detail and length in the Talmud Bavli.

Simply speaking, the reason for this difference is that the study of Gemara in Bavel continued for an extended duration after the sealing of the Talmud Yerushalmi. The compilation and sealing of the Talmud Bavli occurred “approximately one hundred years after R. Yochanan had compiled the Gemara Yerushalmis.” [Rambam in his preface to the seifer *HaYad*]

Thus, the Talmud Bavli is considered to be a later text than the Talmud Yerushalmi, which is one of the reason why legal rulings follows the Bavli not the Yerushalmi. That is, since the Sages of the Talmud Bavli knew what is stated in the Yerushalmi – whose sealing was prior, as mentioned above – being that they appear later chronologically, the principle is that legal rulings follow the later authorities.

And the distinction between the prior and later authorities is expressed also in the fact that the later texts are more detailed and elucidated than the earlier texts. Just as we find regarding the distinction between the literary style of the Mishna (which is to “speak concisely and include many things” [Rambam in his preface to his elucidation of the Mishnayos]) and the style of the Gemara of a later period, so too is the distinction in the Gemara itself between the (earlier) Talmud Yerushalmi and the (later) Talmud Bavli. It is for this reason that the Yerushalmi mentions only three items (citing them in general), whereas the Bavli enumerates 4 items (in detail).

3. The following question, however, can be asked regarding this very principle:

The Gemara in Tractate Taanis says: “R. Yochanan said: ‘Three keys are in the hand of the Holy One Blessed Be He which He did not entrust to the hand of a messenger. These are they: the key of rain, the key of life, and the key of the resurrection of the dead.’ And “In the West [i.e., Eretz Yisroel] they say: also the key of livelihood.”

We see here that, on the contrary, in the West, in Eretz Yisroel, they [add further] detail, including a forth item (livelihood), whereas the Bavli is more general and concise, considering livelihood not as a separate item but merely as an

outcome that results from rain. As the Gemara concludes there, “And with regard to R. Yochanan, why didn’t he enumerate this? He would tell you, ‘rain is livelihood.’” That is, livelihood is an outgrowth of rain, “for seeds and fruits grow from it to sustain the world” [Rashi – see FN 27].

The explanation [of this seeming inconsistency] is simple: The aforementioned principle (in Section 2) concerning the Talmud Bavli and the Talmud Yerushalmi is premised by the notion that the Bavli is a later text (chronologically) with respect to the Yerushalmi. The opinion (in Tractate Taanis) of “the West,” cited above, was, however, not said prior to the time when “R. Yochanan said, etc.” **On the contrary**, “they say: also” means (in the same time period or) later.

In fact, the author of the statement in Bavli who said, “Three keys etc.,” is R. Yochanan, who, “compiled the Gemara Yerushalmis.” Accordingly, the discussion appears chronologically: The saying of R. Yochanan (following the principle as it applies to the Talmud Yerushalmi) is earlier (concise and general), and thereafter in the West “**they say: also**,” meaning later with respect to [the statement of] R. Yochanan, and therefore, more in detail and etc.

4. We must, however, understand with regard to the topic at hand:

Since there is regret and the negation of the principle and the cause (the Evil Inclination), there is apparently, no room to enumerate the result (Exile), which is already negated as a consequence of the regret for the cause. [Thus, this difficulty applies to the approach of the Talmud Bavli, which enumerates Exile separately.]

At first glance, this can be brought to light through preempting another question, something that is at least somewhat awkward: How is it appropriate to enumerate Exile among the things which the Holy One Blessed Be He “regrets **having created**”? Exile is not a creation which G-d created as an existent unto itself, as is the Evil Inclination and the others. Rather, its entire existence is dependent and connected with the conduct of man (when the Evil Inclination persuades the person to transgress and he does not repent thereafter). It comes out that the entire existence of Exile is dependent upon the conduct of Jews.

For this reason we must say, at first glance, that the regret for the creation of Exile does not mean simply [regret] for the creation of punishment for their sins, but for the fact that G-d **created** Exile (a new thing) as a punishment. Indeed, “there are many means available to the Omnipresent” how to punish for transgressions and sins, and we find in the Rebuke itself numerous punishments and afflictions, may G-d have mercy upon us, which come for neglecting to fulfill the Torah and commandments.

*If the Exile were to
bring with it a
benefit, why would it
be “regretted”?*

5. Accordingly we could say that this is the meaning of, “There are four things which the Holy One Blessed Be He regrets having created” (in Bavli), where Exile is enumerated separately: Notwithstanding the fact that Exile is a result of the Evil Inclination (it comes as a punishment for transgressions which result from the Evil Inclination), Exile is not a thing that is a necessary consequence of the (persuasion of) the Evil Inclination, but a creation and innovation unto itself, which G-d created as **an additional** punishment, and thus it is regretted unto itself.

This also comes to answer the fact that the Bavli (according to the text of the Talmud) precedes Exile to the Evil Inclination in its enumeration, notwithstanding the fact that in actuality, Exile comes after the deed accomplished by the Evil Inclination. [The reason for this order is] to emphasize that the fact that the Holy One Blessed Be He regrets the Exile does not (only) mean [that He regrets] the Exile in actuality (as a punishment for transgressions, after the domination of the Evil Inclination), but (primarily) the very creation of Exile (as a punishment), as mentioned above.

6. However, it would, therefore, seem that the distinction between the Bavli and the Yerushalmi is (not only with regard to the style of learning, whether in general or specific terms, but) a matter of a dispute. Namely, according to the opinion of the Yerushalmi, the regret is only with regard to Exile **in actuality** – since it is included in the regret (“*taha*”) for the Evil Inclination – but it is not for the very creation of Exile (for the Yerushalmi does not cite Exile in its enumeration). Whereas this is not so with regard to the opinion of the Bavli, as mentioned above.

Moreover, the order of the items enumerated in the Bavli remains unclear: There is a reason, as mentioned above, why it precedes Exile to the Evil Inclination, however, it is not understood why Exile is placed **first of all** the four things (and similarly with regard to the proofs from the verses).

7. The proposed explanation of the entire matter:

The distinction between the Bavli and the Yerushalmi is expressed not only in the number of items (in Bavli four things are enumerated, whereas the Yerushalmi cites only three). Rather, there is also a distinction in the **terminology**, and of consequence, also in the meaning:

The terminology of the Bavli is, “There are four things which the Holy One Blessed Be He regrets having created, etc.,” whereas the Yerushalmi reads, “There are three things the Holy One Blessed Be He created and He regrets that He

created them.”

The Bavli expresses the matter as a **single** concept, namely, G-d “regrets” (having created them). Whereas the Yerushalmi emphasizes **two** concepts: 1) the fact that “the Holy One Blessed Be He created [three things]” and 2) the fact that “He regrets that He created them.”

And this is the distinction in meaning: It is understood and obvious that “regret” On High is not to be understood in the simple sense of the term, G-d forbid – that He changes his mind and regrets, G-d forbid, a thing that He had made. Rather, this expresses that there is a concept of negativity associated with it. On the other hand, it is understood that since we say that this is a thing which “the Holy One Blessed Be He created,” it emphasizes the positive element it entails.

It comes out that the Bavli speaks only of the negative quality, of the opposite of good, which exists in the four things, whereas the Yerushalmi, in addition, emphasizes their positive quality.

This subject (as is true with regard to every subject), which is discussed in Torah (whether in the Written Torah or in the Oral Torah), is not (only) related in order to describe G-d’s conduct and relationship (and how much more so if it is negative) with regard to the creations which **He has** created. Rather, it is (relevant to know the nature of the creations in order to derive from them) an instruction in man’s service of his Master.

And this comprises the distinction whether it is only mentioned that “There are four things which the Holy One Blessed Be He regrets having created” or if is prefaced with, “There are three things the Holy One Blessed Be He

created”:

In saying “regrets” and nothing more, this expresses the notion that the four things are not true existents; they will eventually be nullified, since “He regrets having created them.” That is, their [being] is not the inner will of G-d.

But when we speak **prefatorily** to the concept, saying that “the Holy One Blessed Be He **created**,” this emphasizes that **they comprise** the creation – and of consequence, the will – of G-d. Thus, they contain an element of eternity (on account of the spark of G-dliness within them), as is the case with all things that “the Holy One Blessed Be He created.” However, together with this, it adds that they likewise possess an aspect of negativity.

But on the contrary: **this** aspect does not possess true existence, and it will [eventually] be nullified.

(To be continued.)

It is understood and obvious that regret On High is not to be understood in the simple sense of the term – that He changes his mind and regrets, G-d forbid, a thing that He made...

‘AND SHE CRIES ... FOR A MONTH’

BY RABBI CHAIM ASHKENAZI
(FROM A CHASSIDISHE FARBRENGEN)

*The “beautiful captive woman” represents the neshama, and in the month of Elul (“She cries... for a month”), the neshama cries for “her father and her mother,” it bemoans its disconnection from its roots and its lofty source. * Sadness and crying as viewed from a Chassidic perspective.*

WHAT AM I CRYING ABOUT?

During the terrible days under communist rule, the mashpia R’ Chatshe Feigin (may Hashem avenge his blood) farbrenge with the talmidim of one of the underground yeshivos in Russia. One boy stood guard outside to warn of approaching policemen, while inside, R’ Chatshe farbrenge as though he was back in Lubavitch in the good old days, and demanded inyanim in avodas Hashem from the bachurim.

The bachurim took what R’ Chatshe said to heart and some even cried bitterly over their distance from the truth demanded of them in their avodas Hashem.

Suddenly, the bachur posted on guard burst in and announced that a policeman was coming. Immediately, each bachur ran for cover, one under a bench, another behind a pile of wood stored in the cellar where they learned,

etc. Then they heard that the policeman was merely passing by and they all breathed a sigh of relief and sat down again to farbreng.

R’ Chatshe asked: You thought you were in danger, right? So why didn’t any of you cry as you did during the farbrengen?

The bachurim answered: How would crying have helped? We needed to find a hiding place!

Said R’ Chatshe: Then why did you cry during the farbrengen? Why didn’t you wonder how it would help? In other words, the crying didn’t come solely from k’dusha; the side of k’dusha wants to take action and find ways of getting out of the mud.

This idea appears in sichos of the Rebbe about the meeting between Yosef and Binyamin when each cried on the other’s neck. Chazal say that Yosef cried over the churban Beis HaMikdash that stood in Binyamin’s

portion and that Binyamin cried over the churban of the Mishkan in Shilo that was in Yosef’s portion.

The Rebbe asks: Why didn’t each of them cry over the churban that took place in their own portion? The Rebbe answers that when it’s the churban in your own portion there is no purpose in crying, for action is needed to fix that which needs correcting so the Mikdash can be rebuilt.

Crying brings a sense of relief and a self-satisfied feeling that comes in the place of action. The person mistakenly thinks that he did what he had to do. “I cried from the depths of my heart and Hashem certainly gathered my tears and placed them in His treasury...”

Everybody must fix his own churban and as for the other person’s churban, that’s not in our hands and this is why we need to cry about it and arouse mercy from On High.

BASIS FOR CHASSIDISHE BEHAVIOR

We can see to what extent this is a foundation and basis for Chassidic behavior from the fact that the Alter Rebbe refers to it in many places. For example, in *Torah Ohr*, in connection with “and Yosef hurried since his compassion was aroused for his brothers and he wanted to cry, so he went to the room and cried there, etc., and he restrained himself and said:

place bread.” The Alter Rebbe uses this verse as an analogy for avodas Hashem as follows:

“Yosef” refers to the Jewish people, as it says in T’hillim 80, “You who lead Yosef as a flock.” The name Binyamin is from “*Ben Oni*,” meaning sorrow. So the words are read like this: When a Jew (Yosef) makes a spiritual accounting about the sorrow the neshama feels when it descends to this world (Binyamin) he cries about the magnitude of the descent.

Regarding this desire and need it says, “and he restrained himself” – this is not the goal, as it says in Yirmiyahu 13:17, “my soul shall weep in secret places” (which is why Yosef left before he cried). “And he went to the room” – the Jewish people cry in their hearts, i.e., a person feels bitterness, but acts with restraint. What should he do? “Place bread” – go and learn (for Torah is compared to food), because the goal is tikkun, correction.

The elder Chassidim would say that this idea appears at the very beginning of *Tanya*. On the words, “if he will be as wicked in his eyes, his heart will be grieved and he will be sad.” These words are said about someone who serves Hashem, so the Alter Rebbe asks how could he possibly think of himself as wicked when this could cause him spiritual harm if he will be sad as a result of thinking of himself as wicked?

The question is asked, why isn’t the same question asked about someone who is truly wicked? Why aren’t we afraid about his state of mind?

The answer is that the wicked person has a solution to his bleak spiritual state, for he can correct himself. But the person who serves Hashem, who does everything he is supposed to do, who is told to view himself as wicked – there is concern about his state of mind, because there is no possible benefit from his broken heart. The moment there is no possibility for him to translate his sadness into corrective action, he can

cause himself spiritual and physical harm.

CRYING – IT’S NOT JUST TEARS

“Crying” that prevents action is a general concept which relates not only to actual tears; it includes all sorts of behavior that express depression, feelings of guilt, feeling broken hearted, etc., instead of searching for a solution or improvement.

An interesting example is brought in the name of the mashpia in Toras Emes in Yerushalayim, R’ Alter Simchovitz a”h. He complained about Yerushalmi bachurim that it was hard



to make them into Chassidische bachurim and he explained the reason for this. He would sit with a bachur for hours at night and speak to him and demand inyanei avoda and afterwards, the bachur would run to the Kosel.

What’s wrong with that? you wonder. There’s no holier place! The problem is that the bachur’s conclusion, after all the talking, should have been to begin working on himself and to subdue his animal soul, etc. He runs to the Kosel and thinks that he did what he had to do. After all, he thinks, “I already davened at the Kosel...” (and maybe even cried).

Like they tell about Hershele Ostropolier – that when he was a child he once returned from shul earlier than usual and his mother asked him whether he had managed to finish the entire davening. He answered: Of course, come and I’ll show you where I spat in Aleinu.

Just as the spitting was the davening for Hershele, so too, this bachur thinks that by going to the Kosel and crying he has done what he needs to do.

This is actually a very clever yetzer hidden within a mantle of religious and Chassidic piety, crying in Krias Shma al HaMitta or in “Slach Lanu.” Regarding this it says, “We will not be saved by sighing” and “one action is better than a thousand sighs.”

We are not negating crying and sighing; we are rejecting them as the goal. They can only be an expression of the depth of the pain and sorrow and then one must immediately get to work in order to find a solution, without sitting back and waiting.

CRYING – TO ASSUAGE THE CONSCIENCE

The inclination of human beings, especially of askanim, to make do with sighs instead of action, is something the Rebbe addresses countless times in letters. There are also many sichos that address this point regarding Mihu Yehudi and Shleimus HaAretz. After the Rebbe writes or expresses his dissatisfaction with how a certain hanhala or askanim or the Israeli government is handling something, the Rebbe concludes: This is not for the purpose of Musar and the like; the goal is to correct things from here-on-in!

Yet we find for example, that the Rebbe Rashab, in one of the stories, was brokenhearted one of the times he returned from Petersburg. He had gone there in order to annul decrees against the Jews and was unsuccessful.

A great rav tried to comfort the Rebbe by saying that the Rebbe had

done his best and didn't spare any efforts, so why should he be so upset? The Rebbe Rashab replied that that was a good excuse, but the thing that needed to get done wasn't accomplished. The Rebbe Rashab was saying that the crying was not about the past but about that which couldn't be fixed. If it would be possible to fix it, it wouldn't be right to cry because action would need to be taken!

This is true in all areas of life: in inyanim of avodas Hashem, crying won't save us and sometimes it is an impediment because it gives one a sense of satisfaction, i.e., I am broken and therefore my conscience is assuaged. If it bothers me, that means I am a moral person and that's enough. He forgives himself for the misdeed and everything is fine.

The truth is though, that the thing that needed to get done wasn't accomplished! What needs to be done is to examine things and fix them. If a person discovers that there is **nothing** that can be done, **then** it is appropriate to **just** cry, to plead before Hashem.

I AM THE VICTIM

In daily life too, whether in chinuch or shalom bayis, crying alone is ineffective and sometimes it makes things worse. When you cry, you are saying there is nothing that can be done, which means you are the victim and the one who created the problem is the one who needs to solve it.

This approach casts the blame on someone else: Hashem or anybody aside from oneself. For example, if it's a chinuch problem, then society is to blame, the educators, Hashem Who created him with this nature, the atmosphere in the street, or the fact that we don't live in a religious ghetto.

If it's a shalom bayis problem, the spouse is at fault, or the mother-in-law, or the lack of parnasa. Even if one doesn't actually cry but he places the blame on the school, society, etc., all he does is absolve himself of blame and the need to do anything further.

He doesn't see the problem or the solution within himself.

He is like a baby or a young child who is caught misbehaving who cries and throws a fit. This babyish part within us doesn't disappear as we get older because it is that part of our selves that doesn't want to be pointed at as the guilty one. Feeling guilty threatens one's very being. This is why the automatic reflex of shifting the blame can't be changed without work.

The Alter Rebbe says about a person who doesn't change his animal soul, that it grows stronger with time, through his eating and drinking, etc. When it comes to the ego, if you don't deal with it, it doesn't disappear; it grows. The first proof of a person's maturity is when he takes responsibility. The more responsibility a person takes for the consequences of his actions and behavior, the more maturity he displays.

“IN THE EVENING HE RETIRES WEeping, BUT IN THE MORNING THERE IS JOY”

Tears are best left for the end of the day when Krias Shma al HaMitta is said. When a person has finished for the day and is going to sleep, he can cry over what he did not correct, over whatever that needed to get done that wasn't accomplished.

This crying is desirable only as a preparation for a busy day of avodas Hashem the next day, as it says (T'hillim 30:6) “in the evening he retires weeping, but in the morning there is joy.” Chassidim explain it thus:

When you go to sleep after crying in Krias Shma, then you wake up in the morning with joy, with enthusiasm for avoda. What is the goal of avoda? It is encapsulated in what the tailor said his father taught him: Fix the old and don't ruin the new. Chassidim would farbreng on this line, explaining it to mean: fix the past and don't ruin the future. A person who suffices with “in the evening he retires weeping” and

doesn't get up to “in the morning there is joy” does not correct the past and is liable to ruin the future.

We should leave all complaints, blame and fault-finding about everything and everyone around us for our last day, after we turn 120. Until then, we should be busy correcting and improving. This is where we should be putting in all our efforts. As I heard from R' Chaim Shaul Brook a”h: a person must learn and learn without stopping, and even if he sees the heavens tottering, he should continue learning until a minute after they fall on his head and only then may he stop.

So too with someone dealing with a problem of some kind – he needs to look for ways to fix it. As long as he is alive, he needs to work on improvement because surely this problem wasn't sent to him merely so he will cry; everything Hashem created in His world is for us to “**do and fix.**”

“FIXING” WHO?

Often, a person who hears that he may not sit with arms folded thinks that this means he can do all sorts of things, including getting other people to correct what he thinks they need to correct and if the other person doesn't want to, he not only talks behind his back but speaks to his face, and from doing things behind his back he does things openly. Sometimes, he even has an answer from the Rebbe in the *Igros...* In previous years, for example, sometimes the Rebbe told him or wrote to him that he has to do all he can to fix a particular matter, and it was not for naught that Hashem presented him with this inyan; rather it was hashgacha pratit for this is his mitzva, his special mitzva, and perhaps it was only for this that his soul descended to the world. Therefore, when someone interferes, he thinks that the person is interfering with the entire Seder Hishtalshelus and the Divine plan of creating a dira ba'tachtonim... He sometimes literally

sees how the inanimate, plant, animal, and human, interferes with the fulfillment of the Divine intention that is rooted in Atzmus U'M'hus. If so, how could he possibly move on without correcting – the other person?

A person who thinks this way is forgetting one little thing which separates the Jewish people from the nations of the world, between the disciples of Avrohom Avinu and the disciples of Bilam the wicked, as it says in the Mishna in Avos that the way to differentiate between their disciples is they had: a good eye or a bad eye, a lowly soul or a broad soul, a lowly spirit or an arrogant spirit.

The measure as to whether a person is a disciple of Avrohom Avinu is if he has a good eye and obviously this refers to looking at others. Therefore, a person must conclude that if he was shown, by Heaven, something that needs correcting, they showed it to him because this problem is found within **himself**, and he needs to correct what **he** needs to correct, without attacking anybody else.

They tell about R' Mendel Futerfas a"h that he once saw inappropriate behavior in someone, so he decided to arrange a shiur with him to learn a particular maamer that disparages such behavior. He planned on explaining it so that the person would get it. When they learned the maamer, the person understood the inyan well and instead of realizing that it applied to him, he said: this is something that fits so-and-so! This led R' Mendel to conclude that it applied to himself (R' Mendel) as well.

R' Mendel saw how a person could learn about something that pertained to him yet apply it to someone else, which is why he figured that he had to work on himself since he was probably subjective too!

This is what is meant by *Chabad mahnt p'nimius* (Chabad demands p'nimius) – that superficiality is what the other person needs to do and what needs to change in the world. P'nimius is what **I** need to change and do.

BEAVER TEARS

At farbrengens, Chassidim would absolutely negate “tears of a beaver.” Why the beaver and why are its tears anathema to the Chassidim? According to legend, the beaver always follows the same path and so the hunters follow it and place traps where they know the beaver will go. The beaver notices the trap from afar and bursts into tears because it knows that it will be caught yet it doesn't veer from the path and continues forward, to its destruction, with tears in its eyes.

“Not to cry the tears of the beaver” sums up the approach of Chassidus, which negates crying on the way to the

“And we have no one upon whom to rely except our Father in heaven.” These words show that we believe in Hashem! How do they illustrate the lowliness of the generation?

trap while affirming tears that are a source of renewed growth.

The area where we have to be particularly careful to avoid beaver tears is in bringing Moshiach. According to the Rebbe, this is one of the signs of the lowly generation to which Moshiach comes, Ikvisa d'Meshicha, enumerated at the end of the Tractate Sota: “And we have no one upon whom to rely except our Father in heaven.”

These words show that we believe in Hashem! How do they illustrate the lowliness of the generation? The Rebbe explains that placing all the responsibility on Heaven and not

doing the work ourselves is a terrible thing. This means, we cry and cry and cry and don't do anything to change our routine, to move off the Galus path that has been our path for thousands of years, and on to the path of Geula.

This is why it is one of the signs of the eve of Geula because we need to take action and not to say: The Rebbe brought us into the struggle for Moshiach, let him continue and we will rely on him. We need to rise above this Galus-mentality and do all we can to publicize the prophecy of Geula and to prepare the world for Moshiach.

TEARS OF T'SHUVA

We said that Chassidus, however, encourages crying – i.e., bitterness – that leads to a renewed commitment to positive action. Where do we see this? In Parshas Ki Seitzei it talks about the beautiful captive woman who “cries for her father and her mother for a month.” In Chassidus it says this alludes to the month of Elul.

If we said that crying is not helpful, why is the month of Elul alluded to in the Torah as a month of crying? The answer is that the beautiful captive woman is the neshama and in the month of Elul (“she cries ... for a month”), the neshama cries “for her father and mother” – about its disconnection from its roots and lofty source.

There is no fear that this Elul-crying will be “beaver tears,” because in the month of Elul of “**Ani l'dodi**.” Thai is, when a person is aroused to action in an “arousal from below,” with his own powers, the regret and pain (that are referred to in the verse as “and she cries”) are motivators that spur him on to the avoda of t'shuva, to an increase in Torah study, and hiddur in the fulfillment of mitzvos, with joy and gladness of heart.

May we all be inscribed for a good and sweet year, a year of “in the morning there is joy.”

AREN'T THERE CLEAR PROOFS THAT THE REDEMPTION DOESN'T DEPEND UPON T'SHUVA?

TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY

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

Regarding the claim that without repairing "due to our sins," there can no nullification of "we were exiled from our land," R. Saadia Gaon writes (*Emunos V'Deios* 8:5) that since it has been a long time and we have not repented, He will bring us back without t'shuva. Even the Ramban writes at the end of Parshas Haazinu that if we won't do t'shuva, Moshiach will be delayed until the appointed time, and the Redemption will come at the appointed time even without t'shuva. The Bachai writes in his seifer *Kad HaKemach* that even without t'shuva, the Redemption will come no

later than the final appointed time. Similarly, we find in Ikarim, the Radak's commentary on T'hillim (108:5), the Metzudas Dovid on Yeshayahu (59:16), the Maharsha on Yoma (86a), the Ohr HaChayim on VaYikra (25:28), the Maharal in *Netzach Yisroel*, the Vilna Gaon in *Even Shlomo* (11:9), etc.

Besides all this, while the entire Jewish People was extremely pious at the time of the Exodus from Egypt, they were sunken into the forty-nine gates of impurity. Similarly, we have the situation that when the Jewish People came into Eretz Yisroel from Babylonia at the start of the era of the

Second Beis HaMikdash, they were married to non-Jewish women (Ezra 8:2), publicly desecrated Shabbos (*Nechemia* 13:15-18), etc., and nevertheless, they merited redemption.

ANSWER:

1. I left the wording of the question exactly as I received it, even though in my humble opinion, nowhere in all the sources you mention is there an indication that the Jewish People will be revealed without doing t'shuva (as we will show here). However, I simply don't understand why you had to cite all these sources, when there is an explicit dispute among the Tana'im in the Gemara (*Sanhedrin* 97b): "Rabbi Eliezer says that if the Jewish People does t'shuva, it will be redeemed, and if not, it will not be redeemed." Rabbi Yehoshua differs and says, "You will be redeemed not with money, and not with t'shuva and good deeds," and therefore, Rabbi Yehoshua establishes that at the appointed time, Moshiach will come even without t'shuva. We have a general rule that in a dispute between Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Yehoshua, **the halacha is according to Rabbi Yehoshua**, particularly in *Sanhedrin* (98a), where Rabbi Yehoshua admonishes with a pasuk

and “Rabbi Eliezer was silent.” Therefore, we learn that the conclusion of the Gemara is that Rabbi Eliezer yields to Rabbi Yehoshua (by his silence on his final question). If so, you should have brought your question from the Gemara.

2. However, there is a clear halachic ruling from the Rambam (Hilchos T’shuva 7:5) that **“Israel is only redeemed through t’shuva,”** and he brings a proof from the pasuk (D’varim 30:2-3): “And you shall return to Hashem, your G-d and you shall listen to His voice...and Hashem your G-d will return your captivity, and have mercy upon you and gather you from among all the nations.” Furthermore, the fact that the Rambam’s contemporaries did not dispute this ruling is proof that they agree with his words.

3. In a general explanation of this point, the source of the Rambam’s p’sak din comes from Talmud Yerushalmi (Taanis 1:1), where we learn from the explicit pasuk, “And you will return unto Hashem, your G-d, etc.,” that the Jewish People is only redeemed through t’shuva.

As for the differing opinions of Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Yehoshua, the Maharsha interprets that Rabbi Eliezer also reasons that Moshiach will come at the final appointed time, even without t’shuva. However, he is not saying that the actual Redemption will come at a time when the Jewish People have not yet done t’shuva. Rather, in Rabbi Eliezer’s opinion, there will be a generation of tzaddikim who will serve G-d with t’shuva and good deeds, and this is the way that the Redemption will unfold. Rabbi Yehoshua then adds that even if there won’t be tzaddikim who will do t’shuva, nevertheless, there is a set time when the Redemption can be delayed no longer, and when that time comes, **G-d will arrange a variety of circumstances that will compel the Jewish People to do t’shuva,** even without any previous preparation on their part.

This can happen in a number of ways, as the Gemara explains the words of Rabbi Eliezer: G-d will call forth a king who issues harsh decrees, and then they will do t’shuva, or bring down a spirit from Heaven upon them to make them return with complete t’shuva. (This is according to the version of the Gemara in which “G-d will establish a king for them, etc.” are the words of Rabbi Yehoshua, as we find also in Yalkut Shimoni, Yirmiyahu 270. See the commentaries on the Yerushalmi, and the Tanchuma, Parshas B’Chukosai 3.) This is the meaning of “I, Hashem, will hasten it in its time” – when the time for the Redemption will arrive, the arousal to



t’shuva will come from Above. Thus, they will all return in t’shuva then, and the “hastening” will follow, for G-d will make the time come more quickly.

4. R. Saadia Gaon explains in *Emunos V’Deios*, Parshas Shmini, that if the Jewish People won’t do t’shuva on their own, and the appointed time comes, “many evil misfortunes will befall us, **so that we will choose the t’shuva for them, and we will deserve to be redeemed.**” See the Maharsha on Tractate Megilla (31a), where he writes quite simply that in the future, the Jewish People will be redeemed specifically through t’shuva. By the

same token, the Radak writes (Yeshayahu 59:16) that the Jewish People will return in t’shuva after they see the beginning of the salvation. This refers to the start of the true salvation, not the “salvation” of the founding of the “medina.” Not only has this not led to people doing t’shuva, it has deliberately brought people to transgress with malice aforethought in a manner of systematic spiritual destruction, unparalleled in the annals of Jewish history.

5. This is what the Rambam meant when he writes at the conclusion of Hilchos T’shuva: “Torah has promised that the Jewish People will eventually

Is this the Redemption that the Jewish People imagined? Did millions of holy Jews sing “Ani Maamin” before they were sacrificed upon the altar of “Zionism”?

do t’shuva at the end of their exile, and they will immediately be redeemed.” This means that there was a need for the promise of Torah, because without this promise, it would be hard to believe, as we see the dog-eat-dog nature of the “medina” and the generation, and each person in his soul knows how far we actually are from t’shuva, etc., requisite for this to be a “fit generation” for the coming of our Moshiach and our Redemption. Therefore, the Torah promised us that the Jewish People will eventually do t’shuva at the end of their exile with an arousal from Above, and when they do

t'shuva, they will immediately be redeemed.

6. This is also the meaning in several of the s'farim that you mentioned in your question, i.e., when the appointed time comes, the Jewish People will certainly be redeemed, even if their actions and avoda until then will not be fitting for the Redemption. Since the hour has arrived, there will then be fulfilled, "And Hashem your G-d will blow the shofar," "And on that day, the great shofar will be blown," and the entire Jewish People will be aroused to t'shuva. In any event, the two opinions in the Gemara – the redemption of the Jewish People when the appointed time arrives and also in a state of t'shuva – are both "words of the living G-d" and each of them is true. (See at length the maamer that the Mittlerer Rebbe, of blessed memory, son of the Baal HaTanya, of blessed memory, said before Rabbi Akiva Eiger, of blessed memory, in 5585 – "Al Tatzeir Es Moav" – printed in the beginning of the seifer *Maamarei Admur HaEmtza'i*, D'varim, Vol. 1.)

7. Similarly, the Ramban writes in *Seifer HaGeula*, Sec. 2, that when the appointed time comes, the least there should be is "their acceptance of the Torah and preserving the principles of the faith, for while they transgress some of the mitzvos, they haven't broken the yoke [of Torah] entirely." Even in the holy Ohr HaChayim that you cited, while he concludes that "there is a time to the end of the Exile, even if the Jewish People will be completely wicked," it is impossible to separate this from what he writes at the beginning, i.e., the essence of the Geula is G-d's redemption of the Jewish People at the appointed time, even if they're wicked: "In awakening the hearts of man...and He will make them detest apparent pleasures, and arouse the spiritual desire...until they improve their actions." In other words, a state of "complete wickedness" *ch"v* does not contradict Redemption, from

G-d's perspective. However, what is the beginning of the Redemption? **The awakening of these wicked people to do t'shuva**, and not *ch"v* that **spiritual desertion** is one of the signs of the True **Redemption**. Similarly, another of the sources cited in your question, the Maharal in *Netzach Yisroel*, writes (Chs. 31 and 45) that the Redemption must be a matter of t'shuva, whether through an arousal from Above or from below.

8. Furthermore, we also see from the aforementioned Maharsha that when Rashi comments that the Jewish People will be redeemed without any t'shuva, this doesn't mean that they will remain wicked until the Redemption comes, rather the suggestion that they will not do t'shuva **prior to the Redemption** even with an arousal from Above, but when the Redemption begins, Melech HaMoshiach will bring them all to return with t'shuva.

9. See the discourse on the Three

THE MITZVA OF CONQUERING THE LAND DEPENDS UPON UPROOTING THE IDOL WORSHIP WITHIN IT

"As long as the conquest does not create the firmness **to uproot the idol worship of the Gentiles in Eretz Yisroel with a high hand**, this is not the conquest we are discussing. Furthermore, it makes no difference if the possibility of uprooting non-Jewish idol worship is prevented by subjugation to Turkey or England, or whether it comes from subjugation to the United Nations, the Pope in Rome, or world opinion... **the firmness of hand of the non-Jews in Eretz Yisroel on the issue of uprooting idol worship is a contradiction to a state of conquest.**"

(HaGaon R. Yitzchak Hutner, o.b.m., Baal Pachad Yitzchok)

Weeks in the Satmar rebbe's seifer *Al HaGeula V'Al HaT'mura*, Chapter 40, where he states that since the Rambam writes that Moshiach will compel all the Jewish People, this proves that they will not do t'shuva before Moshiach comes. I have seen this quoted in a seifer that comes to prove that the medina, despite its wickedness, represents *is'chalta d'Geula*, as the Jewish People will not do t'shuva before Moshiach comes anyway.

But this argument simply doesn't hold water, for even according to the opinion that they will be redeemed without doing t'shuva, the interpretation is that Moshiach will come before the Redemption, and he will **compel** all the Jewish People to go in the path of Torah. Thus, since t'shuva must serve as the foundation for the Redemption, how can anyone derive from this that a state founded entirely with the ultimate purpose of uprooting religion is *is'chalta d'Geula*, **despite the fact that this symbolizes the opposite of the work of Moshiach** and the opposite of t'shuva, without which the Jewish People cannot be redeemed? The entire concept of exile came only "due to our sins," and therefore, how it is possible that a government that transgresses and causes the many to transgress can itself be part of the process of the Redemption? Furthermore, how can those who themselves stand at the head of a sovereign organization that increases sin and transgression be part of the Redemption and its objective of t'shuva and cleaving to the Creator?

10. It is a well-known fact that the founders of the medina at its inception and in the years that followed drove hundreds of thousands of Jewish children away from their roots (including orphans saved from the furnaces of Europe, who upon their arrival in Eretz Yisroel were given treif education and stripped of all the holiness and purity they had received from their parents who died *al Kiddush*

Hashem). How could it ever enter one's mind that those who completed the work of the Nazis (may their name be erased), raising generations of Jews numbering in the millions in the Holy Land who have been totally estranged from their Judaism, are themselves part of the process of the Redemption?

11. The Rebbe Rayatz says in *Seifer HaSichos 5705* (p. 80): "Jewish men and women, listen and be shocked! Jewish children in Eretz Yisroel are being led to annihilation! A number of people fighting against religion, among a group of leaders whose job is to place refugee Holocaust survivors in Eretz Yisroel, have established an 'annihilation of religion corner' for children under their authority. Hitler constructed ovens in the occupied cities to afflict and incinerate the Jewish body, and this clique has established houses of destruction in Eretz Yisroel for the purpose of afflicting and incinerating the Jewish souls.

The 'annihilation of religion corner' instructs the children through educators according to the approach of the wicked Haman, using the same educational model as the Yevsektzia in its worst form. They teach the children to desecrate Shabbos, eat treif, eat on Yom Kippur, and eat chametz on Pesach. They don't permit the children to say Kaddish for their parents who were killed *al Kiddush Hashem*. They teach them to scoff at G-d and Yiddishkeit. The orphans who are taught in the 'annihilation of religion corner' by students of Haman will eventually *r"l* tear Torah scrolls, burn synagogues, and desecrate Jewish cemeteries. They will make pogroms, stab Jews, burn them, shoot them, and plunder Jewish property."

12. In fact, due to our many sins, we have recently seen Israeli policemen and soldiers of the Israel Defense Forces, students of those very houses of annihilation that produced commanders sorely lacking in faith and fear of Heaven, cruelly beating

innocent young boys and girls, destroying Jewish property built with toil and sweat, tearing down and burning shuls, driving Jews from their land, and desecrating cemeteries. Prisons in Eretz Yisroel are filled with more students of the annihilation corner, who **killed and injured Jews** due to a war over drugs, property, or just a case of "road rage." There are incidents every day where young people are knifed in clubs, and quite often they end in murder *r"l*. Hundreds of children suffer terribly from school violence, and dozens of women are murdered by their husbands every year.

The Rebbe Rayatz's prophecy was fulfilled down to the letter. And who

Specifically this Redemption, which will have no exile after it, must begin in a spirit of purity and an arousal to t'shuva.

were the ones who established these houses of destruction that raised these criminals? None other than the "medina," its leaders and its ministers, whom you have labeled with the title "*is'chalta d'Geula*"! Is this the Redemption that the Jewish People imagined? Did millions of holy Jews sing "*Ani Maamin*" before they were sacrificed upon the altar in order that the "Zionists" would bring a spiritual holocaust upon their children, to the point that their grandchildren and great-grandchildren know nothing about keeping Shabbos, kashrus, or family purity?

13. Regarding your question about the spiritual state of the Jewish People at the time of the Exodus from Egypt,

this was still before Mattan Torah, and we have already written that Am Yisroel did t'shuva by accepting the two mitzvos of the blood of the Pesach sacrifice and the blood of circumcision, tying the lamb onto their bedposts on the 10th of Nissan with great self-sacrifice, and they were also redeemed in the merit of their faith in G-d and Moshe, His servant.

In addition, the exile in Egypt was only meant to be for a period of four hundred years (and G-d calculated the appointed time from the birth of Yitzchak in order that the Jewish People shouldn't fall into the forty-nine gates of impurity). Similarly we find with regard to the redemption from the destruction of the Second Beis HaMikdash, as the Babylonian exile was only meant to last seventy years, and therefore, at the conclusion of the fixed time, the redemption came. However, with this terrible exile, "the appointed time has not been revealed."

Furthermore, there was no p'sak din regarding Egypt and Babylonia that they will not be revealed without t'shuva, and therefore, specifically this Redemption, which will have no exile after it, must begin in a spirit of purity and an arousal to t'shuva.

14. But what's most important is that the question now is not if the Jewish People will be redeemed specifically through t'shuva or even without t'shuva, but if the very medina that was founded upon non-Jewish laws and brought millions of Jewish children to spiritual destruction represents the Redemption, and what connection does this have to the redemption from Egypt? Would it enter one's mind to say that Egypt, the nakedness of the earth, is in fact part of the redemption?

15. See the two previous inserts regarding the conduct of Theodore Herzl and the counselors of the Jewish Agency.

HE KNEW BEFORE THEY WERE WRITTEN

TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY

That night, at an unusually late hour, he called Rabbi Belinov's home. He introduced himself as the avreich who had come to the Machon Stam during the day. He apologized for calling so late, but his voice filled with emotion indicated that he had something important to say: "Since you're Lubavitcher chassidim, I must tell you," he said, "the Rebbe knew everything!" An Elul story in honor of the time-honored chassidic tradition to check t'fillin and mezuzos during the Month of Mercy.

It was rather late in the evening when the telephone rang in the home of HaRav **Yosef Yitzchak Belinov** of B'nei Brak. When the phone rings at such a late hour, it's usually a sign of something urgent, and Rabbi Belinov picked up the receiver. He never imagined the amazing and prophetic miracle of the Rebbe MH"M that he would hear now...

This story took place during Elul of last year. In his role of authority as rav of Machon Stam, Rabbi Belinov sits and responds to halachic questions, including matters pertaining to t'fillin, mezuzos, and sifrei Torah that come to the institution requiring a rabbinical decision as to whether or not they are kosher.

One day, a young avreich, a Sanzer chassid, came to Machon Stam with a question that had arisen in connection with a letter 'tzaddik' in one of the parshiyos of his Rabbeinu Tam t'fillin. Rabbi Belinov took the parchment, looked at it thoroughly and meticulously, and was inclined to declare it unfit.

However, since this was a matter of holiness, he didn't want to say outright that the parchment is definitely unkosher, so he settled for a clear statement that it is impossible to put on these t'fillin any longer. The avreich was pained to hear the p'sak, and asked if it was possible to make a formal claim against the scribe who wrote these parshiyos. Rabbi Belinov

looked over the parchment once more, and suggested that he consult with an expert examiner in order to be certain that the defect took place during the writing of the parchments, and only then should he approach the scribe.

The avreich thanked the rav, and then left his office with much sadness.

That night, at an unusually late hour, this young man called Rabbi Belinov's home. He introduced himself as the avreich who had come to the Machon Stam during the day. He apologized for calling so late, but his voice filled with emotion indicated that he had something important to say:

"Since you're Lubavitcher chassidim, I must tell you," he said, "the Rebbe knew everything!"

Rabbi Belinov then listened most attentively to the story that the young man now proceeded to tell:

"I am speaking to you now from my father's house, where I came specially to tell him the unpleasant news that my Rabbeinu Tam t'fillin are not fit for use. When I told him about the t'fillin and that the defect had apparently occurred when the parchments were written, I noticed signs of emotion and concern on his face. He was silent for a moment, closed his eyes, and then blurted in great pain:

"Oy vei, the Lubavitcher Rebbe told me to check them!"

"What do you mean?" I asked, as I tried to understand what was happening.

“My father then began to relate that in 5750, shortly before my bar-mitzva, he had the privilege of coming to Sunday dollars distribution with the Lubavitcher Rebbe. When he passed before the Rebbe’s holy countenance, he requested a bracha for the family, particularly for me in honor of my upcoming bar mitzva.

“The Rebbe gave him a beaming smile and said, ‘You will surely make certain to check his Rabbeinu Tam t’fillin.’

“My father was slightly confused. He didn’t understand what the Rebbe meant, since it is not our (Sanzer chassidim) custom to put on Rabbeinu Tam t’fillin at the age of bar mitzva, and my father dared to tell the Rebbe that “we Sanzer chassidim put on Rabbeinu Tam t’fillin only after getting married.”

“The Rebbe would not relent. ‘If so,’ he said, ‘then check his Rabbeinu Tam t’fillin then.’

“These were the last words that my father heard from the Rebbe before he was pushed outside by the throngs of chassidim.

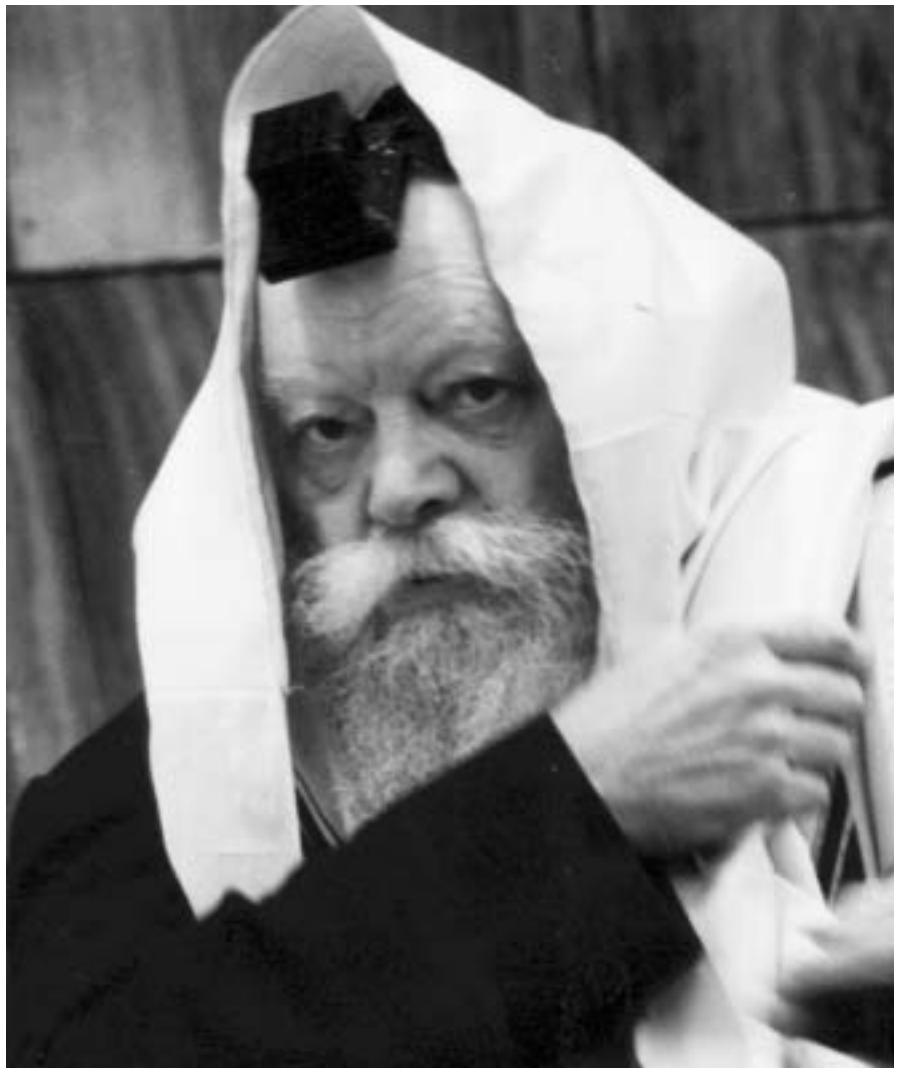
“The years passed, and I got married. My father had completely forgotten about the whole matter. Today, when I came and told him that my Rabbeinu Tam t’fillin were not kosher, apparently ever since they had been written, it jarred him like a clap of thunder on a clear day. He envisioned before him the Lubavitcher Rebbe’s amazing prophecy from sixteen years earlier: Check his Rabbeinu Tam t’fillin!

“Now everything is understood,” my father told me, as he expressed his deep regret over the entire matter.

“But the thing that astounded us the most was: How did the Rebbe know about the unkosher t’fillin before they had even been written?

“It’s true,” the avreich concluded his story to Rabbi Belinov in a voice filled with emotion.

“The Rebbe really does see things from afar.”



HaRav Yosef Yitzchak Belinov

“The thing that astounded us the most was: How did the Rebbe know about the unkosher t’fillin before they had even been written?”

*Mrs. Rivkah
Benhiyoun,
shlucha in
Chicago, tells
stories of
neshamos who
have drawn close
to Judaism,
Chassidus and
the Rebbe MH" M.*

JUDAISM IN DOWNTOWN CHICAGO

BY CHANI NUSSBAUM

Rabbi Meir Chai Benhiyoun at the site
of his projected Center for Jewish Life

Rabbi Meir Chai and Rivkah Benhiyoun arrived in Chicago twenty years ago on shlichus. Their eight children were born there.

Chicago is no hole in the wall and obtaining kosher food and providing a proper chinuch is not very difficult, but the shluchim have worked hard and reached many neshamos. Rivkah shares several stories with us:

We suggested a shidduch to a girl who had become frum and she wrote a letter to the Rebbe to ask for a bracha. When she opened the *Igros Kodesh* it was a letter in which the Rebbe was responding to a father who had asked for a bracha to marry off his daughter and the daughter's name was the same as the girl's.

The chassan also wrote to the Rebbe before the wedding. In the answer he opened to the Rebbe responded to someone with the same name as the chassan and blessed him: May it be in a good and auspicious time.

The story doesn't end there. Their oldest daughter was born on Yud-Alef Nissan and they named her Devorah Leah. A few years later the woman was expecting a child, but there were sudden complications and fear of a

miscarriage. If that wasn't enough, there were fears that she would not be able to conceive again due to the complications.

Her husband called me and asked me to come to the hospital immediately for support. I couldn't locate my husband and wanted to get to the hospital as soon as possible. I rushed to bring my kids home from school and took my Chitas, pushka and volume 18 of the *Igros Kodesh* and raced over to the hospital.

“I had a dream that is giving me no rest, which is why I rushed here. In my dream I saw myself coming to the Chabad house, going up the steps and wanting to go in but being unable to do so...”

When I got there I found the couple and heard that the doctors were pressuring her to undergo an operation that would terminate the pregnancy. They didn't know what to do. We called a rav who said they should consult with a doctor-friend. We did so. To everyone's surprise, this doctor convinced the other doctors to do all they could so that the pregnancy would continue.

The husband wrote all this to the Rebbe and in the answer he opened to the Rebbe referred to Rochel Imeinu and ended the letter with the quote, “and the children will return to their border.” Reading this, the couple and I believed that the pregnancy would endure and that mother and child would be fine.

Two months later the woman gave birth to a beautiful baby girl. She is four years old now and is a gifted child. Her parents consider her “the Rebbe's child.”

Here's another story from Rivkah:

Twelve years ago the famous artist Michael Muchnik did an exhibit here. Many people went to see his work, including a certain non-frum girl. We met her and I invited her for Shabbos.

At that time I gave a parsha class based on the Rebbe's sichos on Thursdays. She came to this class regularly and after the shiur we spoke about many things. I would have her taste the Shabbos food that I had started preparing so she would get a taste of Shabbos. Little by little, she became more involved and she began lighting Shabbos candles. She had many questions about life and we spent lots of time talking together.

Erev Pesach I had to stop the shiur because I was about to give birth. I was worried about that girl because the only connection we had with her was the Thursday shiur. I was afraid our connection would be broken, so I called her a few times after I gave birth and on Pesach too, in order to invite her to come and see the baby, but she



Entrance to the Chabad house

didn't answer.

A month after Pesach she showed up unexpectedly. I saw she was upset about something and she said she needed to speak with me urgently. She told me as follows:

"I had a dream that is giving me no rest, which is why I rushed here. In my dream I saw myself coming to the Chabad house, going up the steps and wanting to go in but being unable to do so. I could not go in because I discovered that I wasn't dressed properly. Then suddenly you, Rivkah, showed up and invited me in. I refused but you insisted. When you heard my reason you said, come in, don't worry, I'll take care of proper clothing for you. And then I woke up.

"I realize that the clothing represent Torah and mitzvos and that I have to improve in them. A Chabad house is not just a place to socialize but a place where you get proper clothing for the neshama, so I was embarrassed to come until now. With each passing day I realized that only here, at the Chabad house, will I get the clothing that I need."

The girl went to Machon Chana in New York and did a shidduch with a bachur studying for smicha in Morristown (whom my husband knew when he himself learned in Morristown before we were married). We knew them both and thought the shidduch was a good idea. She has a beautiful family and being a charming woman with great talent, she has a positive influence on all around her.

The end of the story is sad though. A few years ago she died after being quite sick, leaving three children. So many women attended her funeral! This is a woman who before knowing what Torah and mitzvos are already knew that Torah and mitzvos are the proper attire for a Jewish person.

* * *

Another story about a baal t'shuva, one whose family is still far from religious observance:



Rabbi Benhiyoun with Mayor Daley of Chicago

His father became critically ill and his son decided to fly to see him. He had another reason to fly to his father though. His father had always told his children that when he died he did not want a Jewish burial but wanted to be cremated. This son, who knew the importance of a Jewish burial, wanted to convince his father to change his mind and agree to a halachic burial.

However, his father was not convinced and his brothers didn't agree either. The son figured the only solution would be to steal the body from the hospital and bury his father, for he was determined that his father's body not be cremated.

While still arguing with his father and brothers, a nurse came in to take his father's blood pressure. His father, who was tired from the discussion, sent them all out because he wanted to rest. A few hours later they all went back to visit him and to everyone's surprise the father said, "I changed my mind. I want to have a Jewish burial and want a rabbi to arrange it."

When his shocked sons asked why he had changed his mind, the father said, "When you left my room the nurse, who looked Christian, said to

me, 'Please pardon me for mixing in but I heard the argument between you and your children. If you take my advice, you'll listen to your son and agree to a Jewish burial.'

"The nurse explained, 'I look Christian but I found out that I was born a Jew and before the Holocaust my parents had me adopted by a Christian family. They just recently told me that I'm Jewish. I am sixty years old and it's hard for me to change my way of life, but I know that the Jewish religion is the true religion.'

"When I heard you arguing I realized that I had the opportunity to help with something Jewish, which would give me a merit within the Jewish religion, for after all, I am Jewish.'

"What the nurse said made a deep impression on me and that is why I changed my mind," said the father to his astonished children.

The next day the father died and was buried k'halacha! This happened thanks to the stubbornness of a young man who had become a baal t'shuva and thanks to the Jewish spark hidden deep within the nurse that lay dormant for decades and was awoken.

...AND WHO BY FIRE

BY RABBI SHNEUR ZALMAN CHANIN

*The Chassid R' Hirsh Lieberman, a great Chassid in his own right, suffered tragedy and persecution in Russia, also as a consequence of being the brother of the secretary of the Rebbe Rayatz. * The story of a life of heroism that twice ended in tragedy.*

A HORRIFYING REQUEST THAT WAS FULFILLED

One of the terrible challenges that the Jews had to deal with was whether to send their children to Russian schools. On the one hand they knew that the minute a Jewish child, even a Chassidishe child, went to school, he was in danger of assimilation. It was clear that the child would not only learn general subjects but would be indoctrinated with communist ideology and would hear heretical views that opposed the Jewish religion and the Creator.

On the other hand, the Russian government made attendance at public school mandatory and whoever did not send their children to school could be severely punished. Most Lubavitchers withstood the test and refrained, with mesirus nefesh, from sending their children to public school. However, there were those who were forced to do so and unwillingly sent their children to school. When it came to going to school on Saturday, they looked for ways and means to prevent their children from being mechalel

Shabbos.

R' Hirsh Lieberman, one of the outstanding talmidim in Tomchei T'mimim and a Chassid in the full sense of the word, was determined not to send his children to school, but his wife was very fearful. The couple had many arguments about this. R' Hirsh would say that he had heard the Rebbe Rayatz speak extremely harshly about this, at the Purim farbrengen 5687 (1928) in Leningrad:

"Whoever has a son and puts him in [yeshiva] ... will have a good year but whoever has a son and sends him to the Soviet-Yevseki school, won't live out the year. If they tell someone: send your daughter to school and if not, off with your head, then better off with his head than to send your daughter to school. If they take a wooden board and want to burn him, he should uncover his heart and say, 'Please do with me as you wish, but not this. We are accustomed to mesirus nefesh.'"

The Rebbe Rayatz told one of Anash in Nevel (by the name of Zalman): Zalman, if they make a bonfire of dry branches and light the

fire and tell you: Choose, either send your children to school or throw yourself in the fire, better to be burnt (chalila) and not send your son to school.

(Seifer HaSichos 5687 p. 160)

Once at a Chassidishe farbrengen, R' Hirsh cried and complained about how hard chinuch was and how dangerous. With tears pouring down his face he kept repeating what the Rebbe had said, "Throw yourself in the fire; just don't send your children to Russian schools."

R' Hirsh was determined not to send his children to Russian school and he tried to circumvent the law. He sent his children to his in-laws, to a place where no one knew them, where they spread a rumor that the



R' Hirsh Lieberman

grandparents were taking care of grandchildren with special needs. Nobody suspected that the older couple was helping the children avoid school, especially because of their older age.

However, after a period of time the authorities began to inquire about the children. R' Hirsh and his wife were afraid that the Yevsektzia would hound her parents and begin to interrogate them, for which they didn't have the strength, and would ultimately force them to send their grandchildren to school. R' Hirsh decided to take his children back home to Malachovka, which is near Moscow, where he would try his luck and with Hashem's help he would find a way to avoid sending them to school.

One night (in the year 5698) a fire broke out in R' Hirsh's home that consumed his wife and children. For the rest of his life, R' Hirsh would sadly say, "I asked for it myself." After this tragedy, R' Hirsh remained bereft and depressed.

* * *

R' Hirsh was G-d-fearing and a superb mechanech. When he arrived in Tashkent at the beginning of the war, my mother, who ran a cheider in Tashkent, jumped at the opportunity and asked him to teach. My mother thought that this responsibility would be good not only for the children but could also serve as therapy for R' Hirsh to help him with his depression. In addition, R' Hirsh wanted to pay his own way and not live on handouts.

My mother was thrilled when he accepted the job of teaching the boys Gemara. R' Hirsh instilled yiras Shamayim and Chassidus in his students through the telling of stories.

R' Hirsh had his own apartment yet he still felt like a member of my parents' household. My mother tried to mitigate his sorrow and cheer him up. For a while she managed to raise

his spirits and since he felt some meager consolation in teaching his students and one could see that he was recovering somewhat from his terrible tragedy, my mother asked him to teach my sisters too, especially limudei kodesh, like Chumash, Tanach, writing in Yiddish and Lashon HaKodesh, Jewish history and Chassidic history. In return, she paid him by providing for his needs. Soon my aunts' daughters joined them and other girls as well, until we had an entire class of B'nos HaT'mimim in our house.

The boys as well as the girls, loved R' Hirsh and respected him. They enjoyed every minute they spent with him.



THE EVIL ONES PLOT

R' Hirsh's niece, Mrs. Galperin, daughter of R' Shmuel Galperin the shochet, who was the husband of R' Hirsh's sister, told me:

R' Hirsh suffered greatly from the Yevsektzia because he was the brother of R' Chaim Lieberman, the Rebbe Rayatz's secretary. The NKVD would hound him at every opportunity. Once every few weeks they called him to their offices, where they interrogated him about his brother, demanding to know where he was and what he was up to. Naturally, these frequent encounters ruined his peace of mind and terrified his household.

R' Hirsh tried to escape their

attention by moving to a different city, but since he needed a residents permit, the law required him to register there. After a few months the authorities caught up with him and the interrogators renewed their harassment by taking him in the middle of the night for questioning.

They asked him whether he was in touch with his brother, what his brother did, whether he sent him packages from abroad, whether he received letters from him, whether he wrote him letters, what his brother's job was. They knew that he worked for "Rabbin Schneersohn," but what was his job precisely? Did he send money for the Rebbe's Chassidim in Russia? Did he know who the Rebbe's men were in the Soviet Union? In general, did he, R' Hirsh also have a connection with Rabbi Schneersohn?

Of course, R' Hirsh denied any connection with his brother, and all the more so, with the Rebbe. In fact, he didn't even know what country he was in, in Poland or Riga. In general, he said that ever since his brother had been arrested in 5687 along with the Rebbe Rayatz, he had had no connection with him, and even if he wanted to correspond with him, he had no address.

The evil ones told him they would find the address and they merely asked him to write a letter to his brother, to ask how he was, to ask how he was doing and to ask him to send money to help him buy food. Their intention was to find out the connections that R' Chaim and the Rebbe had with the Chassidim in the Soviet Union.

R' Hirsh said if suddenly, after such a long time of not being in touch, he would write asking him all kinds of questions, his brother, who was not a fool, would understand that these were questions they forced him to ask and he wouldn't answer them.

They left R' Hirsh alone for several months, but then they called him back

to the NKVD office, arrested him for a few days, and suggested that he join the NKVD as an agent, promising him a wonderful salary and many perks. They exerted psychological pressure, but when they saw that he wasn't agreeing to their offer, they began to threaten him with jail, being sent into exile, torture, etc.

After days under arrest and torture and interrogation, they ordered him to sign a letter that he supposedly wrote to his brother-in-law, R' Shmuel Galperin, who was a rav and shochet in some town. The letter said that certainly R' Shmuel knew the address of his brother-in-law, R' Chaim, abroad, so could he please tell him how R' Hirsh was doing, that he had no parnasa and needed money, that R' Hirsh figured that R' Chaim had money and would accede to his request.

R' Hirsch refused to sign this letter but after a few days when he saw that he had no way out and that his strength was dwindling, and he couldn't stand the interrogations and threats any longer, he agreed to sign the letter to his brother-in-law and the NKVD sent it to him.

R' Hirsh hoped that as soon as he could leave he would find a way of informing his brother-in-law that the letter he had signed was dictated and written by the authorities and that he signed under duress. He planned on telling R' Shmuel to ignore the letter and not to send any letter to his brother or the Rebbe. How he would manage to send this information to his brother-in-law, he did not know, but he trusted in Hashem that He would show him the way.

LAST MINUTE RESCUE

When R' Shmuel received the letter, he thought, at first glance, that it was another plot of the NKVD for they had already tried to incriminate him a number of times because he served as a shochet and rav, but they had been unsuccessful. They certainly

thought that if he sent letters abroad and he had a connection with Rabbi Schneersohn, they would be able to arrest him and send him to exile.

On second thought, he recognized R' Hirsh's signature and he thought, maybe R' Hirsh really has no food to eat and clothes to wear and despite knowing of the danger in writing a letter abroad, especially to the Rebbe, he was asking him to write one anyway. Maybe he should fulfill his request? But why was he asking him to write and not writing to the Rebbe and

“Whoever has a son and sends him to the Soviet-Yevseki school, won't live out the year. If they tell someone: send your daughter to school and if not, off with your head, then better off with his head than to send your daughter to school.”

his brother himself? Why was he asking him to write a letter to his brother-in-law?

He thought and thought and couldn't decide what to do, whether to write to R' Chaim or not. After pondering this for a few days, even though he knew that only a connection abroad could incriminate him, he decided to write to his brother-in-law, the Rebbe's secretary, about R' Hirsh and to ask him, in code, to give the letter to the Rebbe.

R' Shmuel put the letter in an

envelope, put a stamp on it and gave the envelope to his daughter who was on her way to school. He asked her to go to the post office and send off the letter.

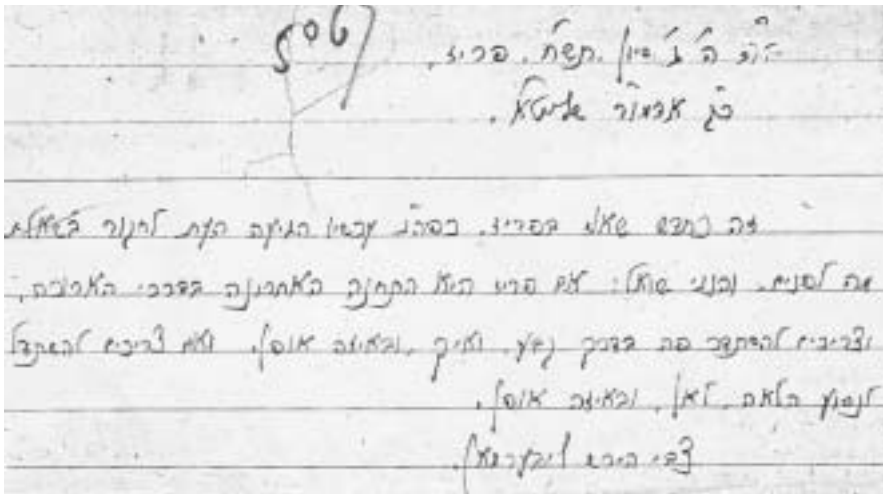
The girl had no idea who the letter was for and that it contained secret matters. She took the letter and went on her way. She encountered a passerby who stopped and asked her whether she knew Shmuel Galperin's address. Even a girl as young as she was alarmed by his question for why would somebody be looking for her father? Who was this man?

She decided to take a side street and to run home and warn her father that someone was looking for him. He could hide anything incriminating and perhaps flee or maybe quickly organize some other means of extricating himself from trouble. She raced home, hoping to get there before the man.

However, the man was quicker, and when she entered the house she saw him talking to her father as though imparting a secret. When her father saw her, he nervously asked her: Did you send the letter off already?

When she apologized, saying she hadn't sent it off yet and she was going to the post office then and there, her father sighed in relief and asked her for the letter. She gave him the envelope and he ripped it up and threw it into the fire so nothing remained of it.

It turned out that the man was R' Hirsh's emissary who had come especially to warn R' Shmuel not to send the letter to his brother, R' Chaim. Till the end of his days, R' Shmuel thanked Hashem for arranging matters so that the shliach came at the last minute, met his daughter and asked her the question that made him suspect so that she ran home before mailing the letter. Who knows what tzaros he would have experienced otherwise. Baruch Hashem, he and his brother-in-law and their families were



R' Hirsh's letter to the Rebbe Rayatz about whether he should travel, where to, and how

saved from the clutches of the NKVD, for from that day on they left him alone, seeing that they wouldn't gain anything from Chassidim like these; any plot they tried, failed.

LIFE OF A REFUGEE

During the great flight, when Chassidim left Russia after the war, my father took R' Hirsh on his account. He fled with our family from Russia but remained in Vienna. In a letter to his brother, R' Chaim, he described his condition and the state of the T'mimim who were in displaced persons camps in Vienna:

The situation for now is terrible. We are living in open summer homes and there is no firewood and we are twelve people in rooms four meters by seven meters.

[The twelve are]: R' Elya Hoft and his son-in-law [R' Elchonon Levin] with his family, myself, the widow Doba Raskin, the daughter of R' Shlomo Raskin. The financial situation is terrible. What we receive per week is barely enough for one day.

For example, this week we received 2.1 containers of milk per person, 400 grams of flour, 50 – salt, 100 – noodles. This is for an entire week. Think about a person alone, such as myself, for whom the salt and flour are useless, so it's like I received nothing at all.

If I am able to travel soon, my funds will suffice me till Paris, but what should a poor widow like Doba with four weak children do, when she has no support and suffers the humiliation of literal starvation ...

Traveling to Paris can be done in another, easier way, over two weeks everything necessary can be prepared, but it is expensive ... If you agree to this, be in touch with our friend, Mr. Chaikel Chanin via telegram (he is here now and tomorrow he is going home) and you can immediately, upon receipt of this letter, wire him the money (you probably have some means of communication with Paris) and he will take care of it for me immediately.

THE REBBE RAYATZ IS PERSONALLY INVOLVED

In 1947, The Rebbe Rayatz wrote a number of letters to R' Binyamin Gorodetzky, the Rebbe's European representative. These letters show how concerned the Rebbe was for R' Hirsh's situation shortly after leaving Russia when he was in the refugee camp in Vienna. It is clear that the Rebbe was interested in the minutest details of his physical circumstances and helped him rehabilitate his life.

In one of these letters the Rebbe refers to him as "the loftiest of the students of Tomchei T'mimim in

Lubavitch." Additionally, the Rebbe wrote directly to R' Hirsh, expressing pain over his depression and encouraging him in his work in chinuch. The Rebbe also inquired about his financial needs, "Because my desire is that he be dressed respectfully and settled in an apartment with the necessary food."

In 1948, R' Hirsh wrote to the Rebbe asking, "If Paris is the last stop on my accursed road, and I need to settle myself here permanently, how and in what manner? And if I need to try and travel onward, where and in what manner?" In a letter written in 1949, the Rebbe Rayatz suggested that he take the first opportunity to move to Eretz Yisroel, saying that he wanted to appoint him his secretary in Eretz Yisroel to bring to fruition the Rebbe's directives to Anash.

MOVING TO ERETZ YISROEL – AND ANOTHER ALIYA

R' Hirsh remained closely connected with my parents throughout the years after he left Russia. When our family continued on to the refugee camp in Poking, Germany, my father made a special trip to the displaced persons camp in Vienna in order to visit him and encourage him.

When my father saw how lonely R' Hirsh was, he suggested that he come and live near my parents in Paris. About two months after my father visited him in Vienna, my father arranged papers for him so he could go to France. R' Hirsh went to Paris and became a member of my parents' household again. He asked people in Russia to write him letters at R' Chaikel's address.

From France, R' Hirsh went to Eretz Yisroel, as per the Rebbe Rayatz's instruction and he settled in Kfar Chabad. A number of years after he settled in Kfar Chabad he died in a fire that burned down the house he lived in.

THE DIRECT LINK BETWEEN THE DISENGAGEMENT AND THE RECENT FAILURE IN LEBANON

BY SHAI GEFEN

WHY DIDN'T THEY WIN THE WAR?

Following the ceasefire, the hurling of accusations, and stinging failure, many want to know what happened to the vaunted Israeli army that not so long ago instilled fear in all the nations of the region. How did an organization comprised of several thousand men manage to fend off the celebrated Israeli army? How was there such a lack in Intelligence information? What really happened?

The answer to why we failed can be found by looking at what preoccupied the army in previous years, things that the army had no business being involved in. A documentary film about the Disengagement by Ram Landes and Menasheh Raz was recently released. It is called *Summer Rains* and is particularly interesting because these journalists accompanied the military administrative unit that directed the Disengagement.

Ram Landes was asked about the serious claims being made regarding the army's state of preparedness and this is what he answered:

"The division that served as the evacuation force is the iron fist of the army, the crushing force and spearhead of the Israeli Armored Corps. In normal times it is based in the Golan Heights

and its sector is Syria and Lebanon. The politicians instructed it to get involved in the organization, training, and the gathering of Intelligence in preparation for Disengagement and it did so for an entire year.

"You cannot expect army commanders to focus their preparedness on a matter of such magnitude while continuing to oversee Hezbollah. Using the army as an arm of the government for all sorts of things not directly connected with defending the nation creates a breakdown in the army's military capabilities. The politicians have distracted the army from its real goal, which is defending the borders of this country. There are limits, even for the abilities of an elite entity."

The point is simple. When they took an army whose goal is to defend the Jewish people and turned it into the entity that implemented the expulsion and destruction, and instead of gathering Intelligence and preparing for the next war they were busy "effectively and determinedly" expelling Jews from their homes, and then they continued their training exercises for the next step of the "Convergence," why are we surprised that they bungled this war?

The government's obsession with fighting the settlers, "the real enemy," so permeated the thinking of the army that one year ago, the Northern Commander Major General Benny

Gantz told the media that "the activities of the Right endanger Israeli democracy more than Hezbollah's missiles." Imagine that.

No wonder that when Hezbollah shot missiles at us that the army was caught unprepared. Benny Gantz got into line with the politicians and the Leftist agenda that the Right is more dangerous than Hezbollah. The army and Intelligence forces were very busy with the most dangerous people of all: the Right and the settlers.

In order to appreciate the absurdity, read what Minister Chaim Ramon (who has just presented his resignation to P.M. Olmert following a decision by the Attorney General to press harassment charges against him) had to say. Ramon, who was a leading proponent of leaving Lebanon in 2000, Gaza in 2005, and the Olmert plan in 2006, claimed in March that Hezbollah would not dare attack Israel in an interview with *HaAretz's* Ari Shavit about the government's plan to withdraw from Yehuda and Shomron:

"I am not overlooking the Hamas election victory. On the contrary, this victory merely serves to clarify for me that there is almost no chance to arrive at an agreement. I will try. I will try because the best of all worlds would be if we could come to mutual understanding a la Ari Shavit. And I will try so that Ari Shavit and Yossi



Beilin and the settlers and the world will know that I tried. Maybe I will send you to try to reach this mutual understanding, but when you return and say that you failed, I will do what I did in Lebanon. Also then they warned me that I was strengthening Hezbollah, just as you are warning me [about Hamas],” Ramon said. “And also then they told me there would be buses in Avivim [a reference to the deadly 1970 attack on a school bus in Avivim, near the Lebanon border] just as you’re telling me there will be shoulder-fired missiles in the West Bank. But it’s quiet on the northern border. [Hezbollah head Sheikh Hassan] Nasrallah has convinced himself that he won, but he doesn’t dare attack Israel.”

Everything was good and well until the delusional theory exploded in their faces. It’s time to thank Nasrallah, who let us know that the Israeli head doesn’t work exactly like the Arab head. They interpret withdrawals and running away rather differently than what the Israeli politicians tell us.

Shin Bet Chief Yuval Diskin warned during a recent government meeting:

“A very problematic reality is developing in Gaza,” Diskin said. “In two to three years, if there is not a significant change, we could find ourselves in a situation similar to what we are facing against Hezbollah in Lebanon, which is to say fortified bunkers, tunnels, and dangerous infrastructure and weaponry. We’ll have southern Lebanon in the south of Eretz Yisroel. We don’t have to wait three years and then launch investigations.”

THE DISENGAGEMENT VERSUS THE WAR IN LEBANON

The media is full of the terrible times the reservist soldiers experienced in this recent war. Starting with contradictory orders, the tentativeness on all sides, the orders that came down to the field and were changed as they were given an opposing order, untrained soldiers, insufficient basic equipment, including food and drink. These stories demonstrate that this wasn’t about specific failures but a systemic rot.

In this as well, those who think that there is no connection between

When they took an army whose goal is to defend the Jewish people and turned it into the entity that implemented the expulsion and destruction, and instead of gathering Intelligence and preparing for the next war they were busy “effectively and determinedly” expelling Jews from their homes, and then they continued their training exercises for the next step of the “Convergence,” why are we surprised that they bungled this war?



IDF leaving Lebanon

the Disengagement and the war in Lebanon are mistaken. The one who took charge of the incredible logistics needed for the Disengagement and the bringing of food to the soldiers was none other Northern Commander Udi Adam, while the Commander of the Galilee Detachment, Gal Hirsh, took care of the actual expulsion. We know that

everything went like clockwork in the Disengagement. Soldiers weren't forced to steal water from canteens of dead Hezbollah soldiers or break in to stores and take food as they did in Lebanon.

On the Internet site of the logistical branch of the IDF they pride themselves on the amazing Disengagement campaign, about how they managed to take care of every last detail concerning the expulsion and providing food for every soldier:

“Every provisions outpost was mobilized in the last month of this campaign, successfully handling the task all the way to the soldier in the field. The staff of the Tzrifin provision outpost prepared for a three-pronged packaging system in the center of the country. Each night, they carried out the loading of 80 truckloads for the campaign and representatives of the Quartermaster Corps joined the staffs of civilian companies in order to supervise the civilian contractors on site.

“During the Disengagement 14 different companies were utilized for food and packaging services. About 700,000 breakfasts were supplied to the withdrawal forces, 2.6 million sandwiches, including vegetarian sandwiches, a million hot and cold ready-to-eat dinners, 25,000 individual portions of salad, 3 million liters of mineral water and 500,000 ices. In addition, 200,000 packages of snacks were given out and 136 freezers were used, utilizing nearly all of the country's capabilities. The costs of the food for one day were 1.8 million shekel.”

A few weeks ago, I quoted what the Rebbe said in yechidus to Rabbi Efraim Yolles z"l about the Midrash, “He, who loves the cruel, hates the upright.” The Rebbe decried back then how they placed soldiers in Lebanon and didn't allow them to shoot at the terrorists, just as they did in the most recent war.

The man who took care of the soldiers in the big expulsion

campaign and made sure every last detail was taken care of, including snacks and ices, while he neglected the real campaign that should have demonstrated the army's ability and strength and failed big time, is the man who epitomizes the adage of the Sages.

We see that it isn't possible to simultaneously transform the army into an entity that aids the enemy while carrying out missions that are opposite to its goal, and then when faced with a war with a real enemy to expect the same results. It just doesn't work.

It's hard to describe the disgrace detailed in the testimony of the reservists, good Jews who showed up to fight in order to win but then discovered how scandalously unprepared they were. How did they want to win when everybody was busy fighting another enemy altogether? Whoever thought you could switch CD's and hear other tunes was mistaken. The results are obvious to all.

Furthermore, you can't win while you inform the soldiers, in the middle of the war, that a victory in Lebanon will give the enemy another victory in Yehuda and Shomron with a Convergence Plan.

The IDF cannot defeat the enemy if it doesn't take a long hard look at how we came to such a state, how it came to be that in recent years it has focused all its power on fighting Jews and helping the enemy, once in the guise of imagined peace and once in a unilateral withdrawal.

The problem here is not a technical one but what preoccupied the army for the last two decades. The political echelons took the army which is supposed to fight the enemy and turned it into an army that trained to fight Jews instead of training to fight our real enemy.

Sad to say, the lessons were not learned. Once again, a committee of

inquiry was established that once again, won't investigate the political elites and will try to assign the blame of their failures to others.

THE CONVERGENCE PLAN HASN'T BEEN FORGOTTEN

It was reported that P.M. Olmert said to his ministers that the Convergence Plan has been shelved and rehabilitating the north is the priority. Many of us breathed a sigh of relief but it should be worrying us. The P.M. and Defense Minister and their cronies haven't abandoned their idea. They haven't suddenly been endowed with prophecy and haven't recognized their errors. They didn't beat their chests and say we sinned and are sorry. They simply want to avoid public anger and in order to save their skin they announced that the residents of the north are their priority. The benefit is twofold: the residents of the north are helped and the ire of the potential evacuees is quelled.

Let us not delude ourselves. The minute they can revive their plan they will do so, happily. If Olmert and Peretz had finished the war with a victory the Convergence Plan would be next on their agenda.

On two occasions during the war itself, Olmert announced that he would continue evacuating settlements: the first time, when he visited expellees in Nitzan, and then later, in an interview with the foreign press. Furthermore, this man without limits, under many criminal investigations, who is utterly corrupt, cynically tried to use the war to further the Convergence. According to him and Peretz, after a joyous victory they would become “Mr. Security” and the nation would bow to them for their success, and thus buy into the entire plan.

There were announcements from senior ministers, including the Internal Security Minister and former head of Shabak Avi Dichter, that we

should make peace with Syria. Dichter said that in exchange for peace with Syria, Israel could leave the Golan Heights.

For some reason, just a few days earlier, our enemy in Syria announced that he is itching for a military showdown with Israel, yet these people carry on as though ten days earlier thousands of missiles and Katyushas hadn't landed in Israel thanks to the direct aid from the Syrians. How could a normal person make such suggestions?

It's sad that it happened after the failure and deaths of many soldiers, but the result is that the Convergence didn't happen. The nation discovered the truth and many, many people had their eyes opened about the Disengagement and Convergence.

We can't let people forget this. We must keep reminding them where our politicians led us and the death and destruction they inflicted on us. This is the only chance we have to prevent them from committing the crime in the future when it will be convenient for them to do so. Those who don't want to repeat the terrible scenes of the summer 2005, have to work hard, now.

The Matteh HaOlami to Save the Nation and the Land should be applauded for distributing their "We Told You So" pamphlet about the consequences of Disengagement and the dangers of Convergence. Nearly a million copies have been distributed thus far in daily newspapers and weeklies and it has been warmly received.

A CHIEF OF STAFF WITH VISION

The story about Chief of Staff Dan Chalutz selling stock the day the soldiers were kidnapped is not surprising. If you observed how he handled the expulsion last year and saw his arrogance, with all his

nastiness reserved for his fellow Jews, you knew he was capable of anything. A Chief of Staff who was appointed to expel Jews and who has been busy primarily with the upcoming Convergence, well, it's not surprising that his stock portfolio is more important to him than our security in the north.

Dan Chalutz does not need to resign over his stock sale. That's nothing compared to his priority,

***The IDF cannot defeat
the enemy if it doesn't
take a long hard look
at how we came to
such a state, how it
came to be that in
recent years it has
focused all its power on
fighting Jews and
helping the enemy,
once in the guise of
imagined peace and
once in a unilateral
withdrawal.***

which is undermining our security. Whoever didn't understand that until now, saw it during the war, when he displayed his military abilities.

Whoever wants to heal the army and get it back to what it used to be has to see to it that Chalutz goes home. Whoever didn't realize that his appointment was just a Sharon family tactic got the answer last week when it was publicized that

Chalutz called Reuven Adler, the famous public relations man to his home for advice on how to minimize the damage due to his stock sale.

PUBLICIZE TO EVERYBODY IN THE GENERATION

The Sages cried and Rabbi Akiva laughed. They asked him why he laughed and he answered that since he saw the fulfillment of the harsh prophecy, he was sure the positive prophecy would also be fulfilled.

We have seen the Rebbe's prophecies being fulfilled, one by one. All warnings that giving away land would endanger millions of people, including warnings during the war in Lebanon that it should be ended quickly and if they delayed, it would lead to another, more serious war, proved to be justified.

During the Camp David Accords, the Rebbe said that concessions would endanger millions of Jews, but this didn't seem realistic at the time. Today we can all see for ourselves how millions of Jews are in danger for their very lives.

We Chabad Chassidim have a shlichus to do: to publicize that there is a prophet in our generation who speaks the truth. Just as all his prophecies regarding security came true, so too, his prophecy of Geula will be realized and we all need to prepare for that great day with bitachon and simcha.

We are sorry that the Rebbe's harsh prophecies had to come true but this should strengthen our belief in the main prophecy about Moshiach. Recent events ought to galvanize us more than ever and in the merit of this we will see the realization of the prophecy of Geula, with kindness and mercy and joy.

'THE CONVERGENCE PLAN WILL OPEN A THIRD FRONT, AND THE MISSILE THREAT WILL BE FROM METULLA TO EILAT'

INTERVIEWED BY SHAI GEFEN

TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY

In an exclusive interview with Beis Moshiach, Ehud Yatom, former high-ranking official in the General Security Services and member of the 16th Knesset, who fiercely opposed the Gaza "disengagement" plan, warns against further territorial concessions and withdrawal plans. He has no regrets over the heavy price that he paid due to his struggle against the disengagement: "I am sad to say today to the people of Israel that we were right." He classifies the results of the war as "a tragedy."

Ehud Yatom, from your vantage point, how do you sum up the war and the ceasefire that came as a result?

A tragedy, simply a tragedy. There are no other words to describe what happened here. We received the dictates of the ceasefire when none of the military operation's objectives were achieved. Furthermore, even the most minimal demand of receiving information on our captive soldiers was not fulfilled. We did not destroy

Hezbollah and even the threat of missile attack against Israeli citizens has not been lessened. We came out of the war far worse than when we entered it.

Based on the prevailing situation, perhaps it would have been preferable if we hadn't gone to war at all?

Absolutely. If the results are that we achieved none of our goals, and in addition, we caused damage to the Israeli army and home front, it would

have been preferable not to take this step.

What essentially went wrong in the conduct of the war?

We allowed Hezbollah to become constantly stronger. Since leaving Lebanon like thieves in the night, we did absolutely nothing to reduce the risk. As a result, the terror in Gaza intensified, and we fled from there. The enemy learned that terror can chase us away, and they achieved their objective. There was a prime minister who stated that "restraint is a component of strength," but it turned out that restraint was really a component of weakness. We ran away because of the terror in Lebanon, and afterwards in the Gaza Strip, and we got ourselves a two-front war.

What could we possibly have achieved in the war but missed the opportunity to do?

Quite simple. It was unthinkable to conclude this war without reaching clear goals. If the missile threat continues and the Hezbollah remain exactly as it was, equipped with Katyusha rockets, we achieved nothing. The war should not have been halted until the objectives had been reached and the operation had

EHUD YATOM – CALLING CARD

Ehud Yatom was born and raised in Netanya, and served in the General Security Services for many years in a variety of prominent senior roles, including head of the department of operations. He was holding a senior GSS position at the time of the Bus 300 Affair.

After receiving a presidential pardon, Yatom continued to fulfill a number of high-ranking GSS duties for another thirteen years. Upon leaving the GSS, he received a letter of appreciation from the late Prime Minister Yitzchak Rabin:

“Please accept my personal thanks, and the thanks of the government of Israel and the security establishment for the many years you have contributed to the security of the State of Israel. We know to appreciate your work, your devotion, your vigor, and operational knowledge. Many citizens of the State of Israel owe you their lives, and don’t even know it. Words and letters are inadequate to retell what you have done. The history books of the security services may never recall your deeds.”

Yatom’s efforts to be appointed as chief of staff for the war on terror were blocked by the Israeli High Court of Justice, which ruled that “the order of the head of the GSS was apparently illegal, and it is forbidden for Yatom to obey it.” Even before this, Yatom was prevented from serving as Knesset officer. However, these decisions did not prevent and may even have led to his high placement on the Likud Party’s list of candidates in the election to the 16th Knesset, where he served as a Knesset Member from 2003 until 2006.

During his Knesset service, Yatom was counted among the “Likud rebels,” who vigorously opposed the disengagement plan. As a result, he was “marked” by Ariel Sharon’s people, and subsequently failed to win reelection to the Knesset, when he received an unrealistic slot on the Likud Party’s list of candidates.



Ehud Yatom

been completed.

Even at the price of further casualties?

We went to war to achieve a decisive victory. It was incumbent that we prevail; this is the whole purpose of war. Ehud Olmert spoke about clear objectives and he did not achieve them, and only caused far greater damage.

Will there be a second round against Hezbollah?

Far more quickly than we think. This is clear. The threat has not been removed from the residents of the north, and Hezbollah is resolute in its determination to continue the war against us. Even now, it is quickly rearming itself with weapons and ammunition arriving from Syria and Iran.

A couple of weeks ago, the Kadima Party began to sound as if it was sobering up, stating that the “convergence” plan will have to wait, and they must rehabilitate the northern region. In your opinion, does this mark a change of direction?

I have no idea, but I am completely uncertain as to whether they are reconsidering their policies. Olmert will try to revitalize the north and garner strength, and then we’ll see what he’s prepared to do. There was a day at the height of the war when he thought that he would emerge victorious, and so he proclaimed that victory in the war would advance the convergence in Yehuda and Shomron.

It’s no secret that you were among the leaders in the struggle against the disengagement plan, and you paid the price as you were not elected to the current Knesset. Do you feel disappointed?

I feel that we were right. We fought very hard, and as a result of the fact that people did not want to hear us, we paid the heavy price of a war being waged simultaneously on the northern

and southern fronts. I am sad to say that we were right. Our struggle was correct and proper. We gave up much of ourselves and embraced the position of truth. I do not have one moment of regret. People stop me in the street, beating their breast over the sin, including leftists, who say to me that I am an honest and decent person. I have no doubt that eventually justice will prevail.

And regarding the essence of the convergence plan?

This will be the third disaster that prime ministers have brought upon us in recent years, except that this third disaster, the threat of rocket attack, will not only reach as far as Greater Hadera, as it was now from Lebanon, but even as far as Ashkelon. Everything that we have seen from Lebanon and Gaza will now come from the direction of Yehuda and Shomron. And if we don't wake up, the missile threat on Israel will apply to the whole country – from Metulla to Eilat.

What do you have to say to Olmert and the other government coalition partners who are responsible for this failure?

I call upon them to resign immediately from their positions, and it is preferable that they resign before the investigative committee that will be established over the terrible failures in this war. The investigative committee must not only look into the results of the war, but also the factors that led to

the conflict, the disengagement, and the abandonment of security in the south and the north.

Do you believe that an investigative committee will be set up?

I sincerely hope that an investigative committee will be formed in order that people will pay the price for the failures they brought. The sooner that public pressure will lead to the formation of this committee, the better this will be for the people of Israel.

Is it relevant to repair the damage and destruction that has been caused?

I still maintain a level of optimism. If there will be a change in the ruling establishment, and those responsible for these failures are forced to return the keys to power, I believe that it will still be possible to do something. The security configuration and deterrence can be restored only if we start

working in a different direction.

I understand that you have just received a new position to help bring the northern home front back to normal routine.

The Minister of Trade and Industry, Eli Yishai, turned to me with a request that I devise a plan to tend to the immediate needs and problems that have been created due to the war in the north and to deal with proposals for the ministry to provide necessary assistance, focusing on small businesses affected by the conflict.

I have no authority to carry out these proposals, rather to make suggestions to the Trade and Industry Minister. Based on my familiarity with the north, I believe that I can help the region's residents. I expect to submit my recommendations to Minister Yishai this week.

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‘PICTURING THE REBBE SAVED ME FROM BANDITS IN PERU’

BY ELI SHNEURI



Nadav Frieden of Tzfas spent most of his life with a strong attraction to spirituality on the one hand but an opposition to Torah on the other. “Since I was a child,” Nadav says when asked to share his personal story, “I’ve always been drawn towards mysticism and spirituality. The emptiness I felt inside compelled me to seek out spiritual nourishment, though not at first through the actual performance of mitzvos. That came later.”

When Nadav finished high school he was drafted into the army and served as a combat engineer, taking part in many missions in Yehuda-Shomron. Nadav tells us about his experience in the army:

“At the base, we had a negative attitude towards religion and Torah and mitzvos in particular. This feeling affecting my politics too. It was in the army where my opposition to our being in Yehuda-Shomron grew. I saw us as imperialists. I didn’t understand what the sacrifices were for. To me, the Jewish people’s connection to the land was merely symbolic.”

Nadav ended up at a base in Tzfas, where he served as Intelligence Communications

Officer, in addition to which, once a week he served as the duty NCO responsible for the nighttime guards.

“One day a Jew with a beard and hat appeared at the base. Rafi Shoval was his name, a resident of Tzfas. He suggested that we put on t’fillin. His religious appearance turned me off and I let him know I wasn’t interested.”

Rafi, however, succeeded in putting on t’fillin with all the other men on the base throughout the course of an entire week. Nadav persistently refused, but Rafi didn’t give up. Each day he went to Nadav’s office and offered him t’fillin with a smile. After a week of this, Nadav finally gave in and rolled up his sleeve:

“I broke. His gentle smile and the way he spoke won me over. I was exposed to a naiveté and refinement that was new to me. His sense of purpose and his commitment made me wonder, ‘Maybe there is truth to what he does after all?’

“There were another two guards on night duty with me: Yair Bronstein and Shai Choresh. Today they are both ardent Lubavitchers, thanks to Rafi. We spent the nights talking about religion and faith. We asked questions aggressively and Rafi answered sweetly and patiently, answering our doubts and exposing us to new concepts that were foreign to us. He broke through our egos and dismantled our deep foundations of animus.

“We began learning Chassidus in depth, maamarim and sichos of the Rebbe. Since Rafi showed up I became a different person. I had a reason to get up in the morning.

“It was so engaging that after Rafi finished his Reserve duty, we kept in touch. In the middle of the day, I would leave the base and go



“We began learning Chassidus in depth, maamarim and sichos of the Rebbe. Since Rafi showed up I became a different person. I had a reason to get up in the morning.”

in uniform to Rafi’s kollel in the Canaan neighborhood, and learn for hours. The maamarim fascinated me and opened a window to a new world of G-dly wisdom that human wisdom can’t even strive towards. I was simply pulled in by a magnetic force.”

Nevertheless, Nadav was still wary of the chareidi world:

“I considered Rafi a lofty individual. Rafi is special, I said to myself. I didn’t believe that religious people in general were nice and well-mannered, open-minded.”

When Rafi finished Reserve duty, he gave each of the threesome Rabbi Chaim Sasson’s *Ata Yodaati*, which explains the Chabad view on inyanei Moshiach and Geula.

“After I read the book, free of preconceived ideas and receptive to the truth, I came to recognize the Leader of the Generation, the Rebbe MH”M! From that point on my world view began to change and this is when a revolution took place in my life. This book presented the entire history of the Jewish people with the ramifications for our times.”

Nadav finished his army duty and still kept in touch with Rafi, who encouraged him to take on practical mitzvos, but Nadav was stubborn: “I considered the spiritual theories as something separate. I had no problem learning maamarim and sichos without taking on more mitzvos.”

Rafi believed that a month’s visit to 770 would have more of an impact on Nadav than any sicha and he convinced Nadav to go for Tishrei. Nadav agreed!

“I landed in 770 and at first I was very disappointed by what I saw. I wasn’t used to it. All around

me were bearded men in black. I went around to the farbrengens but didn't feel comfortable. In addition, that Tishrei the weather wasn't good and I caught a cold. I was aggravated and feeling really down. There I was on Sukkos, thousands of miles from home, feeling broken.

"At the Simchas Beis HaShoeiva, the bachurim urged me to join in the simcha and dancing and I did, but it didn't help make me happy. Feeling awful, disappointed and frustrated, I sat on the sidewalk and sulked.

"Then I heard someone addressing me pleasantly and I felt a hand on my shoulder. 'Why are you looking so down?' someone asked. Afterwards, I learned that his name was Tzvi List. He invited me to his sukka and served me some food. I poured out my heart to him about my situation and my mixed feelings. He greatly encouraged me and took care of me. I felt that someone cared and my mood brightened.

"I remember that afterwards I went to Ofer Maidovnik's farbrengen and even though I didn't know him, he went up to me

and gave me a big hug. I found it strange but I was amazed by his Ahavas Yisroel."

Nadav's visit to 770 made a deep impression on him. He made a decision, "This is the way!" Rafi had opened his eyes to a magical world of Rebbe and Chassidim, avoda and yiras Shamayim, a life full of meaning which needs to be translated into action. It was clear to him that he couldn't continue as he had been doing until then and that he had to make some significant changes.

During the year following his release, Nadav worked at a gas station, earning money for his trip. In his free time, he learned deep maamarim of the Rebbe. It was, however, very hard for him to make a change in his lifestyle. He learned Chassidus but didn't use the spiritual inspiration to fulfill mitzvos. His thoughts were drawn elsewhere, to traveling in India, like many young people who are drawn there because of the emptiness felt within.

For a while, Nadav was torn between his study of Chassidus and (*l'havdil*) wanting to go to India. He

finally decided to go to South America. He stopped in 770 on the way, where he committed to keeping kosher, observing Shabbos, and growing a beard.

At the very beginning of his trip, Nadav lacked the satisfaction that he had hoped to feel on this trip.

"I felt a void. My friends spent their time smoking water pipes and just hanging out, but I already began to despise that lifestyle. It turned out that the trip drew me closer to G-d."

One evening, when Nadav and a friend went for a walk, two policemen did a stop and search on them. They arrested them and searched them and then told them to get into a nearby taxi and to follow them to the police station.

"I could tell something bad was in the offing. I told them that we were willing to walk with them to the police station. I don't know how I had the nerve because the police don't exactly operate according to the law. This was a primitive country where bribes can be offered midday in front of anybody. If we had gotten in, we would have no way of knowing where we were heading.

"Tourists carry cash on them. They also carry credit cards with high credit lines. Sometimes, robbers take their victims to a nearby bank and force them to take out the maximum amount of cash. Sometimes the victims are murdered.

"As we walked they began explaining what awaited us. A trial would take place after 50 days in jail and the judge might sentence us to ten years without blinking an eye. Apparently they had it all planned out, for only after they softened us up did they suddenly begin talking money. \$600 is what



Nadav speaking at the dinner for the Chabad yeshiva in Tzfas

they wanted. With diabolical grins and in order to explain how great the deal was, they said, 'That's just lawyer's fees. The legal fees can be really steep.'

"We were still thinking about what to do when they suddenly told us to turn off to a café for a short rest. We agreed and followed them. We sat together at one of the tables. 'Listen,' they said in low, threatening tones. 'Let's make a deal. How much are you willing to pay?'

"It was a critical moment. If we appeased them, fine, but if not, our future was unknown. We stared at them intensely trying to figure out how serious they were.

"50 sol is what I offered. They burst out laughing and then turned threatening. One of them grabbed my friend's arm and tried to get him to let go of the wallet strapped across his stomach. My heart raced.

"They fished around in his wallet and found only 50 sol, precisely the amount I had said. Furious at the paltry sum, the policeman turned to me. I had a lot of cash on me that I had earned after a year of work. I also had traveler's checks and worst of all, all types of credit cards.

"He was grabbing for my wallet when I suddenly had a brainstorm. I remembered that when people were in trouble and they thought of the Rebbe and asked for his help they are answered. I closed my eyes and pictured the Rebbe and asked: Rebbe, please help me! And you know what? One of them got up and yelled at the other for no apparent reason, 'Forget it! Let's get out of here!' And they left."

Nadav went straight to the nearest Chabad house to help the local shliach of Peru, Rabbi Shneur Zalman Blumenfeld, in his work with Israelis.



Rabbi Avrohom Rosenblatt, who brought Nadav to the Chabad yeshiva in Tzfas

After a short while Nadav continued touring with his friends, traveling from city to city and village to village. They meandered along rivers roaring along at the base of majestic mountains, climbed to the summits, and feasted their eyes on the breathtaking scenery.

"In one forsaken village, I walked on a dirt path between houses made of clay. The people were illiterate. I noticed a house with big letters that spelled the name of Hashem. I was taken aback. I had been feeling so distant and Hashem had sent me this reminder.

"When I told the locals that I was from Israel, they all gathered round in amazement to hear what I had to say. I used the opportunity to teach them about Moshiach and the Seven Noachide Laws.

"I decided to end my trip, go back to Israel, and rebuild myself. I was far from the international airport, 27 hours by bus. My friends suggested that I go by bus. It was cheaper but dangerous. I

preferred flying because it was faster and safer.

"The intercity airport was a six-hour bus ride away. I had matza with me, the only food available to me. I noticed some tough looking Arab guys at the back of the bus who were talking the local language. With my poor command of the language I understood that they planned on killing me. Their plan was that when we got to a stop, one stop before the airport, they would take care of me. I was petrified. I mumbled chapters of T'hillim and prepared for the biggest challenge of my life.

"Again I remembered to picture the Rebbe. To the surprise of the passengers, the bus continued to the terminal and drove inside, which was unusual. In the terminal were armed policemen. I took my belongings and quickly left the bus, though not before throwing them a wave. Then I disappeared into the terminal."

Nadav left Peru and flew to New York and went to 770, where he began seriously learning while

planning his future.

After a few days, he decided to return to Eretz Yisroel and enter a yeshiva. Upon the recommendation of the shliach, Rabbi Avrohom Rosenblatt, where he lived in Nave Shaanan in Chaifa, he went to learn in Tzfas.

It wasn't easy for him to

acclimate to yeshiva life. Rabbi Rosenblatt tried to arrange chavrusas for him but adjusting to yeshiva life was something Nadav found very difficult. After a week he returned home for a break until he mustered his energy to try again.

Nadav got into yeshiva life until he became an inseparable part of

the yeshiva scene. For a while he was a madrich in the Chabad yeshiva in Chaifa. Nadav is engaged and is about to build a *bayis ne'eman b'Yisroel*, founded on Torah and mitzvos as they are illuminated with the light of Torah, Toras HaChassidus.

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ב"ה

WORKING FOR THE REBBE

BY YISROEL YEHUDA
PICTURES BY MEIR DAHAN

*Each one has a job and no you won't find them on the list of shluchim at Chabad.info and not at the Kinus HaShluchim. Yet, each of them does mitzvaim in a way that would make any Chabad house proud. When I say, "Wow, you're mamash a Chabad house!" they sigh and say, "halevai." * Stories about unofficial shluchim, working people who combine Hafatzas ha'Yahadus and Chassidus and the Besuras HaGeula with their daily job. * Part 3*

CHABAD HOUSE ON WHEELS

When was the last time you traveled by bus? It doesn't really matter. Surely everybody can recall a trip in which they nodded off, or a noisy ride, a driver who yelled or a nice driver, lots of empty seats or so crowded it was hard to find a place to stand, good air conditioning or so hot you thought you'd faint, early or late, a fast driver or a slow one... If you haven't traveled on the 47 line of the Dan Company that leaves Carmalit for Raanana, you've definitely lost out on a unique experience.

The 47 line operates every morning, from five o'clock until ten at night. It's a relatively long line and generally serves to take people to work in the center of the country. The bus driver is Yosef Yaskin, an

impressive Chassid who is dynamic and persuasive. In his time, when he was an actual driver, Rav Yaskin was one of the big record-setters of the Dan Company with the number of hours he amassed daily.

R' Yaskin became frum and a Chabad Chassid and now he is a Lubavitcher who is a member of the Chabad community in Hertzliya. He quickly showed himself to be an innovative and daring outreach activist. Upon becoming frum he not only changed his way of life but also the nature of his job on the bus. This, in turn, changed the lives of many people.

The driver area turned into a Chabad house with all the necessary paraphernalia – t'fillin, *Igros Kodesh*, Jewish books, a pushka, brochures, and more – but the main change was

in the atmosphere of the bus. In order to appreciate what we're talking about, let's remember that this bus line primarily serves those going to work. The people who needed the 47 would go to work with him in the morning and return home with him. Some people even traveled an additional round with him when they went home for a break during the day. The passengers are mostly regulars who know one another. Yosef drove the same people for a period of time and was acquainted with them personally.

During the trips, Yosef began talking to the passengers. He knew how to get people interested by first chatting with them about this and that and then slowly introducing topics of k'dusha. Yosef is a good conversationalist and it's a pleasure to listen to him. He knows how to compliment and how to gently joke around so that everybody enjoys it. Little by little, his "bus k'hilla" of people who eagerly listened to what he has to say was built up.

SHOFAR ON THE BUS

Throughout his trips, Yosef distributed over 7000 Moshiach cards! The passengers who have a monthly pass knew that along with showing their pass they had to show him their Moshiach card, or else... Yosef would put on a show of mock anger. Many of the passengers said "Yechi HaMelech HaMoshiach" on their own as they boarded the bus. People began asking questions.

Some he responded to himself



while with others he arranged a live connection with Rabbi Yisroel Halperin of Hertzliya on the speakerphone of his cell phone, while driving his bus. Those whom he thought were ready, he sent to Rabbi Halperin personally in order for them to participate in shiurim that take place in the community.

Everybody knew Yosef was a great guy. When a new passenger showed up who didn't know Yosef, he would sometimes be taken aback by everything happening on the bus, the conversations, the t'fillin, etc. The other passengers would calm down the passenger by telling him that Yosef was a nice person who waited for everyone, who remembered who had to get on or off and when, and he was always ready to help, and it was actually enjoyable to listen to what he had to say on any topic.

In Elul, Yosef would stop the bus and blow the shofar every so often. Some people heard the shofar five or

six times per trip because it's a long ride.

Every Friday he stopped at an additional stop, at the t'fillin stand. Yosef would stop, take on or let off passengers and do Mivtza Neshek and Mivtza T'fillin on the bus too. Before Purim he gave out mishloach manos and so on, before every holiday. The results: dozens of Jews interested in Judaism and Chassidus and two baalei t'shuva!

TRAVELS OF A PICTURE

One morning, one of the regular passengers boarded the bus, presented her monthly pass but the Moshiach card was missing. She apologized to Yaskin and explained that it wasn't lost and told him the following story:

The woman's husband had heart disease. He always had to carry medications around with him. The couple went on a trip to Turkey and while standing near a rock to be photographed, they put their bag

down. A short while later they realized it had been stolen.

Their bag had everything they needed in a foreign country: their passports, cell phones, money, address book, and most important of all – the medication. You can well imagine the couple's consternation and feelings of helplessness, their fear that at any moment he might need medicine without which he could die, and it was gone!

The couple went back to their hotel distraught. They had no idea what to do next. For two hours they wavered between hope and despair. The wife was a bit calmer because she remembered that in the bag was a picture of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, "and the driver of the 47 line promised that the Rebbe helps wherever you are, no matter the situation."

Just then, the phone rang. They dashed for the phone and the man on the line was from the embassy. "Your

bag is here,” he reported, “though the cell phones and money are gone.”

“Are the medications there?” asked her husband anxiously.

“One second, let me check. Yes, they’re here,” said the man, not realizing how relieved the couple was to hear this.

They quickly took a cab to the Israeli embassy, where the employee there greeted them. After checking to see that everything else was there, they sat down to hear the story of how the bag had ended up at the embassy.

“The person who stole the bag was only interested in the valuables it contained and he threw the rest on a street corner. A short while later, someone found the bag and when he saw the Israeli passports he turned it in to the embassy.

“I didn’t know where to find you. I looked in the bag for your address, a hint of some kind, but couldn’t find anything. I emptied the bag on the table and finally found your address book. I opened it and saw the picture of the Lubavitcher Rebbe. I gazed at it for a few seconds, at the warm smile, the Rebbe’s gaze, but the urgency I felt to locate you pushed me to continue looking for you.

“I noticed a phone number on top of the picture. I had no idea who your relatives are that would know where you are and so I didn’t know which phone numbers to look for. I decided that the phone number closest to the Rebbe’s picture is the number I should dial. I called the Israeli number and I have no idea who answered the phone but she immediately gave me your address in Turkey and here you are...”

The couple couldn’t get over the story. “Do you realize that the only woman who knew where we are and how to reach us is the one whose number appears next to the Rebbe’s picture?”

The embassy employee returned all their stuff and said with a smile,



Yosef Yaskin at his desk at the drivers’ club area under his care

“There is one thing I won’t give back to you and that is the Rebbe’s picture!”

“So that’s why,” concluded the woman, “I don’t have the picture. Now I need a new one!”

SUSPENDED LICENSE

Over the years of working as a bus driver, there were many interesting stories and miracles. One of the amazing stories took place when Ofer’s license was suspended for three months and the poor fellow had to travel with Yaskin every day in order to get to work in Hertzliya.

Who is Ofer? Ofer is a Leftist who belongs to the Bohemian crowd in Israel. He’s a bit famous, speaking at various extreme Left rallies. Ofer has a terrible allergy. He can’t stand chareidim.

Now imagine Ofer’s dismay after his license was suspended and he boarded the bus only to come face to face with a Chabad house on wheels! The passengers tried to calm him down and explained that Yaskin is a terrific driver and “it’s always this way on his bus,” but it only got him more mad. He had to travel with this religious guy?! For three months?

Ofer took out his frustration on Yaskin. Wherever he sat on the bus, he directed his arrows at the driver by mocking him and otherwise being completely obnoxious, and he did this all the way to work. When he got off the bus, no doubt he breathed a sigh of relief, “Ah, air free of *dosim* (religious Jews).”

It wasn’t easy for Yaskin. Sometimes it was hard to restrain himself, especially when what Ofer said could cause damage to his “k’hilla,” but “restraint is strength” and Yaskin continued to welcome Ofer with a smile. Every so often, Yaskin would say a sentence or two in the attempt at penetrating the wall and reaching Ofer’s Jewish heart.

For the first month and a half, Ofer continued full force but then he got used to the idea and began to temper his words. In the final month Ofer got off the bus saying, “Yechi HaMelech HaMoshiach,” and he wasn’t being cynical.

From a sentence here and there they got into longer conversations about life and a little bit about Judaism. It was hard for him, but Yaskin saw the fulfillment of the promise with his own eyes that “we

are assured that our efforts do not go for naught.” Ofer’s pintele Yid began to wake up.

Around that time, Yaskin visited 770. He met Avi Taub and discovered that he was Ofer’s friend from way back. Yaskin told him about the change in Ofer. Avi was skeptical and said, “It just can’t be. Ofer hates religious people. He can’t even look at them.”

In the course of their conversations, Ofer told Yaskin that he was suffering from cancer, which was eating away at him physically and emotionally. Yaskin tried to encourage him. He even tried to connect Ofer to his Judaism but Ofer rejected the thought.

One time, Yaskin suggested that Ofer come to the Chabad house in Hertzliya for one of the Chassidic special days. Ofer’s reaction was typical, “Listen Yaskin, I just can’t. Our personal relationship is nice but that doesn’t mean that I can stand chareidim.” Ofer did not show up at the farbrengen but Yaskin didn’t forget about him. He asked for a bracha for him in the collective pidyon nefesh that they wrote to the Rebbe, and put it in a volume of *Igros Kodesh*.

Rabbi Halperin opened the volume of letters and began reading it. Part of it said that whoever asked in connection to a refua shleima would get what he needed and even if things looked just the opposite, it would be like Purim when what looked definitely bad turned out to be good.

Yaskin didn’t keep this to himself but called Ofer from the farbrengen. He didn’t reach Ofer (who was undergoing tests and treatment at the time) and so he left him a message, “Ofer, I wrote to the Rebbe for you. The Rebbe says you are healthy and there is nothing to worry about!”

Three days later Ofer returned the call, shouting like a little boy, “Yaskin! It’s all over! It simply stopped! It’s amazing!”

Ofer had heard Yaskin’s message three days before. His life had always been one of “my strength and the power of my arm,” i.e., what I can obtain with my strength, I obtain, and what not, not. Now Ofer was confronted with something beyond his abilities, with a miracle! He had internalized the concepts that Yaskin had persistently mentioned to him over the months, concepts like Rebbe, Geula, Moshiach, emuna, etc.

Ofer agreed to join an ongoing shiur that took place at Yaskin’s house. It so happened that the first time in his life that Ofer showed up to a Torah shiur was Nittel Nacht, so the shiur was just a nice conversation about this and that. This served to ease Ofer into things.

Today Ofer participates in the programs of the Chabad house in Hertzliya. He helps distribute food packages and assists those in need. He still speaks at rallies (“I tempered the content a bit,” he told Yaskin), however, he has clearly made huge strides in coming closer to Yiddishkeit and the Rebbe.

PERMANENT CHABAD HOUSE

A year ago, Yosef asked the Rebbe for advice regarding his work. He felt he had done all he could do in his job as a bus driver, and as a loyal Chassid he asked for direction. The answer he opened to spoke about involvement in shlichus. Rabbi Halperin said it meant the continuation of his shlichus in his work.

Yosef wrote a letter to his superiors at the Dan Company, asking for another position within the company. To his surprise, he was soon informed that he was assigned to the job of dispatcher of one of the bus lines. Normally, in order to be a dispatcher, something has to have happened like an accident or injury or the like. To get this position just like that is unusual and Yosef Yaskin saw it as a sign from Heaven that this was his new shlichus.

Yosef quickly integrated into his new role as dispatcher of one of the lines at the office in Tel Aviv. The company provided him with a small booth, in addition to a club area for the drivers and a tiny office. What should the drivers’ club area look like? You can well imagine, but Yosef’s looks different.

From a distance you already notice the “Boruch HaBa” sign over the door.



Yosef Yaskin alongside a bus advertisement about consulting the Rebbe through the *Igros Kodesh*

There's a picture of the Rebbe and other Jewish signs. Yosef's office is a complete Chabad house. The closets are packed with Jewish material that is distributed to thousands of passengers on the line that he is charge of. T'fillin, a pushka, forms to fill out for a letter in a Seifer Torah, all these cover his desk along with various forms and documents from the Dan Company.

As usual, Yosef puts his efforts into reaching people's souls and within a few months he managed to create a revolution among the drivers. He shows up at the office at dawn and the drivers put on t'fillin with him.

Afterwards, most of the drivers learn the Rambam's *Seifer HaMitzvos*. During the course of the day, Yosef looks out for the material and spiritual welfare of his drivers. He has already convinced some drivers to buy t'fillin for themselves.

Yosef knows the mentality of the drivers and with lots of Ahavas Yisroel and determination he is bringing about real changes. The drivers know already what bracha to say on what. They come every day with questions

Yosef knows the mentality of the drivers and with lots of Ahavas Yisroel and determination he is bringing about real changes.

in halacha and Judaism and just to consult with him and unburden themselves.

On the day that I visited his booth, Yosef had brought some forms for the purchasing of a letter in a Seifer Torah, for the first time. In his characteristic manner, he publicized the idea in simple terms via the company's announcements. The forms were quickly filled out and having run out of space, he wrote additional names on plain paper.

While we spoke the loudspeaker announced, "*Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu V'Rabbeinu Melech HaMoshiach L'olam*

Va'ed!" It was a driver who had parked his bus in the parking lot outside the booth and had announced his arrival.

Yosef is interested not only in the drivers but in the thousands of passengers who use the bus line daily. Each bus is equipped with Jewish material and signs. Some of the drivers know enough to provide Jewish information to their passengers. Yosef has plans for opening his own Chabad house.

"When I came to work at the booth as a dispatcher, there were people who were afraid that Dan wouldn't like all this Jewishness and they advised me to take it step by step. I did it l'chat'chilla aribber and came with all the stuff you see here, and baruch Hashem, it worked out.

When asked what his dream is, Yosef points at a full pushka and says, "We are collecting money for permanent t'fillin for the dispatcher's booth. My dream is that every booth of the company will have a small closet with Jewish material, t'fillin, and a pushka. This is on the way towards fulfilling the big dream of the Rebbe's hisgalus."



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REB MOTTEL KOZLINER: “YECHI” IS THE “KASHA” OF THE REBBE

BY RABBI LEVI YITZCHOK GINSBURG

I heard the following from R' Mottel Kozliner aⁿh, which illustrates a profound idea about the current situation, when the Rebbe said that the work of Exile has been completed and now we must focus on preparing for Geula:

R' Avrohom of Zemin, known as R' Avromke Zeminer was one of the famous mashpiim amongst Anash in the early years of Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim Lubavitch. (He was the teacher and guide of the mashpia in Tomchei T'mimim, R' Shmuel Grunem Esterman.)

Talmidim of the yeshiva in Lubavitch once wanted to farbreng with R' Avrohom and he agreed to come to Lubavitch and farbreng. They agreed that the farbrengen would go on until two a.m. and that a horse and wagon would be waiting for him to take him back home to Zemin.

The talmidim ordered the wagon and the farbrengen began. R' Avrohom spoke and spoke, niggunim of yearning were sung, and the atmosphere warmed up. At two o'clock, when the wagon arrived as arranged, the farbrengen was at its height and nobody thought of stopping it abruptly.

A few minutes went by and then some more and even more. It was almost an hour of waiting and nothing happened. The wagon driver was upset and he banged on the window and began yelling, "Avromke! We arranged a time, I came in the middle of the

night and I've been waiting a long time already! Come immediately!"

R' Avrohom saw he had no choice but to leave and he got ready to go. The bachurim groaned: Oy, just as the farbrengen was starting to get going...

R' Avrohom said: It's just the opposite. It's because it was ending that it began going so well.

One year, R' Mottel stayed with his daughter in Kfar Chabad for Acharon



R' Mottel Kozliner

shel Pesach and farbrenged in the Beis Nachum Yitzchok Shul at the Moshiach Seuda. We heard a "vertel" from him on the Chazal, "Moshiach comes to bring the tzaddikim to do t'shuva."

Why do tzaddikim need to do t'shuva? asked R' Mottel. He answered in a humorous vein: Nearly all baalei t'shuva proclaim and sing "Yechi," while not all the "tzaddikim" do so yet.

Apparently that will be Moshiach's job: to get the tzaddikim to act like baalei t'shuva and to proclaim "Yechi."

Naturally, after a vort like that, the crowd began singing "Yechi," but some people didn't like it and there were even a few who tried to interfere.

R' Mottel couldn't restrain himself and he stood on the steps to the Aron Kodesh and began to scream: It's one thing if you yourself are not holding by "Yechi," but how can you try to prevent others from singing and proclaiming it?!

He added: If regarding the four cups that you drink at the Moshiach Seuda the Rebbe [Rashab] said, "This is the Seudas Moshiach," then "Yechi Adoneinu" is certainly, certainly "the Seudas Moshiach," for this is the whole point of the Moshiach Seuda!

R' Mottel wasn't satisfied until he added: It's known that everybody pushed to eat from the kasha served on Yud-Tes Kislev, since they knew that whoever ate from the kasha of Yud-Tes Kislev, the kasha of the Alter Rebbe, would not die without t'shuva. Every person knows himself that with his revealed soul powers there is no knowing whether or not he is a worthy individual. Therefore, he tries with all his might to at least grab on to the *klamke* (doorknob) of Chassidus, the "kasha" of the present Rebbe, which is "Yechi"! You must hold on to this with all your might and push and do everything possible to grab it and be connected to it.