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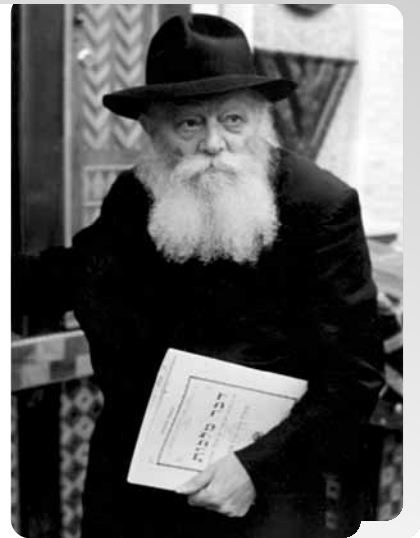
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# MODERN SCIENCE AS A PRELUDE TO MOSHIACH

MOSHIACH AND SCIENCE<sup>1</sup>  
LIKKUTEI SICHOS, VOL. 15, P. 42FF



The Torah tells us:<sup>2</sup> “In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life... all the fountains of the great deep burst forth (and the windows of the heavens were opened).” On this verse the *Zohar* comments:<sup>3</sup> “And six hundred years into the sixth millennium the gates of wisdom from above and the fountains of wisdom from below will open, and the world will be corrected as a preparation for its elevation in the seventh [millennium.]”

There are two concepts hinted at in the verse: “fountains of the great deep” (wisdom from below) and “windows of the heavens” (wisdom on high). Higher wisdom refers to Torah and lower wisdom refers to the sciences.<sup>4</sup>

Indeed, we see that around that time there started an additional revelation of Torah wisdom, especially of the inner dimension of Torah:<sup>5</sup>

There was a calculation in several holy books that implied that *Moshiach* would arrive in the year 5608 (1848). The *Tzemach Tzedek* explained that, [in a certain sense, that prediction] was actually fulfilled, since in that year the *Likkutei Torah* was printed. (After all, the focus of *Moshiach*’s arrival is that then “the world will be filled with knowledge of G-d.”<sup>6</sup>) Also, several years earlier, *Torah Ohr* was printed (in 5597—1837). Only when the study of *Chassidus* reached the clarity and depth made possible through those books could one truly say that people were “sustained” by the *Zohar*,<sup>7</sup> and that a “dissemination” of the wellsprings of the Baal Shem Tov had been achieved.<sup>8</sup> (Interestingly, the Baal Shem Tov’s revelation occurred around the beginning of the sixth century, 5500—1740.<sup>9</sup>)

Furthermore, there also began in that era an increased development in areas of worldly wisdom.

But a question remains. We can understand how the revelation of the inner dimension of Torah is a preparation for the world’s “elevation in the seventh,” since when *Moshiach*

comes “the world will be filled with knowledge of G-d as waters cover the sea.” Therefore it makes sense that prior to his arrival—as a preparation—there should be a revelation of the inner dimension of Torah, which is a foretaste of the Torah of *Moshiach*. The question is, however, what relationship is there between the progress and discoveries of science and the era of *Moshiach*?

Moreover: Since the *Zohar* brings both of these ideas together, it is obvious that they are related to one another. Indeed, the new revelation in areas of Torah wisdom, which came as a preparation for *Moshiach*, is what “caused” the discoveries and development of the sciences. The two disciplines seem quite disparate, being that the sciences—“from below”—are incomparably lower than the wisdom of Torah—“from above”—and especially in comparison to the inner dimension of Torah. Why then should the revelation of one depend on the revelation of the other?

## ELEVATING SCIENCE: A RISKY BUSINESS

The entire world and everything in it was created “for the Torah and for Israel.”<sup>10</sup> “All that G-d created in His world, He created solely for His honor.”<sup>11</sup> Thus, it is understood that the ultimate purpose of every created entity is that a Jew use it for Divine service.

The same applies to worldly wisdom: the Divine purpose behind the recent development of the sciences is—as the *Tanya* puts it—“to use them for the service of G-d and His Torah.”<sup>12</sup>

However, not every person can achieve this goal, as the Alter Rebbe concludes, “This was the intention of the Rambam and the Ramban, of blessed memory, and their associates, who studied secular knowledge.” In other words, it is only fitting for special people of this sort. Anyone else is, on the contrary, “defiling the intellectual faculties of his Divine soul” by pursuing such studies.<sup>13</sup>

## THE CASE AGAINST COLLEGE

Something must be pointed out, although truly it is obvious:

What was said above has no bearing whatsoever on the question of studying in college or university.<sup>14</sup> Such study involves a strict prohibition and danger (“danger is even more severe than prohibition”<sup>15</sup>), since the entire atmosphere, environment, and outlook of such institutions nowadays is permeated with denial of the Almighty’s providence and involvement in the world. In their view there is no entity or power that can influence the way the world runs or the laws of nature. (In fact, this is accepted as something that is so obvious (and need not even be proven) and is the basis of many areas of study; so much so that it need not even be openly discussed.) In most such institutions, they also study heretical teachings, idolatrous beliefs<sup>16</sup> etc.

Furthermore, in just about all of them the boundaries of shame and modesty have been completely broken down, so much so that they laugh and ridicule those who do take modesty into account. On the contrary, according to them, the more vulgar, the better, etc.

The terrible situation on campuses, in dormitories, meeting places, etc., is infamous, and there is no need to discuss at length something so distressing, especially when it is to such an awful extent.

The famous “argument” that it won’t hurt this particular student, since he or she will be able to withstand the test, etc., has an equally famous, and simple, response: Even a perfectly righteous person on the last day of his one hundred twenty year life petitions G-d in his morning prayers, “bring me not to a test.”<sup>17</sup> There is plenty more that can be said, but here is not the place.

## A TASTE OF THINGS TO COME

Since the *Zohar* associates the development of science with preparing for the seventh millennium, it must be that the benefit of scientific knowledge is expressed in something that serves as a preparation for the attainments of the Messianic era.

One of the main accomplishments of the Messianic era is the fulfillment of the promise<sup>18</sup> “And the glory of G-d will be revealed, and all flesh will see together that the mouth of the L-rd has spoken.” In other words, the Divine revelation will not be only in a manner of “the world will be filled with

knowledge of G-d,” but even “all flesh will see,” i.e., that even our physical flesh will see that “the mouth of the L-rd has spoken.”

Thus, we will not merely perceive G-dliness in our “spiritual, mind’s eye”; we will also “see physically with our physical eyes.”<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, the verse states, “all flesh will see,” not “the eyes of all flesh will see” [similar to “may our eyes behold”<sup>20</sup>]. This implies that not only will our “physical eyes” see G-dliness, but even physical flesh itself will behold that “the mouth of the L-rd has spoken.”

Herein lies the connection between the strides made in the sciences and the preparation for “being elevated in the seventh.” Our using worldly knowledge “for the service of G-d or for His Torah,” helps to ready us for a taste of “all flesh will see”—a physical, tangible, seeing—in matters of Divine service.

## “AN EYE THAT SEES AND AN EAR THAT HEARS”

To illustrate, consider one of the powers inherent in nature that has existed in full strength ever since the six days of creation, and yet was previously unknown to man and has only been revealed and developed recently, namely the ability for the sound of a person talking in a given place to be instantaneously heard in a remote location, even on the far side of the earth, on the moon, etc. This is possible through telephone, or—even more so—via radio. And also, more recently, this includes the ability to see someone from afar, with all his movements, etc.

This achievement in the world—the ability to hear every sound a person makes, or see him, at the very same second in all corners of the globe—acts as a very tangible and real example for the concept of “an Eye that sees and an

Ear that hears.”<sup>21</sup> After all, if the “ear” down here in the physical world can immediately hear [and similarly the “eye” down here—through the development of yet another potential in nature—can see] what is happening on the other side of the world, how much more so can the supernal “ear” and “eye.” “Shall He who implants the ear not hear? Shall He who forms the eye not see?”<sup>22</sup> He is not bound by any limitations, Heaven forbid. Everything that man does, even be it hidden in the most private of inner chambers, is—at that very same moment—caught by “an eye sees, an ear hears, and (therefore) all your actions are recorded in a ledger.”

When one has such a tangible example for this concept, his meditation about the concept that “behold G-d stands

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---

over him... and looks at him, and searches kidneys and heart to see if he is serving Him properly”<sup>23</sup> becomes something that is not merely understood in his mind’s eye alone. That does not always have a full effect on a person. Rather, it becomes much closer to the person’s physical senses and feelings, and therefore has a greater effect on his emotions, and even on his thoughts, speech, and actions.

## SCIENCE IS GOLDEN

Although everything in this world was created “for Torah and for Israel,” the Sages singled out certain things by emphasizing that they were created solely for a specific use for Torah and *mitzvos*. For instance: “The world was not worthy of using gold. Why, then, was it created? For the Tabernacle and for the Holy Temple.”<sup>24</sup>

The difference between these most distinguished items and all other created entities is: All other entities, although they exist “for Torah and for Israel,” may still fulfill their purpose in creation through being used for physical matters (permitted pursuits, etc.), as long as those pursuits themselves (eventually) provide a benefit for Divine service.

Regarding gold, on the other hand, we are told, “the world was not worthy of using gold.” Using gold for worldly needs is a descent for the gold. Its entire *raison d’être* was only to be utilized directly for the needs of the Tabernacle and Temple. [It is just so that people should have free choice that G-d allows it to be used for other purposes as well.]

The same is true in our context: The *Zohar*’s association of the development of secular wisdom with the revelation of (the inner dimension of) Torah and with “being elevated in the seventh” is in itself clear proof that this is the entire purpose<sup>25</sup> of this development. [The fact that the benefits of this advancement can be used for other areas is only so that man should have free will, as discussed earlier.]

In other words: The fact that one may derive a tangential benefit in Divine service from some scientific advancement does not yet fulfill the ultimate goal of its development. (After all, at that stage the science still remains a part of the material world, a permissible matter from which some specific benefit to Divine service is extended.)

The true purpose of their development is achieved when these advances are themselves utilized for Torah or *mitzvos*. Furthermore, since the *Zohar* relates this process to the time when the inner dimension of Torah is revealed, the ultimate goal must be to use them specifically for the revelation and dissemination of the inner dimension of Torah.

## THE SEA OF KNOWLEDGE ~~ IN WAVES

As discussed previously, the novelty of Messianic times is expressed in two aspects: “The world will be filled with knowledge of G-d, as water covers the sea,” and this itself will be in a manner of “all flesh will see etc.” Accordingly, the

accomplishment and purpose of using secular wisdom for the dissemination of *Chassidus* (which is, as mentioned, a “taste” of the Torah of *Moshiach*), is that through these advances the revelation of the inner aspects of Torah as a preparation for *Moshiach*’s Torah is accomplished in (at least a “taste” of) those two manners: “The world is filled etc.” and “all flesh will see etc.”

A practical example: When one uses a radio to disseminate teaching of *Chassidus*, the topic of Torah being studied is heard—physically, and in all corners of the globe.

Furthermore, the Chassidic teachings being taught on the radio permeate the entire world, even where no radio-receivers exist to receive the transmission. (Radio waves spread everywhere, throughout the entire world—and actually, not just potentially. The receiver is only able to pick up the voice and transform it in various ways; it does not create the voice.)

This means that through utilizing secular advances to spread the inner dimension of Torah, there is a taste of: a) “The world will be filled with knowledge of G-d...” without any limitations, in every single place. And b) it is in a manner of “all flesh will see...”—the sound is *physically* heard at that very moment.

## UNITY WITHIN NATURE, A SIGN OF DIVINE

Even in this case, secular wisdom is still being utilized for something else—in this case Torah and *mitzvos*. In the technological developments themselves we have not yet discussed any connection to holiness. The true fusion of secular wisdom with Torah is when one can discern aspects of the inner dimension of Torah within the secular wisdom itself.

One of the main areas where we see this clearly: The inner dimension of Torah reveals the ultimate unity of G-d within the world. Despite the myriad different creations that exist, they do not contradict G-d’s essential oneness, since the very existence of the many separate entities is itself derived from the essential oneness of G-d, as is explained in various sources.<sup>26</sup>

Since the true existence of the world is G-d’s “simple unity,” this oneness is expressed even within the physical nature of the world: the world has the quality of unity. This idea—the oneness of our world (which in its inner essence is really the oneness of G-d)—is becoming ever more apparent with the further development of scientific knowledge.

People used to think that each of the forces of nature is completely *separate*; that the matter of every object is comprised of numerous *distinct* elements. The more science develops, however, the more it reaches a recognition that all the diversity and disparity among the various elements is only an external factor—the way in which the components fuse, the degree of contraction or expansion, etc. Thus, the scientists are continually decreasing the number of

fundamental components, until they recognize that the basic existence of the world is simply the combination and interaction of just two aspects: quantity and quality (matter in which energy is contained, and the energy itself). This, then, is the connection between the development of secular wisdom and the revelation of the inner essence of Torah, both as a preparation for “correcting the world to be elevated in the seventh [millennium].”<sup>27</sup>

The revelation of the inner dimension of Torah automatically causes the development of secular wisdom, since thereby is achieved a “taste” of *Moshiach’s* Torah (which reveals G-d’s oneness in the world) in a manner which is (at least) a “taste” of “all flesh will see...”—when the world itself becomes a “vessel” for the oneness of G-d, and we see this unity and oneness within the world itself.

When we see this, we truly realize that this unity is not something separate from the simple unity of G-dliness<sup>28</sup> (which is revealed in *Chassidus*). Through this, the “world is corrected to be elevated in the seventh [millennium]” very soon.

#### NOTES:

1 Reprinted with permission from *Mind Over Matter*, Arnie Gotfryd ed., Chapter 9 © 2003-2005 by SHAMIR International. Included is only a portion of the original discussion and footnotes, in abbreviated form.

2 B'Reishis, 7:11.

3 I, 117a.

4 Ashmoret HaBoker on the Zohar (by Rabbi Moshe ben Avrohom Kashtaro), 9.

5 See Zohar *ibid.* (118a): “As the era of Moshiach approaches, even young children will be able to discover the secrets of wisdom.”

6 Yeshaya, 11:9. Cf. (at length) Rambam, *Melachim*, 12, and T'shuva, 9.

7 The term is from the Tikkunei Zohar (end Tikkun 6). In the introduction to Mikdash Melech (a commentary on the Zohar) he explains: “[As the days of Moshiach approach,] they will be sustained... when it will be clear to them the truth of his teachings. Cf. Kissei Melech on Tikkunei Zohar, *ad loc.*”

8 Correspondence of the Baal Shem Tov. He relates that his soul ascended to the chamber of Moshiach, and he asked Moshiach when he will finally arrive. Moshiach responded: “When your wellsprings will be disseminated to the outside.” Printed at the end of Ben Porat Yosef, and in many places.

9 In 5494, 1734. See also Orach Chaim, beginning of Tzav.

10 Midrash 'Otiot D'Rabbi Akiva,' 2. Rashi, B'Reishis, 1:1.

11 Avos, 6:11.

12 Chapter 8.

13 Tanya, *ibid.*—Different levels and approaches to secular studies with a holy intent have been explained earlier, See end of Ch. 3.

14 Studying in a university in the Holy Land is extremely dangerous because of the following factors:

The environment and atmosphere there.

It is co-educational.

It delays marriage for several years.

It creates a great division between those studying there and their parents and leaders of the community, etc.

It implants in the students the idea that true wisdom is to be found among non-Jews, and Jews must try their best to imitate them and stop missing out. The more one acts like a non-Jew, the more they consider him to be intellectual and complete.

The fact that they do not say this openly, but rather only through hints and a roundabout manner through practical example in all of their behavior (which forces the above conclusion—as has been clearly proven by the actual results), only serves to increase the danger manifold.

This is especially so since among those who are—in a roundabout way—making this declaration, are also some who keep Torah and mitzvos in their private lives. Unfortunately, they distort the Torah in wrong and false ways, and bring “proofs” to their statements from Torah...

(From a correspondence regarding absorption of young immigrants [seemingly from Georgia or Bukhara]. From a copy of the Rebbe's handwritten response printed in Kfar Chabad, 13 Cheshvan, 5758, Issue 783, p. 11.)

15 Chullin, 10a.

16 Cf. Rambam, *Avoda Zara*, 2:2—“It is forbidden even in thought.”

17 Liturgy of Morning Blessings. (*Brachos*, 60b.)

18 Yeshaya, 40:5.

19 This is discussed and explained at length by the Mittlerer Rebbe, Shaar HaEmuna, chapter 25 ff. Cf. Tanya, 36.

20 Liturgy in the Amida. Cf. Yeshaya, 52:8: “For eye to eye they will see.”

21 Avos, 2:1.

22 T'hilim, 94:9.

23 Tanya, chapter 41. Cf. Rema, beginning of Orach Chaim. Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch, *ibid.* Moreh Nevuchim, vol. 3, chapter 52.

24 ShmoS Rabba, 35:1. (See there for other examples.)

25 And therefore the entire essence and existence. See at length in Likkutei Sichos, vol. 19, p. 182 ff.

26 See Derech Mitzvosecha, 49a.

27 Note Rambam, *Melachim*, end of chapter 11 (in the paragraph that was deleted by the censors): “All of these things (Christianity and Islam)... are merely to smooth the way for King Moshiach, and to correct the entire world to serve G-d together....” How much more so is this true in our case.

28 Note Sefer HaMaamarim Kuntreisim (vol. 1, p. 226b ff.), that through illustrations from physical objects “the G-dly soul refines and purifies its portion in the world, for through using the physical objects to understand G-dliness, he sees within them the Divine concept—for he sees the details of what is illustrated in the illustration itself, and how they are truly one and the same.” See there at length.

# ‘AND THEY WENT TO THEIR TENTS HAPPILY AND WITH GLADNESS OF HEART’ WHY SHOULD WE BE HAPPY?

BY RABBI CHAIM ASHKENAZI  
TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY

*The Rebbe asks in wonderment how the prophet describes the homes of those returning from the Beis HaMikdash after the Sukkos holiday with the term “tent,” something temporary and unstable. \* “In Tomchei T’mimim, you might find a very small percentage of those who constantly learn Torah, day and night, and maybe there are a few more who are involved in worldly matters. The difference is that those involved in worldly matters are jealous of those who are truly diligent in their study of Torah. Therefore, go to Tomchei T’mimim!”*

In one of the Rebbe Rayatz’s most famous sichos, he makes mention of a pasuk from the Haftora of Shmini Atzeres, taken from the prayer of Shlomo HaMelech and concluding with the words, “And on the eighth day, he sent the people...and they went to their tents happily and with gladness of heart.” The Rebbe refers to the words “their tents,” and asks in wonderment how the prophet

describes the homes of those returning from the Beis HaMikdash after the Sukkos holiday with the term “tent,” something temporary and unstable.

The era of Shlomo HaMelech was an era of good fortune; the Jewish People lacked nothing material in those times. It stands to reason that apart from the vineyard and fig trees

described in the Book of Kings, everyone also had a firmly built and beautifully arranged home. If so, why does the pasuk say, “their tents”?

In his answer, the Rebbe Rayatz brings the story about the Jew who was asked by the Baal Shem Tov to send regards from Mezhibuzh to the Mezritcher Maggid on his way home. When he arrived at the Maggid’s home, he was shocked to see the utter poverty that reigned there. There weren’t even any beds or tables anywhere; blocks of wood served as the only pieces of furniture.

The Jew expressed his astonishment to the Maggid, saying that while he personally is not a wealthy man, at the very least, his home has a table, chairs, and beds for the children. “Indeed,” the Maggid replied, “at **home**, the situation is entirely different. At **home**, a person needs a table, a chair, a bed, and candlelight.”

In these words, the Maggid expresses the feeling that this world is not his home. They also explain the reason why the pasuk specifically uses the words “and they went to their **tents**,” and not “to their **houses**.”

While it is true that the Jewish

People during the days of Shlomo HaMelech did live in material wealth with luxurious homes, nevertheless, when they came to the Beis HaMikdash and saw G-dliness, they came to an absolute understanding that gashmius is not **home**. Spacious houses and a proper material status is nothing more than a temporary dwelling, similar to a tent.

If the time they spent in the Beis HaMikdash gave them the feeling that this world is merely a temporary passageway, why were they “happy and glad-hearted”? What is the reason for the happiness, and what did they have that gave them such gladness of heart? The Rebbe Rayatz’s answer: The great joy came from the fact that they **recognized the truth**, the true understanding that *ruchnius* is the main thing.

The pasuk says that they returned with happiness and gladness of heart, as if they were provisions for the journey that they had bought in the Beis HaMikdash and wrapped up in their knapsacks to use during the period after their stay in Yerushalayim. Why? Because these “provisions” – the ability to distinguish what is most important from what is secondary or extraneous – are the most important things that a person needs to take with him when he goes out to deal with his material activities.

## CHASSIDUS IS THE TRUE MEASURE

There is a story about R. Zushe Wilimovsky, of blessed memory, who was unsure where he should go to learn upon his arrival in Eretz Yisroel. He went to R. Moshe Dubinsky, of blessed memory, and asked him if he should study in Tomchei T’mimim or in a non-chassidic yeshiva.

“In a yeshiva that is not chassidic,” R. Moshe replied, “you’ll find most of the students diligently learning Torah day and night, while the minority is involved with all types of worldly

matters. Yet, the majority is jealous of the minority. In Tomchei T’mimim, you might find a very small percentage of those who constantly learn Torah, day and night, and maybe there are a few more who are involved in worldly matters. The difference is that those involved in worldly matters are jealous of those who are truly diligent in their study of Torah. Therefore, go to Tomchei T’mimim!”

We see from this story that the essential life of a Jew, especially a chassid, is determined on the basis of priority. Every person has his own order of preferences. The question is:



What is considered “top priority” and what is considered “secondary in nature”? The revealed Torah, particularly *Shulchan Aruch*, provides clear instructions on this point. According to chassidus, however, such considerations take on a totally different dimension.

According to nigleh, we can visualize a situation that while the physical body and everything it needs and desires is really not the most important thing, nevertheless, it’s not totally immaterial; it’s just less important than certain things, yet more important than others. As such,

there is an obligation to invest considerable attention to such matters, both in thought and deed, as it always proves worth the effort. Therefore, we find many people who exert much effort in their material work, and do so with great excitement and enthusiasm.

However, when we learn chassidus, we get an entirely different picture: The world is actually nothing, and its whole existence is only for the purpose of advancing our avodas Hashem. As a result, there is absolutely no room whatsoever to consider anything material in nature. This brings us to the realization that our efforts in material matters are made simply because “There is no choice,” with the knowledge that anyone who invests his time, his energy, etc., in such things is engaging in an empty pursuit after nothing.

The famed mashpia, R. Shaul Brook, of blessed memory, would define the chassidic approach in a very firm and clear manner. One Erev Yom Kippur, he noticed one of his sons in a rush to go somewhere. When he asked him where he was going, the son tried to avoid answering the question. When R. Shaul persisted, the son finally admitted that he was preparing to go with his children to one of the Torah “giants” to ask for a bracha.

“What is the nature of this Torah ‘giant’?” R. Shaul queried. “Does he have a striking appearance? Does he have a large build?”

The son replied that he’s short.

“If so,” R. Shaul asked, “then what’s so special about him?”

The son replied that he is a great scholar who possesses the strength of Torah.

“That’s fine,” R. Shaul said, “because I was worried that your children would get the message that good looks or great physical strength is the main thing in life, and this is

the reason that you're going to him to receive a bracha. But if the reason is his strength in Torah, your children will get a proper message. I have just one request: Tell the children that he's also 'a *chassidische Yid*' who knows chassidus, etc."

"But that's not true!" the son blurted.

"If that be the case," R. Shaul retorted, "then it also wouldn't be true to say that he possesses the strength of Torah, since he doesn't learn *p'nimius ha'Torah*. To say otherwise would be lying to your children and about these qualities."

## THE DISTINCTION FROM THE MOMENT WE WAKE UP IN THE MORNING

How important it is to make a distinction between the most important (*"ikar"*) and the secondary (*"tafel"*) can be proven from the first thing a Jew is obligated to do when he opens his eyes in the morning. When a Jew wakes up, before he gets involved in any other matters, he has to say "*Modeh Ani*" – even prior to washing his hands. First and foremost, he must give thanks to G-d Alm-ghty, "that You have returned **my soul**" – and You haven't exchanged it for another one, better or worse.

However, the recitation of "*Modeh Ani*" is not merely an expression of thanks. It comes to make proper order out of a Jew's priorities. Thus we say "*Modeh*" first, and then "*Ani*" – not the other way around. This means that first of all, there is a soul for which we give thanks (*Modeh*), and then the individual Jew (*Ani*) takes it and utilizes his time properly until the following day, when his soul returns again.

If we only say "*Modeh Ani*" as a means of saying "Thank you," it would be far more appropriate if we would first get out of bed, get dressed, take a shower, organize ourselves, eat and drink, see that *baruch Hashem*

everything is in proper working order, and only afterwards, say "Thank you." According to this approach, it would perhaps be better to say "Thank you" only at the end of the day.

This reminds me of something I heard from one of the cooks in the Lod yeshiva, a middle-aged bachelor who was emotionally broken from his experiences during the Holocaust. When his brother became a chassan, he did not give him the customary blessing of "*Mazel tov*" upon hearing of his engagement. When he was asked to give an explanation, he replied, "How can I say '*Mazel tov*'? Who knows if this will really turn out to be a good fortune? After he gets married and many years pass and he has children, everything will be fine and then I can wish him '*Mazel tov*.'"

This might sound rather ridiculous, but it has a very similar foundation to the suggestion that we should only say "*Modeh Ani*" at the end of the day. If it was a successful day – i.e., if **I** found it to be profitable – then I'll say "Thank you."

Of course, we see in truth that the saying of "*Modeh Ani*" with our eyes wide open establishes the fact that the main thing is not me, but the soul within me.

## LIFE LIKE A "YESHIVA-BACHUR"

After this expression of thanks, there comes the entire davening in order to establish this recognition properly within our soul by means of a thorough understanding of the words of the t'filla. This is particularly so of someone who understands the words according to their chassidic interpretations, and especially if he is prepared to contemplate upon the greatness of the Creator and the nothingness of created beings.

There are also a number of customs in davening that provide a greater sense of direction regarding the subject of our discussion. For

example, when we step back after *Shmoneh Esrei*, we begin with the left foot, because it is difficult for us to leave a situation where we are standing before the King. Similarly, when we take off the *T'fillin Shel Rosh*, which we are supposed to wear the entire day (but we remove only due to the state of our generation), we do so with the left hand. If a person pays attention to the meaning behind these customs, it establishes within his heart the clear distinction that the time of davening, when he is connected to G-d Alm-ghty – this is the main thing, and his mundane pursuits afterwards are absolutely secondary in nature.

In discussing how the study of Torah is the only important thing in a Jew's life, R. Shaul Brook would mention what is written in *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* about the way we are supposed to say the words at the end of Tachanun, "And we don't know what we will do": The words "And we don't know" are said sitting down, while the words "what will we do" are said standing. "In Lubavitch," R. Shaul recalled, "they would interpret the inner kavana of this halacha in the following manner: When we're **sitting** down and learning in *yeshiva*, everything must revolve only around Torah and Avodas Hashem, and we have no permission ('we don't know') to think about 'what will we do' when we're **standing**, i.e., when we leave yeshiva for the purpose of building a home, etc."

R. Shaul demonstrated this approach in his way of life. For example, on the day of his son's wedding, he sat in the beis midrash and learned. When they came to tell him that his son is waiting to go to the chuppa, he closed his Gemara and said with a groan, "Ah, the pain of raising children!" When he was involved in the study of Torah, which was the focus of his life, he detached himself entirely from the material world, in the manner of "And we don't know," to the point that leaving



a Gemara or a chassidic maamer in order to bring his son to the chuppa was considered to be part of the pain of raising children!

## THE BATTLEFIELD OF THE INCLINATIONS

Indeed, the whole battle between the good and evil inclinations is based upon the distinction of what is most important and what is secondary in nature. This began when Yaakov and Eisav were still in their mother's womb, as is written, "And the children struggled." Even prior to their birth, they battled over whether to go out to the beis midrash of Shem and Eiver or *ch"v* to the house of idol worship.

It's not enough to know what's most important, you must also be involved in it responsibly and with much vitality. If you relate to the matter with coldness and indifference, there is no guarantee that you will not set your sights on the less important, taking a knowing glance from afar. This concept is expressed in the saying "The rock will be filled only through the destruction of Yerushalayim." This means that when Yerushalayim (the conduct of 'Yaakov' in *yiras Shamayim*) is destroyed – **dry** without taste or vitality – then the rock will be filled, i.e., Eisav has what to say and his words make *ch"v* an impression.

The reciprocal relationship between "*ikar*" and "*tafel*" reminds us of the seesaw principle. When one side is down, the other is up – and vice versa. Yet, the seesaw does have one advantage: there is a moment in the middle when both sides are at the same height. However, in the battle between the *yetzer tov* and the *yetzer ha'ra*, no such situation exists. There is no middle ground, as it is totally irrelevant to discuss a possible partnership between the positive side and the negative side. As we see in the example of a bicycle race, you simply can't stand in one place or you'll

immediately fall down.

The Alter Rebbe explains in *Tanya* (Ch. 6) that this is because the *yetzer ha'ra* starts exactly at the point and the boundary where holiness ends. Therefore, it is also called "*sitra achra*" (the other side – not 'the opposite side'). At the exact point where the side of holiness ends, the other side begins. Thus, if we want to know whether something is *sitra achra*, we first have to check if there is any holiness. If we see that there is no holiness – this is the *sitra achra*.

Therefore, the war between Yaakov and Eisav began when they were still in their mother's womb, a war for domination in the physical world from the moment they are born. In

***All this is not enough.  
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dragged after it.***

this light, the appropriate conduct is to say "*Modeh Ani*" immediately upon waking up (with an emphasis upon the "*Modeh*" before the "*Ani*"), because there is no room to argue who should lead the way and in what direction.

## WHAT DOES THE FORK SAY?

The Rebbe Rashab brings a similar concept: Prior to piercing it with a fork, the food we eat is on the level of *klipas noga*. At the moment we stick a fork into it, we determine whether it will be raised to holiness or brought down into the three impure klipos. It would seem that the Rebbe Rashab is referring to an interim situation before the Jew puts his fork in the food.

However, that would be an incorrect conclusion, because even beforehand, the food is *klipa* – *klipas noga*.

This *klipa* creates the mistaken impression that it's somewhere in the middle – "pareve," neither here nor there – but this is simply not so. The fact is that *klipas noga* also contains some good, which lures us into mistakenly thinking that it's a "neutral zone." The truth is that it's *klipa*, and when we place our fork in it, we elevate its good and destroy its level of "*sitra achra*."

Every created being receives its vitality either from the side of holiness or the "*sitra achra*"; there is no middle road. Therefore, the first thing we must do in every instance is to "prod it with a fork" – we must check to see whether it belongs to the side of holiness, and if not, whether it can be properly elevated and purified.

If something receives its vitality from holiness, its primary component is the G-dly purpose for which it was created. If *ch"v* a Jew's motivation is merely the preservation of his body, this alludes to a lack of Divine purpose, despite the fact that self-preservation is most important – i.e., created beings need food in order to live – and what can be more important than the preservation of life?

Nevertheless, the Alter Rebbe says that this is *klipa* and *sitra achra*. However, if our intention is to preserve the body of a Jew, with all the relevant implications connected to Jewish preservation, this is an appropriate and holy objective. Thus, when a Jew starts his day, he davens to establish within his soul the reason why he lives, breathes, eats, etc.

## WE DON'T FORGET WHAT'S REALLY IMPORTANT

It is perhaps in order to establish this proper set of values that we customarily **spit** on the floor at the conclusion of davening, when we say

the words, “they bow down before vanity and nothingness.” The Rebbe Rayatz writes in *HaYom Yom* that the reason is so we shouldn’t even derive any benefit from the saliva that accumulates in our mouths when we say these words. We must conclude our prayers with the full knowledge of what is most important, and be stringent that we shouldn’t even benefit from the saliva that comes from saying these words.

Only after davening on such a level is it possible to be involved in mundane affairs. In the words of chassidus, then our involvement will be “without heart and heart” (*b’lo leiv va’leiv*). In other words, not only don’t we put our “heart” into it – i.e., without any exuberance – it will even be without “heart” – not even a shred of additional enthusiasm – “without heart and heart” whatsoever.

The chronicles of Chassidic history are filled with many examples of those who dealt with their business concerns “without heart and heart.” For example, the Rebbe Rayatz tells about a chassid who went out on a business trip and came to the home of a fellow chassidic merchant. While he waited for his friend to arrive, he became deeply engrossed in a chassidic maamer. When the merchant came home and sat down to ask his guest the purpose of the visit, the chassid responded with surprise, “I didn’t come to you; you came to me!” Commercial matters were so “without heart and heart” to him that not only did he totally forget why he came, he thought that he was still home, sitting and learning chassidus.

Each person has to examine himself and make certain that he comprehends fully what is the “*ikar*” and what is the “*tafel*.” What is the determining factor? If the “*ikar*” is truly precious to him, he will be totally connected and devoted to it, to the point that he can never possibly be separated from it.

When the Alter Rebbe was taken into imprisonment, he sent a shliach to his *mechutan*, HaRav R. Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev, to inform him. R. Levi Yitzchok asked the shliach: Was the Alter Rebbe troubled when they took him to prison? The shliach replied that he was not, and then brought proof: While the Alter Rebbe forgot to take his slippers, he didn’t forget to take his tallis and t’fillin. R. Levi Yitzchok’s reaction: That *Litvisher* sees well (grasps the concept)!

In contrast, the Tzemach Tzedek once left several packages of his writings with the *moreh tzedek* of Lubavitch, R. Avraham, due to his fear over possible fire damage. When a fire did break out in Lubavitch, R. Avraham totally forgot about the writings, and they were destroyed. As a result, he avoided meeting with the Tzemach Tzedek. Eventually, the Tzemach Tzedek met up with R. Avraham, and told him sternly, “Your clothes you didn’t forget, but my writings you did forget?!”

In today’s jet-setting lifestyle, we can prove this point from taking a look at an airport Chabad House. Quite often, we see completely G-d-fearing Jews putting on t’fillin at the Chabad House, because their tallis and t’fillin have already been checked in with the rest of their luggage.

## DETEST THE OPPOSING SIDE

The reciprocal relationship between “*ikar*” and “*tafel*” also appears in connection with our davening: “Better to eat in order to daven than to daven in order to eat.” The Rebbe Rashab was present at a rabbinical conference when tea was served close to *Mincha*, and a debate ensued among the attending rabbis over what to do first. The Rebbe Rashab said that it depends upon what they want to do peacefully. If they want to drink tea peacefully, then they should daven first, but if they want to daven peacefully, then they should first drink

their tea.

This reminds us what we discussed earlier about the need to recognize what’s most important and what’s less important. Furthermore, our involvement with the “*ikar*” must be with much vitality and pleasure, connected to it with an unbreakable bond. However, all this is not enough. A Jew must also look upon the “*tafel*” as something detestable in order not to be dragged after it.

We see clearly that those who mistakenly make materialism and pleasure to be the “*ikar*” are into it way over their heads, similar to that famous animal that sinks into the mud up to its snout and then wants to get even more disgusting until the mud covers its snout.

This doesn’t seem to make any sense: What’s all the joy, pleasure, and self-pride about making the “*ikar*” into the “*tafel*,” and vice versa? What kind of an achievement is this? They should at least feel a bit ashamed and not show the whole world how they’ve lost all direction by attributing primary importance in their lives to the physical body and all that it represents. Don’t they have anything more valuable than that?

The Rebbe shlita made similar references regarding a woman whose clothing compromised on laws of *tznius r”l* as if expressing that she has no inner value to display – e.g., intellect, middos, etc. – and therefore, she has to *ch”v* display her body.

Chassidim tell the story about how R. Shmuel Munkes taught his friend to detest material wealth. Once he came to the house of Rabbi Pinchas Reizes, a fellow chassid of the Alter Rebbe, who was also quite rich. The master of the house was not home at that moment, and R. Shmuel waited for him while lying on Rabbi Pinchas’ bed, still wearing his muddy boots.

When Rabbi Pinchas returned home, his wife told him: Some strange creature is lying on your bed with his

boots on. R. Pinchas entered his bedroom, saw R. Shmuel, and scolded him, “Couldn’t you possibly have taken your boots off first?” R. Shmuel got up in mock anger and left the house, saying, “Feh! That’s all what matters to you? What came out of all the chassidus that the Rebbe taught you if all you think about is *gashmius*?”

Rabbi Pinchas dashed after R. Shmuel and begged forgiveness. R. Shmuel agreed to come back, but on one condition: First, R. Pinchas would have to ride in the street on a broom in such a way that people would laugh at him. This would instill within his heart a feeling of disgrace towards worldly “principles.”

### DON’T BE A “CHAMOR”!

It is safe to assume that among those who have just read this story, there are those who are thinking to themselves: *Things are not the way they were in generations past. How is it relevant to demand such conduct today?* Such a claim is totally wrong, because the Torah is eternal and belongs to every generation, especially the generation of the Redemption.

In all candor, the claim that there has been “a descent of generations” is merely an expression of a lack of desire to deal with the situation. Such a response is similar to someone who argues with another, and as long as he has something to say based on logic or feeling, he keeps right on arguing. However, at the moment that he no longer has anything to say, he negates everything the other person says with a violent “wave of the hand.”

The main thing that is not understood here is this: If they think that it is impossible to do anything to rise above the “*tafel*” and reach the “*ikar*,” then why do they learn chassidus? Quite simply, such people are just going through the motions to fulfill their minimal obligations.

This reveals the hidden answer to

our question. It’s not that it’s impossible to make such demands upon our generation; it’s just that the people who make such claims simply don’t want to serve G-d. This is nothing new. This is the same old animal soul from the days of Eisav, as is written, “And Eisav despised the birthright” – he looked upon all spiritual activity as something detestable.

Yet, it is understandable that Eisav, who lived many many years before the

*This is what is liable to happen if our generation, which has merited a flood of G-dly illuminations from the sichos and maamarim of the Rebbe MH”M, continues to be sunken in the material world. What will we have to say when we appear before Moshiach? I’m the chamor!?*

Redemption and the purification of the world through Mattan Torah, would have difficulty standing up to the task. However, our generation, which is already in the days of Moshiach and is waiting at any moment for Moshiach to come and appear before us and see where we’re holding – what exactly will we show him? How every fiber of our existence says *ch”v*, “More and more *gashmius*”?

R. Avraham Drizin, of blessed

memory, used to say: Why is it that when we want to label someone in an insulting manner, we call him a *chamor*? What makes a *chamor* more insulting than any other animal? Torah speaks of the tremendous miracle when Bilam’s donkey opened its mouth and began to talk. Under the circumstances, one might expect that a donkey speaking with the strength of such an amazing G-dly revelation would obviously say some words of chassidus, etc. What did she say? **I’m the *chamor*!** That’s what you can expect from such an animal. When G-d finally makes such a miracle, what great proclamation does it have to make: I’m a *chamor*!

To our great regret, this is what is liable to happen if our generation, which has merited a flood of G-dly illuminations from the sichos and maamarim of the Rebbe MH”M, continues to be sunken in the material world. What will we have to say when we appear before Melech HaMoshiach? I’m the *chamor*!?

Let’s take full advantage of this opportunity, as these days of “And Yaakov went on his way,” following the month of Tishrei, filled with the great and elevating avoda of shofar, Yom Kippur, sukka, and lulav, are days more auspicious than even before to make the all-important distinction: What is the palace and what is the tent? What is the choicest and what is detestable? What should we long for and what should we throw out?

This is particularly true of Lubavitcher Chassidim, especially those who have just come back from the courtyard of *Beis Chayeinu* – “770” after being with the Rebbe MH”M, returning from the Beis HaMikdash feeling “happy and glad-hearted” that they have been privileged to recognize the one and only truth with all else shrinking in comparison – namely, “all the days of your life to bring the days of Moshiach,” until the hisgalus of the Rebbe MH”M, mamash, NOW!

# A BAAL SHEM'SKE STORY

BY RABBI LEVI YITZCHOK GINSBERG

*What makes Igros Kodesh stories special is not just the miraculous aspect but the fact that the Rebbe MH"M, with all his greatness and his involvement in matters of major concern to the Jewish people and the world, answers and guides us little people. "Like a shepherd feeds his flock, in his arm he gathers lambs...gently leading those that are with young."*

R' Yosef Reitzes told this story that he heard from Rabbi Gurkov of Montreal, who knows the person it happened to:

Over 20 years ago a businessman was about to make an important decision. He was offered a business deal which could earn him a hefty profit but he had to invest a lot of money, an amount that threatened his financial standing. He was unsure whether to go ahead with it and decided to consult with some friends.

Among his friends was a Lubavitcher, who told him to write to the Rebbe and ask for his advice. The friend told him about the greatness of the Rebbe, how he is consulted on a wide array of subjects and he tells people what to do, and how people are very successful when they listen to him.

The man wrote to the Rebbe, described his dilemma and asked the Rebbe what to do. He waited several weeks for an answer but received no response. Finally, after much hesitation, he decided to go ahead with the deal. It went as planned and the man prospered tremendously.

One day this man went home and found a letter from the Rebbe in his mailbox. He figured like this: When I needed him and his advice the Rebbe wasn't there for me and now that I have become wealthy he wants to be in touch with me!

The man did not even bother opening the letter but stuffed it into a drawer and forgot about it...

\* \* \*

The man's wife gave birth to a daughter and years later, when she was old enough to consider marriage, she

became acquainted with a man from a Sephardic family and they decided to marry. Her father was from an illustrious Ashkenazi family and he wanted his children to marry Ashkenazim and he absolutely rejected this marriage. The daughter was unwilling to break off with her fiancé for she saw no reason to forgo her happiness because of reasons of pedigree.

The father stuck to his guns and informed his daughter that if she married against his wishes he would cut his ties with her. The daughter insisted that although she loved her father and didn't want to be the cause of any unhappiness, it was her life and she refused to be dictated to, even by her father.

The father was very hurt and was completely consumed by this family problem. He moved through the house like a sleepwalker, utterly preoccupied by his daughter. He didn't eat or sleep properly and things deteriorated from day to day.

One day (years after 3 Tamuz 5754), he went through a drawer of his desk and was surprised to come across a sealed letter from the Lubavitcher Rebbe that had been written 21 years before! He remembered what it was about and decided to finally open the letter to see what the Rebbe had written to him.

First the Rebbe wrote a blessing for success in the business deal and that

he should use the money properly and for Yiddishe nachas from his children. At the end of the letter, the Rebbe wrote as a postscript: **It is known that we are not so particular about pedigree when the fear of Heaven is as it should be and there have been many weddings between Ashkenazim and Sephardim and baruch Hashem they were successful and they built an everlasting edifice on the foundations of Torah and mitzvos.**

To say that the man was dumbfounded or was shaken up would be an understatement. He went wild over this: *21 years ago the Rebbe saw what would happen now and back then he wrote to me not to make myself and my family miserable!* He knew he would be doing the right thing if he gave his consent to this marriage.

Needless to say, the happy father rushed to appease his daughter and his

son-in-law-to-be. The wedding was held with due pomp and joy to everyone's delight.

It was just like in the famous story with the Baal Shem Tov where he gave a letter to a man for the *parnas ha'chodesh* (communal leader appointed for a one month term) R' Tzaddok. The man forgot about the letter and only gave it 17 years later when R' Tzaddok was first appointed as *parnas*. When R' Tzaddok opened the letter he read that the Baal Shem Tov was asking him to help the man who had given him the letter who had lost his money in the interim and needed financial assistance.

\* \* \*

A few weeks ago I attended a *farbrengen* in Kiryot and heard a sort of epilogue to this story from R' Eitan Pizem:

It was when the yeshiva in Kiryot was first starting out and the money situation was precarious. At that time, his brother Shimshon Pizem, the principal of the yeshiva, traveled nearly every day in order to juggle money and to buy time for one day before the bank closed so that the checks dated for that day wouldn't bounce.

It was Erev Chag HaGeula, 19 Kislev. That day Shimshon was unsuccessful in obtaining a loan, not even for one day. The time when the bank would close was fast approaching and checks to the tune of 60,000 shekels were payable for that day. He didn't know what to do and in the end he decided, with the advice of his brother Eitan, to take a bottle of *mashke* and to visit the manager of the bank.

He went to the manager, Mr. Dahan, and enthusiastically told him



that it was the Chag HaGeula, said l'chaim with him, and told him about the miracles then and now. The manager enjoyed it and told him how much he admired Chabad. He had encountered Chabad in far-off places when he was in the army, with mishloach manos, Chanuka gelt, activities close to the front, and had heard of their work around the world.

Mr. Dahan finally asked him what he wanted and Shimshon said that on Rosh HaShana L'Chassidus his checks shouldn't bounce. The manager promised to honor the checks, though when he heard the amount he was taken aback but he kept his word.

A few days went by and the amount of the discrepancies went up and up rapidly. Shimshon repeatedly went back to the manager, farbrenged with him and told him more and more miracle stories of the Rebbe. Mr. Dahan was very receptive but explained that with all his goodwill he couldn't approve sums like that without surety because he would be unable to stand up to the top management especially when he was a relatively new manager.

One day Shimshon told Mr. Dahan the story told above about the letter the Rebbe had written that was read 21 years later. Mr. Dahan exclaimed, "One minute! I also have a letter from the Rebbe!"

The two of them went to the Dahan home to find the Rebbe's letter. The manager, who was an orderly fellow, had file folders full of all the papers he had ever gotten. To find the Rebbe's letter in that sea of folders was almost impossible yet he put out his hand, removed a folder and in it, as though ready and waiting ahead of time, was the letter.

Mr. Dahan was very excited since he considered this overt hashgacha pratis. In this letter the Rebbe wrote that he needed to use the abilities he was given to spread Judaism. Mr. Dahan considered this a direct

instruction to continue helping Shimshon despite the personal danger this entailed. The amounts had grown to 600,000 shekel!

The day came when Mr. Dahan was told by the bank's central administration that his branch had to generate from its customers deposits in the amount of 10 million shekels, within a week's time. Thus they wanted to test him to see whether he could take responsibility for such large amounts and could prove his ability to raise that kind of money. If not, well that would indicate he wasn't a good manager.

This was more than daunting; it

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was unrealistic. But having no other recourse, the manager convened a meeting with all the clerks and told them what the central bank had said. He instructed them all to make every effort so that each customer who entered the bank would sign ongoing commitments for long-term deposits or savings and the like.

Four days later, after exerting themselves mightily, the amount they had managed to amass totaled only one million. It seemed impossible to reach the sum of ten million and Mr. Dahan felt that his days as manager at that bank were numbered. Exhausted, he left the bank before it closed for the

day, as he bleakly contemplated his future.

Then he got a call from the assistant manager who urged him to return to the bank immediately because someone had come who wanted to deposit nine million shekels!

The story behind this amazing deposit that came just at the right moment was no less amazing. He was a man who worked in renovating houses who had recently become a baal t'shuva. Generally, after establishing a price for the work that he did, he set another price for the cost of materials. In many cases, the renovators charged more than they actually needed for materials and thus they earned even more than the cost of the job.

Since this man had done t'shuva, he decided he had to be perfectly honest and not ask for a penny more than the real costs of the materials. This had a tremendous effect on the amount of money he earned and his financial earnings went way down. His son, who worked with him, began to complain about their losses to the point that they yelled and argued about it.

Erev Shabbos his wife asked him to go down to the supermarket to buy things for Shabbos. The person in front of him bought a lottery form but he didn't have enough money for it. The woman who sold it to him said she had already put it into her computer and couldn't delete the purchase. The baal t'shuva solved the problem by paying for the lottery ticket himself and taking it.

That Shabbos there were many arguments about the losses he was incurring but he insisted that he was doing what Hashem wanted and that what happened was Hashem's will. In general, he maintained that there was nothing to worry about when it came to money.

On Sunday he discovered to his amazement that had won the lottery

on Motzaei Shabbos and the prize was 10 million shekels! He went to the lotto office in Tel Aviv, filled out the forms and went back the next day to get his check. With check in hand he returned to his bank, wanting to deposit nine out of the ten million shekels but he was late by a few minutes and the branch was already closed and the guard wouldn't let him open the door.

He decided that if his bank treated him that way he would deposit the money in a different bank. He remembered that the bank where Mr. Dahan worked was still open and he went there and deposited nine million shekels at just the right moment.

The task Mr. Dahan was assigned to do was completed and not only did he not lose his job but he was promoted to run a much larger branch.

\* \* \*

The Rebbe has his ways of reaching everyone, and stories like these abound. It happens every day that someone writes to the Rebbe and opens a volume of *Igros Kodesh*, letters that the Rebbe wrote decades ago, and finds an answer that directly pertains to his situation now!

The uniqueness of stories like these is not just in their miraculous quality but primarily in the fact that the Rebbe, with his infinite greatness and his involvement in matters of major concern to the Jewish people and the world, answers and guides us little people.

"Like a shepherd feeds his flock, in his arm he gathers lambs... gently leading those that are with young" (Yeshaya). Like Moshe Rabbeinu is described in the Midrash as caring for the sheep and lambs, carrying them on his shoulder compassionately, looking

out for each one, as Moshe asked Hashem to appoint someone to replace him who could relate to every single Jew.

Therefore, we must fulfill the incredible shlichus we received in the sicha of Parshas Shoftim 5751: **To publicize to all members of the generation that we merited that Hashem chose and appointed someone with free will who from his part is incomparably greater than the people of the generation to be "your judges" and "your advisors" and the prophet of the generation, to provide directives and give counsel regarding the avoda of all the Jewish people and all the people of this generation, in all matters of Torah and mitzvos, and regarding general daily activities ... until the main prophecy, the prophecy of "immediately to Geula" and immediately "behold Moshiach comes."**

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# ‘PRAVDA’ URGES THE REBBE’S VISION AS A MODEL FOR RUSSIA

BY BERL HASKELEVICH

Who has not heard of *Pravda*, the mighty Party newspaper, the official propaganda mouthpiece of the forever ruling Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The old saying was, “there’s not a word of *pravda* (truth) in *Pravda*,” but the paper used to sell tens of millions of copies daily for many reasons:

(a) People needed paper to wrap the butter or cheese bought at the milk store, or meat at another store;

(b) There was nothing else to read: other papers copied the carefully tailored news from *Pravda*;

(c) *Pravda* was the official source of information about government decrees: all the new ordinances were carefully outlined in *Pravda*

(d) those readers who were brilliant enough to read “between the lines” could, through careful analysis, get a glimpse of what goes on behind the scenes, what changes can be expected in the official thinking. A sentence in *Pravda* was like a briefing from the Politburo.

However, in the Era of Moshiach things change so quickly that we sometimes miss the quick flashes on

the video screen. *Pravda* is no longer Communist, and no longer the official giant-paper. It is politically aligned with the rightist Russian nationalist forces, and makes a modest living through gossip, etc. Until recently, I was convinced: I will not find one word of truth in *Pravda*.

That was until September 19. As if accidentally, I saw a link to the *Pravda* website that reads, “Rebbe Shneerson against Belykh and Gozman.” Did they chose the title for sensational reasons? I did not know. I

just clicked on it.

It was a political commentary written by one Andrey Scherbakov. He deplored the political platform of the leaders of the SPS (the Union of the Rightist Forces) Nikita Belykh and Leonid Gozman, which they published under “the hollow and meaningless title”: “Horizon 2017. Let’s restore the Future to Russia.” The program is criticized for suggestions of returning Russia to Yeltsyn’s times (when organized theft and oligarchs prevailed) and



Photo: Chabad.org

President Ronald Reagan signs the proclamation for Education Day U.S.A.



Gozman's exposed atheism, which pushed away many religious people from the extreme rightist political movement.

So what does *Pravda* suggest instead?

Read on...

"We would add [writes A. Shcherbakov commenting on a lead article by Chief-Editor of the popular Moscow paper *Moscow News V. Tretyakov*] that gaining more and more popularity among the [Christian] rightists of America today are the ideas of reforming the political structures made by the...spiritual leader of Lubavitch Chassidim Rebbe Menachem-Mendel Schneersohn...whose birthday is proclaimed by a decision of Congress as Education Day USA.

"Although Rebbe Schneersohn was an orthodox Jew, his ideas are supported by many rightist Christian politicians. In the opinion of this prominent thinker, the future development of America is impossible without education and revival of morality, and fascism and democracy are extremes that must be

***"...gaining more and more popularity among the rightists of America today are the ideas of reforming the political structures made by the...spiritual leader of Lubavitch Chassidim Rebbe Menachem-Mendel Schneersohn."***

avoided."

Next Shcherbakov quotes from Simon Jacobson's book (in Russian), writing Gd's name with a hyphen.

"Only a just government that is based on Faith in G-d can successfully balance individual and

societal interests. The main flaw of any government, whether it is fascist or democratic, is that it is based on man-made principles. A government whose orientation rests exclusively on human reasoning will inevitably be the subject of preconceived opinions, bias and despotism of certain individuals or groups. However, G-d Who created all men equal has provided them with a system of absolute moral and justice." (*Towards A Meaningful Life*, Moscow, Lechaim, 2004, p. 197-198).

"From such wells of wisdom, and not from association with all kinds of 'samodurovs'<sup>1</sup> should the ideologues of SPS draw their ideas for their programme documents. And Leonid Gozman, who so much loves to refer to the practice of American democracy, should rather know, as Rebbe Schneersohn reminds us, the sessions of [US] Congress begin with an appeal to G-d. Since there are presented people of different confessions there, this is not a traditional prayer, but a specially prepared text."

(*Pravda*, Sept 18, 2006)

1. Yuri Samodurov (the name means "selfish fool" and is used in the context as a word play) is the Director of the Sakharov Center and organizer of an anti-religious Modern Art exhibition "Beware of Religion" in 2003. The exhibition was destroyed by religious fanatics from the Russian Orthodox camp. However, no one of the mobsters was arrested, only Samodurov and his partner Lyudmila Vasilovskaya were found guilty in March 2005 of "kindling ethnic and religious strife" and fined 100,000 rubles each. Amnesty

International, while admitting that certain displays of the exhibition could be considered offensive, said the sentence was inappropriate. Leonid Gozman, the ideologue of the Union of Rightist Forces is a close friend and supporter of Y. Samodurov. Gozman is a supporter of gay-parades, and passed a bill in Moscow legislature to pay the fines for Samodurov and Vasilovskaya.

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# REBBE, WE'RE SOLDIERS!

BY RABBI NAFTALI ESTULIN, SHLIACH, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY

*For a chassid who was privileged to see the Rebbe dance with the seifer Torah at the Hakafof of Simchas Torah, it's not easy to dance today, when we can't see the Rebbe with our flesh eyes. For a few, it's even extremely difficult. However, we are soldiers, and soldiers carry out orders. Therefore, since the orders are to dance and be happy on Simchas Torah – forty-eight hours of joy and dancing – we were happy and made others happy, we danced and made others dance.*

The Rebbe Rashab would customarily stay awake the entire night of Erev Yom Kippur, daven early in the morning, and by noontime, he had already completed the festive meal. He would recite T'hilim until one o'clock, and afterwards, he would daven Mincha.

During the morning hours, the Rebbe Rashab sat in his room and learned Torah. On a small table, there was a bottle of wine and honey cake, and the more familiar chassidim would go in and take from the "lekach" and the wine. There were those who even had the privilege that the Rebbe would look towards them

and say, "Shana tova u'mesuka" (a good and sweet year).

On one such occasion, one of these chassidim, named R. Zalman, went in and turned to the Rebbe with great joy and astuteness and said, "A gut yom tov!"

The Rebbe, who was sitting totally immersed in Torah study, said: Yes, it is Yom Tov now, and Yom Tov means "festivals for rejoicing." However, today is Erev Yom Kippur, and we must be in a state of arousal to t'shuva from the depths of our hearts with regret for the past and acceptance of the future.

"Rebbe!" the chassid said, "We are

soldiers! On Erev Yom Kippur, G-d Alm-ghty said that it's Yom Tov and commanded us to be happy, and after noon, we must daven Mincha, say the 'Al Cheit,' and do t'shuva. Rebbe, give me lekach!"

The Rebbe was pleased by this chassid's answer, and contrary to his normal custom, he personally gave lekach to the chassid, and said, "Here's lekach for you, and may G-d Alm-ghty give you a sweet year."

## HAPPY ON COMMAND

I recalled this story during Simchas Torah, at the height of Hakafof. I personally was in the place of my shlichus, Los Angeles, but in my heart, I was in 770, where thousands of chassidim and T'mimim were leaping and dancing with true joy at that very moment.

I thought about those chassidim who were privileged to see the Rebbe dance with the seifer Torah at the Hakafof of Simchas Torah. It's not easy to dance today, when we can't see the Rebbe with our flesh eyes. For a few, it's even extremely difficult. Nevertheless, there are thousands of chassidim standing there, including many hundreds who never had the privilege of seeing the Rebbe – all happy with true joy.

How can this be? Where does the strength come from to dance and be truly happy, despite the state of hiding and concealment?

Then, I remembered this story.

There was a similar situation on Simchas Torah 5738, after the Rebbe's illness. While he did not participate in the Hakafos, nevertheless, the Rebbe instructed everyone interested in improving his health to dance and be happy at the Hakafos. Chassidim cried, but they danced.

The Rebbe called in his secretary, my brother-in-law, Rabbi Yehuda Leib Groner, and inquired whether the chassidim were dancing, saying that



he wanted to hear the joy and dancing. Rabbi Groner asked several of the groups of chassidim that were coming out of shul to dance in the street across from the Rebbe's room in order that the Rebbe could hear how they were fulfilling his request.

Indeed, we are soldiers, and soldiers carry out orders. Therefore, since the orders are to dance and be happy on Simchas Torah – forty-eight hours of joy and dancing – we were happy and made others happy, we danced and made others dance.

This is particularly true since Tishrei 5752, when the Rebbe said that all the joy and dancing hastens

the Redemption and brings Moshiach's coming closer, as the dancing is also part of the campaign to prepare the world to greet Moshiach!

The more that we act as true soldiers, the more the joy deeply penetrates the inner workings of our soul.

In a sicha delivered before the yeshiva students during Simchas Beis HaShoeiva 5712, the Rebbe explained the difference between the wine libations, expressing Avodas Hashem out of reason and knowledge, and the water libations, expressing Avodas Hashem out of *kabbalas ol* (acceptance of the yoke of Heaven). The unique concept to the holiday of Sukkos is the water libation, avoda out of *kabbalas ol*, and specifically then we are able to attain the highest levels of joy.

The Rebbe explains that the *kabbalas ol* of Sukkos derives from the enjoyment and pleasure of "one who drinks water according to his thirst," referring to the thirst of the Jewish People who request from G-d "Reign over the entire world in Your glory," i.e., their will and desire that G-d should accept them as His servants. Similarly, we find that the *kabbalas ol* itself derives from enjoyment and pleasure.

Thus, when the *kabbalas ol* comes about in this fashion, the simcha is far greater, since it is not limited according to our intellect, rather in a state of unlimited joy.

## A GENERATION OF SOLDIERS

We are soldiers, and not just on Simchas Torah. The Rebbe raised us, the chassidim of the seventh generation, to be soldiers. When we were sent on shlichus, we didn't always understand and we didn't always feel. But we always knew that when the Rebbe makes a request, this is an order for us, and soldiers must

carry out orders, even when they don't understand.

This same principle applies today in our current shlichus to prepare the world to greet Moshiach: The Rebbe instructed us to publicize before the whole world that "*Hineh Zeh Moshiach Ba*" (Here comes Moshiach), there is a prophet in the generation whose instructions and guidance we must follow, we can receive his brachos, etc. The Rebbe also instructed and guided us that the straight path to achieve this is through learning about Moshiach and the Redemption – each person according to his intellect and understanding.

Every chassid has his own nature, and there are those who have natural difficulties with going before the world at-large and making such declarations. There are even those who have problems with sitting and learning about the Redemption in great detail.

But we are soldiers, and as a result, we must fulfill all of the Rebbe's instructions – even if we don't understand and even if we don't feel. Furthermore, since we carry out the Rebbe's orders with the faith that in the merit of doing so, we will merit to see the Rebbe again with our own flesh eyes – we are on the level of "one who drinks water according to his thirst." This means that while serving G-d with *kabbalas ol*, we do so "to his thirst," out of our thirst and longing to see the Rebbe again. Thus, even the avoda of *kabbalas ol* is done out of pleasure, vitality, and tremendous joy.

Therefore, when we fulfill all of the Rebbe's orders and instructions, we will surely merit immediately to quench our thirst with the complete hisgalus of the Rebbe MH"M shlita, when "our eyes will behold the King in all His glory" at the True and Complete Redemption, immediately, mamash, now!

# ISN'T IT POSSIBLE THAT IF 'THEY HAVE NOT MERITED,' THERE WILL BE A NATURAL REDEMPTION?

RABBI SHOLOM DOVBER HALEVI WOLPO  
TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY

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

Rabbi Alexandri says in the name of the Ribal (Gemara Sanhedrin 98b): "[If] they have merited, [Moshiach will come] with clouds of glory. "[If] they have not merited, [he will come] poor and riding upon a donkey." The holy Ohr HaChaim explained (Parshas Balak 24:9) that there are two ways

for the revelation of Moshiach to occur: "If the Redemption will be through the merit of Israel, the matter will be most wondrous, and the Redeemer of Israel be revealed from Heaven by a miracle and a sign...However, if the Redemption will be due in its appointed time and Israel is not worthy of it, it will be in a different manner...that one tribe from Israel will arise in

the natural fashion of those who rise in the world...that he will come poor and riding on a donkey, and he will arise and rule." Thus, today when we have not merited, the Redemption has come in a natural way, i.e., the medina has arisen, poor and riding upon a donkey (*chamor*), i.e., the redemption of material substance (*chomer*) comes first. So why have the Chabad Rebbes opposed the concept of natural redemption?

## ANSWER:

1. Even the revelation of aspects of Torah not according to halacha has an end and a limit. We're talking here about which way **Moshiach** will come. What does any of this have to do with the medina?

2. The intention of the Ohr HaChaim is plain and precisely in line with the words of the Rambam, "a king will arise from the House of

Dovid.” This means that Moshiach is not some spiritual concept, rather a flesh-and-blood Jew. There are two possibilities: The first is that he will come through Heavenly revelation, and then everyone will accept him with immediate submission, thus easing the process for him to carry out his responsibilities to build the Beis HaMikdash and gather in the exiles of Israel. This will happen only when the Jewish People have great merits – and then he will have no need to compel them to do t’shuva. The second possibility is “they have not merited,” and then Moshiach will arise and exalt himself in a natural way, similar to all others in the world who come to power. In other words, he will become famous through his righteousness and greatness until everyone will know him as the leader and the Moshiach, and then he will begin the process of compelling the Jewish People to walk in the path of Torah, fighting the wars of G-d, etc., until he reaches the stage of the ingathering of the exiles, which is the Redemption.

3. Furthermore, the halachic ruling of the Rambam that emphasizes that the Moshiach does not have to show signs and miracles or create new innovations in the world, and that the



beginning of the process is from the period of “*b’chezkas Moshiach*” (presumed to be Moshiach) when he will have to **compel** Israel, refers specifically to a situation of “they have not merited,” i.e., the lowest level of the revelation of Moshiach (because it is impossible to establish in practical halacha that the situation must be that “they have merited”). Nevertheless, the Rambam establishes quite clearly that the entire process of the Redemption is through Moshiach, and there is no such concept as a “natural redemption” without Moshiach.

### HA’GAON R. ELCHANAN WASSERMAN, OF BLESSED MEMORY, ON THE SECULAR STATE OF ISRAEL

“The true kingdom of Israel is the greatest merit, **and the leaders of Zionism have the greatest guilt.** Furthermore, anyone who believes that **the greatest merit should come about through the guiltiest party** is nothing more than an idiot or someone who mocks the words of our Sages, of blessed memory. The secular State of Israel and the long awaited kingdom of Israel are two different propositions.”

(Kovetz Maamarim, Vol. 1, p. 161)

In a letter to Mizrachi rabbanim: “You gentlemen don’t understand something quite simple – these people who place for themselves the objective of uprooting *ch”v* the Torah of G-d from Israel can only be the messengers of Satan, whose job is only to destroy and not to build, to uproot and not to plant.”

(*ibid.*, p. 210)

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# THE ESCAPE FROM RUSSIA 1946-1947

BY RABBI SHNEUR ZALMAN CHANIN

*Sixty years have passed since the famous exodus from Russia and yet much is still unknown. The following is an account of the escape as heard from R' Chaikel Chanin.*

INTRO: In the Hagada it says, "We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt and Hashem our G-d took us out of there with a strong hand and an outstretched arm ... and even if we were all wise and we were all discerning and all knowledgeable in Torah, it is a mitzva for us to relate..."

My father would repeat the aphorism in the name of the Chassid, R' Yisroel Neveller, "A story must be repeated and told or else it will be forgotten."

In order for there to be "relate to your son" and "so that your generations will know" my father would often retell the story of the escape and the miraculous salvation from the clutches of Stalin.

Regarding the servitude in Egypt it says (Shmos 18:9 Rashi), "a slave could not flee Egypt which was a closed land." It also says there in Rashi on the words, "who saved you from the hand of Egypt" – a tough nation, "and from the hand of Pharaoh" – a harsh king, "from the under the hand of Egypt" – "as the

Targum explains it from the root meaning subjugation, for they placed heavy burdens upon them."

The same applies to Russia, which was sealed behind an "Iron Curtain," preventing people from leaving. New decrees were constantly being promulgated against the Jews in addition to famine, illness, arrests, slave labor, and executions. This was the lot of the Chassidim in the USSR and similar to Pharaoh in Egypt, Stalin wanted to break the opposition of the Lubavitcher Chassidim, "lest they increase and lest they break forth." However, the Chassidim stood strong with the strength of our holy Rebbeim and they demonstrated that, "as they afflicted them, so they increased and so they broke forth."

Just as it is a mitzva to recount the story of the exodus from Egypt, said my father, so too it is a mitzva to recount the exodus from Russia. The common denominator between the two is the open miracles that were apparent at every step and the

Divine Providence that was felt, as well as the haste with which they left.

However, there was a big difference between the exodus from Egypt and the exodus from Russia. The Jews left Egypt in the middle of the day, proudly, with tremendous wealth, and were headed towards the land flowing with milk and honey. They left with Moshe Rabbeinu who instructed them and led them.

Only some Jews left Russia and they snuck out in the dark of night, with uncertainty, with next to no belongings, heading for the unknown, while the Moshe Rabbeinu of the generation, the Rebbe Rayatz, was on the other side of the ocean. Their overt and covert communication with him was practically nil. They couldn't even send him a letter and of course they could not receive correspondence from him.

Much has already been written about Anash's flight from Russia in the years 1946-1947 which is called "the great escape" for good reason. Some told a little bit about it while concealing a lot, some told more, and some said nothing at all. Most of the Chassidim remained unaware about what was going on behind the scenes and just went along with the others.

If someone related the story, it was generally his personal experience. What happened, the uncertainty, and the meetings of the leaders of the Chassidim to discuss whether to flee or not, took place secretly and very few people were involved.

Unfortunately, many Lubavitcher families remained in Russia after the “great exodus,” unable to leave via that route. Some of them were arrested and sentenced to long years in prison or were sent into exile. Many of them died in jail or labor camps. Some have made accusations against this one or that one, blaming them for not telling others about how and when to leave Russia. They point fingers at those who fled who saved themselves and didn’t pass along the secret to others as though those who were fortunate enough to have left decreed years of additional suffering on those who remained.

My father told me that nobody is to blame as Stalin is the one who was responsible for the terrible situation. When a Lubavitcher decided to take the chance and to flee, he was like someone drowning who grasps at a straw. The road to safety was a dangerous one and had to be kept secret so that the

government didn’t find out about it.

Informing on one another was so common that people were afraid of their friends, neighbors and even their own relatives. Some people even refrained from telling their wives because sadly, there were women who did not want to leave Russia, some of whom were afraid of the danger while others were caught up in communism. So some Chassidim told their wives only at the last minute. Everybody knew that if they wanted to have a chance of leaving they had to keep quiet.

It happened that a small group of Chassidim tried to escape from Russia by crossing the border between Russia and Turkey near the city of Atum, planning on continuing via Syria to Eretz Yisroel. A few of them managed to cross the border safely but those who immediately followed them were caught by the border guards in Atum and sent to exile.

It turned out that someone had spoken of their plan to the wrong people and at the last moment, before they crossed the border, they fell right into the hands of the NKVD agents. It was only after Lubavitchers in the US lobbied the American government that Russia agreed to release the prisoners as one of the preconditions for a trade agreement between the two nations.

All the details about the exodus from Russia that I write about here are what I heard from my father. My father, as a communal figure, knew about the goings-on including what went on behind the scenes. He participated in all the meetings that took place in this regard. Yet there were things that I think he felt were better left unsaid.

After I wrote down what I knew I was left with several unanswered questions. I also noticed some contradictions in the story and a few things that are unclear to me.

## A CRACK IN THE IRON WALL

Right before World War II Poland was divided between Germany and Russia following the Ribbentrop-Molotov agreement. After the annexation of part of Poland by the Soviet Union, 14,500 Polish prisoners of war were taken by the Soviets and executed and about 1.5 million Poles, including women and children who lived in the areas annexed by Russia, were sent to labor camps in Siberia and other locations.

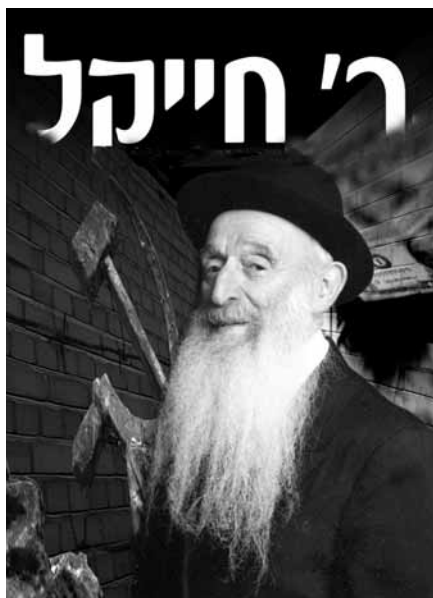
During the war, after Russia and the Polish government in exile decided to collaborate against the common enemy, the Germans, some of the exiles were pardoned and were permitted to move freely within Russia.

At the end of 1944, a new agreement was signed between the Polish government and the Soviet Union called the Repatriation Agreement which allowed Polish citizens to return to Poland. The Soviets even provided special trains called *eshalons* for this purpose.

This was first organized a half a year after the end of the war. In various cities offices were opened in which Polish citizens who wanted to return home had to register. Whoever had documents showing that he was a Polish citizen or whoever brought two witnesses to testify on his behalf was allowed to leave. This privilege was also given to Russian citizens, to parents, brothers and sisters whose son or daughter was a Polish citizen.

Looking back on this period of history we are astonished that the communists were suddenly so benevolent towards Polish refugees to the point that they agreed to finance their trip to Poland. Apparently they had a reason for this largesse.

In the book *Kiddush Hashem*, A.A. Gershuni writes, “The reason that is assumed by those in the know is that



many of those exiled to Siberia died of starvation and the cold, illness and forced labor. This was also the lot of many who were pardoned and who went to warm Uzbekistan. They died of starvation and from the epidemics that raged during the early war years.

Silent witnesses to this are the full cemeteries in cities like Samarkand and Tashkent. When Stalin was ready to allow Polish exiles to return to Poland, with only a small percentage still alive, he did not want to disclose to the Poles what had happened to the majority of their citizens. In order to make up for the number of missing Poles, Stalin allowed Soviet citizens that were related to a Polish citizen to join them.”

My father explained it somewhat differently. The Russian slogan was equality for all. Indeed, all were equal as all Russian citizens were abjectly poor and lived on a little bread and water. The Soviet Union, the vaunted superpower used all its resources in the war and after the war it remained with critical economic problems and serious food shortages.

Russia wasn't interested in refugees and didn't want to share its meager food with foreigners. They were happy to be rid of them and their families.

### OPPORTUNITIES AND DANGER

In 1946 there were two main concentrations of Chabad Chassidim in Middle Asia, one in Tashkent, Uzbekistan and the other in Samarkand, Bucharia. These communities were in close and constant contact and were the centers of Lubavitch Chassidim at that time. The lives of the Chassidim who fled there during the war began to take on a measure of routine.

The NKVD was a bit weaker there and it gave them a certain latitude when it came to religious matters. Yet, despite the relative peacefulness, religious persecution could begin

anew at any time.

The plan was to leave Russia as Polish citizens or as relatives of Polish citizens. This meant, in other words, buying the papers of Polish citizens who had died or if necessary, forging them for the Chassidim and their families. Whatever the reason may have been, after years of terror, Repatriation gave Russian citizens the opportunity to leave Russia. For the first time a narrow opening had been made available for Anash to flee Russia.

The plan would have been marvelous if not for the great danger it entailed. First of all, the papers were forged and there was always the danger that it would be discovered and then, woe to the person with those documents. Secondly, if relatives were registered as Polish refugees, at least one of them was expected to speak his native tongue of Polish and most of the Chassidim didn't know the language. How would they respond in Polish when the border police asked them something?

In addition, there was the money problem. The ones who dealt with the escape and the forging of papers were primarily Polish Jews whose goal was to make a lot of money. They asked for astronomical sums of money for every document they obtained and most of Anash in Tashkent and Samarkand were indignant.

Singular Chassidim arranged papers at the beginning of the Repatriation and managed to leave Russia immediately. They traveled on regular trains and escaped Stalin's clutches, but they were exceptions, just one here or two there who managed to mingle with the thousands of Poles and get out.

How could 800 Lubavitcher families who lived in these cities throughout the war as Russian citizens, who had neighbors who knew them for years, suddenly leave their homes and overnight or within a

short time, turn into Polish citizens? This was dangerous and they would immediately arouse suspicion, thus putting everybody, including their wives and children, into jail forevermore.

### BEIS DIN OF 23

The question people had was whether it was permissible to endanger themselves and their families in the attempt to flee when the results were uncertain, or whether this attempt was suicidal. In this period of uncertainty, the Chassidim wanted to ask the Rebbe and they hoped to receive his bracha but the Rebbe was in the US and it was more dangerous to attempt to contact him than it was to leave the country illegally.

The Chassidim decided to organize a beis din of 23 men like a “small Sanhedrin,” which was allowed to judge in capital cases, to decide what Anash could do. Should they take advantage of Repatriation to leave

*“R' Nissan, aside from his positions at the yeshiva, was also the main mashpia of Anash and he became the local leader in all matters. They listened to him and asked his advice concerning material and spiritual matters. They obeyed whatever he said and were afraid to contradict him.”*





**R' Nissan Nemenov**

Russia with all the dangers this entailed or stay put in Stalin's regime and not attempt to leave.

Among the 23 men were well-known rabbanim and askanim: the menahelim of Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim Rabbi Nissan Nemenov, Rabbi Yisroel Noach Blinitzky, R' Avrohom Elya Plotkin, R' Shmaryahu Sassonkin, R' Shmuel Notik, R' Menachem Mendel Dubrawsky, R' Shneur Zalman Garelik, R' Peretz Mochkin, R' Shlomo Chaim Kesselman, R' Avrohom Maiyor-Drizin, R' Zalman Shimon Dvorkin, the askanim R' Yona Cohen (may Hashem avenge his blood) and R' Menachem Mendel Rappaport, my father and others.

They sat and discussed this for a few days, hearing the opinion of experts, the opinion of those who dealt with smuggling, and they heard testimony from the relatives of those who had already left Russia. They weighed the chance of freedom from communism against the danger this entailed.

Some of them thought they had to flee despite the danger, and they were led by R' Avrohom Elya Plotkin. A sizable number of them thought they should stay put, and they were led by R' Nissan Nemenov.

The meeting took place in Samarkand under utter secrecy, but my father, as a communal figure who took place in all secret meetings which affected Anash, made a special trip to Samarkand to participate in this meeting.

After discussing it the majority view was that the policy of Lubavitcher Chassidim, as a unit was that they not leave in a way that entailed almost certain danger but to wait, perhaps Hashem would help and another, more secure, way would be found that did not entail such danger to life.

In Teives 5706, R' Binyamin Gorodetzky, received a letter from the US from his father-in-law R' Shmuel Levitin, who had asked the Rebbe in his name about the trip. The Rebbe had answered in writing but R' Shmuel wrote to his son-in-law in code because of the censorship so that the answer could be understood in two ways.

My father did not see the letter that R' Shmuel wrote but R' Binyamin told him, as he told many other rabbanim and askanim, that the Rebbe Rayatz had written that the situation at that time wasn't clear and therefore it was worth waiting until matters became clear. Naturally, this letter strengthened the position of those who said they ought to wait.

After about a month, they received encouraging news from individuals who had left the Soviet Union as Polish citizens and had joined Repatriation, namely that they had arrived on safe shores. Word got around and this provided the impetus for Anash to rethink the issue. Perhaps it was worth attempting to leave Russia with this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, especially when the Russian government was paying for the trip which would make it easier on those who didn't have money.

Time was also a factor as the deadline for registering for

Repatriation was coming to an end and offices designated for this purpose would about to be closed.

## **SECRET LETTER CREATES A COMMOTION**

One day, close to Pesach in the year 1946, R' Binyamin asked to meet my father in a certain place about an urgent matter. When they met he told my father that he wanted to impart a big secret and he asked my father to guarantee that he wouldn't tell a soul. My father emphasized that since by doing this on previous occasions he had lost money, he had a principle which was not to guarantee anything, especially when he was in the dark.

However, he soon realized that R' Binyamin had received another letter from his father-in-law about fleeing Russia and even though R' Binyamin concealed more than he revealed, he understood that the Rebbe had given his consent.

R' Binyamin told another few Chassidim that he had received an answer from the Rebbe through his father-in-law (as he wrote in his memoirs that he informed several Chassidim after he obtained their promise not to tell the secret). With all the carefulness and secrecy, word got out and after a few days my father heard other details from the letter. He passed this along to rabbanim and askanim so they could discuss the issue once again.

One of the Chassidim from the beis din met with R' Binyamin, who confirmed that he had received the letter and added that once again the letter was in code and it wasn't yet clear to him. As he understood it, the Rebbe had permitted the Chassidim to leave Russia under two conditions: 1) that those with the means to cover the expenses, who would be able to support themselves on safe shores, should leave, 2) those who did not have little children who needed to be held, should leave.

Since this letter was also written in code that people could interpret as they liked, and it wasn't clear whether R' Shmuel Levitin had asked the Rebbe about R' Binyamin as a private individual in which case the Rebbe's answer did not apply to anyone but R' Binyamin and his family, or whether he had asked on behalf of Anash which obligated them all.

Once again there were differences of opinion among the rabbanim with each of them being sure that he understood what the Rebbe meant. In the end, the majority prevailed and they said that the rabbanim could not take such a great responsibility regarding pikuach nefesh and they thought that the danger in escaping still stood.

Those rabbanim who officially submitted to the majority expressed their personal views to the public that indeed, the rabbanim could not pasken to send people into danger but those who wanted to make the attempt to escape were permitted to do so and were not transgressing what the Rebbe had said.

They admitted that they themselves would try to escape. Among them were R' Elya Plotkin, who told everyone that he would leave as quickly as possible for, "I cannot take the suffering anymore. I've had enough of bitterness. I was sent to exile and went through all the levels of hell. If I have the opportunity I will take the chance and run. We are all in Hashem's hands and if I merit it, all will go peacefully, but if not, G-d forbid, I have nothing to lose. They will eliminate me here in Russia in any case."

The Chassid R' Yehuda Chitrik and his brother-in-law, R' Shlomo Shimanowitz and a few other families felt the same way, that if there was an opportunity to leave it paid to take the chance. They were among the first to make the attempt successfully.

## WARNING FROM THE CHIEF OF POLICE

Aside from these few families, Lubavitch as a whole accepted R' Nissan's view and waited for salvation. Some Chassidim consulted with R' Shlomo Chaim Kesselman, one of the great mashpiim, who was in agreement with R' Nissan.

I would like to explain what R' Nissan's position among Anash was like in those days. R' Nissan wasn't only the menahel of Tomchei T'mimim and the one who collected *maamud* money; he was in a class of his own. Although there were

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rabbanim and Chassidim who were older than he, perhaps even greater scholars than he, and there were those who were more knowledgeable in worldly affairs, R' Nissan was above the rest.

The reason for this was that R' Nissan was a great Chassid and owed Elokim who davened 6-7 hours a day, and the Rebbe and Tomchei T'mimim were his entire life, to the point of *mesirus nefesh*. This is why people looked at him as a spiritual man and did not dare to question him. He became the mashpia of Anash and became the local leader. They all

asked for his advice and submitted to him and his views.

(In a letter of one of the T'mimim he described R' Nissan's standing at that time: "R' Nissan, aside from his positions at the yeshiva, was also the main mashpia of Anash and he became the local leader in all matters. They listened to him and asked his advice concerning material and spiritual matters. They obeyed whatever he said and were afraid to contradict him. He davened at length, served Hashem seriously, spoke at every farbrengen about *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe and the need and obligation to have *mesirus nefesh*." )

My father, like many others, wondered how to proceed. He was determined to leave Russia for he had no future there. Sooner or later he would be caught, sent to exile, or killed. He knew that his daughters would not be able to prevail as religious Jewish women under the heretical government's rule. Until then, my mother had been able to protect them and did not send them to communist schools. She hired a private teacher who taught them at home and she bribed those who needed to be bribed, but the fear that someone would inform on them was enormous.

In addition, my father's informant, the head of the NKVD in Kazakhstan, told him that there was an order to crack down on the Jewish leaders, to arrest all the askanim and rabbanim, to shoot them or send them to exile. Stalin said that now that the war with Germany was over, the number one enemy of the Soviet Union was the religious Jews, particularly Chabad Chassidim. They had to be rid of them once and for all.

He told my father that he didn't know when, but in the end, every Chassid of Rabbi Schneersohn, from the rav down to the simple Chassid, would be imprisoned. It was just a matter of time but that order would be



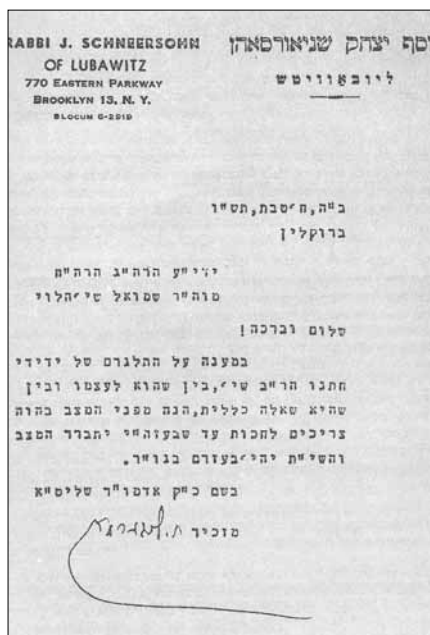
The g'dolei ha'Chassidim after they left Russia. From right to left: R' Peretz Mochkin, R' Betzael Wilschansky (Charsaner), R' Nissan Nemenov, R' Shmaryahu Sassonkin (Batumer), R' Avrohom Elya Plotkin, R' Mendel Baumgarten, R' Binyamin Gorodetzky, R' Zalman Posner, R' Shneur Zalman Garelik, R' Yisroel Noach Blinitzky, R' Mendel Deitsch, R' Yisroel Yitzchok Reitzes. Standing, on the right: R' Shneur Zalman Teibel; on the left: R' Avrohom Yaakov Levitin, R' Hillel Pevsner, R' Hirsh Lieberman (?)

given. He said that my father was a prime target and would be among the first to be arrested. The secret police knew of his activities, that he gave a lot of money to support Tomchei T'mimim and that without this money the yeshiva would have closed down long ago.

When my father considered his future and the future of his daughters, he saw no other recourse but felt he had to take the chance and flee as a Polish citizen. He hoped that Hashem would help him and his family and all would work out well. His question was only when to leave and who would prepare his papers for him, i.e., which group of smugglers he would work with.

## HUGE CONTRIBUTION

In any case, my father didn't want to leave without consulting with R' Nissan and the members of the beis din and receiving their bracha. He went to R' Nissan after one of the meetings and explained to him and the other members of the beis din that



A letter from the Rebbe Rayatz to R' Shmuel Levitin

according to the Rebbe's letter it seemed that those who had the financial ability and those who did not have young children could leave. He fulfilled both conditions and so it seemed that he was allowed to leave.

R' Nissan, as the leader, responded that my father was apparently correct but how could he leave? What would happen to Tomchei T'mimim without his support? Who would cover the yeshiva's expenses?

My father said that if this was the reason why he shouldn't leave, he was willing to provide money that would support the yeshiva for a year! A few days later R' Nissan received the money from my father but it was obvious that even though R' Nissan and the other members of the beis din had reluctantly agreed to his trip, R' Nissan wasn't pleased about it.

During the nichum aveilim for my father, R' Mordechai Rivkin, the one who had given the money to R' Nissan that my father had sent for the yeshiva, told me that it amounted to about two million rubles.

According to testimony from Rav Zalman Shimon Dvorkin, R' Yisroel Noach Blinitzky told him that he had one million rubles in cash that my father had left for Tomchei T'mimim before his trip.

# THE PROPHET OF THE GENERATION VS. THE POLITICIANS

BY SHAI GEFEN

Those who know Tanach see how throughout our history there have been battles between the prophet of Hashem and the kings and leaders unwilling to accept his reproof. This is what led to our downfall. As always, the ones who appeared to be smart, knowledgeable, correct, progressive, and pragmatic were the kings while the prophets were considered benighted and primitive. Sometimes the prophets were persecuted and even imprisoned and degraded.

When we examine the Rebbe's teachings we see how everything he predicted and screamed about is coming true. Contrast this with what our pathetic politicians have told us. Although they won the Nobel Prize and made gala peace celebrations with the nation rejoicing along with them, they have brought death and destruction upon us.

Let us look at the history of the Camp David accords. The Rebbe was sitting in Brooklyn in his little room at 770 Eastern Parkway after a heart attack and every Motzaei Shabbos he cried out to the leaders not to bring tragedy upon the Jewish people. The agreement with Egypt would bring churban and total collapse on all fronts, he warned. The Rebbe was the only one who opposed not only the

Israeli government and Knesset (which almost entirely supported the agreement) but also opposed the entire rabbinic world, dati and chareidi, which supported the agreement. The Rebbe was alone in his view.

Why am I mentioning the old Camp David accords now when we have new problems to contend with? The head of Shabak, Yuval Diskin, recently reported to the government about 19 tons of explosive materials that were brought across the Egyptian border into Gaza. Egypt did nothing to stop this despite Israeli Intelligence that was communicated to them about this.

According to Diskin, "The Egyptians know who the smugglers are and don't confront them. They also received Intelligence from us about this. Since last August four tons of high explosives were smuggled from Egypt, hundreds of rifles, and tens of thousands of bullets and other weapons that I won't enumerate. From August 2005 until August 2006 another fifteen tons of explosives were smuggled. If the chief of staff reported to the government about similar quantities being smuggled from Syria to the Hezbollah there would have been an outcry about it."

What the Rebbe said 26 years ago

on 29 Elul 5740 leaves no room for doubt and seems to be taken from Diskin's weekly poll. The Rebbe said it decades ago and at the time it sounded utterly removed from reality:

**On the Egyptian border there is a state of "the Kutim besieged Israel!" It's not "besieged" merely in a symbolic sense wherein a soldier or two stand there in order to announce that the area belongs to Egypt, but entire military camps are there.**

**In order that people not err and think they are not preparing for war, Egypt sends weapons to the Israeli border every day! If you are really holding by peace, why are you sending so many weapons there? Send machines for building!**

**Although this is not the place to shake up and cause pain to Jews, we must mention this since we see how great is the doubled and redoubled darkness of Galus:**

**We read daily in the newspapers that on all three borders stand soldiers who allow terrorists to enter or who send terrorists who wage war with Israel. On the border with Egypt are soldiers. Today the situation is such that "gentiles besiege" all of Eretz Yisroel! On all four borders, from all directions!**

**It is only because of Hashem's**



kindness, the “great shepherd who protects his sheep of his flock,” that for the meantime all is quiet. This is despite the fact that since the signing of the Camp David accords there have been more terrorists. When they give them oil they don’t give them something with which they will have more light or which will be used to run electric machines. They are giving them weapons!

All the nations use the oil, first and foremost for weapons, security, defense and offense and only that which is left over is used for peace.

Just this week the news reported that Egypt announced that it is about to build a nuclear reactor for peaceful purposes. We ourselves provided them with the oil and everything they need. Aside from that, thanks to Israel, Egypt has received massive amounts of weapons from the US.

At the funeral of our friend Rechavam Zeevi who was murdered five years ago, the shliach Rabbi Yosef Gerlitzky, one of the rabbanim of the Pikuach Nefesh organization, said that

Zeevi visited him in his sukka two weeks before his death. Zeevi said about the Rebbe, “He is a prophet like Yeshaya the prophet and like Yirmiyahu the prophet. In another thirty years the world will see this.”

Unfortunately, far fewer years have gone by and what the Rebbe said is coming true one by one, including on the border with Egypt, including Yehuda-Shomron and including the northern front and the situation with Yerushalayim.

We will continue to quote the Rebbe and by speaking against giving away land and working against it, may it lead to the annulment of all g’zeiros and agreements so that we merit a complete Eretz Yisroel with the coming of Moshiach.

### **THEY ATE ROTTEN FISH, WERE BEATEN AND HAD TO PAY TOO**

Israel is once again expecting Abu Mazen to do the work for them. Once again, leaders are relying on false hope as though nothing has happened

*We will continue to quote the Rebbe and by speaking against giving away land and working against it, may it lead to the annulment of all g’zeiros and agreements so that we merit a complete Eretz Yisroel with the coming of Moshiach.*



**The Arabs don’t stop planning suicide attacks.  
An explosive belt that was recently discovered.**

until now. Again, they try to delude the public into thinking the Road Map will bring peace and that they have to “talk peace” with Abu Mazen even though today everybody sees what trouble we got into after making agreements with our enemies. What’s shocking is to what extent the public can be fooled, how the same approach can be used as though nothing untoward has resulted from it in the past.

In order to understand how terrible our security situation is, it is worth quoting a report that was publicized by the National Auditor, Judge Micha Lindenstrauss, which expresses concern for how decisions are made about the most crucial matters pertaining to our national security. This report was prepared

over the course of a year and it claims that the prime minister and the government make decisions in national security matters without doing the necessary legwork. They rely on various interest groups and even private interests.

One of the shocking sichos that pertains to our present situation was said by the Rebbe on 13 Tishrei 5740, 26 years ago. The Rebbe asked why they don't immediately fulfill Hashem's command to protect Eretz Yisroel when in the end they won't have a choice and will have to do it anyway. The Rebbe asked that they take back all the land they gave away:

Another shocking thing is taking place. They gave more land to Egypt without receiving anything in return. This is not only about the land itself, for this is a preparation to their returning all the territories, including Yerushalayim the Holy City. What is shocking here is that those who are doing this know the truth but despite it they pretend it will bring peace.

Whoever has brains in his head is not ashamed to say, "I made a mistake." Even the great rabbis, the Amoraim, when they erred would say, "what I said to you was in error." Although the Torah generally refrains from speaking negatively about people, the Gemara writes of this in detail and even mentions the names of those who erred. This is because when you need a p'sak din it is forbidden to say it euphemistically, for afterwards people will not know the p'sak.

Regarding the Egyptians' behavior before they released the Jewish people from their land, Chazal compare it to a man who stole rotten fish and ate it. When he was unwilling to pay, they forced him, by lashing him, to pay, and when he couldn't take the beating, he paid. Regarding him it is said: you ate the rotten fish, you were beaten and you paid too.

So too in our situation, in the end

Hashem will do as He desires and the land will be complete in its borders, so why copy Pharaoh king of Egypt and be humiliated when causing pain to Jews for expelling them from their land, not allowing them to live in the Old City of Yerushalayim and Chevron.

They have already eaten rotten fish and been beaten to the point that now they say they regret signing! This is not a situation of "giving away land in exchange for peace" but "for a piece

*In the end Hashem will do as He desires and the land will be complete in its borders, so why copy Pharaoh king of Egypt and be humiliated when causing pain to Jews for expelling them from their land, not allowing them to live in the Old City of Yerushalayim and Chevron.*

of paper"!

Since this signing was against halacha and therefore, against Hashem's will, and since "the word of Hashem will endure forever," therefore the signing won't help at all. Why suffer humiliation to begin with and get a beating just so that the goy will accept the Jew graciously? It will only cause him to demand more and more.

To the claim that since the Jews

signed they have to stick to it, they did not receive the Jewish people's agreement to this signing. They did not receive authorization from the owners of Eretz Yisroel (the Jews throughout the generations) and so the signature is worthless. You need to go to Washington and say you erred since the owners did not agree!

Last year, rather than greater peace the situation got worse with more terrorists entering Israeli territory. The state of the world deteriorated and additional serious things took place that harm Israel. And this all happened to Israel by their free will.

Although they proclaim nonstop mazal tovs, pat one another on the shoulder, and even say they will be remembered in Jewish history as the ones who brought peace, the results of such "peace" is a large number of terrorists entering Israel. Since the signing, security expenses have increased drastically.

There was never such a dire situation as in the past year. They thought this year would be one of "lying down in security" when there was never such fear as there is now!

In the end, they will have to follow *Shulchan Aruch*, so why eat the rotten fish and get beaten when it pays to do what *Shulchan Aruch* says right away and not give an inch of land away!

Now that Egypt has broken the agreement so many times and Israel has begun to regret its signing, one hopes that this will be the beginning and they will admit that to begin with the signing was wrong and they have already eaten enough rotten fish and been beaten and the time has come to fulfill Hashem's desire. From now on they will stop giving and even what they gave away they will take back!

This will definitely not prove harmful but will only help since they go with the power of Hashem.

**Kupas Rabbeinu**  
Lubavitch

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## Ato Horeiso - Keren Hashono

To All Of Anash And Tmimim **שיחי**

The Rebbe was accustomed to request after the selling of the Pesukim of "Ato Hereiso" that the following should be announced "Your word to Hashem is equal to physically giving to a person."

In many of his Sichos the Rebbe recalled words of the Alter Rebbe concerning the greatness of the quality of alacrity in all matters pertaining to Torah and Mitzvohs, especially regarding the Mitzvah of Tzedaka, he stressed, that one should act as quickly as possible.

In keeping with this dictum we wish to remind all those who would like to have the merit of buying the Pesukim of Ato Hereiso this Simchas Torah for the Merkos (which is under the leadership of Rabbi S.M. Simpson in accordance with the Rebbe's instructions) to bring their pledge in as expeditiously as possible to the offices of either Rabbi Simpson or Rabbi Groner or to send in their pledge to the address below.

May giving of this Tzedaka speed the coming of the full Geulah through the revelation of Melech Hamoshiach.

### **VAAD KUPAS RABBEINU**

P.S. Based on the Rebbe's Sichos those individuals who were not able to buy a Posuk on Simchas Torah can still participate by sending their donations now. Keren Hashono (the amount of days this year is: 355), Pidyon money etc. can also be sent to the above.

Please make all checks payable to KUPAS RABBEINU.

Eretz Yisroel address: KEREN KUPAS ADMU"R / P.O.B. 1247 / KIRYAT MALACHI / ISRAEL

# BUILDING A HOME FOR HASHEM IN THE SHOMRON

BY OFRA TAMARKIN

*The week that homes were destroyed in Amona and Jews were expelled from their land, I went to Itamar in the Shomron, to the home of Hadi Noama, wife, mother, shlucha. She lives there with a strong sense of mission, to the point of mesirus nefesh. While taking in the incredible view we spoke about the place and about sacrifice. \* An inspiring interview.*

I left early in the morning for Itamar and the Noama family. The first stop is in Ariel, where on my way to the bus station, I saw a police van pass by. It's different seeing a police van in the center of the country than seeing it here. The images of the evacuation from Gush Katif and Amona are still fresh in our minds and the threat on the Shomron hangs like a sword over us. It's hard to handle the changes, such as the police who used to protect us becoming a tool of destruction. At the bus station were mostly soldiers who were on their way to their bases.

The bus went up, down, and around the hilly Shomron and I tried to catch a glimpse of the scenery. When I made a great effort I was able

to see a few Arab houses on the side of the road, and roadblocks with soldiers and Jewish yishuvim on the edge of a mountain. As I traveled I thought about how unprotected we are in our country.

The bus arrived at Itamar. Around me were mountains, the ancient Shomron mountains, which give a sense of homecoming. Behind me the city of Sh'chem is spread out. That is where Yosef HaTzaddik is buried. I hitch a ride into the hills. I heard the phrase "the hills of the Shomron" so many times and there I was, on my way to see them.

I asked the woman who stopped for me whether she was heading in the direction of the Noama home. She

was, and so I got in. After a short drive she stopped near a caravan with a huge picture of the Rebbe. On the door it said, "Beit Chabad Itamar: Yechezkel, Hadi, Shaked, Yosef, and Chaya Mushka."

I sat with Hadi, enjoying the magical atmosphere of the Shomron:

"We began our t'shuva process after we married," said Hadi. "We lived for a few months on Moshav Margaliyot in the north, where we became baalei t'shuva. We took it slowly. We understood the truth but it took time until we incorporated it into daily life. My husband, who was ready to get more deeply involved, just needed a little push. One day he went to take care of errands in Tzfas and met a chareidi.

"During the course of their conversation, my husband asked him where he could learn Torah in Tzfas and the man, who was a Lubavitcher, took my husband to his home. There he wrote a letter to the Rebbe through the *Igros Kodesh*. In the letter he opened to (vol. 14, p. 291) the Rebbe wrote:

"It would be proper if you tried to visit the one you wrote about and without dealing with his past, to ask him whether he is ready to wholeheartedly accept to live, from



here-on-in the life of a Jew according to *Shulchan Aruch* ... there is the parable of the prince who was taken captive and how great the king's joy was when his son returned to him.'

"The letter was so on the mark that my husband quickly made his way to a Judaica store. He returned home with a kippa, tzitzis, a cup for Kiddush, and an urn. As he walked in to the house he announced, 'We got a letter from the Rebbe.' I wasn't at all ready to accept the yoke of Torah and mitzvos but things began to penetrate. After a few months we moved to Tzfas, where we lived for half a year."

### **How did you get to Itamar?**

"The truth is that we didn't plan on living here. We wanted to leave Tzfas and we sought a place with a country atmosphere, close to the earth. Our first idea was Bat-Ayin. We went there to check it out and met a couple from Itamar who invited us for Shabbos. During the visit they took us on a tour of the area. I'll never forget the ascent into the hills. I simply loved the place. Then and there I knew that this is where I wanted to live."

\* \* \*

Eight years ago the Noama family moved into a caravan on one of the

hilltops surrounding the yishuv. The security situation was still calm. It was dangerous to enter Sh'chem, but aside from that there was no danger in traveling on the roads. When I asked Hadi whether there is a place to which she feels particularly connected she showed me the view from her home. I see Har Grizim and Har Eival with Sh'chem in the valley. This was the place where the Jewish people received the Torah for the second time, when they entered the land.

Hadi told me about the special character of the residents of Itamar:

"From the first moment we came here I loved the place and the people who live here. It's rare to find people so genuine and endlessly good. There is real searching here; people truly want Hashem.

"When we arrived here we still were not mekuravim to Chabad. During our t'shuva process people were tolerant and understood. I think that deep down they recognized that this is a path of truth and holiness. Moving here was like a dream come true. I know that I find serenity here."

During the first years in Itamar, Hadi strongly felt that this was the heart of the country and she wanted to

convince everybody to come and live there, to contribute and strengthen the yishuv. Today she understands that everybody has their place and their shlichus and the hills of Itamar are not for everyone.

"What's clear is that these days everybody must feel as though the burden of the work is on his shoulders. This is a time when we must be real; the responsibility is on each of us to find our shlichus. When a person wants to know what his shlichus is, Hashem helps him!

"These days we have no time; we have to take action, quickly. Living here we feel the urgency very strongly. I think this is mainly because of the security situation. We feel the 'slap' close to our face and so when we 'doze' and veer from the road, we feel it immediately."

### **How do you see this?**

"It's the sense that the ground is slipping out from under our feet, physically and spiritually. There isn't much time here to indulge in fantasies. When you live in a city you go with the flow while over here *you are the flow* and you are the one who creates the movement. If you don't move in the right direction, you feel it immediately. Every slight veering off is felt.

"Our bracha is that we follow the Nasi HaDor. Hiskashrus to him gives us the tool by which we can know what path is right and true. This prevents wrong turns off the path."

### **What is unique about your shlichus in Itamar?**

"When we settled here, we weren't connected with Chabad and so we didn't come from the outside as shluchim. We are part of the yishuv. There are very special people here and I constantly learn from them. They are people who are truly baalei mesirus nefesh. You have to remember that they are the ones who are waging the war that the Rebbe spoke about against giving away land. Our job here



Pouring cement for their new home on the hilltop

is to strengthen the settlement by bringing in the light of Chassidus and the strength of the Rebbe.”

In a conversation with Hadi's husband Yechezkel, he compared the settlers to soldiers in an elite unit who can be equipped with modern weaponry. No doubt he uses this analogy because he himself was in an elite unit of the IDF. Yechezkel added that what is important is to connect this job of preserving shleimus ha'Aretz to the Nasi HaDor, to understand that this is an activity which is carried out with the strength of the Rebbe MH”M.

In the Noama living room there is a large picture of the martyrs of Itamar, sixteen men and women, teenagers, and children who were moser nefesh al Kiddush Hashem. Hadi told me about them, each one a whole world:

“Here you understand that this is real. These people literally gave their lives. It's no simple thing to understand this. I feel that, at this time, I have to at least take responsibility and be moser nefesh in the things that I do. From my experience the only way to be focused on my shlichus is when I take the time to study Torah and Chassidus. It is nearly impossible due to the pressures of everyday life, but I know that I have choice because this learning is what enables me to go forward despite the darkness and the challenges that threaten to overwhelm me. It's what renews our strength to act as Chassidim of the Rebbe.

“Wearing a wig is not enough for raising Chassidishe children and being on shlichus. Inner work is needed and we must put all our soul powers into it.”

Hadi told me about this difficult period, about the months without sleep that she endured:

“For several months I didn't sleep at night. I remember how I waited each time until our neighbor woke up

at five a.m. I felt that as long as someone was awake, we were safer. It was a very insecure time with a real feeling of fear. Terrorists came right into our yishuv. It became something routine. Every evening there were warnings from the Defense department. We were all holed up in our homes with weapons. We put blankets on the windows so that terrorists wouldn't find our homes.

“The army never knew precisely how the terrorists would enter so their method of fighting was to shoot in all directions, from the ground and from the air. Can you imagine what it's like to live like that? I was pregnant and had a baby besides and often my husband wasn't home. It was really very hard. Shaked, my oldest daughter was a baby then and I would put her to sleep and put *Igros Kodesh* around

## FAITH AND PRACTICALITY

This article was written the week the homes in Amona were destroyed. I feel the connection must be made. Opening our eyes at this time is a must; there is no more time. The Rebbe demanded this long ago and today, more than ever, we must awaken to the reality.

I heard about the destruction of the houses on Wednesday afternoon and I immediately called Shira, my dear friend, in order to hear how she was doing. Her sister Ayelet was part of one of the families whose homes were destroyed. She described to me in a shattered voice the horrors that took place there and my heart broke along with hers.

We cried together. Our tears contained mixed emotions: anger, pain, frustration, but more than anything else, compassion; for all those leaders, media, and citizens who went so far off the path so that their hearts are closed; so closed that the evacuation of a Jewish yishuv in the Holy Land seems almost holy to them. And we cried for the policemen who struck with batons and trampled boys and girls who came to protest the uprooting, with their horses. More than all else, our tears conveyed a request for mercy from Hashem, that He have mercy on us from heaven.

Our job has only become more urgent. We need to both do what the Rebbe demanded, to protest and not give in, as well as continue to spread the Rebbe's teachings. May he be revealed immediately.



Purim farbrengen at the Noama caravan with Yechezkel at the head of the table with Mushka on his lap

her. I remember measuring how high they were so they would cover her in all directions.”

One of the most sobering moments for Hadi was when their neighbor, Meir Liksenberg, was killed by terrorists:

“It was like a bomb that fell into my life.”

Just the night before he had come to thank Hadi for helping him print letters, thanks to which, soldiers returned to protect the yishuv. When he saw Yechezkel he asked him, “What’s with the Geula?”

Yechezkel answered that the Rebbe said we just need to open the door and bring it in. Meir opened the door as though saying: nu, it should come already. That’s how they parted with him.

“At his funeral I walked the path to the cemetery and suddenly it all became clear. I understood that all the choices I had made in my life up until that point, becoming a baalas t’shuva, choosing Chabad as my way of life, and settling in Itamar were not external things. I suddenly realized that this situation that I was in with all the settlers around me was real, I was part of it. It was a moment of truth. I am here with mesirus nefesh.”

After they moved to Itamar, Yechezkel began learning in yeshivas *Od Yosef Chai* in nearby Sh’chem. He became involved with Chabad and switched to Rabbi Yossi Ginsburgh’s yeshiva in Ramat Aviv. The changes came slowly and the house filled up with s’farim of the Rebbeim. They began spreading the wellsprings of Chassidus in Itamar and their shlichus developed over the years.

Hadi says that in recent years she feels a breakthrough in their work. She connects this with the fact that they sold their apartment in Rosh HaAyin in order to begin building a permanent house. It wasn’t easy for her to forego the sole financial stability the family had but she believes the

project will succeed and the hilltop will become a Beis Chabad that will spread light throughout the Shomron.

“Our bitachon is built step by step through explicit directions from the Rebbe,” says Hadi. “It took us time until we understood what was required of us. One of the letters we opened to (volume 14, p. 380) speaks very clearly about buying a permanent place: **I was pleased to receive word that you bought a lot where the schoolchildren will learn our holy Torah, the Torah of life.**”

At the end of the letter the Rebbe writes that he will participate in buying the lot with the sum of \$18. They understood that the letter spoke clearly about buying land but they

*It’s rare to find people so genuine and endlessly good. There is real searching here; people truly want Hashem.*

expected that the Rebbe would also give them \$18 as he promised!

Three years later there was a massacre in which three students in the Chitzim yeshiva high-school were murdered. Shortly after that, another boy from the yeshiva was murdered in French Hill. The bachurim in the yeshiva were heartbroken. The Noama couple were spending Shabbos with Rabbi Boaz Lerner in Nachala and Yechezkel asked him to farbreng and strengthen the bachurim in the yeshiva on the Chag HaGeula but Rabbi Lerner could not make it.

“That night I dreamt that my husband was asking Rabbi Lerner to come and farbreng with the bachurim. Suddenly, in walked the three

murdered bachurim. Their appearance was so holy and full of light that I couldn’t look at them but it was clear that it was them. On the bed was a tallis spread out and the boys tried to pull it but it got caught on the dresser. I ran from the room in fear.

“When I woke up I told my husband that the boys from Yeshivas Chitzim came and wanted Boaz to come and farbreng with their friends.”

The next day, Yechezkel got up and found an extra tallis. It turned out he had taken Boaz Lerner’s tallis too, by mistake. He called him right away and told him the dream and said that he was holding the tallis as a deposit so he would come and farbreng.

R’ Lerner had opened to a letter from the Rebbe about the need to farbreng with boys on Yud-Tes Kislev and was taken aback. He ended up going to farbreng and brought a gift of eighteen dollars from the Rebbe for whoever would learn a chapter of *Tanya* by heart.

Chabad’s presence in Itamar with its intentions of expanding has helped strengthen the outreach activities in the yishuv but it wasn’t always this way. Before the Noama family came to Itamar, Rabbi Yehuda Rubin worked there as he works in other yishuvim in the Shomron. For many years he gave Chassidus classes there, gave out material and was mekarev Jews. He prepared the groundwork there. Till this day he continues his activities and the Noamas are in close contact with him.

“In the early years it wasn’t easy doing all the work ourselves. We had guests nearly every Shabbos. T’mimim and seminary girls came as well as families who we wanted to see Itamar and join us. Every Motzaei Shabbos we remained alone with all the work. Recently another two Lubavitcher families have joined us, Dovid and Vicki Schneersohn and Oron and Einat Raz. We have a Gan Chabad for the boys and girls which has eighteen children. The melamed is Yosef Hizmi



Boys who learn in the Gan Chabad



Girls who learn in the Gan Chabad

and the preschool mora is Hila Peretz.”

The gan was started because of explicit instructions from the Rebbe. When Shaked turned three, Yechezkel and Hadi began looking for a gan for her. They opened to several letters at that time which directed them to open their own preschool. In one letter (volume 14, p. 119) the Rebbe specifically wrote about a place in which girls would be able to learn all day and compared the place that would be opened to a lantern that you put on a dark street around which people gather.

In another letter (volume 13, p. 240) the Rebbe wrote about the massacre in Kfar Chabad perpetrated by Arab infiltrators, which applied to the massacre that took place in Itamar: **As it happened to our ancestors by the Egyptians thousands of years ago, the response to their torture and decrees was: as they afflicted them, so they increased and burst forth.**

The Rebbe wrote that the work of Chabad needed to expand. Although this seemed impossible, the Noamas understood that this is what the Rebbe wanted and so they started the gan!

“There are ongoing shiurim for women and men, a farbrengen at the yeshiva high school, a shiur in the yeshiva high-school, Tzivos Hashem, Bat Melech, and people come to us Friday night from the yishuv to farbreng. Lately I feel a little less anxious which definitely has to do with an improvement in the security situation but is also due to the strengthening of Chabad here at the yishuv. Now I am putting a lot of thought into guiding our k'hilla, to see to it that it's good for everyone.”

After lunch we dressed warmly and took a basket with flower seeds in order to plant them on the Noama lot. As we went up the mountain in the car, I understood why Hadi loved this place. It's hard to describe the beauty and the power in these mountains. Hadi says there are amazing material and spiritual treasures here that merely need to be redeemed. After a long drive she pointed at a building in the middle of being constructed.

“See? That's ours,” she said in a satisfied tone.

**What made you pick this hill over another?**

“Seven years ago I went with the

yishuv administrator who grants land lots on the hills. We went around the hills until we came to this hill. When I saw it I knew that this was where our house would be. You can feel the freshness of the energy of the place. It's still clean, like the world in B'Reishis, as though it's waiting for us to come and be mevarer it.”

The plan is to build a large Chabad house that will spread light and attract people. It will be for anybody who is interested in Chassidus for whom the Shomron is close to their heart, especially the knitted-kippot crowd. The bottom floor of the building will serve as Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim of Itamar. The Schneersohn family is responsible for the yeshiva, which has already begun functioning.

Hadi: “Although the building is still not finished, we wanted to start the yeshiva in order to help out in a spiritual way. In the meantime there are two T'mimim who came from Tzfas who consider their stay here a shlichus in every way. We hope the yeshiva will grow. Every Shabbos, T'mimim come here from various yeshivos and hosting them is a big z'chus. They are excited and inspired

by the place. Sometimes it seems as though they want to join us but it is difficult to undertake and no less difficult to commit to. It's important to me to tell their mothers that it is an enormous shlichus to be here, and those who are here – the Rebbe watches over them.”

On the way back to the caravan, a police van passes by and little Yosef asked Hadi, “Are they tzaddikim or reshaim?” Hadi told him that it depended on what they did with their seichel, whether they used it for good or for bad. She told me that Yosef doesn't stop asking about the police as he tries to figure out which side they are on. How can you explain the confusing fact to a child that which side the security forces that are meant to defend us are on is still unclear?

“Very soon everything will be ‘refined and clear,’ says Hadi, “and Moshiach Tzidkeinu will appear and solve everything.”

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# R' SHMUEL (MULLE) PRUSS A"H

## *A glimpse of the life of a Chassid*

BY HIS GRANDSON, MENACHEM ZIEGELBOIM

In his final years he could hardly see or hear, though he was healthy in all other respects. His mind was clear and he had the wisdom of the aged, remnants of a generation who still saw something genuine in their lives.

When my son was born, R' Mulle Pruss could still read large letters that were written for him on a special board. I wrote to him that I was honoring him to be sandek at the bris. He refused. "I cannot," he said.

I wrote to him asking him why and at first he didn't respond but then he said it was because he stopped going to the mikva when he couldn't see. It wasn't possible that a G-dly soul would descend to the body of a Jewish child that he held when he hadn't gone to the mikva that day.

I dismissed this concern but he was insistent. In order to assuage his conscience (and to gain his consent) I suggested that he consult a rav. I knew that any rav would permit him to be sandek.

He said, "That's not a question for a rav."

"So ask a mashpia," I wrote him in large letters.

"It's not an inyan for a mashpia either but is a Chassidishe hergesh."

Since I already knew my grandfather (or to be more precise, my wife's grandfather) as a giant of the spirit and a man of mesirus nefesh who had known the great mashpiim and Chassidim of the previous generation, I didn't give in. On the contrary, the reason he gave for declining only made me want him to be the sandek all the more.

I wrote him, "You will be the sandek and if not, the

bris will wait for you."

He smiled a little smile and gave me a meaningful look. You don't always have to say something in order to communicate.

And he came to the bris, took the baby, and held him tight. I didn't ask him anything further and he didn't say. It was only after about a year that I found out that despite the danger and hardship, he had immersed in a mikva.

That's one small example that shows you what a special Chassid he was. A giant in my eyes not because I had the privilege of joining the family but because I got to know him and when I did so, I merited to have a tremendous closeness with him, one that warms the heart, the nefesh, and the neshama.

I was able to get close with him because not many gathered around him. Who from the residents of the Kfar knew that behind the unassuming R' Mulle was a Chassid who had seen, heard, and received with a p'nimius and was the right

hand of the great mashpiim of the previous generation, such as R' Zalman Moshe Yitzchaki, R' Nissan Nemenov, R' Itche der Masmid, R' Peretz Mochkin, R' Yitzchok Raskin, and others. He not only knew them, but knew the importance of cleaving to them and serving them loyally and with kabbalas ol.

Who imagined that behind the usual figure who circulated in Beis Menachem as the devoted gabbai was a man who was moser nefesh (literally) not only once or twice for others?



Who dreamed that our Chassid, Mulle, as he was called by one and all, had ties with the head of the Mosad, because after he arrived in Eretz Yisroel he did not forget those he left behind the Iron Curtain. He sent them thousands of packages of food, clothing, matzos, etc., and even the heads of the Mosad went out of their way to help him!

Who would have thought that this Chassid, who was orphaned of his mother at the age of six months and of his father at the age of three, would become one of the distinguished Chassidishe askanim in Russia? R' Mulle supported several underground branches of Tomchei T'mimim as well as many Chassidishe families whose husbands had been killed or sent into exile.

This Chassid was raised without the guidance of a father or mother and supported himself by the skin of his teeth, yet he wasn't swept away like most of the youth his age by the heretical winds of communism. He established a beautiful Chassidishe family that was a model for others throughout the dark and difficult years in Russia.

When you saw him on the street he looked like everybody else and only very few knew who he really was. This was the genius of the early Chassidim: their greatness was a way of life, without standing out. If R' Mulle had not agreed to sit with me and lovingly satisfy my curiosity about the years he spent in Russia, even his relatives wouldn't know the extent of his ahavas Hashem, yiras Hashem, hiskashrus, and Chassidishe bittul that were absorbed in his lifeblood and put into practice for 91 years, starting from 9 Elul 5675 (1915).

I sat there, listening to him and writing it all down eagerly. Eventually I plan on writing a series about his incredible life.

Then on 5 Tishrei, R' Mulle's condition took a turn for the worse and seemingly without being aware, he called out loudly and repeated, "*Hinei ma tov u'ma na'im sheves achim gam yachad*," in his characteristic Chassidishe way. These were his final words before his soul went up the night of 6 Tishrei 5767.

He was a Chassid. Plain and simple.

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# SIMCHAS TORAH SHLICHUS FROM CROWN HEIGHTS

BY ALIZA KARP

The Arba Minim represent Jews with different characteristics all coming together. On Simchas Torah we put down the Arba Minim, signifying that our differences have now become nullified, and we dance together as one. But once inside 770, the people dancing together are people who are similar. How is the unity that transcends the Arba Minim applied to Jews who are not in 770?

Tahalucha! Tahalucha is Ahavas Yisroel. Tahalucha is Achdus. Tahalucha is Shlichus on Yom Tov. And most of those walking for hours hardly realize it. They go on Tahalucha because the Rebbe said to go. They make no Cheshbonos. And yet they walk for hours to reach their destination and then walk back. And they are doing it for Jews they have never met.

Walking along the Williamsburg Bridge at 6 pm on Shmini Atzeres afternoon. Black hats as far as the eye can see in front and black hats as far as the eye can see behind. The same scene was happening Yama V'Keidma Tzafona VaNegba, spreading out from the center of the universe, on Simchas Torah.

One of my guests came back and reported that he had gone to Flatbush but was not given proper instructions to get to a Shul. So he sought out a Shul he knew about. When he and his group walked in, the rabbi was overjoyed! He said that Chabad used to come but had stopped coming for a reason unknown to him. (For all I know it was the rabbi who forgot to make a call, but even if that was the

case, he was unaware of it.) He was just thrilled to have the Chassidim and throughout the Hakafo he only sang Chabad Niggunim.

Another guest said he went to a Shul with elderly S'fardim. Their Sifrei Torah were encased in ornate covers which were very heavy. The congregants were no longer strong enough to walk around the Bima carrying the scrolls. The Tahalucha group were given the honor of carrying the Sifrei Torah the entire Hakafo. Without these Chassidim, there would have been no Hakafo!

Groups that leave 770 are made up of informal smaller groups and

***Tahalucha is Ahavas  
Yisroel. Tahalucha is  
Achdus. Tahalucha is  
Shlichus on Yom Tov.***

individuals who begin walking in the same general direction. When a group branches off to go to a specific Shul, very often the participants do not know more than one or two others in the group. By the time they leave, they are a team. A spirit of Achdus comes from a worthwhile job well done and the K'dusha of the Mitzva of the hour.

Another guest told me that his group politely agreed not to sing "Yechi" during Hakafo, but immediately upon leaving the Shul to return to 770, they began a resounding chorus of "Yechi." Spontaneous combustion generating heat and light

on the streets of the Lower East Side of Manhattan!

Considering the short time span and the brevity of verbal communication, an amazing Achdus develops, connecting the Chassidim with the Rabbis and congregations they visit. Not all rabbis are as welcoming as the one who missed the Chassidim who used to come. Some are tense at first – they are unaccustomed to the bright light – but from all the stories I have heard, even the most frigid rabbi becomes malleable after a few Hakafo and the congregants find themselves drawn to the Ko'ach and energy of the Simcha generated by Chassidim who are carrying out the Rebbe's Peula.

Chassidim on Tahalucha touch the lives of the young, very young, old and very old. I have never heard of groups walking from Queens to Brooklyn or from Flatbush to Crown Heights. Only the Rebbe's concern for every Jew stimulates thousands of Chassidim to walk such distances ! and our guys do it singing!

One congregant on the Lower East Side was impressed that the group walked the way from Crown Heights. He was even more amazed to hear that this was only the warm-up – the real dancing begins after they walk back and join together with the others who walked for hours, returning to home base, after embracing thousands of Jews with the loving arms of the Rebbe.

We can't take pictures of Tahalucha with cameras, but we can do it with words. It is time to start an album of Tahalucha stories.