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The International weekly heralding the coming of Mashiach  
**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



[Continued from last week.]

8. Accordingly, it is understood the reason for the difference between the Bavli and the Yerushalmi:

The Yerushalmi speaks about things that possess eternity, in virtue of the fact that G-d created them (“the Holy One Blessed Be He created them”). They will, therefore, continue to exist even in the Future to Come. It is only the not-good they possess, the aspect of negativity, that will be nullified: “**He regrets** that He created them.”

It is for this reason that the Yerushalmi omits “Exile” in its enumeration. That is, since Exile **in actuality** is entirely a negative concept and will be nullified completely in the Future to Come. It lists, rather, only three things: “Kasdim, and Yishmaelim, and the Evil Inclination.” In the Future to Come, there will indeed be gentile nations. However, their conduct will be different then. Not only will they not persecute Jews then, G-d forbid, on the contrary, they will be transformed into [a force of] good and will even help the Jews, as it is written, “Strangers will get up and tend your sheep” [Yeshaya 61:5], and as it is written, “Then I will transform the nations to have a clear language, to all call in the name of G-d, to serve Him as one unit” [Tz’fania 3:9].

So too with regard to the Evil Inclination: In the Future to Come, the Evil Inclination’s aspect of evil will be nullified, but its strength and vitality will be transformed into good and will exist in the Future to Come.

The Evil Inclination [which was originally manifest as the snake in the Garden of Eden] will be as it was before the sin [of Adam and Chava] – a great servant [see Sanhedrin 59b]. In fact, it will surpass that, exemplifying the advantage that comes about through repentance.

That is, the Evil Inclination will exist in the Future to Come not (only) on account of the benefit and virtue gained through (overcoming) it (for a semblance of that exists even now in Exile), which brings a Jew to a greater height and level, but of its own virtue. Indeed, it will then be transformed into good. This is in accordance with what is stated in the Yerushalmi with regard to Avrohom our Father, peace unto him: “And He found his heart to be faithful before Him” – Avrohom our Father “made his Evil Inclination **good**.” Likewise it is said with regard to every Jew in actuality but for a limited duration: “‘With all your hearts’ – meaning, with both of your inclinations.”

The Bavli, on the other hand, emphasizes the negativity of the items it enumerates – “He regrets them” – which will eventually become extinct. That is, it speaks about the not-good in them, which will be nullified.

Thus, the Bavli includes an additional item: Exile. And for this very reason, it places it first, for the negativity and nullification associated with Exile is more absolute than that which is associated with the other items. Notwithstanding the fact that Exile brings Jews to a greater height and perfection (for were it not for Exile they would not be able to attain such a revelation of the power of self-sacrifice and etc., as it is explained in many places), this is, however, a benefit that is derived merely as an **outcome** of Exile [and not one that expresses a virtue of Exile unto itself]. The Exile itself, the existence of Exile, will be **entirely** nullified in the Future to Come; it will be an eternal Redemption, **with no** subsequent Exile.

The fact that the Bavli prefaces Exile [in the order of enumeration] teaches a lesson about the other three things. Namely, that here it does not speak about the good in them – the fact that “the Holy One Blessed Be He

created them” (which would indicate that they contain an aspect of eternity) – but about the portion of negativity they possess, that which has no true existence and which will be entirely nullified.

9. It may be asserted that also **this** explanation is connected with the general distinction that we find in many places between the approach of the Bavli and the approach of the Yerushalmi:

We have already mentioned many times that the approach of the Bavli is to primarily consider the present state of things, whereas the approach of the Yerushalmi looks (primarily) at the future state (with the notion that this prevails over and overcomes the present state).

And thus, there is also a connection with regard to the aforementioned distinction, [namely] whether we speak only about “He regrets them,” which underscores the nullification (of their negativity), or whether we also speak about (and emphasize) their positive aspect, the fact that “the Holy One Blessed Be He created them,” which engenders their transformation into good **in the Future to Come**.

Something that stands to be nullified in the future is not a true existent even at the time it exists at present (for which reason we find that rivers that dry up once in seven years are called “rivers **that deceive**” (and are disqualified for use in sanctifying ritually purifying waters [used to cleanse a person from the spiritual impurity associated with contact with corpses], for they are not “**living waters**”). Since they are sure to cease in the future, after seven years, even from the moment of their inception they are not deemed to be true existents.)

It comes out that their **lack of existence** is their **present** existential state and status (before they become nullified [in the Future to Come]). Whereas this is not so with regard to their positive aspect. That is, the fact that in the future they will be transformed into good is an innovation, the opposite of their state of being in the present time. This will only be realized in the Future to Come, a **future** state of being.

Therefore the Bavli emphasizes the negative aspect of the four items, following its approach of considering the present state of things.

10. All the above runs parallel with the general distinction between the Bavli and the Yerushalmi:

Concerning the Talmud Bavli it says: “He has set me in dark places...’ – that is the Talmud of Bavel” [Sanhedrin 24a]. In “Bavel” there is a state of concealment and hiding, from which we must distill the light **from the darkness**. Whereas the Yerushalmi is at the level of light. (As it is explained in many places, this itself is the reason why the Yerushalmi discusses topics in a concise fashion and in general terms, without splitting hairs and without debate, whereas Talmud Bavli speaks in detail and with lengthy debates and [attempts to resolve] quandaries and etc. To illustrate, when we find ourselves in a place that is luminous, we immediately find what we are seeking. But when we find ourselves in darkness, we must grope about and search and etc, and it takes some time before we find what we are looking for. The same applies in seeking a clear line of reasoning, or a legal ruling, using the intellect.)

Therefore, when there is state of illumination – the Talmud Yerushalmi – the subject is illuminated and we clearly see (relatively speaking) the inner dimension and the truth of the matter, as the thing will be (in the Future to Come) for eternity, for then it will be transformed into good; it will be revealed that “the Holy One Blessed Be He **created** [it].”

However, in a time when there is a state of “dark places” with regard to the human intellect, there must be the approach of learning of the Talmud Bavli. That is, when we don’t see the inner dimension of things – that which will eventually become apparent – but the way things are at present, the negative aspect, we must toil in that (i.e., in a matter of

darkness, the opposite of good, which is not a true existent) until we discover that it is not a true existent and etc.

11. The lesson we derive from all the above:

First off, we must know and remember that the concept of Exile is one of the things which G-d “regrets”; Exile is not the true state and status that G-d wants Jews to be in, Heaven forefend. This is said to Jews because they must be dissatisfied with Exile. Exile is a punishment (“because of our sins”). When a Jew feels differently, may G-d have mercy, and says that this is an acceptable condition for Jews, he says something that is the opposite of G-d’s will, for G-d regrets, and the regret is [felt] **every day**. It is understood the great darkness of such a person’s exile within an exile.

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dissatisfied with Exile.  
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---

On the other hand, this approach must not be one that leads a person to succumb to depression, G-d forbid. We must not be put off by Exile, knowing that it is not a true state of existence, that it will eventually, very soon, be nullified. This is especially so being that we are presently in the era of the Heels of Moshiach, which demands of us that we speed up the end of Exile – “I will hasten it” – through increasing in “a candle is a Mitzva and Torah is light.” By doing so, we accelerate the banishment of the darkness of Exile.

Accordingly, we can also derive a lesson on how we must conduct ourselves with regard to the gentile nations of the world (“Kasdim and Yishmaelim”): We must not be put off by them. They have no strength or existence with respect to their opposition to Judaism. Therefore, with regard to all matters of Judaism, also in the time of Exile, we must “speak” to them with the appropriate force, as the Gemara describes how G’viha ben P’sisa spoke with them [Sanhedrin 91a].

And this brings about that even in the time of Exile the conduct of the gentile nations will be in a manner of “And kings will be your [children’s] caregivers and the wives of rulers [will be] your [children’s] nurses” [Yeshaya 49:23]. Indeed, this was already fulfilled in actuality a number of times – to the extent that this is a **true story involving a rabbinical authority**, which G-d has recorded in Torah [Z’vachim 19a, top]. Thus, it is intended to be [received as] an instruction of the Torah of **Life**, an instruction in life:

*Rav Ashi said: Huna bar Nasan said to me: One time I*

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***We must not be put off by Exile, knowing that it is not a true state of existence, that it will eventually, very soon, be nullified.***

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*appeared before King Izgeder (he was the king of Pras —Rashi). [...] (His gartel was worn too high, and “he (the king) drew it downwards in order to make it nice” —Rashi). And he said, regarding you [people] it is written, “a nation of priests and a holy people” (and you need to conduct yourselves with the beauty of priests, of whom it is written, “do not gird in [a place associated with] perspiration” —Rashi). When I came before Amimar, he said to me, “It has been fulfilled with you, ‘And kings will be your caregivers.’” When a Jew conducts himself in such a way that*

we see in him that he is an appropriate expression of “a nation of priests and a holy people,” all the kings of the land say that he must be **beautiful**, and they come **on their own** to assist in this and **occupy themselves with this**, and it is publicized in all corners of the earth.

The Torah is **eternal**, and as a **luminous** directive and **instruction** for every Jew [the Torah tells us]: take pride in the “Torah, **the inheritance** of the congregation of Yaakov,” and obviously do not lower your head before heathenry or before gentiles.

And together with the service of changing and transforming the Evil Inclination, reaching the level of “with all your hearts’ – with both of your inclinations,” it is already the time of the “Eve of Sabbath,” when we taste of every single dish that will be in the Future to Come.

This is alluded to in the testimony, “He (G-d) placed an end to darkness” [Iyov 28:3], the end of Exile, and “*miyad*” (immediately) comes the true and complete Redemption through our righteous Moshiach.

*(From the addresses of Shabbos Parshas Chukas and Shabbos Parshas Balak 5741)*

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# WAS THERE A TZIMTZUM?

BY RABBI CHAIM ASHKENAZI  
TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY

*When someone is suffering, ch"v, no one has the right to justify the judgment and give excuses for G-d, as it were. He must assume that his friend doesn't have it coming and he should help him as if there was a "tzimtzum in its simplest sense," and he is the only person in the universe who can extend a helping hand. As the Rebbe MH"M instructed us in relation to the Holocaust, we should not try and say that it was due to sins and transgressions, rather we should ask, "Why have You done evil to this people?" \* Excerpts from a chassidic farbrengen.*

## IN ITS SIMPLE SENSE OR NOT

There's a story about one of the T'mimim in Russia who asked the mashpia, R. Yechezkel Feigin, a question on a subject in chassidus, and R. Yechezkel did not provide an answer to his question. What was the question that failed to elicit a response from the renowned mashpia?

The question dealt with the Alter Rebbe's statement in *Shaar HaYichud*

*V'HaEmuna* – that the concept of tzimtzum, as explained in kabbala (that G-d contracted Himself in order to create the world), is not to be understood according to its simplest interpretation, i.e., that

G-d removed Himself, *ch"v*, from the place where He established the heavens and the earth. Instead, the correct, albeit more complex, interpretation is that G-d merely concealed Himself in order that the

world could be seen as "something," but in reality, the world is not a *metzius* at all, just as it was prior to its creation, and G-d's glory is fully manifest everywhere.

This serves as a complement to the innovative interpretation of chassidus on the pasuk, "Know this day..that Hashem is G-d in the heavens and on the earth below; there is nothing else."

According to those who erroneously maintain that the tzimtzum occurred in the literal sense, the words "there is nothing else" come to exclude, i.e., there is no Divine power besides G-d, and no one should think *ch"v* that there are two Creators of the world; there is only one. Chassidus reveals the true interpretation: "There is nothing else" means there is no existence whatsoever except for the Blessed Creator. In other words, anyone who knows that there really wasn't a tzimtzum in its simple sense relates to the world as a total nonentity. It is considered to be non-existent, despite its having been "created" ("In the beginning, G-d created..."). This is because when it was lacking (prior to its creation), there was nothing missing in the G-dly *metzius*, as the world's existence adds nothing to G-d's existence, for G-d is the only *metzius*, just as it was before Creation. (Chassidus explains this matter at

great length.)

## WHY DIDN'T R. YECHAZKEL ANSWER?

"I don't understand," the Tamim asked R. Yechezkel, "what is the avoda of someone who neither learns chassidus nor walks in its path? His entire faith is that there is only one G-d. But even honest and upright non-Jews agree with that. If that's the case, then what battle does he wage with his yetzer?"

"For we who learn that there is no metzius whatsoever besides G-d, and that the tzimtzum is not understood according to the simple interpretation, yet our very eyes perceive an actual world that contradicts this concept – we must literally work against our perceptions, common sense, and rationality, against the clearest and most accepted beliefs in the world. This requires tremendous avoda.

"However, anyone who is far from this – what problem does *he* have? His mentality stems from an accepted and logical premise, even among non-Jews. (Chassidus explains the concept of "emuna" (faith) as follows: The world mistakenly thinks that faith means **knowing** that there is a Creator. But the truth is that you don't need faith to have such knowledge. This is something mandated by common sense, and even non-Jews understand that, because there simply can't be a world without a Creator. Instead, the true faith is to believe that "I, Hashem, do not change" (i.e., have not changed), because "there is nothing else besides Him." If they would think *ch"v* that there is something else besides G-d since Creation, then He apparently has changed, since He was alone before, and now there's something other than Him.)

"If so," the Tamim concluded his question, "what is the avoda of those who don't know what true emuna is, reasoning that there is a metzius to the world that G-d once created after

He "cleared the area" from His presence *ch"v*, and He merely looks upon it from afar? What do they have to work on? The yetzer hara is probably quite satisfied from their assumptions and everything that develops from it..."

R. Yechezkel replied that he is unable to give this a proper explanation, since you simply can't understand the thought process of someone who has no connection to the study of chassidus and you can't "get into his head."

In any event, there are some sharp chassidic sayings that try to describe the thought process of someone who



has never learned the true meaning of "there is nothing else besides Him" and its results.

For example, chassidim used to say about a certain rabbi, a great Torah scholar who was always lenient in his halachic rulings, that he based his persistent leniency on the principle of "*s'feik s'feika*" (a double doubt). The first doubt: Everything in Torah has conflicting opinions, and therefore, it's always possible to find a lenient opinion. The second doubt: Maybe there is no Commander of the mitzvos? Therefore, be lenient.

Thus, we find that the "avoda" of

someone who is not a chassid is to grasp that there is a Commander Who instructs us to fulfill the commandment, and not that "there is nothing else besides Him."

Chassidic "*verter*" even express feelings of mercy towards those who have not been privileged to recognize the meaning of pure faith. Chassidim would say, for example, that when Moshiach comes, the whole world will be elevated from its current level to a higher level. Chabad chassidim will recognize G-dliness as the spiritual creations do, the other chassidim will appreciate G-dliness as Chabad chassidim did, anyone who is far from the teachings of chassidus will recognize as the other chassidim did, non-Jews will recognize as those with no connection to chassidus, and animals will recognize G-dliness like goyim. Their conclusion: Poor goyim – even with their elevation, they believed in G-d more before... Need I say more?

## WHO AND WHAT IS "ABSOLUTE NOTHINGNESS"?

Everything that a Jew sees or hears is meant to teach him something in his service of G-d.

G-d created the world in such a way that He hid G-dliness to the point that we perceive a tzimtzum in its simplest sense, particularly in accordance with the Rebbe shlita's explanation that were it not for the Alter Rebbe's interpretation, one would be tempted to accept the simple interpretation of tzimtzum. Therefore, since this obviously comes to teach us something in our Avodas Hashem, what exactly can and must we learn from the fact that the world appears to us as a metzius?

Chassidim from the previous generation taught that we must relate to the world as a "*yesh*" (the result of understanding the simple interpretation of tzimtzum) in connection with our relationship

toward others. The following story will help us understand this point:

Chassidim once came to the Tzemach Tzedek and told him that there was a chassid who had borrowed money and didn't want to return it, claiming that since the world is absolute nothingness (tzimtzum in its deeper sense) and essentially does not exist whatsoever, therefore, there is no borrower, no lender, no money, no promissory note, no witnesses, and no judges. The Tzemach Tzedek pointed to a stick and instructed someone to "take this absolute nothingness and give that absolute nothingness a few doses of absolute nothingness until he pays the absolute nothingness that he owes..."

The point of this story is that in relation to ourselves, a person should feel that tzimtzum is not according to its simple interpretation, i.e., he is nothing, will always be nothing, needs nothing, deserves nothing, and is owed nothing. But in connection with someone else, you have to give him all he requires, as he exists because G-d exists, and G-d sent this person to you with his needs in order for you to help him.

If you want to give to him for your own benefit, then you're not giving, but taking. This demonstrates that you're acting towards yourself according to "tzimtzum in its simplest sense," and this is sheer heresy. When this becomes your outlook, you see the other person through **your** lenses, i.e., "What use can I possibly get out of him?" If you're dealing with yourself and the other person is simply getting in your way and being a nuisance, and you get rid of him with a few verbal and hand expressions, you're just like the poor guy who will eventually rise to the level where he'll have to wage war with himself on the question of whether there is a Creator *ch"v* or not.

This is the whole reason why this person was sent your way: to instill

within you the concept of "tzimtzum in its deeper sense." Our Sages say that as much as the *baal ha'bayis* does for the poor person, the poor person does more for the *baal ha'bayis*. In other words, don't think that if you give tzedaka, you are giving and doing good to a poor person. Not so, the Gemara says, rather the poor person is giving you the privilege. To emphasize this point further, there is a great accomplishment achieved by giving to a poor person: it causes you to grasp that tzimtzum is "not in its simplest sense" in relation to you. By internalizing the fact that there is only one metzius and "there is nothing else besides Him," while you are absolute nothingness without any existence whatsoever, this will enable you to direct your attention away from yourself and towards the poor person.

### THIS IS A GREAT PRINCIPLE OF TORAH

Therefore, the Alter Rebbe says that love of one's fellow Jew is the root and foundation of the entire Torah. The warmth that you show towards another person proves that he takes up a more honored place than you do, demonstrating that you are instilled with the true faith that tzimtzum is "not in its simplest sense."

If you only help someone in a manner of "fulfilling your obligation," this is a declaration of your personal state of affairs, i.e., you believe that the tzimtzum was "according to its simplest sense"; the world exists (and therefore, so do you), and only in order to dispel any concern that there is some basis to the stringent opinion that the tzimtzum is "not according to its simplest sense," you do something for someone else in order to fulfill your obligation.

This symbolizes the profundity in the Baal Shem Tov's interpretation of the saying of our Sages, "Anyone with whom his fellow men are pleased, G-d is pleased with him." The simple

interpretation is since they are pleased, therefore, He is pleased. The Baal Shem Tov explains this to mean that the proof that "G-d is pleased with him" comes from the fact that "his fellow men are pleased [with him]." In a deeper sense, the interpretation is that if he relates towards his fellow man, even creatures, with pleasantness (and not because he's looking for some use or benefit, for then his fellow men would not be pleased), then surely "G-d is pleased with him," as he got the message that the world appears as an "existing entity" only with respect to our fellow man.

When a Jew understands that love of one's fellow men is the main criteria for faith in G-d, he is then able to fulfill what the Rebbe Rashab says in *HaYom Yom*: "It is a wondrous gift of G-d to merit a special sense and feeling for doing kindness to another Jew. This can even reach the point that the other person is more precious in his eyes than himself. While he may find many reasons why he deserves *ch"v* his own lot, with regard to someone else – this is simply impossible."

This saying contains a specific instruction that if *ch"v* something happens to oneself that is not good (in the revealed sense), he can bring justification for the judgment upon him and understand that there are reasons why G-d did this to him – everything is G-dliness and certainly all is for the good. This is how he comes to recognize that the tzimtzum is "not according to its simplest sense," since G-d is even then still filled with His good. Whereas in the case of one's fellow man, this has no relevance whatsoever.

In other words, when someone *ch"v* is suffering, no one has the right to justify the judgment and give excuses for G-d. He must assume that his friend doesn't have it coming to him and he should help him, as if

there is a “tzimtzum in its simplest sense,” and he is the only person in the universe who can extend a helping hand. As the Rebbe MH”M instructed us in relation to the Holocaust, we should not try and say that it was due to sins and transgressions, rather we should ask, “Why have You done evil to this people?”

What are the results of following this basic assumption? There was a chassid suffering from hunger during the Second World War who distributed a lot of money to tz’daka and sustained many families, despite that fact that his own home was seriously in want. People asked him: Isn’t it written, “Don’t squander more than a fifth”? His reply: That’s exactly what I do! Anything that I spend on myself is squandering, and a fifth is sufficient for this. However, to someone else, I have to give more and more. Such a saying proves that this chassid is instilled with the belief that tzimtzum is “not according to its simplest sense” in relation to himself. Everything is absolute nothingness, and therefore, all money spent on himself is squandered. There’s a story about R. Mordechai Kozliner, who was the director of Yeshivas Tomchei T’mimim in Nachlat Har Chabad, when a man came into the yeshiva asking for work. When R. Mottel asked him why he wanted to work in the yeshiva, the man replied that he had heard that Lubavitcher chassidim are crazy, and since he has a certificate from an insane asylum, he thought that is the place for him. It’s true, R. Mottel replied, we are crazy. However, the difference is that we are crazy in relation to ourselves, but in relation to others, we’re normal. On the other hand, you’re crazy in relation to others.

To interpret this in connection with our discussion, thinking that the tzimtzum is in simple terms seems to indicate a crazy departure from common sense, but in relation to yourself – keep acting that way.

## ILLUMINATING WITH A NEW LIGHT

With this in mind, we can understand how “taking in guests is greater than welcoming the Sh’china,” because greeting the Sh’china can possibly stem from thinking that the tzimtzum is in simple terms, i.e., he accepts that G-d does exist, but he also exists, since he is greeting the Sh’china. However, when he accepts the guest, he thus proves that he (and his interests) doesn’t exist, and therefore, this is greater than welcoming the Sh’china.

Even the statement in *HaYom Yom*, “a soul descends into the world and

***R. Yechezkel replied that he is unable to give this a proper explanation, since you simply can’t understand the thought process of someone who has no connection to the study of chassidus and you can’t “get into his head.”***

lives there for seventy or eighty years to do a favor for a Jew in material matters, and particularly, in spiritual matters,” takes on a new light according to this explanation. A person who hears this saying might ask in puzzlement: What’s so special about doing a favor for another that makes it THE reason that the soul descended into the world? There are so many mitzvos that seem far loftier

and more important, yet it is not said that they are the cause for the soul’s downward trek!

It is quite clear and obvious that we must fulfill all the mitzvos, but why do we emphasize that the unique reason for the soul’s descent was to help another? This is because all the mitzvos can have a mixture of “yeshus” in them; the person thinks about himself. However, when he thinks about the other person and carries this out in actual deed, this demonstrates the belief that in his relation to others, the tzimtzum is expressed in simple terms, but not in his relation to himself.

According to this explanation, we can understand the chassidic saying that a day when we don’t do a good deed for another (even though we did many other mitzvos) is not considered a day!

The Rebbe shlita gives instructions in many of his letters and sichos that the mitzva in our generation that must be fulfilled “with greater care” is influencing others materially and spiritually. In addition, we must be especially careful not to cause harm or injury to our fellow Jew.

It is known that Yom Kippur does not atone for sins committed by one Jew against another, despite the great and intense power of Yom Kippur to atone for grave transgressions. This is connected to what we have said here – that causing harm to one’s fellow man *ch”v* proves that he thinks the tzimtzum is expressed in simple terms and he doesn’t remember that “G-d is in the area.” Therefore, he also doesn’t consider asking forgiveness and atonement from the other person because there’s just “me and nothing else.” As a result, even Yom Kippur can have no effect upon such a situation, because he has no G-d over him *ch”v* (because in his mistaken opinion, He has removed Himself from the world).



In the words of the Rebbe Maharash from *HaYom Yom*: What's the use of doing something in chassidus and yiras Shamayim when not only is the main thing missing – Ahavas Yisroel – but it also causes someone else anguish? How can someone be a *chassid*, *yira Shamayim*, and *lamdan* if he is lacking the faith of “there is nothing else besides Him”?

Therefore, chassidus, which reveals the concept of tzimtzum “not according to its simplest sense,” also emphasizes the constant obligation to place our fellow Jew first before anything we do. We find a clear example of this in a story from the Rebbe MH”M’s mother, the Rebbetzin Chana, of blessed memory, who related that when the Rebbe was a boy, he never wanted to play on a seesaw because he said that he didn’t want to be up while the other person is down!

### IMPLICATIONS AT EVERY AGE AND IN EVERY SITUATION

This principle is extremely meaningful in the field of education. A teacher quite often encounters a student who is not blessed with great ability and aptitude. The teacher invests considerable effort, yet sees no results. He might even entertain a thought such as, “What can I do for this student? G-d created him this way. There is nothing else besides Him, so surely He will care for this child as well. Someone once put it in much harsher words when he said, “I don’t have to be G-d’s ‘flat tire repairman...”

In such a situation, the teacher has to look upon his student through the glasses of “tzimtzum in simple terms,” i.e., the whole world was created just for this student, and he has received the great privilege of competing with these limited abilities in the true faith that the tzimtzum is really “not in simple terms” and he has been given all the Divine help possible to succeed

in his mission.

By the same token, it can be said in relation to the Jewish home that you can’t avoid dealing with conflicts by making the excuse, “there is nothing else besides Him.” In dealing with such problems, we have to view them in actual and existing terms, as if the tzimtzum is in “simple terms,” as if the whole world depends upon me and my ability to conduct my family matters in the ways of pleasantness.

These two opposing approaches are demanded from T’mimim in their developing years with even greater force. They must uplift themselves toward more spiritual matters – the

*When the Rebbe was a boy, he never wanted to play on a seesaw because he said that he didn’t want to be up while the other person is down!*

avoda of davening, Torah study, and mitzva fulfillment – with the fullest measure of devotion and the feeling that “there is nothing else besides Him.” However, together with this, they must listen to “the voice of a crying child.” If there is a friend with him under the same roof who is in need of help and assistance, both material and spiritual, or even if he is outside of the yeshiva walls – in the framework of mitzva campaign activities and the like – he mustn’t ignore his responsibilities, claiming that his place is in more lofty matters and not in the trivialities of this material world.

### THE REVELATION OF “TZIMTZUM IN NOT SO SIMPLE TERMS”

If we consider in wonderment: How is it possible to serve G-d in two opposing directions simultaneously – tzimtzum in simple terms and tzimtzum in not so simple terms, one in relation to others and one in relation to ourselves? The answer is that G-d, the most hidden of all hidden beings, as it were, gives us the ability to contain these opposites and serve Him with a full heart.

As a result, we can even fulfill the Rebbe MH”M’s instructions to believe with complete faith in the coming of Moshiach, and at whose revelation we will see with our very eyes that “the tzimtzum is not according to its simple interpretation” and “there is nothing else besides Him”; everything is actual G-dliness.

Based on the strength of this faith and the feeling that the whole world is absolute nothingness, we might be inclined to forego all mundane concerns, wear Yom tov clothes, and deal only in matters of pure holiness, etc. However, the Rebbe MH”M also demands that we continue with our daily lives, dealing with the material and spiritual good of our fellow Jews, mitzvaim activities, concern for those in need – as if the tzimtzum is “in simple terms,” and the world in which we live is our top priority.

This is what is demanded from us. The best example is the custom of many who write in wedding invitations: The chuppa will take place, G-d willing, in Yerushalayim in the Third Beis HaMikdash. If, G-d forbid, the Rebbe MH”M does not reveal himself by then, it will take place in Kfar Chabad or Tzfas or Crown Heights or...

May it be G-d’s will that we shall participate very soon in the wedding celebration of G-d and the Jewish People in the rebuilt Yerushalayim in the Beis HaMikdash to be revealed in its [his] place.

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Boruch Hashem, Elul 5766

## Mivtza: HELPING THE NEEDY

**To every member of the Lubavitcher community:**

During this month of preparation for Rosh Hashonoh, the "head" of the New Year, we fondly recall our Rebbe's words that this is an especially auspicious time for strengthening our deep bond of Hiskashrus with the "Rosh Bnei Yisroel," the "head" of the Jewish people and leader of the generation.

Our Rebbeim explain that **an important way to strengthen Hiskashrus is by participating in the Rebbe's activities and concerns, consequently, by supporting an organization that brings together a number of these activities, the Hiskashrus is greater and stronger.** Such an organization is Kupas Rabbeinu, which seeks to continue many of the Rebbe's activities and concerns without change from the way he would conduct them himself.

Every year at this time, the Rebbe would call upon us to contribute generously to help needy families with their extra expenses for the coming month's many Yomim Tovim. This also coincides with the special emphasis during this month of giving extra Tzedokah, (indicated in the Hebrew letters of the word "Elul," as explained in many Sichos etc.), as a vital way of preparing ourselves for the new year and arousing Divine mercy upon us.

**We therefore appeal to every individual man and woman to contribute generously to Kupas Rabbeinu, enabling us to fulfill the Rebbe's desire to help all those who anxiously await our help. The greater your contribution, the more we can accomplish.**

Your generous contribution to Kupas Rabbeinu will be the appropriate vessel for receiving the abundant blessings of the Rebbe, who is its Nasi, that you may be blessed with a Ksiva Vachasima Tova for a good and sweet year, materially and spiritually. May it help to bring the full revelation of Moshiach - our Rebbe - immediately now!

Wishing a Ksiva Vachasima Tova for a good and sweet year,

**In the name of Vaad Kupas Rabbeinu**

**Rabbi Sholom Mendel Simpson**

**Rabbi Yehuda Leib Groner**

P.S. Of course, you may send to Kupas Rabbeinu all contributions that you would send to the Rebbe; all will be devoted to the activities to which the Rebbe would devote them.

You may also send Maimad, **Keren-Hashono** (this coming year 5767 - 355 days), Vov Tishrei, Yud Gimmel Tishrei Magbis etc. to Kupas Rabbeinu.

P.S. Please send all correspondence only to the following address.

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# THE PRAYER OF THE ASSIMILATED JEW

BY MENACHEM ZIEGELBOIM

*A Baal Shem Tov story presented for Chai Elul, birthday of the Baal Shem Tov.*

## PART I

It was the end of Elul and one could feel the approaching Days of Awe. Preparations for Yom Tov were being made. The markets were full of merchandise with stands piled high with all sorts of fruits and vegetables customarily eaten on Rosh HaShana, like pomegranates and dates.

There was an energy that was palpable in the Jewish streets. People were busy cleaning their homes and buying new clothes for Yom Tov, yet one could discern a certain gravity on their faces. After all, it was the eve of the New Year. People were more careful with davening b'tzibbur and shiurei Torah and about refraining from forbidden speech.

In the Baal Shem Tov's beis midrash the final preparations were being made for the Yomim Nora'im. People davened at length with great concentration, each person making his spiritual accounting, doing t'shuva for everything that was not as it should have been throughout the year.

## PART II

The talmidim of the Baal Shem Tov prepared themselves for the

weekday Maariv. They all stood in the beis midrash and eagerly awaited the Baal Shem Tov and the beginning of the davening.

The Baal Shem Tov entered at the usual hour, though he looked particularly somber, unlike his usual joyous countenance. He walked over to his place, leaned on the table, but did not open his Siddur; he remained standing there, deep in thought.

Nobody dared to disturb the tzaddik or hint that it was time to daven. The minutes passed and the tzaddik still stood there. One could see on his face that he was not in this world. The sharp-eyed talmidim could discern great emotion on his holy face. They were already used to sights such as these.

A long time passed and then, as though awakening, the Baal Shem Tov opened his Siddur, his face radiating great joy. The davening was different than that of any other evening. The Baal Shem Tov prayed at length and with unusual d'veikus. It was obvious that something great had transpired.

The davening ended and the talmidim looked forward to hearing

an explanation. They crowded around the tzaddik and the Baal Shem Tov began the following story without waiting for them to ask what had happened:

## PART III

In a little village, not far from here, lives a Jew who grew up and was raised in a warm Jewish home, but when he grew older he left his fathers' ways and befriended gentile youth. He spent much time with them until he became just like one of them and completely turned his back on his Jewish origins.

Many years passed. The man left the area where he had grown up and moved to live among gentiles. He completely forgot the Jewish way of life, the t'fillos and customs. Thirty years went by.

Today, this Jew happened to visit one of the Jewish towns in the area for business purposes and he noticed unusual activity in the streets of the town. It aroused his curiosity, so he went over to one of the Jews and asked him what was going on.

"We are preparing for our holiday, Rosh HaShana," answered the man. "According to Jewish tradition this is the day when man was created and the day the entire world is judged."

The simple words of the man on the street had a profound impact on

the assimilated Jew. Perhaps it was the word “our” when the man said, “our holiday,” illustrating the tremendous chasm that existed between him and his roots, or maybe it was the mention of the Day of Judgment that aroused his neshama.

Whatever it may have been, the assimilated Jew continued to walk about among the stands in the marketplace with childhood memories beginning to surface. Waves of nostalgia for his childhood washed over him. He remembered Shabbasos and Yomim Tovim, the shofar blowing in shul, and the holy dread that was felt by all the worshippers. A strong feeling overcame him and he choked up. He could almost touch that atmosphere of k’dusha and tahara.

He was suddenly faced with the stark contrast between the two worlds. How did he exchange a rich, meaningful life for an empty,

***“Master of the universe, I know there is no bigger sinner in the world than me...”***

worthless one? Powerful longing for his childhood burned in his heart.

As he walked about the streets of the town he found himself opposite the shul. Darkness was descending as the day came to an end. The sounds of t’filla could be heard outside and the voices sounded so close to him ... With his emotions in turmoil he stood outside and observed the Jews entering the shul for Maariv.

He felt that he wanted to enter and join their davening but he was embarrassed by his appearance and

his clothing since he looked like a gentile. Yet the inner tumult was strong and he could not withstand its urgings.

The man went to the women’s section and hid behind a curtain as he watched what was going on in the shul. When the chazan loudly proclaimed, “And He the Merciful will atone for sin,” a tremor went through his body. It was all familiar to him and he wanted to join the davening but his memory betrayed him. He had completely forgotten the words of the davening. He felt terrible and his eyes stung with tears.

When the last of the men left the shul, the man got up his courage. He took a Siddur and began to daven with tremendous kavana. The words of the prayers combined with the emotions that came directly from his burning heart.

“Master of the universe, I know there is no bigger sinner in the world than me,” and he began to enumerate his sins, “but I know that You are compassionate and gracious and most kind. Please forgive me for my sins and from now on, I will no longer sin. I want to return and be a Jew. Please accept me!”

The man’s prayer and sincere regret aroused a great commotion in Heaven, said the Baal Shem Tov. The prayer of this assimilated man, a man who seemed lost to the Jewish people, went up to the Heavenly throne. It also elevated prayers that had waited hundreds of years for their tikkun.

“I saw what was going on in the heart of that Jew,” concluded the Baal Shem Tov, “and waited for his t’filla. I wanted to daven with him. That is the reason for the delay today. We merited to daven along with a baal t’shuva and our prayers went along with his, straight to Hashem.”



# DOES THE REBBE REALLY REJECT THE NAME “MEDINAT YISROEL”?

TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY

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

I cannot refrain from writing about another cause for great surprise. In his *Igros Kodesh* (Vol. 16, Letter #5992), the Lubavitcher Rebbe writes in response to a question regarding the name Eretz Yisroel or Medinat Yisroel: “After the name has long since been established by the G-d of Israel, and as is said in Torah at the prophecy of Yechezkel: ‘In visions of G-d He has brought me to **Eretz Yisroel**,’ and furthermore, our Sages and Rabbis, of blessed memory, have taught in Gemara and Midrash that this holy land is so called (or by the name “HaAretz,” the Land, as in the

language of the pasuk, “When you come to the land”), it is clear and understood that as in all matters established by the Creator and Ruler of the World, matters of Torah and its mitzvos, even this name can be neither changed nor altered by anyone to the name Medinat Yisroel – even if the majority agrees, as this is not subject to a vote.”

The Rebbe’s words are astonishing, as no one is interested in changing names, since, as the Rebbe himself writes, land and state are different concepts. The territory is called by the name “land,” and the form of regime and societal order is called “state.” It is

clear that even today, we travel to the Land of Israel, however, we live according to the laws of the State of Israel. Therefore, there is no name change here, but differing concepts – each one independent of the other.

It is, therefore, puzzling that the Rebbe writes that in the Tanach Eretz Yisroel is only called a “land”; we find in numerous places that it is also called a “**medina**”: “And these are the children of the **medina** that went up out of the captivity” (Ezra 2:1); “The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the **medina** are in great affliction and reproach” (Nechemia 1:3); “These are the children of the **medina**, that went up out of the captivity” (ibid. 7:6); “And these are the chiefs of the **medina** that dwelt in Yerushalayim (ibid. 11:3).

## ANSWER:

1. On the pasuk that you brought from Ezra, “And these are the children of the **medina** that went up out of the captivity,” Rashi comments: “The **medina** of **Eretz Yisroel**,” emphasizing that the **name** is “Eretz Yisroel,” and “these are the children of the **medina**” refers to the Jews who were under the regime that was in Eretz Yisroel. This is the intention in all the verses you

cited, i.e., even though the **name** is “Eretz Yisroel,” the “medina” is merely a description of the regime, as you wrote yourself. (This is because the word “*medina*” derives from “*din*” (law), meaning the regime and not the inner value of the land, as our Sages say, “Everything is according to the custom of the medina.”)

However, those who founded the state gave it the **name** “Medinat Yisroel,” and this is because they wanted to emphasize that its whole essence is just a regime like all other countries, and as all the nations, thus causing the very holiness of the land itself to be forgotten, as we mentioned earlier.

2. The Rebbe himself in his letters (*Igros Kodesh*, Vol. 25, p. 308) notes in the language of the Sages in Mishna (Sh’k’alim 1:3) that Eretz Yisroel includes “a Mikdash and a Medina” (just as it includes Judea and the Galilee), but this is not the name of the place. The decision of the founders of the state, based on their ideological outlook, to reject the name “Eretz Yisroel” and call it specifically by the name “Medinat Yisroel” was in order to show that we are not the Land of Israel from the times of the Patriarchs and the Sages, of blessed memory but a state like all other countries.

3. Thus, we can understand that when the Rebbe wrote that the place is only called by the name Eretz Yisroel, his intention is that throughout Tanach and the sayings of the Sages, of blessed memory, we haven’t found that Eretz Yisroel was **called** by the **name** “Medinat Yisroel.” Accordingly, you obviously haven’t exposed anything new in the p’sukim that you brought.

Note that nowhere in all those p’sukim is the place called by the **name** “Medinat Yisroel,” rather just “the medina,” which we also find in other verses, such as “one hundred and twenty-seven *medinos*,” etc. Therefore, Rashi emphasized the name, “The medina of **Eretz Yisroel**,” as the name is specifically “Eretz Yisroel.”

4. I will now offer a deeper explanation of the above: Throughout the entire globe, the only place that can possibly be called “**the Land**” itself (even before it had any government or when it was under a different regime) is Eretz Yisroel. For example, before



America established its own government, it had no name of its own or it had the name given by the natives, and if one day there will be another form of rule there, it will also have a different name according to the new regime. In the case of Eretz Yisroel, however, **the land itself** is

called by this name, chosen at the time of the Creation as an everlasting inheritance. Therefore, regarding **the name of the Land**, it makes no difference whatsoever what type of regime it will have, because it will always be called “Eretz Yisroel.”

5. Thus, when “Zionists” come along today and say that they are prepared to give portions of our Holy Land to non-Jews, if they would know and internalize that we’re talking about “Eretz Yisroel,” which belongs entirely to the Jewish People, with borders established at the time of the world’s Creation, they would understand that they have no authority whatsoever to dissect it. However, if their relationship to this place begins from the innovation made in 5708, and in their estimation, this is only “Medinat Yisroel” and they seemingly are **the authorities**, then who can prevent them from deciding what the country’s boundaries will be?

6. Similarly, this matter also has relevance to the manner in which they relate to Eretz Yisroel from **the spiritual aspect**. Their utter chutzpa in bringing in Shabbos desecration, the eating of pork, and other forms of abomination stems from their point of view that we’re talking about a state like all the other nations where democratic rule is the power of authority here, not a special land with a pure atmosphere (see Shabbos 15b, Gittin 8b) whose true authority derives directly from G-d Alm-ghty, besides the fact that He is “the Creator of heaven and earth” and He specifically chose this place for the indwelling of His Divine Presence.

7. This is what the Rebbe meant when he wrote that changing the name of the place from “Eretz Yisroel” to “Medinat Yisroel” is not merely semantics; it amounts to naming it after the regime as opposed to signifying the inner essence of the land from the time of its creation and its inheritance by our holy Forefathers.

### DECISION OF THE COUNCIL OF TORAH SAGES – 5699

“A Jewish state that refuses to recognize the Torah as law, denying the origin of Israel, refuting the proper character of the nation, and undermining its existence – **such a Jewish settlement can not be called by the name ‘Jewish state.’**”

(“From Katowicz to the 5th of Iyar, p. 279)

# FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION

*The following is a reshima of a Chassid containing the Alter Rebbe's horaa to his son, the Mittlerer Rebbe, not to daven with great excitement, with a wondrous explanation about the difference between the generations. \* Presented for Chai Elul, birthday of both the Baal Shem Tov and the Alter Rebbe.*

The Alter Rebbe told his son, R. Dovber, not to daven with great excitement of the heart. This was surprising to his son, since he saw his father, the tzaddik, daven with great *hispaalus*, moving around the room and reciting the words loudly, as is known. He did not, however, summon the nerve to question his holy father about why his father refused to allow him such *avoda*.

Then an auspicious moment arose when the Alter Rebbe was in a happy mood and his son asked him. The Alter Rebbe answered: You know that I am the disciple of the great Maggid and that the Maggid was the disciple of the Baal Shem Tov, and you are my disciple. You know my physique and I will describe that of my teacher. He was known as sickly and very weak, and my teacher the Baal Shem Tov was the opposite. He was tall and healthy, robust and strong.

This was not from pleasures of this world, for he did not take pleasure

with even his little finger. My teacher the great Maggid did not lack anything and it wasn't because of this that he was weak and sick, but there are lofty matters involved here, and I will teach you understanding.

It is known that all illnesses of the soul correspond to sicknesses of the body in detail and by examining one's body one can understand illnesses of the soul:

Sicknesses of the body are divided into four types. One is a simple sickness – i.e., a wound, a bruise, a fresh cut – and this can be cured by a simple doctor with some medication applied externally.

The second is if the wound did not emerge externally. Then a more experienced doctor is needed to draw it out and then he can heal it with medications that can be effective externally.

The third is when the sickness is in the inner organs and it cannot be drawn out. This needs an even great

doctor who knows about sicknesses of internal organs with great exactitude not to err even by a hairsbreadth. He can heal it with various potions and compounds which are taken internally.

The fourth is a sickness which even a top doctor cannot heal, as it comes from a diminishing of the life-force. The invalid has no pain, but he often faints and the doctor cannot increase his life-force. This invalid's condition is very dangerous and only some Baal Shem with holy names can heal his heart and increase his life-force so he no longer faints.

Thus, there are also four types of soul sicknesses:

There is a simple sickness, i.e., when a person transgresses deliberately or inadvertently and then becomes aware of his sin. His cure is readily at hand. Look in *Rokeiach* and other Musar works for the tikkun of every sin.

The second are those things which a person "tramples with his heel" (i.e., treats lightly) and are forgotten about, like *avak lashon ha'ra*, *avak gezel*, bittul Torah for no purpose, *t'filla* without *kavana*. They are overlooked, and therefore, they must be drawn out from the potential to the actual with *hispaalus ha'lev* in order that the sinner be aroused and he recalls them and repents.

The third is when he does not transgress any prohibitions or refrain from any positive commandments. It's just in the area of *emuna* in the Divine Oneness that his thoughts are "off,"

and like someone whose internal organs are sick who needs a top doctor, this person needs a lot of Torah – Nigleh and Nistar – in order to straighten out his mind with emuna.

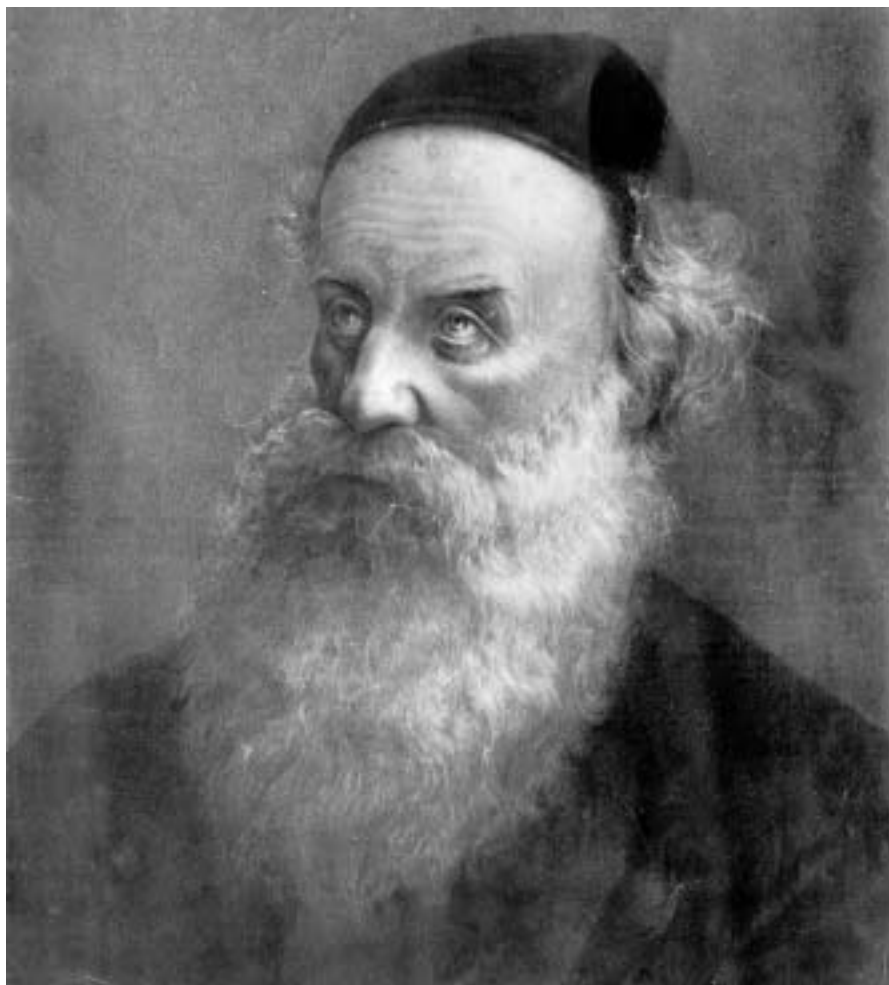
The fourth is not even lacking in this, for his emuna is intact. His deficiency is faintness of heart, i.e., *es lebt nit* (lifelessness). Nobody can help such a person except [here there are words missing in the manuscript]... the Baal Shem Tov.

The disciples of the Baal Shem Tov lacked nothing except for this, and as a result of the nachas that he received from them, he was healthy, robust, and strong. He did not impart a huge amount of Torah to them; simply through a few words he would increase their chayus in avodas Hashem, *lebedikait*.

The next generation, during the time of the Maggid my teacher, the generation fell to a lower level and had sicknesses internally in the unity of G-d and emuna, and from the pain of this my teacher was weak and very ill and he said much more Torah without end in order to straighten out the intellects.

Following him, when the next generation fell even lower and there were numerous sins that a person tramples with his heels and between man and his fellow, I work with my avoda with *hispaalus ha'lev* to draw it out from the potential to the actual. The sinner remembers and knows his sin and then he repents and is healed.

However, in your generation my son and disciple, the generation falls another level. They come to ask about simple sins that man does. This needs



***“I work with my avoda with hispaalus ha’lev to draw it out from the potential to the actual. The sinner remembers and knows his sin and then he repents and is healed...”***

a simple doctor, without any *hispaalus*, looking into sifrei Musar for the tikkun for every sin. This is why I came out to

tell you that your avoda is only with *hisbonenus* (contemplation).

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# THIS PLACE NEEDS MORE THAN MESIRUS NEFESH

BY CHANI NUSSBAUM

*She was “born as a shlucha” in Porto Alegre, Brazil. She left for several years and then returned, this time with her husband, whose parents are also shluchim. Together they try to inspire other Jews and ignite neshamos. In this engaging interview, Mrs. Raizy Binyamini describes her childhood on shlichus as well as her current shlichus.*

This interview with Raizy Binyamini is somewhat unusual in that Raizy is a second generation shlucha. She is helped by her parents, Rabbi Moshe Menachem Mendel and Mrs. Miriam Lieberov, who are on shlichus in Porto Alegre, Brazil.

“My parents came here 25 years ago. The shliach in Brazil, Rabbi Shabsi Alperin, bought them one-way tickets because he was afraid they would want to leave

immediately. They say that when a Chassid asked the Rebbe about going on shlichus here, the Rebbe said, 'that place needs more than mesirus nefesh.'

"My parents arrived in Adar and by Erev Pesach my father already had a good relationship with the president of the local shul. The president bet \$100 that my parents wouldn't last for more than a year in the city. After a year had passed, he had to pay my father \$100 at a little gathering they had. He discovered that my father was a loyal soldier who was not going to leave until Moshiach comes.

"I was born to shlichus. I always read the shluchos interviews in the *Ateres Chaya* to see how shluchos manage. I can only tell you that we try not to get bogged down with the constant difficulties. We don't run away from them; we deal with them.

"Think about it – after 25 years there is no big Chabad house, as there are in many other places. Throughout the city there are only two families who keep kosher properly."

## REMOVE THE BROCHURES

Porto Alegre is an hour and a half flight from S. Paulo and an hour and a half flight from Buenos Aires, Argentina.

The community in Porto Alegre is the oldest Ashkenazic community in Brazil, started when Jews began arriving after the year 1900. Most of the Jews who settled here were people who didn't have enough money to settle in North America and so they chose South America. These were mostly simple people. Rabbanim, for example, were never drawn to this city.

The Jews worked hard for their

livelihoods. The first generation still remembered a little of Jewish customs and mitzvos but the next generation had no knowledge of Judaism since no Talmud Torahs had been founded. There was nobody to teach the children. As the years went by, their line of thinking became: Whatever has to be done is done, for no particular reason. There was little concern for Yiddishkai or any sense of obligation.

"Today there is a bit more caring and openness, but it's still greatly limited," says Raizy.



Rabbi Shmuel Biniamini

The first Jewish school was founded seventy years ago. Though this school hardly supplied what was lacking; it was Jewish only in name. The local Jews abhor change and shun open displays of Jewishness. 60% of the students are children of mixed marriages.

"When my parents came in Adar, they wanted to start by sending mishloach manos to the children of the school. In the end, after long discussions, the principal of the school decided to allow it only for

first grade. They did not allow the rabbi to come to the school himself.

"When he got permission, my father sent over mishloach manos to the school and a half an hour later they called him and said they would allow mishloach manos to be distributed to all the children on condition that he remove the brochures."

## How many Jews live in Porto Alegre?

"Officially there are 8000 Jews, with 2500 or so families, but I believe there are more Jews."

## 13-YEAR-OLD PRINCIPAL

"The difficulties of shlichus were not new for my mother because she too was born into shlichus. She is a Posner and her family has been on shlichus in Tennessee for 57 years. This is where she got the strength to deal with the hardships, especially when she didn't know a word of Portuguese, the local language. I follow in my parents' footsteps.

"At first my father davened in the kehilla's shul, but when he began bringing young people, the locals didn't like this and began to harass him. We had to start our own shul.

"Our shul only holds a congregation of fifty. For Yom Tov we rent a hall to accommodate the overflow. The shul is full every Friday night, baruch Hashem, and two years ago we began having minyanim on Mondays and Thursdays too, which is quite an achievement in a place like Porto Alegre.

"Recently, a man went over to my father after davening and asked him, 'Which Haftora do we read today?' He was asking because there were two parshiyos that week. I was so moved by his question since just a

few years ago he knew nothing about Judaism.

“Among their many activities, my parents started a Tzivos Hashem club, which is a good way to attract children. As a kid, I was one of the first soldiers to work in the club.

“My parents opened a preschool which slowly grew into a school with fifty children. When my older brother became bar mitzva, he left for yeshiva far away. This made a big impression on the other children and some of his friends followed him. They returned later with hats and jackets and tzitzis out. This sight frightened the locals, but of course we didn’t despair, and my parents carried on.

“When I turned 13, I also left home and learned in Eretz Yisroel in Lud and Tzfas and another year of seminary in Vienna, Austria. When I left for the first time, I announced that I wouldn’t return, but when I matured I knew that it wasn’t I who made these decisions, but the Rebbe. Maybe this place suited me because I was familiar with it and all the difficulties, more than outsiders. So yes, I returned, and how!

“I can hear Rabbi Yaakov Biderman’s words ringing in my ears. He is the shliach in Vienna, and in one of our classes he said, ‘We have to mature with the shlichus.’ Indeed, I matured along with the shlichus. After a few years of study out of Brazil, I returned to help my parents on shlichus. By Divine providence, I married my husband, Shmuel Binyamini, here. He is also from Brazil, was also born on shlichus, and we continue on shlichus here together.”

**I assume your shlichus began not after you married, but when you were a child...**

“I have memories of those days when I was a young shlucha, dealing with the hardships here. When I was ten, I helped my mother in chinuch. I worked in the preschool and I often had to substitute for my mother, the principal!

“I still remember that when I went into my own classroom and davened, every five minutes I would run out to bring another class to order.

“One year, my mother gave birth two weeks before Pesach and I tried to restore order in school. One day,

people came from the Board of Education and wanted to speak with the principal. I was 13, thin and small, and I told them, ‘My mother, the principal, isn’t here at the moment and I am her replacement.’ They said with a smile, ‘Okay, we will come back in a week to meet the principal.’ I told them, ‘I am sorry, but she will back in another three weeks.’ They said, ‘Okay, so we’ll come back in three weeks.’”

## FINAL REQUEST

Raizy mixes past and present in our conversation. When she was bas mitzva she decided she wanted to organize Mivtza Neshek in the city. She started going to the hospital every Erev Shabbos. On the hospital forms, each patient must indicate their religious affiliation, so Raizy knew how many Jewish patients there were and their names.



Shma Yisroel in Porto Alegre

“My sister and I put a lot of work into this. The first week we prepared two candlesticks for each woman and two challos with a small label on it that said, ‘Shabbat Shalom.’

“The second week a Jewish woman and two men were hospitalized and we were disappointed at first. Both of us are shy by nature and people are not used to getting things here.

Nevertheless, we got up our courage and went to the room of one of the Jews. Fortunately, he recognized us right away because he knew our parents and told us that he remembered when we were born.

“We went back home and gave my father regards. My father remembered that the man and his wife were among the first Jews who sent their daughters to our Tzivos Hashem club. They had warmer feelings towards Judaism, relatively speaking. Then, in a moment of candor, he told my father that he couldn’t move his legs and the doctors did not know why. He felt that his days were numbered, he said. Then he burst into tears and said, ‘I want to see nachas from my daughter before I die.’

“It turned out that one of his daughters was going to get married and he asked my father to speak to his

daughter to move up the wedding date without telling her about his state of health. My father did so and managed to organize the wedding within three months, which is extremely rare here.

“The man attended his daughter’s wedding and died a week later. We felt we had been shluchim to give him the nachas he yearned for before leaving this world. This was thanks to Mivtza Neshek that we did with the kochos of the Rebbe.

“The story has a postscript. Today, the children of that couple regularly attend Tzivos Hashem and there is no greater nachas than that.”

### SEND HIM TO A PSYCHIATRIST

“My brother would go out on mivtzaim often and got to know a certain man. The man became very sick with cancer and he became very attached to my brother and poured out his heart to him. Of course, they wrote to the Rebbe and gave tz’daka and said T’hillim together.

“The man recovered miraculously and went with a group of people that we organize to 770 for 3 Tamuz every year. The man has remained a mekurav till this day and he takes part in our programming and helps as much as he can.”

Another story:

“One Erev Shabbos we went to the hospital for Mivtza Neshek as usual and we met an elderly Jew. He looked pale and listless. When we wished him a refua shleima he was very touched. We left challos for him and candlesticks for his wife. We later learned that he died that Shabbos. His wife told us that until his final moments he didn’t stop talking about us. He was so moved that we, the rabbi’s children, had come to visit him.

“Until this day I am moved to think about how we made that man so happy less than a day before he left this world.”

Raizy has more stories about neshamos along with an account of the difficulties and alienation they experience.

“A Jewish girl who was impressed by our work and began becoming close with our family and Judaism was sent by her parents to a psychiatrist. When she realized that she wouldn’t be able to grow in her Judaism here, she moved to S. Paulo, a city with the largest concentration of Jews in Brazil. She married and had a son and they have a frum home.

“My father says that Jews who become interested in Judaism here are products for export because anybody who is interested and wants to be observant, wants to leave as soon as possible. My parents and we have mekuravim living in S. Paulo, New York, and even Eretz Yisroel, but they don’t stay here in Porto Alegre. They leave because there is no structure to help them progress. When they discover the beauty of Judaism they want to grow stronger and find a social circle that is similar to theirs.”

### LIVING ON MIRACLES

“After experiencing stories like these, no wonder that at the school and Tzivos Hashem club we give the children more and more Judaism. We are not afraid, not even after a boy from our school went out to eat with his parents and began bentching and his parents took him out of the school. We continue our work, slowly but surely.

“Being the second generation on shlichus here, it’s easier to work because people have already

participated in our programs and they know us and aren’t afraid to send us their children. The results are that most of those who join Tzivos Hashem are married to Jews.”

At this point, Raizy recalls a miracle that happened in connection with the school:

“It was at the end of a school year and the school’s financial situation was bad. With all the plans to expand the school, my parents were in debt for about \$26,000. My father wrote a letter to the Rebbe and put it in the *Igros Kodesh*. The next day, the shliach from S. Paulo called and said he had a donor who wanted to make a contribution of \$26,000 to a school. Yes, that was a miracle.

“My parents have no steady income but we always



In the sukkah

***“We manage. We learned to live with what we have. We go to the milking in order to have chalav Yisroel. The meat comes from northern Brazil, but for nine years we had no meat and years have gone by and I still can’t eat meat.”***

know that when we need money, it comes. Emuna is one of the main characteristics of shluchim, right?”

### **SUCCESSFUL RADIO PROGRAM**

“We began our own program here five years ago,” said Raizy, focusing on her present shlichus. “We have a Jewish radio program every week and it is broadcast every Sunday from 10 till 11 in the morning. This is a day and hour when most people are home. It’s a network that broadcasts to a high-class audience and the program has to be suited to that demographic. The program plays in every Jewish home and every Sunday, about 15,000 local families hear it. It is full of Jewish ideas and even Chassidus and we also speak about the Seven Noachide Laws.

“My father gives over a sicha of the Rebbe. Then there’s the Moshiach Corner, in which my mother talks about Geula and Moshiach. She also speaks about the Jewish woman. There are responses

to the questions of Reform (there are three Reform temples here) like: Why doesn’t a woman get an aliya to the Torah and why is the woman behind the mechitza, etc.

“There is a Jew who used to live here, who lives in northern Brazil now, who knows a lot about the history of the Sephardic Jews here. He contributes to the radio program with his vast knowledge. When I was in seminary in Vienna, I would also get on the radio and talk about the European countries we had visited and their Jewish angle, past and present.

“When I returned here I began to bring up a different topic connected with Judaism on the program. In recent months I began talking about cycles: the daily cycle, the annual cycle, as well as the cycle of life – from ‘Modeh Ani’ in the morning to the mitzvos throughout the day: tzitzis, t’fillin, until ‘Shma’ at night.

“One Friday, when I went with my sister to the supermarket, an elderly woman stopped me excitedly and said, ‘You don’t know me and neither do your parents. I recognized your voice from the radio program which I listen to every week.’ This encouraged me to continue broadcasting and to support my parents in this.

“The radio is a powerful medium. The program has to be interesting, multifaceted and high quality, week after week. It’s definitely a tough job, but one with lots of job satisfaction. We live with this program at home. Throughout the week we prepare for it and it has become a tradition that right after Shabbos we sit down and make the final preparations for the next day’s broadcast.”

### **TEACHER OF MY SISTERS**

**What do you do about kosher food?**

“We manage. We learned to live with what we have. We go to the milking in order to have chalav Yisroel. The meat comes from northern Brazil, but for nine years we had no meat and years have gone by and I still can’t eat meat.”

**How did your parents manage with chinuch for you and your sisters and brothers?**

“From grade six and on I did not attend limudei kodesh because I was far ahead of the other students. I knew English too because it’s my mother’s native language. I didn’t study Portuguese since I knew I would be going to Eretz Yisroel. (Laughing): Now you understand how I had time to help my mother run the school!

“I had it very hard in high school in Eretz Yisroel because I was so homesick. I always had pictures of my little brothers with me. My year of seminary in Vienna was my best year. It also prepared me a lot for my present life.

“When I returned here, I began to teach my sisters. We began a home schooling program, which is popular in America and helps shluchim who cannot always send their children to the local schools for obvious reasons.”

### **What about a mikva?**

“Baruch Hashem, there is a beautiful mikva here. Before my parents came here there was a wealthy Jew who convinced important people here that a mikva had to be built. Wealthy Jews who now live in S. Paulo donated their home to the mikva. We brought Rabbi Feigelstock to check it out and baruch Hashem, there are ten families who use the mikva. This number is significant but of course we want it to grow.”

### **SHLICHUS AT A WEDDING**

A year and a half ago on 7 Adar,



The shluchim's shul

Raizy married Shmuel Binyamini, a son of shluchim in Brazil. Naturally, when two shluchim marry, the wedding is a perfect opportunity to spread Judaism.

“It was historic – a Jewish-Chassidic wedding with completely separate seating. People won’t forget it. My mother definitely won’t forget it. If you ask her if another child of hers will get married here, her answer will be a firm no because it was so very hard to arrange it all, getting a caterer, preparing the food, kashering the kitchen and the hall, getting a mechtza, etc.

“We had a kind of bar to which we invited about 1000 people, which is not surprising considering the connections my parents have made with the people here over 25 years of shlichus. We also felt we had to invite them so they would see what a Jewish wedding looks like.

“We even had a hard time

getting me a wedding gown. It also taught me a lesson in life. It was when I walked to the chuppah that I suddenly noticed a big stain on the gown and I wanted to cry, but I immediately said to myself: You can ruin the wedding and you will never be able to reclaim this day. It would be smarter to close your eyes as though you didn’t see anything. That’s what I did. I was truly happy at the wedding despite the stain.

“I learned that it’s easy to destroy. It’s sometimes hard to be happy, but it’s worth it because you can’t begin to imagine the positive results, with Hashem’s help. The wedding was exceptional. The local papers photographed it and reported it excitedly and a lot was said about it.

“Right after the chuppah I put on a sheitel so the guests would see that hair is permissible before the wedding and is covered after the wedding and they would see the importance of wearing a sheitel

(they would also see it’s not so terrible to wear a sheitel).”

A shlucha, even at her wedding, is a dugma chaya!

***“The man attended his daughter’s wedding and died a week later. We felt we had been shluchim to give him the nachas he yearned for before leaving this world. This was thanks to Mivtza Neshek.”***

# A “TASTE” OF THE TORAH OF MOSHIACH

BY ZEV RITTERMAN

*A compilation of aphorisms from our Rebbeim about the Baal Shem Tov from Otzros HaBaal Shem Tov. \* Presented for Chai Elul, the birthday of the Baal Shem Tov.*

## A TASTE

It is known that the revelation of the Toras HaBaal Shem Tov is a “taste” of the revelation of the Torah of Moshiach.

*(Hisvaaduyos 5751, Cheilek 3, p. 264, footnote 20)*

## HEAD OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE

Our teacher, the Baal Shem Tov is the aspect and level of Moshe, the head of all the Jewish leaders throughout all the generations until the luminous time of the revelation of Moshiach Tzidkeinu, very soon.

*(Igros Kodesh Admur Rayatz, vol. 8, p. 19)*

## BLAZING FIRE

With the revelation of Moshiach, the heart of the holy Baal Shem Tov will be revealed. There will be the revelation of the burning flame of Ahavas Yisroel in

the physical heart.

*(Seifer HaSichos 5702, p. 11)*

## THE POINT OF GEULA WHICH INCLUDES THREE

We spoke lately about the acronyms (that pertain especially to Chabad Chassidim and through them, all the Jewish people throughout the generations) of the word “**miyad**” (immediately) as in “*miyad*-immediately they are redeemed.” The word “*miyad*” alludes to **Moshe**, **Yisroel** (Baal Shem Tov), and **Dovid** (Malka Meshicha).

These three (Moshe, Yisroel Baal Shem Tov, and Dovid Malka Meshicha) are associated with “immediately they are redeemed”: **Moshe** – he is the first redeemer and the final redeemer. **Yisroel** – the Baal Shem Tov, as Moshiach answered his question, “when are

you coming?” with, “when your wellsprings spread forth.” **Dovid Malka Meshicha** – through him comes the true and complete Redemption.

The word “*miyad*” includes all three in one word and in a word that means “in one moment.” This alludes to all three having one purpose: the immediate Redemption.

This concept is divided into three details and in this order: Moshe, Yisroel Baal Shem Tov, and Dovid. From this we learn that the power for Geula originates from Moshe, the first redeemer who is the final redeemer. Moshe received the Torah from Sinai and transmitted it, etc. This includes the entire Torah, including anything an experienced student will innovate in the future, also including the revelation of p’nimius ha’Torah in a way of spreading the wellsprings outward through the Baal Shem Tov, bringing about the arrival of Dovid Malka Meshicha.

More specifically: Moshe and Dovid (Malka Meshicha) are the first and the last, the first redeemer is the final redeemer. Between them

is the letter “Yud,” which stands for Yisroel (Baal Shem Tov), corresponding to the “point of Jewishness” as it is in a revealed, overt manner, to the extent that it takes on the form of an actual letter (Yud).

It is this (Yud) which connects the two letters “Mem” and “Dalet,” which are incomparably more expansive than the letter Yud, for the point of Jewishness is connected with Hashem himself ... and it is specifically this which has the power to bring the first redeemer who is the final redeemer (Moshe and Dovid Malka Meshicha).

The power to reveal the Yud (the point of Jewishness), the yechida of the soul (the spark of Moshiach within every single Jew; the very essence of the soul) in a Jew comes especially through



Otzros HaBaal Shem Tov

Yisroel Baal Shem Tov, through the revelation of Toras HaChassidus, referring in general to all of Chassidus of all the Rebbeim (which is connected with Moshiach).

(Seifer HaSichos 5752, vol. 2, p. 7)

### A LIGHT WHICH CONSTANTLY SHINES

The light of the Baal Shem Tov

constantly shines. There will be Chassidus until the coming of Moshiach, without a doubt, because Dovid Melech Yisroel Chai V'kayam is manifested in the Baal Shem Tov and the Maggid and the Rebbe [i.e. the Alter Rebbe]. It shall be this way forever, for we are from Dovid, so it will be forever until Moshiach.

(Seifer HaSichos Toras Sholom, p. 176)

### THE CONSOLER AND ENCOURAGER

The Baal Shem Tov is “this is the one who will console us” (B'Reishis 5:29) of the period of Ikvisa d'Meshicha. The Baal Shem Tov is the consoler and encourager of the Jewish people in the difficult time of the bitter Galus, from his time until the happy day of the coming of Moshiach.

(Likkutei Dibburim p. 548)

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ב"ה



# TIME OF RECKONING

BY SHAI GEFEN

## REGRET FOR THE PAST AND COMMITMENT FOR THE FUTURE

Elul is a month of stocktaking. The security situation and the general breakdown since the abysmal failure in the second war in Lebanon, and the connection between the failure and the Disengagement crime, are causing many to rethink their participation in that crime. Many people who stood off to the side are now asking forgiveness from the former residents of Gush Katif and feel completely different because of what has happened.

Brigadier General Gershon HaKohen was the commander of the 36th Division who burst into Neve Dekalim and brought about the collapse of the opposition there. He is the commander who was responsible for the evacuation of most of the settlements in Gush Katif; the person whom the settlers see as commander of the expulsion.

Last week, when he paid a Shiva call to the family of Emanuel Morano, a senior commander in the General Staff Reconnaissance Unit (Sayeret Matkal) who was killed in a fierce battle with Hezbollah on August 24, HaKohen is reported to have said to the family, "The Disengagement was a crime and I was an accomplice to the crime against the Jewish people. What happened now was because of the crime that was perpetrated." HaKohen did not deny the report.

What is "sobering up"? Is knowing that a crime was committed against the Jewish people in the category of

sobering up? If it's not a crime, what do you call expelling and destroying dozens of yishuvim, throwing out thousands of people from their jobs and property, giving their land and all their hard work to their enemies and murderers solely because they are Jews?

T'shuva is defined in halacha. The Rambam says that the t'shuva process consists of two basic components: regret for the past and commitment for the future. When will we know that t'shuva is genuine? When all those who took part in it (openly or secretly by taking bribes and payoffs and the closing of criminal files) will openly admit their participation in the crime and will publicly declare that they will never take part in such destruction again.

One of the wicked campaigns that Sharon and his cronies led said that if

we refuse expulsion orders that will lead to the destruction of the army. No less. Many people fell for this, including people from among us who went along with Sharon and the spin doctors. On the eve of the expulsion, Gershon HaKohen said that although it was difficult emotionally to carry out the expulsion, it was not difficult morally. "There is a tragedy here. But the question that I ask myself is whether it is possible to do this act as a Zionist act. And I think that it's possible. In my opinion, what I'm going to do this week is not post-Zionism, but Zionism. I ask myself whether it is possible to bring about this destruction as a sacred act. And I think it's possible. Not that my hands are holy. But in the final analysis, I will destroy what I destroy in the name of the state, and in order for the state to exist. I will do what I do in order to enable the state to make difficult



Discovery of a mile long Hezbollah bunker near a UN post



decisions in other places, and to impose authority in other places, as it is doing in this place.”

Afterwards, HaKohen bragged that the success of the Disengagement was like the victory in the Six Day War and it is what will boost the army and the State for years to come since everybody saw who is the real authority.

We said it time and again that the ones who would collaborate in this crime would be the one who would destroy the army. One year later we all see the army failed and how the entire structure is corrupt. You didn't have to be a genius to pose a basic question: How can an army that trains to expel Jews and serve the interest of terrorists expect to fight and defeat its enemies?

If Gershon HaKohen and others like him have begun to grasp the enormity of the crime they perpetrated against the Jewish people, the minimum we expect of them is for them to inform their higher-ups that they will refuse to carry out any anti-Jewish orders!

The Disengagement Plan brought about a shakeup of the existing systems both military and political. Now we have to shake up the broader public. There are many Jews today who feel guilty for not doing enough to stop the tragedy. We're talking not only about the homes of settlers beyond the Green Line but a war for the welfare and defense of all the Jewish residents of Eretz Yisroel. The Disengagement affected not only settlers of Gush Katif and northern Shomron but all Jews everywhere.

We need to make use of the current crisis to create a shift towards positive values. Each of us needs to feel that we are loyal soldiers in the battle for shleimus ha'Aretz. The Matteh HaOlami to Save the Nation and the Land has distributed about a million copies of, "We Told You So." The

booklets were distributed in areas where Leftists live and they heard feedback that we never heard from Leftists before.

There's no question that if we spread the word, the message about halacha, it will have a profound impact and bring about real change.

### THE STRENGTH OF MY HAND

One of the main problems that the Rebbe pinpointed with those who are in favor of giving away land is "kochi v'otzem yadi" (my power and the strength of my hand). The halacha says that we may not take unnecessary risks and that we have to protect ourselves in the natural way of things, including going to war.

When those in favor of giving away land are asked how they dare to take such chances, they say, "If necessary, the mighty IDF will go back in and overpower them." We see that it doesn't work that way, and to reenter territory that you left costs us in blood.

Unfortunately, those in the chareidi sector perverted the concept of "my strength and the power of my hand," as though holding on to your land epitomizes "my strength and the power of my hand" – that we "allow" ourselves to "start up with the nations" when just the opposite is correct.

Why am I writing this? Because the news reported that the Chief of Staff of the expulsion, Dan Chalutz, called the prime minister on the first day of the war, after the air force destroyed the Zelzal missile launchers and declared, "We won the war." This is the Chief of Staff who took the "my strength and power of my hand" to an extreme with arrogant declarations about his abilities and the abilities of the army.

We still don't forget what he threatened after the expulsion that if they shoot Kassams from Gaza, "we will enter with full force." Well,

*We need to acknowledge that our strength is limited and if Hashem does not protect the city, the guard watches it in vain. Therefore, we must carefully protect whatever Hashem gives us as an outright gift.*

Kassams fell on Sderot and the Negev this week as they have over the past year, nonstop.

We need to acknowledge that our strength is limited and if Hashem does not protect the city, the guard watches it in vain. Therefore, we must carefully protect whatever Hashem gives us as an outright gift. Any experiments and gambles made because we rely on our strength are made out of arrogance and faith in our own might. We saw where this led us in the "Realignment War."

### IRAN-SYRIA

In this recent war we saw how the Evil Axis – Iran and Syria – ran the war from behind the scenes. Tragically, once again Israel did not finish the war and instead of eradicating the enemy it allowed them to grow stronger.

Amazingly, 16 years ago in Sivan

5750, when the mayor of Ariel, Ron Nachman passed by for “dollars” and asked the Rebbe how to explain the subject of shleimus ha’Aretz in the US, the Rebbe put the spotlight on Iran and Syria. Today we all see what a danger they pose. It has only gotten more dangerous over the years with their hold growing to include the Gaza Strip and Lebanon:

**As I said several times, the United States is interested in Israel’s welfare because the opposing side are Arabs and Arabs are against the US. They don’t want the US to be successful; they want Iran, etc., to succeed. Lately though, alien thoughts, side issues, mixed in. What is needed is to find a response to what has occurred lately.**

It’s easy to check this out by finding the speeches of the president of the US in which it was explained to the entire nation how for the benefit of the whole world Israel must be strong so as not to allow Syria and Iran, etc., to spread. For they are opposed to the US no less than they are opposed to Israel, and maybe more so.

#### **MORE “PEACE TALKS”**

If you’ve been following politics in recent years you discover an astounding thing. People make political decisions that are completely disconnected with what is truly going on with the other side. They dream up plans that have no basis in reality. The world is openmouthed in shock, incredulous about what Israel has done to itself. Here’s a recent example, hot off the press:

Syria is the country that along with Iran supplied and is still supplying Hezbollah with missiles that wreaked havoc in the Galil. Syria is a country that the US, our biggest ally, declared as belonging to the Evil Axis. It is this country whose leaders threatened us with war just yesterday and suddenly, Israeli ministers and senior party officials are giving it extravagant gifts!

Interior Defense Minister Avi Dichter announced that he is ready to concede the Golan, in other words, to expel the Jews from there. Defense Minister Amir Peretz also spoke about opening peace negotiations with Syria. Foreign Minister Tzippy Livni announced the appointment of a project coordinator for peace talks with our dear neighbor over the border.

Are they for real?! But delusionary, political plans are an old story. I will

***If Jews want goyim to reckon with them, they must show their strength. Instead of doing this, they take the most valuable security assets and give them away to the opposing side, and when the opposing side sees who they are dealing with, they demand more and more.***

end with a quote from the Rebbe from 19 Kislev 5742:

The nations of the world themselves are waiting to hear the Jewish people’s true thoughts, because the nations of the world know how the Jew’s line of reasoning regarding Eretz Yisroel ought to be. When they see Jews talking diplomatically to them and offering them another piece and another piece of Eretz Yisroel, the nations don’t believe their ears and

they are sure that this is just talk and that *really* they mean just the opposite.

Especially when the nations of the world see that Jews don’t speak Jewishly for the content of what they’re saying indicates fear of “the sound of a falling leaf.”

We see how what it says about Ikvisa d’Meshicha is being fulfilled, “and they will flee ... with nobody chasing them.” The only pursuer is goyishkait in the “left ventricle” that frightens them lest the goy think a certain way, while the goy is actually not thinking at all about that because it’s enough for him to be dealing with his own tzaros!

It was mentioned several times what a tremendous error the signing of that treaty at Camp David was. I don’t want to call it “Camp David” because this is the opposite of the inyan of “Dovid Melech Yisroel chai v’kayam,” for by doing this they endangered the security of all the Jewish people. They returned all those things that are naturally connected with security without receiving anything in exchange. The only thing they got was another demand; “give me” even more! This situation is ongoing!

As for those who claim that doing this prevents wars – everybody wants peace and the question is only where this is leading us: to peace or to war!

Anybody who understands human nature knows that when the respondent becomes weak, the claimant becomes even stronger. If Jews want goyim to reckon with them, they must show their strength (strength that the goyim understand). Instead of doing this, they take the most valuable security assets and give them away to the opposing side, and when the opposing side sees who they are dealing with, they demand more and more. They figure they don’t need to make a military effort since they achieve their goals without going to war!

# ‘THANK G-D, MISSED ME BY THAT MUCH’

BY NOSSON AVRAHAM  
TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY

*Thousands of soldiers returning from the front after the second Lebanon War have brought amazing and chilling miracle stories with them, testimony to the incredible Divine Providence that accompanied them on the battlefield, day and night, as they waited with great tension and confronted the fire of combat face-to-face. Two miracle stories in the aftermath of the recent military conflict.*

The echoes of the powerful explosions from the artillery units stationed near Kiryat Shmona that had already been heard since the first day of the war were finally silenced at half past seven in the morning on Chaf Menachem Av. Long processions of soldiers, who fought under mortal danger with great sacrifice, then waited long hours until they would return from battle. None of them understood the logic of the “ping pong” game that the policymakers were playing with them. Only in the final days, just as they began to reap a little success and the terrorists appeared to be withdrawing, suddenly they started pulling out. They were astonished.

In the days that have passed since the signing of the capitulation agreement, it has become clear in the most literal sense that not a single clause in the agreement has been carried out in any way. As chassidim, we can recall the pained words of the Rebbe (Shabbos Parshas Eikev 5730), when he asked, “Why and for what purpose was so much blood spilled?”

## SAVED BY A CHITAS

As we have said, tens of thousands of soldiers, most of whom serve in various reserve units, recently left Lebanese territory and returned home to their private affairs. Many of them were equipped prior to their departure for the battlefield with an

assortment of means for spiritual protection that they had received from the Chabad shluchim who were making the rounds in the region. The seifer Chitas, well known as a special segula for protection and security, was distributed to many of the soldiers. Lubavitcher chassidim, shluchim of the Rebbe MH”M, and numerous T’mimim worked day and night to encourage the soldiers and provide them with material and spiritual assistance.

One of the miracles that will be preserved in the consciousness of those who served in combat is the story of the soldier, R. **Yossi Vaknin**, who returned to his home in the central region of the country and discovered to his amazement that his life had absolutely been saved. “I’m still in shock,” he said in an exclusive interview with *Beis Moshiach*.

“It’s difficult, very difficult for me to digest this. This was simply a miracle. A revealed miracle! I have told this story several times over the past twenty-four hours,” he emphasized with satisfaction.

Yossi Vaknin is the brother of Rabbi Dovid Vaknin, local chief rabbi and shliach of the Rebbe MH”M on the Galilee settlement of Menachemia, and the cousin of Rabbi Gershom Ochana of Kfar

Chabad, a well-known and vigorously active participant in activities to spread the wellsprings of chassidus. In his youth, he was educated in Chabad institutions, and since then, he has had a warm spot in his heart for the Rebbe and Lubavitch.

When he grew up, he was inducted into the Israel Defense Forces and placed in a select army unit. "A number of months after his induction," his cousin, Rabbi Gershom Ochana, recalls, "I presented Yossi with a Chitas for protection and security. It should be noted that the Chitas was wrapped in fabric with a special miniature pocket for tz'daka attached to the side."

Since then, Yossi has carried the Chitas with him wherever he goes. "The Chitas has accompanied me for the duration of my IDF service, and even afterwards," Yossi relates in a voice filled with emotion.

When the recent military conflict in Lebanon began two months ago, Yossi was called up for reserve duty. He returned to his battlefield unit, and fought along side his comrades against the Hezbollah enemy in numerous villages throughout the north. Even then, Yossi did not forget to take his Chitas with him for protection. "I placed the seifer in the sack that was constantly with me."

A few days prior to the ceasefire, his unit went out on a difficult and complicated mission in a Lebanese village. "Before going in," he said, "a Lubavitcher chassid approached me and asked if I had a Chitas. I replied affirmatively, pointing to my knapsack. But this Chabadnik told me that it would be more appropriate to put the seifer in the breast pocket of my protective vest.

"I removed two clips from the vest, and replaced them with the

Chitas. A few minutes later, we went into action in the heart of this village. During the mission, we engaged in a difficult battle against terrorists that fired at us unceasingly. I was struck by several bullets that were stopped by my anti-flak jacket. When the battle concluded, we returned to the border to get ready to accept new orders when the ceasefire took effect.

As a result of the end of hostilities, Yossi and his friends were released from duty. He first returned to his base to return his



**Yossi Vaknin with the Chitas that saved him**

military equipment, and immediately afterwards, he arrived home to unload his personal effects. "When I removed the Chitas from the vest," he recalled, "I noticed a lump of metal protruding from it.

"When I opened the vest, I saw that one of the bullets fired by the Hezbollah had penetrated the Chitas, passed through it, and continued toward the tz'daka pocket, even bending one of the coins there, where it stopped – literally in the place of my heart..."

Yossi was still in utter shock

over what he had discovered.

"I have not the slightest doubt," Yossi concluded, "that taking the Chitas with me wherever I went had saved my life. I also have a Chitas in my car for protection and security. When I tell this story to anyone who wants to hear it, the reactions are beyond words. There is little to add in the face of such a miracle. Many of my non-observant friends have called me with great excitement, and now all that is left for us to do is to greet Moshiach Tzidkeinu."

## ENTERING THE ORCHARD AND LEAVING IN PEACE

In parallel to the claims of many soldiers and officers over the conduct of their military superiors, they also reveal amazing miracles that they experienced on the battlefield.

**Alon Cohen**, a computer expert from Carmiel, who serves in Battalion 7012 of the "Alexandroni" Reserve Brigade, discusses the many miracles that he experienced during his twelve days of fighting in Lebanon. He emphasizes that all of the brigade's soldiers returned home, healthy and uninjured, adding that we're talking about "great miracles":

"Our reserve infantry battalion fought in the sector of western Lebanon. The youngest fighter had been released from his regular army duty only four months earlier. The older volunteers were approximately fifty years old. While I do not practice my Judaism religiously, I would classify myself as a "spiritual" person – someone who believes, but does not actively fulfill mitzvos. I put on t'fillin during the year of mourning for my father, of blessed memory. Before going into Lebanon, I sat with my friends and asked that they pray for me to return in peace. There were

several who told me that while they don't believe, they are prepared to pray for me.

"I serve as a platoon sergeant. Before entering Lebanon, I was preoccupied with organizing my soldiers for the battlefield in the best possible manner. As we approached the border, we met Chabadnikim distributing T'hillim, but due to all the apprehension, I didn't pay much attention to them. I already had a Book of Psalms that my mother gave me, along with a picture of the Rebbe that I had received from my close friend, Sharon Hoffman.

"The fighting commenced, and things simply developed on their own. There were revealed miracles, which I considered at the time to be nothing more than good fortune, not something extraordinary. But these were actually great miracles, and how.

"The first miracle took place at the beginning of the conflict. It was nighttime. We were on the border in the area where the soldiers had been kidnapped. We received intelligence information on the penetration of terrorists en route to making an attack. As platoon sergeant, I received orders over the radio to wait, as the ambush for the terrorists was not yet ready. We remained at a dirt intersection – six soldiers in pitch black. I had a bad feeling that the place was exposed. I felt that something terrible could possibly happen to us. If the terrorists would come, we wouldn't know if it's them. If our forces would arrive, we wouldn't know if it's them either. I made an independent decision, and I told the men who were with me that they should go into the nearby apple orchard. We went in and waited quietly.

"After a few minutes passed, there was suddenly a powerful

noise. The ground shook, and I saw two of our tanks right in front of me, advancing rapidly to the exact location where we had been standing before. It became clear that the tanks did not know that we were supposed to be there. If we hadn't gone into the orchard, the tanks simply would have crushed us, as the darkness would have made it impossible to see us. We were saved.

"The second miracle was when

***"When I opened the vest, I saw that one of the bullets fired by the Hezbollah had penetrated the Chitas, passed through it, and continued toward the tz'daka pocket, even bending one of the coins there, where it stopped – literally in the place of my heart..."***

we hid ourselves in a house as we were engaged in battle against the terrorists. Our soldiers were on the first floor inside a three-story building. About a hundred meters from us, a terrorist got up and fired a missile directly into the house. It passed over us, struck the second or third floor, and we escaped uninjured. I remember saying to myself that the terrorists had missed, and I had already begun to think how we would manage to

escape death the next time. I still didn't think that we were talking about a miracle.

"On the final night of the war, we were informed that a ceasefire agreement was due to take effect the following morning. We knew that the terrorists were planning a heavy bombardment in order to try and finish us off before the ceasefire begins.

"During the night, we made our way back to Israel from Lebanon – four hundred tired fighting men after twelve uninterrupted days of battle. They told us to wait near the fence so they could open a route for us through the minefield. It would be literally life-threatening to pass through it, and as a result, we did not receive permission for this in the past. Time passed, and it was almost four in the morning. We knew that an attack was expected at around half past four. I made a quick calculation, and I understood that if we continued to wait, we would be sitting ducks. The terrorists would massacre us – four hundred soldiers.

"The commanding officer made a brave decision and went into the minefield, leading an entire battalion after him. Four hundred soldiers walked through the minefield, totally exhausted and in complete darkness, yet not one of them was injured!

"I experienced some truly unique occurrences. After the incident with the tanks near the orchard, I said 'Luck – just luck.' After the rocket hit the floor above us, I said, 'Missed me by that much.' But after four hundred soldiers walked through a minefield at night without injury, I said that this was indeed a great miracle. The Creator of the Universe saved our lives."

# THE CHIDDUSH OF ELUL

INTERVIEW BY SHAI GEFEN

*Mashpia Rabbi Elozor Kenig in a special interview with Beis Moshiach in honor of the month of Elul. \* In Elul, Hashem wants to see us excel specifically in those areas that we are not obligated in. This is the point of the avoda of the king in the field. We need to examine ourselves to see how we are transforming the “field” into k’dusha.*

Elul is a very significant month in the world of Chassidus and Toras Chabad in particular, as we know the Alter Rebbe’s parable about Elul and the king in the field. How do we “live” with this month and all the inyanim associated with it?

One of the special things about Elul is to act according to the famous parable in *Likkutei Torah* about the king in the field. The Rebbe explains that the inyan of the avoda in the field as expressed in daily life is in the area of *chullin*, mundane activities.

In Elul, Hashem wants to see us excel specifically in those areas that we are not obligated in. This is the point of the avoda of the king in the field. We need to examine ourselves to see how we are transforming the “field” into k’dusha. We see how in Elul people are more open to listening,

because the main avoda of the king in the field is expressed in those areas that we are not commanded in and are not the “norm.”

**What is the connection between “know Him in all your ways” and the king in the field?**

There are two ways of connecting to the king. Simple *hiskashrus* consists of doing what the king commands, as Chazal say, “Who is a ‘kosher’ woman? The one who does her husband’s will.” This way of connecting is through fulfilling Torah and mitzvos, plain and simple.

Connecting to the king in Elul is on a different plane entirely. *Hiskashrus* is called for even in those areas not demanded of you at all and even more so in those things which were not even accomplished from Above, as it were, and are only done

by those in the lower realms, as Chazal say, “My sons have vanquished Me; they have vanquished Me.”

This is the Chassidic-inner explanation of the Chazal, “Who is a ‘kosher’ woman? The one who does her husband’s will” – that the woman *makes* her husband’s will. The woman is *Kneses Yisroel*, who generates a new will and desire, as it were, in Hashem, or in Chassidic terminology, they effect a new manifestation in the Supernal Will.

This is the *avodas Hashem* that is demanded of us in Elul: to draw down the Divine Will required to recreate the world, and this is done specifically through our avoda in those areas in which we were not commanded, matters in the category of “know Him in all your ways.”

This is the essence of the idea of the king in the field. *Mitzvos* in general are “garments.” When the king is in the field, this means that our *hiskashrus* to him is without any intermediaries (i.e., ministers, servants), but directly with the king himself. Therefore the avoda of Elul is specifically “I am to my beloved,” an avoda with oneself, to sanctify oneself and purify oneself in those matters which we weren’t commanded.

**“Greater is the one who is commanded and does...” – yet according to what you’re saying, we are praising the avoda of Elul which is**

## in those things that we were *not* commanded!

The Rebbe gives an example from chinuch (Shoftim 5748). Until a boy is 13 he has no obligation to do mitzvos, but his mitzvos are so lofty that it says that the world stands on the breath of the schoolchildren! They are Hashem's army and the most loyal soldiers who do things which they weren't required to do per se. This is how they succeed in bringing victory and nachas ruach to the king.

On many occasions the Rebbe complained that people wait for him to give explicit instruction, which is not how it ought to be. In an army you also have to do things you were not commanded to do, and it is this that brings victory.

We see this idea expressed in crowning a Jewish king. The Torah command is worded in a way which indicates that kingship (as opposed to a dictatorship) is only when the Jewish people request it, and therefore, in order to coronate the King on Rosh HaShana once again and to draw down lofty lights into the world that never existed before, the kind of avoda that is needed is that which was not commanded.

### How was Elul viewed before



## Chassidus and the chiddush of the Alter Rebbe?

Elul was without chayus. We know that Chai Elul, the birthday of the great lights (the Baal Shem Tov and the Alter Rebbe) gave chayus to Elul. Before the Baal Shem Tov and the Alter Rebbe, there was no chayus in Elul.

People looked at Elul simply: there is a king who will judge everything and they trembled as the fish in the sea. The emphasis was on the fear (distance) and not on the closeness and connection. In avodas Hashem too there was fear, the opposite of a smiling face. It was avodas Hashem from fear and not from love.

Chassidus innovated that Elul is the peak time of closeness of Hashem and the Jewish people, and the Jewish people, as it were, have an effect on Hashem to achieve lofty things that are unattainable the rest of the year.

### Did the Rebbe add or innovate anything in connection with the Alter Rebbe's revelation (king in the field) regarding the avoda of the month of Elul?

The Rebbe spoke a lot about five modes of avoda that pertain especially to Elul which are alluded to in various acronyms of the word Elul: Torah,

T'filla, Tz'daka, T'shuva, Geula. The Rebbe says that the fifth acronym, Geula, must permeate all the other modes of avoda.

The avodas Hashem of Elul in our time, Yemos HaMoshiach, is completely different than what was understood about Elul throughout the years. When you work to instill the avoda of Geula in all other aspects of avoda, this means that there are no limitations. This is essentially what our request on Rosh HaShana of "Rule over the entire world and all created things will know that You created them" is about – that every physical thing recognize what gives it life.

If in the past our primary request in Elul had to do with our material and spiritual inyanim, now we know that the point of Elul is Geula and how "Rule over the entire world in its entirety" will be fulfilled. This Geula-Elul avoda must permeate and encompass all aspects of our avoda.

Put in other words, previously the avoda of Elul was in order that we have a bit more Gan Eden and our requests were for "fewer pogroms and an easier time for the Jews." Today our main request is like the Alter Rebbe put it, "I don't want Your Olam HaBa...I want You Yourself!"

The Geula atmosphere must permeate these inyanim throughout the year: In **Torah** – that Torah study be on a completely different level; preparing for "a new Torah will go forth from Me;" writing chiddushim as the Rebbe asked and in-depth learning of inyanei Geula and Moshiach. **Avodas HaT'filla** – to the point of wringing out of the soul. **G'milus Chassadim** – unlimited giving, as the Rebbe taught us, and this must be part of our daily lives. **T'shuva** – in the spirit of Geula this is *t'shuva ilaa*, which is done specifically through simcha and not just t'shuva for sins but t'shuva on a more refined level, as it says: Moshiach will come to bring tzaddikim to t'shuva.



Elul today is about living with Geula in all aspects of life. It all depends on how we take it. If we limit ourselves to requesting that things be somewhat better, then the avoda is also limited. If our avoda is Geula'dik, unlimited, it will look entirely different. Even the kabbalas ha'malchus and the added chayus of the king in the field is experienced in an essential way; it is just us and the king, unlimited and without barriers.

**Elul is when Chassidim travel to the Rebbe and they are busy with this all month. How does this fit in with what you've said?**

As we said before, the main inyan of Elul is preparing to coronate the king on Rosh HaShana. Going to the Rebbe for Tishrei, especially for Rosh HaShana, is part of the inyan of coronation of the king, of accepting his malchus. Going to the Rebbe for Tishrei means to devote yourself to the Rebbe.

Today especially, when we have seemingly minimal giluyim, this is the epitome of devotion: giving and giving without seeing what we get in return. Preparing for the trip to the Rebbe doesn't begin in Elul but from when

**The avodas Hashem of Elul in our time, Yemos HaMoshiach, is completely different than what was understood about Elul throughout the years. When you work to instill the avoda of Geula in all other aspects of avoda, this means that there are no limitations.**

we returned from our last trip. Upon our return we immediately begin preparing for the next trip as R' Mendel Futerfas a"h would say.

The avoda of going to the Rebbe today is a very p'nimius'dike avoda and the preparations for it must take a long time. Now, when the Rebbe is like

“the king in the field” throughout the year, and we can see giluyim of the Rebbe wherever we are, the avoda today demands far more than previous years. Therefore, the avoda of Elul of “know Him in all your ways” needs to be done the entire year.

Where is there a loftier place than with the king, in the seventh month, in his palace? As the Rebbe Rashab said: where can a Jew be for Rosh HaShana if not in Lubavitch?

The Rebbe said that he is in 770 and this is the place that was established for the revelation of the Sh'china until the full hisgalus. Therefore, on Coronation Day and in the month of coronation, it is only natural for every Chassid and every Jew to be with the Rebbe in 770.

We have heard the Rebbe's prophecy about Geula and about how the only avoda left is kabbalas p'nei Moshiach Tzidkeinu. The Rebbe told us that all the avoda of Elul must be permeated with Geula, which means to open our eyes and discover Geula in every detail of Creation. This itself hastens the Geula. *Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu V'Rabbeinu Melech HaMoshiach Lolam Va'ed!*



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# A MODEL OF DEEP FAITH

BY RABBI YOSEF YITZCHOK KELLER

*Over 24 years have gone by since the passing of an amazing Chassid, one of the outstanding members of the brotherhood of Chassidim. Many characteristics were blended in this remarkable Chassid, but the one which stood above all else was his deep inner faith which accompanied him on all his journeys, starting from his youth in Tomchei T'mimim in Lubavitch, and continuing through the decades of his tumultuous life. \* Profile of a Chassid – Reb Peretz Motchkin a”h.*

R' Peretz Motchkin lay in his bed, pale, exhausted and wracked with disease. Around his bed stood his sons, Shmuel age 8, Yosef age 7 and Leibel age 2 and a half. Alongside his bed, his daughter Gutta sat and cried bitter tears. They all understood that the illness which their father was suffering from – a particularly virulent form of typhus – left no chance for survival. The situation deteriorated rapidly, and R' Peretz felt that these were his last hours on this earth. He was only 33 years old and the father of four young children.

At one point, R' Peretz gathered a bit of strength and addressed his

family with parting words, instructing them to remain loyal Jews at all times and in all situations. When he finished, he began to say Vidui (Confession of Sins). When he reached the end of the Vidui, his inner emotions burst forth and in a choked voice he added, “I believe in our Rebbes,” and he began to list them one by one.

One of the Chassidim present at the time could not contain himself and had to leave the room to cry. Years later, he told how at that time he felt that a Chassid with such a deep and inner Chassidic faith would surely recover. Indeed, in miraculous fashion, R' Peretz “came back to life.” His

strength slowly returned and he lived many more years, and he passed away at the age of 88 in 5742/1982.

\* \* \*

The esteemed mashpia, R' Peretz Motchkin was born in the beginning of Shvat 5654/1894, to his father R' Yehuda Leib, who was a melamed in the town of Nevel and a Chassid of the Rebbe Maharash, and to his mother Chiyena.

In his youth, he learned in the Chassidic town of Dokshitz, where he lodged at the home of R' Yisroel Gordon. Years later, at the engagement party of Avrohom Moshe Deitsch, R' Peretz said to R' Yisroel Gordon, “I knew your grandfather (the father of R' Yochonon Gordon) when his beard was redder than yours.”

In the year 5669/1906, when he was only fifteen years old, the young Peretz arrived in the Yeshiva of Tomchei T'mimim in Lubavitch. There, he absorbed and internalized the unique inward-directed chinuch of Lubavitch for seven years. Those were seven years of upward growth, when he toiled in Torah, Nigleh and Chassidus, and in Avodas HaT'filla, by the light of the founder of the yeshiva, the Rebbe Rashab, and under the tutelage of the famous roshei yeshivos and mashpiim.

Due to his young age, he was first sent to study in a separate branch of

the yeshiva which was located in the city of Tchtzedrin. Following the guidance of the local mashpia, the Chassid R' Shaul Dov Zislin, he began to work on the service of prayer.

When he reached Lubavitch, he began to receive internal foundational guidance from the renowned mashpia, the Chassid R' Shmuel Groinem Esterman. Under his tutelage, he grew and climbed the progressive levels of Torah and Chassidus, diligently studying day and night, while concurrently toiling in Avodas HaT'filla for many hours each day.

His son, R' Shalom Dovber, recounted that many times R' Peretz would come late to the Nigleh session because he davened at such great length. The mashgiach once told him that if he did not devote himself to the study of Nigleh, he would end up being a storekeeper. R' Peretz heard the comment and laughed to himself, since he and his friend Yehoshua Eizik had long resolved that they would have no dealings with matters of this world, and if they would some day need to support themselves and their families, they would make due with being attendants in a mikva. He certainly never entertained any thoughts of business, such as being a storekeeper or the like.

The young Tamim, Peretz, had many good friends, amongst them, R' Shlomo Chaim Kesselman, R' Chaim Ber Yudasin (who later became his brother-in-law) and R' Yochanon Gordon. However, he had a very intense friendship with R' Yehoshua Eizik Baruch, who later served as the mashpia in Tomchei T'mimim in Vilna. Together, they labored in Torah study and grew in their Divine Service.

At one point, the two of them could not fathom why despite their constant and consistent hard work, they had not succeeded in reaching levels of love and awe of Hashem. Obviously, they were clever enough not to fool themselves, and their

concern was consistent with their level. The matter disturbed them, until at one farbrengen they heard from R' Groinem that one of the results of the Ministering Angel of Eisav striking the thigh socket of Yaakov is that in the later generations it is impossible to attain proper love and fear of Hashem. Only then, did they make peace with the situation.

R' Peretz was gifted with a good head and solid comprehension. Once, the mashgiach of Nigleh called him in

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for a quiz. When he saw that the boy possessed a good mind, he tried to challenge him with a sharp question in the section that he was learning, hoping to arouse in him a desire for the *pilpul* approach to learning. R' Peretz understood immediately what the mashgiach was trying to do. He responded that according to the approach to in-depth learning outlined by the Rebbe Rashab in Kuntres Eitz Chaim, this is not the proper approach, and as such he had no

interest in such learning.

Years later, he in fact had a store, which was run mainly by his wife, and he would only travel occasionally to buy goods. In those years, he would say that now he was certain that the comment about becoming a storekeeper was said by the Rebbe Rashab, and that is why it came to pass.

\* \* \*

When he reached draft age he had to present himself to the Russian army. In those days, all of the T'mimim faced the problem of the compulsory draft. Many of them tried different strategies in order to be exempted, and many of those who inflicted various diseases upon themselves remained handicapped for life. Some even put their lives in danger.

R' Peretz did not like these tactics, and after much thought he hit upon a way to arrange that when he appeared before the draft board he would be extremely weak, but then he would be able to build himself back up again. His approach worked, and he received an exemption from the army.

Since his strategy proved itself, he decided to help other young men. He traveled to various places where the T'mimim studied in order to prepare them for their draft board hearing in such a way as to ensure their release.

A few years later, he was sent by the administration of the yeshiva to the city of Ramen (perhaps, to help the bachurim who had to report there to the draft board). He spent more than half a year in the city and lodged in the home of R' Itche der Masmid Gurevitch.

R' Itche was the mashpia of Anash in the city of Ramen, and his salary was a pittance that did not suffice even for the most basic needs of his family. After much effort, they awarded him an additional ruble from the communal fund. Despite this, R' Itche once wrote to his father-in-law that he

had a plentiful livelihood and he could not understand why he deserved such largesse, unless it was because "He pays his enemy up front to destroy him."

\* \* \*

R' Peretz continued to learn in Tomchei T'mimim until his marriage in 5676/1916 to Henya Chasha, the daughter of the Chassid R' Nachman Havlin, the shochet of Semyanovka.

In those days, it was very difficult for a Tamim to find a worthy shidduch as there were very few young women interested in marrying someone who had no interest in this world. There was one young student who was looking into shidduchim who was only willing to consider a "learned" girl. When he went in to the



Reb Peretz Motchkin

Rebbe Rashab, the Rebbe said to him, "Peretz didn't look for a learned girl and he did a fine shidduch." Later, when this fellow met R' Peretz, he said to him, "I have regards for you from the Rebbe."

His father-in-law, R' Nachman Gershon Havlin had six daughters. Five of them married high caliber T'mimim, whereas the youngest, Rosa, passed away at the age of 21-22. One of his brothers-in-law, R' Chaim Ber Yudasin was a good friend from his yeshiva days. They would learn together at night and copy over maamarei Chassidus. R' Chaim Ber did not merit children, and he and his wife were killed by the Nazis, may Hashem blot out their name.

[To be continued be"H]



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# THE HIDDEN BLESSINGS

BY RABBI YEHEKEL LEBOVIC

## ASCENDING ORDER FOR THE BAD AND ...THE GOOD

As is known, Rashi explains not only the *P'shat* of the Torah, but within the *P'shat* he also hints at *yeina shel Torah*, the “wine,” the hidden dimensions of Torah – compared to wine which is extracted from the grapes wherein it was initially hidden.

One such instance is at the end of *Ki Tavo*, where the *Tochacha* (Rebuke) ends with: “*And Hashem will cause you to return there (Egypt) in ships (aniyot) in the path of which I said unto you that you shall not continue anymore to see it and you will (want to) be sold to your enemies but none will (want to) buy.*”

Without going into many analytical questions, the following is the two-pronged explanation which the Rebbe (*Likkutei Sichos* vol. 19 pp.235-243) offers on this Rashi. The basic premise of this explanation is that there is an ascending order on both levels: On the level of *P'shat*, each successive word of the pasuk adds to the intensity of the *Tochacha*, while, on the deeper level, each successive word adds to the dimension of the comforting message contained therein.

On the level of *P'shat*: Rashi quotes and states: *in ships (aniyot): in sefinot, into captivity. Sefinot* is the Aramaic term for the Hebrew *Aniyot*, both meaning “ships.” The reason why Rashi has to clarify this is that,

otherwise, one might be tempted to translate *Aniyot*, not as ships, but as “*aniya*” in the sense of “wailing and bemoaning,” for, at first glance, how relevant is the fact that this return to Egypt will be in ships? Therefore, Rashi has to make the point that, indeed, it does mean ships, and then he proceeds to explain the relevance: The burden /pressure of captivity will be felt, not only upon reaching the land of captivity, Egypt, but – even more – the *travel* thereto will be exacerbated in 2 ways: (a) part of it will be on the same dry land route that our ancestors took during *Yetziyas Mitzrayim*, in direct contrast to the great miracles which occurred at that time. (b) the other part of this travel will be a water route in ships – in contrast to the glorious passage through *Yam Suf* – wherein captives are held in total control, with absolutely *no means of escape*.

*And you will (want to) be sold to your enemies but none will (want to) buy.*” On this, Rashi comments: *you yourselves will seek to be sold to them (your enemies) as slaves and maids.* This further exacerbates the situation several fold: (a) not only will there be cases where the captors themselves will sell the captives; even more, in some cases the Jewish captives will ask their captors to permit them to sell themselves to their *enemies!*

The pasuk continues: *But none will (want to) buy.*” Rashi comments: *for they will decree killing and destruction*

*upon you.* What is the basis for this? Perhaps upon refusing their Jewish captives to sell themselves, the captives will revert to their previous state of captivity? The basis is, as mentioned earlier, that Rashi understands that each successive word and expression *adds* to the severity of the situation rather than resulting in a mere reversal to the preceding status quo. Therefore, the unwillingness of the enemies to buy Jewish captives from their captors will result into more dire consequences.

## THE DEEPER RETURN

On the deeper level, the same pasuk: “*And Hashem will cause you to return there (Egypt) in ships (aniyot) in the path of which I said unto you that you shall not continue anymore to see it and you will (want to) be sold to your enemies but none will (want to) buy,*” alludes to a different kind of return. The return spoken of in this pasuk is the process of *t'shuva*, the return to G-d. It is similar to a latter pasuk (*D'varim* 30:1-2) “*It shall be when all these things, the blessing and the curse, shall come upon you, ...you will return unto Hashem your G-d.*” The culmination of the *Tochacha* and its curses is the eventual return through *t'shuva*. This process not only elevates certain sparks which cannot be elevated through the ‘regular’ path of Torah and *Mitzvos*; it elevates the person to a higher spiritual status,

that of baal t'shuva. The true answer (*Likkutei Torah Balak p.73:a*) as to what is the purpose of the soul's descent into this world is that, not only does it elevate the *Cheftza*, the elements and sparks which it would not be able to elevate would it not have come down – the soul itself actually undergoes an elevated status in terms of *Gavra*, the person himself achieves a metamorphosis through t'shuva.

## HASHEM CAUSES THIS TOO?!

“The path of which I said unto you that you shall not continue anymore to see it” – this refers to the path contrary to the path of Torah and Mitzvos. Hashem is the One Who not only causes (*Hashem will cause you to return...*) the culmination of the t'shuva process to take place, but who causes also the beginning of the whole process. For the sake of the t'shuva elevation, He pulls certain strings that land some Jews in the path contrary to Torah and Mitzvos! (see Midrash Tanhuma VaYeishev:4, and sources mentioned in *Likkutei Sichos* vol 18, p.395, and note 45) (For an explanation attempting to reconcile the preceding with the principles of free choice, and reward and punishment, refer to my article “Free Choice - Not As Free As It Sounds” in *Beis Moshiach* #386, pg. 30)

How does Rashi hint at any of this? By translating *aniyot* as *sefinot*. The former term is pure Hebrew, the holy tongue, while the later is of Aramaic origin. As the context of this pasuk relates to going off the path of Torah, it is not sufficient to make use of the protective dimensions of the holy realm, that of Torah and Mitzvos (*aniyot*); it also becomes necessary to come down lower, into the realm of foreign tongues and cultures (*sefinot*), and proceed to elevate those sparks as well, to the point of transforming “willful transgressions into merits.”

*And you will (want to) be sold to*

*your enemies but none will (want to) buy.*” The words “none will buy” in the original are “v'ein koneh.” The Chassidic interpretation, in brief, is that “koneh” refers the G-dly realm of *Atzilus*, while “Ein” or “Ayin” refers to a level which transcends even *Atzilus*,” and thus, the level of *Ayin* (now understood as a noun-subject rather than as an adverb) becomes drawn into the level of *Atzilus* – through the process of t'shuva.

## BY ONE'S OWN EFFORTS

On “*And you will (want to) be sold,*” Rashi comments: *you yourselves will be seeking to be sold.* As the theme of this pasuk is t'shuva, the point now being made by these words is that, unlike

*The main driving force of the baal t'shuva is the radical change generated by his decisive application of will power.*

children who are naturally drawn towards their father, the baal t'shuva is lacking this natural pull and is becoming Hashem's “slave” (rather than “son”) only by virtue of his own efforts and *kabbalas ol* (acceptance of heavenly yoke), and not through some Divine elicitation.

This can be correlated to a passage in *Toras HaOla* of the *Ramo* (third section, chap. 47), where he makes the point that the main driving force of the baal t'shuva is the radical change generated by his decisive application of will power, rather than by gradually developing it from his hidden potential “fear and love of G-d.” Were it due to the latter, why has it occurred later than

sooner? Obviously, says he, because it was generated at the precise time he willed to do t'shuva (and therefore, says the Gemara, he who betrothed a woman on the condition that he is a *tzaddik*, she is betrothed (at least on account of the doubt): he may have fully activated the process of t'shuva (turning him into a “tzaddik”) at the precise moment of betrothal by applying his will power towards the desire to do t'shuva).

On “*and none will buy,*” Rashi comments: “*for they will decree upon you killing and destruction.*” In the context of the deeper meaning relating to t'shuva, Rashi is hinting that the baal t'shuva, striving to return by dint of his own efforts and running against the tide of his natural, engrained tendencies, can merit to reach a level wherein all alien lusts of his past become “killed,” wiped away, replaced by a state of extreme yearning which has the effect of “destroying” all his former attachments to the forbidden realm.

## CURRENT APPLICATION

The *Tochacha* and its conclusion is addressing the Jewish people as a whole. Throughout the centuries, down to the present day, many mistakes were made by our people and its leaders, even the best of them. The current Israeli “leaders” are “a joke,” a sad one at that, leading Israeli citizens down a very dangerous path. The ultimate “Mover of Strings,” however, is G-d Himself. He assuredly is patiently waiting for that sudden application of recognition and willpower which will jettison the entire Jewish nation on the path of t'shuva and the speedy culmination of the Geula Shleima through Moshiach Tzidkeinu!

*Published as z'chus for Avraham Refael ben Chaya Feiga Raizel in honor of his Yom Holedes on the 13th of Elul, and in merit of Rabbi Yeheskel and Pearl Leah Lebovic, in honor of their 40th wedding anniversary on Elul 7th.*