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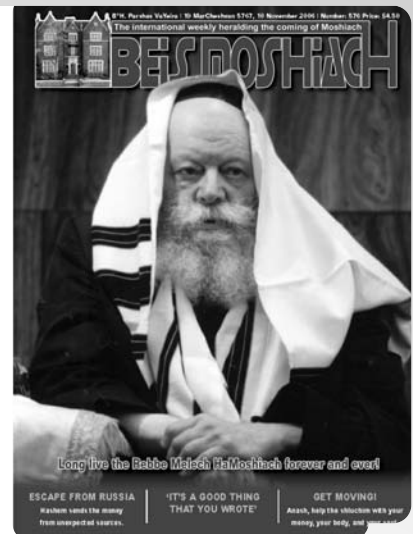
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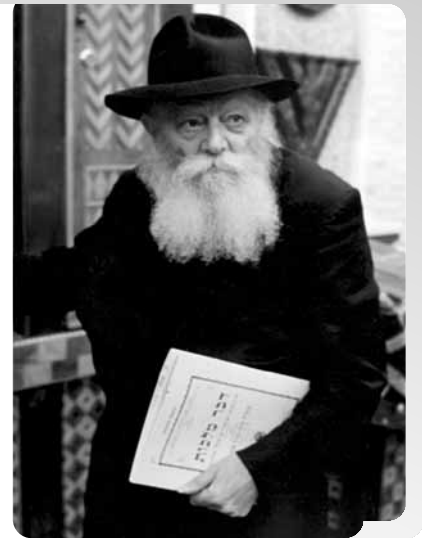
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WHY THE RIGHTEOUS HAVE NO REST

LIKKUTEI SICHOS, VOL. 15, PG. 137-144
TRANSLATED BY BORUCH MERKUR



[Continued from last week.]

11. At first glance, the following two questions arise:
a) Our Sages say that “Mitzvos will be nullified in the World to Come.” The Alter Rebbe elaborates, “that is, during the Era of the Resurrection of the Dead” [*Igeres HaKodesh*, siman 26 (145a end of page)]. [How is this reconciled with the notion that during the Era of the Resurrection it will once again be a time of “work” in Mitzvos?] b) It is elucidated in several places in the works of Chassidus [FN 36: *Or HaTorah* and *Hemshech* 5666, cited in FN 3] that the saying of our Sages, “The righteous have no rest, etc.” (rather, they continually ascend from level to level) refers to ascending in the Garden of Eden. However, **the Future to Come** will be a sabbatical and a time of rest – also from ascending. Now, how is this understood in light of what was explained above – that the version that reads, “**The righteous** have no rest, etc., in the World to Come,” is speaking (not about the Garden of Eden, but) about the World of Resurrection?

The explanation: The Era of the World of Resurrection itself is composed of two stages, the first of which is said with respect to **every** Jew [in the Musaf Prayer], “And there it will be done before You, etc., according to the Mitzvos of Your Will.” [That is, in this first stage] there will then be the fulfillment of Mitzvos, and of consequence, also the ascent accomplished through them. Whereas, the second stage, which follows thereafter, will be a time when “Mitzvos will be nullified.”

Among the proofs for [the first stage, a time when there will be the performance of Mitzvos, etc.] is the

following: There is a familiar saying of our Sages – that in the Future to Come, “Moshe and Aharon will be among us,” and they will offer sacrifices [Tosafos, P’sachim (114b, section beginning with the word, “One”)], indicating the fulfillment of Mitzvos. (This is particularly [relevant in our case, considering] that the general concept of offering sacrifices is the concept of ascending, the elevation of the life-force of the animals, from below upwards, as it is explained in several places.) We see from this that also during the Era of the Resurrection of the Dead there will be the concept of Mitzvos and ascent, etc.

12. However, it is still not entirely explained: “Have no rest” means here that the ascent of the righteous proceeds without any interruption. But according to the latter explanation – that “The righteous have no rest...in the World to Come” means (a stage of) the World of Resurrection – they experience a “restful” intermission in the Garden of Eden (where there is no “work” of Mitzvos), between this world and the World of Resurrection.

The explanation: It was previously explained that the performance of Mitzvos is only possible in this world, where the soul is invested in a body. When the soul is in the Garden of Eden, however, without a body, the service of Mitzvos is impossible.

Therefore, with regard to the classification of (and in connection with) the service of masters of good deeds (the righteous), whose service is only possible when the soul is **together** with the body, the time when the soul is without the body, when it is in the Garden of Eden, is not considered existence. To be precise: The fulfillment

(kiyum) of Mitzvos is connected with – and thus, requires – the sustenance (kiyum) of the body. And when the body is not sustained (in a manner that is adequate for the expression of a soul [i.e., when it is alive]), it is likewise not possible to say regarding the soul that it exists in the context of time. [FN 41: This sheds light on the fact that no one puts forth the notion that, according to the opinion that it is a law given to Moshe at Sinai (i.e., a decree) that at the age of thirteen years one becomes obligated in the fulfillment of Mitzvos, a minor [i.e., someone under thirteen], when he arises in the Resurrection of the Dead, will be obligated in Mitzvos immediately if thirteen years had since past since he was born.] Thus, the fact that the souls of the masters of good deeds experience no ascent throughout the duration of their being in the Garden of Eden does not comprise an **interruption** in their ascent.

To illustrate: The Rogatchover says [Tzafnas Paneiach on Rambam's Laws of Repentance 8:4 – see FN 42] that the passage of time is not possible when the soul is above. That is, at the time when the joining of the soul with the body is severed and the soul rises to the Garden of Eden, there in its “world” there is entirely no concept of time with respect to the **laws** of Torah. (Although it does experience the **reward** for the performance of Mitzvos, involvement in Torah study, and etc., as is known with regard to the concept of midnight in the Garden of Eden and etc.)

13. We may further postulate: The Rebbe Rashab, whose soul is in heaven, whose birthday is celebrated on the twentieth of Mar-Cheshvan, writes (in his will) as follows: “To discuss this topic in greater depth, we may further propose, in a speculative manner – according to what I heard in the name of my father, the Rebbe, of blessed memory – that the Infinite Light that Transcends all Worlds illuminates for them [i.e., the souls] also in the Garden of Eden ... Accordingly, we may presume that it is possible that [in the Garden of Eden] there is a semblance of the performance of Mitzvos, in a manner resembling and exemplary of the Mitzvos that will be [performed] in the World to Come [i.e., the World of Resurrection] ... This

is the concept of honoring one's father and mother: Just as He brings the Patriarchs (Avos, Fathers) to the Garden of Eden, etc.”

14. (We may suggest that this is the inner meaning of the writing of the Rambam [Laws of Repentance 8:2], as he puts it: “Thus the Early Sages said [Brachos 17a], ‘In the World to Come there is no body or corporality...rather, the righteous sit with their crowns on their heads and they derive benefit from the ray of the Divine Presence.’ Thus, it is clear to you that there is no [concept] of body there...” – for the Rambam interprets “the World to Come” in this saying of our Sages to mean “the Garden of Eden” – “Likewise, that which they said, ‘their crowns on their heads,’ refers to the knowledge they will possess ... This is their crown, along the lines of what Shlomo said, ‘In the crown crowned upon him by his mother’ ... Likewise the meaning of the term ‘crown,’ as used by the Sages, is ‘knowledge.’ And what is the meaning of their saying, ‘they derive benefit from the ray of the Divine Presence’? That they possess knowledge and comprehension of the truth of the Holy One Blessed Be He, that which they knew not when they were in a dark and lowly body.”

(We may propose that the intent derived from the above is that in the Garden of Eden there are two concepts: a) “Their crowns on their heads” – for a crown rests **upon** (and above) the head and surrounds it, referring to the knowledge that corresponds to the Light that Transcends the Worlds, which is said to surround/transcend them; b) “they **derive benefit** from the ray of the Divine Presence ... That they possess

knowledge and **comprehension**, etc.” – this refers to the fact that they ascend from level to level in their **comprehension** of the Torah, [an increase] in knowledge and the degree to which it is internalized.)

Since that also in the Garden of Eden it is (at least) possible for there to be “a semblance of the performance of Mitzvos,” therefore, even in the Garden of Eden, at least “one who is great in righteousness (tzaddik gadol)” has no rest, also with respect to the “work” of **Mitzvos**.

(From the address of Chaf Menachem-Av 5735)

No one puts forth the notion that, according to the opinion that it is a decree that at the age of 13 years one becomes obligated in the fulfillment of Mitzvos, a minor, when he arises in the Resurrection of the Dead, will be obligated in Mitzvos immediately if 13 years had since past since he was born.

THE POWERFUL MITZVA OF HACHNASAS ORCHIM

*A special revelation of the Sh'china to Avrohom. * The difference between tz'daka and hachnasas orchim. * Moshiach will host the Jewish people with the Geula shleima. * A fascinating look at the parsha according to Midrash, Kabbala, and Chassidus Chabad.*

HONOR TO AVROHOM

Parshas VaYeira begins with Hashem appearing to Avrohom, “and Hashem appeared to him,” but the parsha does not tell us the purpose of this revelation. Hashem did not say anything to Avrohom, He did not command anything; He just appeared to Avrohom and visited him.

The commentators provide various reasons for Hashem's revelation to Avrohom: 1) According to Rashi it was for *bikur cholim*, “to visit the sick and inquire as to his welfare,” for it was the third day after his circumcision, which is the most painful.

2) According to Rambam it is talking about the revelation of the three angels which the Torah goes on

to tell us about: they came to visit Avrohom and to inform him about the birth of Yitzchok. The words, “and Hashem appeared to him,” are not a separate revelation, according to Rambam, but the beginning of the story of the revelation of the angels to Avrohom (and there was no prior revelation of the Sh'china).

3) According to Ramban, this is a revelation of Hashem (and not angels) and this revelation was not for any particular purpose (like visiting the sick or the like) but to express Hashem's esteem for Avrohom Avinu.

Ramban says: This wasn't a revelation of the Sh'china to command any mitzva, as nothing was said and nothing new happened, but to honor

him and inform him that Hashem appreciates his deeds, as it were. He should know that his deeds are desirable and this (revelation) would serve to protect His servant, the tzaddik, and to honor him.

According to this we can understand the connection between this revelation and the mitzva of hachnasas orchim which the Torah goes on to tell us about in the next verses. The mitzva of hachnasas orchim has no other purpose than the relationship itself; it's not about giving physical aid to a guest (as will be explained further on).

THE MITZVA OF HACHNASAS ORCHIM

The attribute of chesed is the beginning and foundation of the world as Dovid HaMelech says in T'hilim, “the world is built on chesed.” Hashem created the world with the attribute of chesed, and one who does chesed, gives tz'daka, and has guests, earns a reward and blessing from Hashem in this world and the world to come, as the Mishna says, “he eats the fruits in this world and the principal remains for the World to

Come.”

The practical expression of the attribute of chesed is helping another through the mitzva of tz’daka and hachnasas orchim, but there is a difference between these two mitzvos. The mitzva of tz’daka is to help the poor person, who has nothing to eat and drink. When you give him money or take him into your home and give him food and drink, you fulfill the mitzva of tz’daka and are doing a chesed with the needy.

The mitzva of hachnasas orchim is not (only) with the indigent. Even someone who has food and is not starving or thirsty, even someone wealthier than me whose house contains all he needs, can be invited to my home and I thereby fulfill the

mitzva of hachnasas orchim.

In other words, the point of the mitzva of tz’daka is to give, to help and support the poor, but the point of hachnasas orchim is to give honor to your guest, to open your home and heart to the guest, to give him attention, to sit and talk with him, to learn with him and show him how important he is and how pleasant it is to interact with him and how wonderful it is that he came to your home. This guest didn’t come to your home to satisfy his hunger but to have a nice time in your company.

(Actually, at the root and essence of things, even the mitzva of hachnasas orchim is a branch of the mitzva of tz’daka, because the definition of the mitzva of tz’daka is “giving to the

needy.” There are many facets of neediness: one person is poor and needs food and money to support himself and another person isn’t poor and he has food but he needs a relationship, to be listened to, to be respected as a human being, and so any giving to another person is a branch of the mitzva of tz’daka.)

HACHNASAS ORCHIM IN THE STREET

The mitzva of hachnasas orchim need not be done, necessarily, by taking a stranger into our home. By opening our heart to another, wishing a good morning or saying hello, or smiling at someone, we are bringing guests into our heart and encouraging and supporting them.

When you meet a Jew on the street



who looks downcast and greet him and add some encouraging words, even briefly, and the person's spirits are uplifted, you are fulfilling the mitzva of hachnasas orchim *l'mehadrin*.

This is the connection between the first revelation described at the beginning of the parsha (according to Ramban) and the mitzva of hachnasas orchim described in subsequent verses:

Just as the revelation to Avrohom wasn't for the purpose of commanding him and conveying a message but to accord respect to Avrohom, so too the mitzva of hachnasas orchim is primarily meant to honor another (like the hosting of the angels, who didn't need to eat and drink).

When the Torah describes Hashem's visit to Avrohom, it says, "And Hashem appeared to **him**," and not "appeared to Avrohom." Why? The Rebbe explains that if it said that Hashem visited **Avrohom**, one could think that he was given special treatment because he was Avrohom Avinu, the tzaddik, man of G-d, father of the Jewish people. Therefore the Torah writes "to him" and doesn't stress that it was Avrohom, teaching us that we should give respect to every single person, not only to someone on the exalted level of Avrohom.

To summarize: The mitzva of tz'daka consists of helping and feeding a poor person. When you meet a poor person it's a mitzva to help him in any way, by giving him money and by taking him into your home and providing him with food and lodging. The mitzva of hachnasas orchim is not just for the poor, but also for someone who lacks for nothing – that we are commanded to honor him and make him happy.

HACHNASAS ORCHIM OF MOSHIACH

By fulfilling the mitzva of hachnasas orchim in its pure form, relating to a guest not only by filling

him up with food and drink but with respect and Ahavas Yisroel, we will merit the hachnasas orchim of the Jewish people with the complete Geula, with Moshiach taking us all to the Yemos HaMoshiach *b'karov mamash*.

The world will be fixed and complete with no sorrows and illness, no poverty and hardships, no interference with fulfilling the will of Hashem, as the Rambam writes in Hilchos Melachim (12:5), "At that time there will be no hunger and no war, no jealousy and competition, for good things will flow in abundance

The Torah writes "to him" and doesn't stress that it was Avrohom, teaching us that we should give respect to every single person, not only to someone on the exalted level of Avrohom.

and all the delicacies will be as freely available as dust... The Jews will therefore be great sages and know the hidden matters, and will attain an understanding of their Creator."

Some pray for the Geula because they suffer from poverty, illness, tzaros, and the Sh'china being in galus. In other words, they want Moshiach to come because of all the wonderful material and spiritual things we will have then. However, there is something special regarding Moshiach himself – not insofar as he will provide that which is lacking and

correct those things that need to be fixed, but Moshiach for Moshiach's sake!

It's like Hashem's visit to Avrohom, which wasn't for the purpose of healing or fixing, bikur cholim, but for the man himself, in order to honor Avrohom Avinu; like hachnasas orchim being for the sake of the guest and not to satisfy what he lacks and to stave his hunger.

Similarly regarding prayers for Moshiach: there is something significant that is inherent to Moshiach, not as a means to attain additional benefits.

The Rebbe says: there is something wondrous about Moshiach not only as a means to an end, such as fixing the world and humanity, but in and of himself – the coming of Moshiach which supersedes Tikkun Olam!

AVROHOM AVINU'S AMAZING ATTRIBUTE OF CHESED

Back to our topic, the mitzva of hachnasas orchim: Avrohom Avinu was a generous man and an outstanding baal chesed, with his money, his body, and his soul. He planted an orchard in order to feed his guests and he built a hostel. He pampered his guests with all sorts of delicacies. His chesed was so exemplary that "the Attribute of Chesed said to Hashem: Master of the world, since Avrohom is present on earth I haven't had to do my work, for Avrohom stands and serves instead of me!"




"The deeds of the Avos are a sign for the children," and from Avrohom's special deeds we are all empowered to be hosts and baalei tz'daka and chesed, till we merit the great chesed that Hashem will do with us when He takes us to the complete Geula, may it be now.

Sources: Likkutei Sichos vol. 5, p. 84. Vol. 34, p. 84.
Toras Menachem-Hisvaaduyos 5746, vol. 2, p. 653.
HaBayis HaYehudi p. 415.

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GET MOVING!

BY RABBI SHNEUR ZALMAN HALPERIN, CHABAD HOUSE DIRECTOR, M'VO'OT HERMON, ERETZ YISROEL

TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY

Thousands of shluchim work day and night with vigor and devotion, but where do Anash members find themselves participating in the avoda of shlichus? In preparation for the 5767 International Shluchim Conference in Beis Chayeinu – 770.

In the *HaYom Yom* entry of the 3rd of MarCheshvan, the Rebbe MH"M writes: "Lech [Lecha] is really a happy Torah portion. Each day of the week, we live with Avrohom Avinu, the first person who acted with self-sacrifice to publicize G-dliness in the world, and Avrohom Avinu bequeathed his self-sacrifice as an inheritance to all Israel."

Indeed, we must **live** with the times, particularly with the weekly Torah portion and the daily entry of *HaYom Yom*, and here the Rebbe tells us that we received the great treasure of self-sacrifice as an inheritance from Avrohom Avinu.

The Rebbe explains in his holy sichos that Avrohom Avinu had the world's first Chabad House, and therefore, we are obligated to learn from Avrohom Avinu and his self-sacrifice to publicize G-dliness in the world.

G-d willing, in another two weeks, the International Shluchim Conference will take place in Beis Chayeinu – 770. In an edited sicha

from the farbrengen during the 5752 Shluchim Conference (*Seifer HaSichos* 5752, Vol. 1, p. 109), the Rebbe told us, "All this has especially increased even more in our generation with the new innovation in shlichus that my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, leader of the generation, appointed **every Jew from this generation** to be his shliach in spreading Torah and Yiddishkait, and spreading the wellsprings outward until it brings the True and Complete Redemption."

From a shliach's vantage point, I would like to turn to Anash members and ask: Can each one say to himself, "I am devoting time, strength, thought, and a little self-sacrifice to the shlichus that the Rebbe has placed upon me?"

Thank G-d, there are shluchim and Chabad Houses in almost every location in the world, and thousands of shluchim work day and night with vigor and devotion, but where do Anash members find themselves participating in the

avoda of shlichus? Why do we find cases where a shliach has to go around and beg avreichim to give over shiurim in his community or to participate in activities organized by the Chabad House? To our great regret, there are many reasons and excuses, and while they may be true, it's possible in the meantime to start another weekly Torah class or to establish some other activity.

I wish to emphasize here that it takes tremendous dedication for an avreich or a housewife to leave home once a week for three hours, leave the children behind with a babysitter, and travel to some distant location to teach a Torah class, but we receive the strengths to do all this from Avrohom Avinu



Rabbi Shneur Zalman Halperin

himself.

Thank G-d, I can testify to the fact that there are many people who have come closer to Yiddishkait in the merit of such Torah classes. Many have begun writing to the Rebbe through *Igros Kodesh*, and many others have even traveled to the Rebbe as a result of these classes, etc.

There's no time! In another brief moment, the light of the Redemption will break through, and therefore, we must closely connect as many Jews as possible to the Rebbe MH"M.

Anash members, N'shei Chabad – come and help us, the shluchim, in every location with your money (as the situation mandates), your body, and your soul. One can give over a Torah class, a second can escort the teacher to the class, and a third can donate his car for that purpose. Each one is a shliach of the Rebbe, and

this role obligates him and gives him the privilege to devote himself totally to shlichus in every way possible.

Even regarding our children and the members of our household, there is no greater living example than when Tatty and Mommy go out

on the Rebbe's shlichus activities at least once a week.

May it be G-d's will that these activities should do their job, and we should speedily and immediately merit to see the Rebbe MH"M with our own flesh eyes and hear G-d's Torah emit directly from him.

Anash members, N'shei Chabad – come and help us, the shluchim, in every location, with your money, your body, and your soul. One can give over a Torah class, a second can escort the teacher to the class, and a third can donate his car for that purpose. Each one is a shliach of the Rebbe, and this role obligates him and gives him the privilege to devote himself totally to shlichus in every way possible.

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WHY DON'T WE RELATE TO THE GOOD THINGS THAT THE MEDINA DOES?

RABBI SHOLOM DOVBER HA'LEVI WOLPO

TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY

In response to requests by our readers, we now present the twenty-first 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

While it's true that there is much corruption in the medina, nevertheless, it is impossible to ignore the good things. Today, the greatest Torah center in the world is in Eretz Yisroel. Hundreds of thousands of avreichim, bachurim, and young boys learn in yeshivos, kollels, and Talmud Torahs and many young women and girls study in religious and chareidi learning institutions. Therefore, how can we possibly invalidate all this in one shot?

Furthermore, we must not slander

the leaders of the medina, as we find in the case of Eliyahu HaNavi (Melachim Alef 18:46): "And he girded up his loins and ran before Achav," and as is written in Yalkut Shimoni (ibid., #217): "[We learn] from here that we give honor to the king."

ANSWER:

1. No one wants *ch"v* to invalidate the importance of the great centers of Torah and the fear of Heaven in Eretz HaKodesh. But what does this have to do with the "Redemption"?

2. By the same token, there are also

tremendous centers of Torah and chassidus in the United States and Europe. Does this make America "is'chalta d'Geula"?

3. Getting to the heart of the matter, if we take a look at the medina's support for Torah institutions, we find that it comes nowhere near the level of income tax collected from Torah observant Jews in Eretz Yisroel. What thanks do we owe the medina for this? **It's our money!** It's enough to compare the medina's investment in secular schools and universities to what it gives to Torah institutions, and its support for the "culture" of lewdness and abomination as opposed to its support for the true culture of the Jewish People. Is this the medina's contribution towards the Redemption? Agreeing to transfer part of the income taxes we pay to our children's learning institutions, when the rest of the money collected from us is used to fund corrupt education?

4. In the last several years, they have gone even further by slashing child allowances, thus leaving large observant families to live at the poverty level. Yet, at the same time, they



If we take a look at the medina's support for Torah institutions, we find that it comes nowhere near the level of income tax collected from Torah observant Jews in Eretz Yisroel. What thanks do we owe the medina for this? It's our money!

he was totally evil, **he did not give him honor.**" Similarly, it is explained in Yalkut Shimoni (#351) on the pasuk "And you shall not curse a leader among your people" (Shmos 22:27): "If he is a leader **such as Achav** and his companions, the Torah states, 'among your people,' I did not say except at a time when they act according to the custom of your people" (See "Tumim" 17:103).

Furthermore, all this is besides the fact that Achav was one of the kings of Yisroel, who were deemed as kings when they were appointed by a prophet, and his other great qualities, i.e., his self-sacrifice for the Torah (see at length in the Gemara, Sanhedrin 102b). However, the Zionist leaders of our generation never were deemed as kings, as they made war against G-d and His Moshiach, and therefore, it is quite obvious that there is no reason to honor them according to Torah.

6. See the previous insert (Issue 573) from HaRav Elchanan Wasserman, of blessed memory, regarding his view on the secular State of Israel.

increase salaries for government ministers, Knesset members, etc., and they have billions of shekels available for the expulsion of Jews living in the settlements of the Gaza Strip and the northern Shomron.

The evil actions of these violators of our covenant with G-d are simply hair-raising. How can anyone possibly think they advance the cause of the Redemption simply by throwing us a few crumbs under the table from the money that they collected and deducted from our salaries?

5. Regarding Eliyahu's giving honor to Achav, the Ralbag has already explained (ibid. 22:38): "And while he

gave him honor at that time, **he didn't before**, because it appeared to him now that [Achav] had also turned away from Baal and believed in G-d Almighty, and therefore (Achav) agreed with Eliyahu regarding slaying the prophets of Baal. However, prior to this, when

HA'GAON R. CHAIM HA'LEVI OF BRISK, OF BLESSED MEMORY: WHAT IS THE FINAL OBJECTIVE OF ZIONISM?

"The world is in error, [thinking] as if the final objective of Zionism is the establishment of a Jewish state. The final objective of Zionism is **the uprooting of the Torah ch"v**, and they see the founding of the medina merely as the best possible means toward this uprooting."

(excerpt from "Yalkut Daas Torah," appendix to HaRav Elchanan Wasserman's seifer Ikvisa D'Meshicha)



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יחי אדונו מורנו ורבינו מלך המשיח לעולם ועד

THE ESCAPE FROM RUSSIA 1946-1947

BY RABBI SHNEUR ZALMAN CHANIN

*R' Chaikel merited to help others knowingly and unknowingly, not only with the huge sums that he dispersed left and right to Anash so they could leave Russia, but even the moneys that he set aside to be smuggled out of the country were used, unbeknownst to him, for this purpose. The Rebbe Rayatz afterwards asked Anash to pay back the loans to him. **
Part 3

THE APPOINTEES

As was related in an earlier chapter (issue 572), when R' Nissan Nemenov, the menahel of Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in Samarkand, saw that R' Shlomo Matusof, secretary of the yeshiva and treasurer was seriously planning on fleeing Soviet Russia, he asked him to take all the milk containers in which the yeshiva's money was hidden and to give them to R' Yisroel Noach Blinitzky. R' Yisroel Noach was the yeshiva's accountant and was devoted to Tomchei T'mimim and Anash.

In this installment we are up to the part where my father and R' Nissan are about to leave Tashkent for Lvov/Lemberg in order to leave the country from there. Before he left, R' Nissan handed over the responsibility for the learning in yeshiva to Rabbi Zalman Shimon Dworkin, who was one of the Magidei Shiur in the yeshiva. He gave the responsibility for money matters to R' Yisroel Noach Blinitzky, who was in charge of the money in any case.

R' Yisroel Noach was my father's dear friend. When

my father would mention his name, he would refer to him as "the great man." I could feel the great respect my father had for him. When my father described him, his greatness, his kindness and humility, he would do so with the love preserved for the great Chassidim and the spiritual pillars of that time.

I would like to devote a separate chapter to describe R' Yisroel Noach, his life and his work as I heard about it from my father and from what I found in my father's correspondence with him that he wrote from 1963 until he died. I will also recount my own memories of him from the years that I merited being in his presence

when I was a boy until after my bar mitzva. In this

R' Yisroel Noach told her sadly that he could not help her since the money he had was designated for the talmidim and for the yeshiva's staff and after he had distributed it all, nothing remained. The widow began to cry: What will become of me and my orphans? They will become gentiles if I remain in Russia!



R' Chaikel Chanin (right) and R' Mendel Futerfas (left)

installment I will only tell what pertains directly to the course of events having to do with the smuggling.

GEMACH WITH NO LIMITS

My father's opinion, that they had to take advantage of the opportunity and leave Russia at any price was well-known, but when it became known that R' Nissan was going to

join him and leave Tashkent momentarily, chaos broke out. R' Nissan had been the one who strongly insisted that they not leave and was the one whose view prevailed against the illegal exit. Now he himself was about to leave!

The Chassidim were floored by this unexpected step and it gave them permission, as it were, to leave too. They began to try and obtain passports and to leave as soon as possible. However, most of the Chassidim didn't have the means to finance a passport and tickets.

My father didn't just leave a fortune for Tomchei T'mimim but also provided loans, before he left, to many Lubavitchers to enable many families to leave Russia. Most of the Chassidim asked for a loan and intended on returning the money but my father knew that he was probably giving it to them as a "gift which need not be returned."

(When my father mentioned this gemach he added parenthetically in the name of my grandfather, Rabbi Yehoshua Nimotin: Once, when he served as rav in Vitebsk, one of the

wealthy men of the town took someone to a din Torah. He claimed that the man had taken a loan from him several months earlier but when the time came to repay it, the man had not paid him back.

(The wealthy man emphasized that he was calling the man to a din Torah not because he hadn't kept his word and hadn't returned the money but mainly because he had caused him damage. Chazal say, "G'milus chesed is greater than tz'daka" (because tz'daka is only for the poor and chesed is for the poor and rich). By not paying him back, the wealthy man had fulfilled only the mitzva of tz'daka and not the mitzva of chesed, which he had wanted to fulfill...

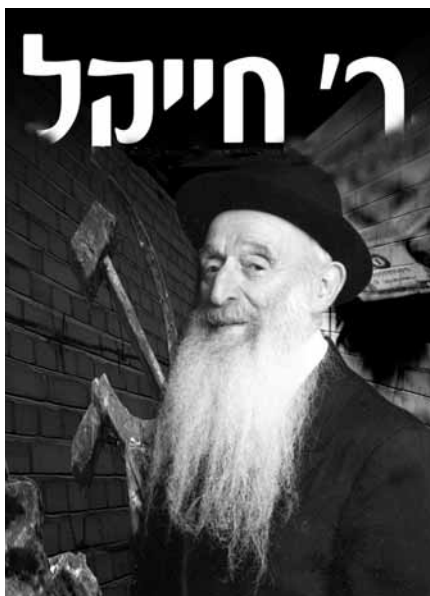
(I, on the other hand, said my father, was sure from the outset that the loan I was giving was actually tz'daka and that I wouldn't get it back because I couldn't imagine how the Chassidim would have the money to pay me back. I realized though that people would feel better receiving money as a loan and not as a gift.)

WHO IS FIRST?

As R' Zalman Shimon Dvorkin wrote, right after R' Nissan and my father left Tashkent, a sort of Heavenly voice went out among Anash who up until then would not defy R' Nissan's view not to leave, which said: **Chevra, we must leave!**

A large number of Chassidim began quickly preparing to leave Tashkent and Samarkand secretly in order to quickly arrive in Lemberg. The Chassidim who remained behind to bear the burden and run the yeshiva decided to enable the T'mimim to leave the country with all of Anash.

At the end of Tamuz 1946 the hanhala of the yeshiva, led by R' Yisroel Noach and R' Zalman Shimon, decided that with the



money my father left – about two million rubles(!) – for the yeshiva and the bachurim, they would finance the talmidim's trip.

Precedence would be given to talmidim who were orphans and had nobody to take care of their expenses for the journey. Then they would take care of indigent talmidim whose parents did not have the wherewithal to pay for a passport and a ticket. They also decided that if money remained it would be divided among the staff of the yeshiva and their families.

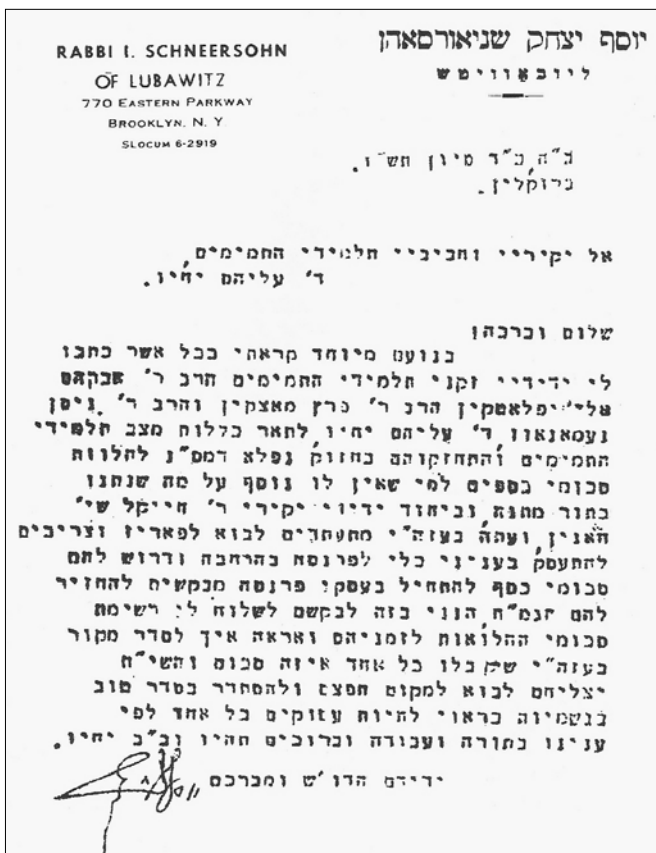
The decision as to who would be going at the yeshiva's expense was made by R' Yisroel Noach the long-time accountant of the yeshiva who became the yeshiva's treasurer. After R' Nissan left he also took on the entire responsibility for running the yeshiva. After taking care of passports and money for the train for the talmidim and the staff, the hanhala unanimously decided that the remaining money would be used to cover R' Yisroel Noach and his family's expenses for the trip from Russia to Poland.

R' Yisroel Noach obtained a Polish passport for himself and his family with difficulty (in those days, a

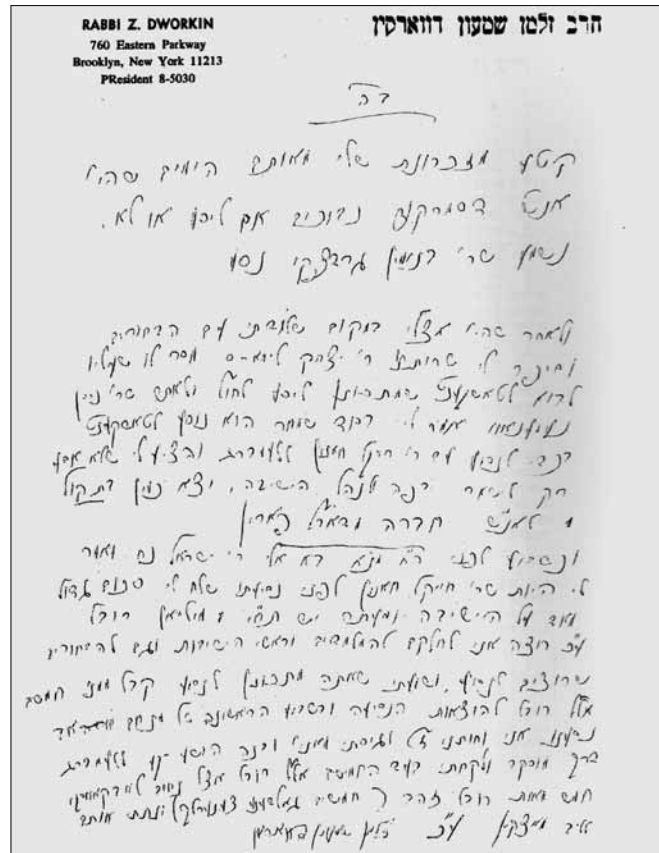
**R' Yisroel Noach concluded:
When you listen to the Rebbe
and act on behalf of Tomchei
T'mimim loyally and with
bitachon, Hashem sends the
money from unexpected sources.**

wife and children were listed in the passport of the head of the family, not in separate passports, which made matching the identities and the passport very complicated). When he finally had the passport in hand, a widow with six or seven children came to him and asked him for money for traveling expenses since she had no money.

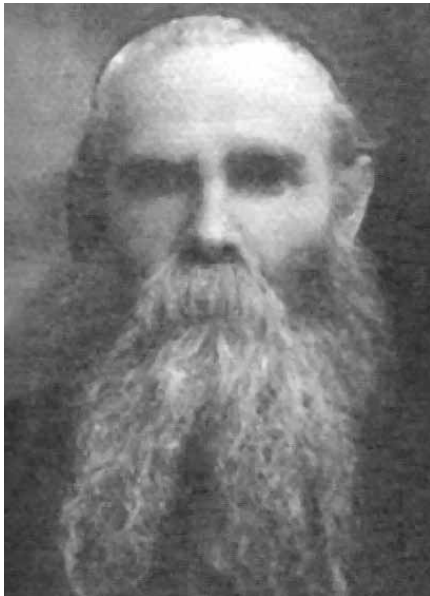
R' Yisroel Noach told her sadly that he could not help her since the money he had was designated for the talmidim and for the yeshiva's staff and after he had



A letter from the Rebbe Rayatz written to Anash on 24 Sivan 1947 which says that those who were helped with my father's money should repay the loan they got in Russia



A letter from R' Zalman Shimon Dworkin which tells of the enormous sum of money that R' Chaikel left for the yeshiva



R' Yisroel Noach Blinitzky



R' Nissan Nemenov

distributed it all, nothing remained. The widow began to cry: What will become of me and my orphans? They will become goyim if I remain in Russia!

UNBELIEVABLE AHAVAS YISROEL

The widow's tears melted R' Yisroel Noach's heart (and he had a heart of gold in any case) and he cried along with her. When he recovered he said to her, "You know what? Take the passport I prepared for myself and my family and use it for yourself and your children. Travel in peace and may Hashem be with you." And he gave her the passport, happy that he could save an entire family, and money so she could buy train tickets. He had simple faith that in the merit of helping the widow, Hashem would help him.

R' Yisroel Noach's Ahavas Yisroel was a byword. To do a favor for a fellow Jew was always something he held dear and what he did his entire life, but in this case he went way beyond the norm. A Lubavitcher who was there at the time said to R' Yisroel Noach that he held that R'

Yisroel Noach was not permitted to do what he did because according to halacha, "your life takes precedence." The Gehinom was the same for both of them and what would happen to the widow and her children would happen to him and his family, and the danger was probably greater for him since he was known by the NKVD offices as one of the senior Chassidim and leader of the Lubavitch community in Samarkand and one of the members of the hanhala of Tomchei T'mimim. The secret police were no doubt on his trail and as soon as they were able, they would arrest him.

R' Yisroel Noach listened but in his kindheartedness he didn't change his mind and he left the bundle of money and papers with the widow.

He told some of his friends that he wasn't at all worried and was sure that as soon as R' Chaikel heard that he didn't have papers he would find a way to send new papers and money to him. He was sure, said he, that R' Chaikel would do what he could to extricate him from Russia and he would leave with his family.

And that is just what happened! I

don't know how my father heard the story, but as soon as he heard that R' Yisroel Noach didn't have papers, he sent him new papers and money through Mumme Sarah, who made the trip from Lvov to Samarkand for the purpose of giving him the money.

R' Yisroel Noach and his family left long after my father left Russia. My father left in the summer of 1946 in the first *eshalon* that left after the official break and I think that R' Yisroel Noach left on the last *eshalon* to leave Russia in the middle of the winter of 1947.

ANOTHER BEIS DIN OF 23

As time went by, it became harder to leave and the fear intensified. On the street it was apparent that many Lubavitchers had fled and those who remained



**R' Zalman Shimon Dworkin (right)
speaking with R' Chaikel Chanin (left)**

were fearful that the NKVD would begin to suspect that something untoward was going on and they would be caught before they could flee. The danger in crossing the border became greater day by day as the border between Poland and

Russia was guarded more closely and papers were scrutinized. Any shadow of a doubt placed the passengers and the askanim in danger of being caught.

The askanim and smugglers, including Leibel Mochkin, R' Mendel Futerfas, R' Yona Cohen, R' Moshe Chaim Dubrawsky and Rebbetzin Sarah Katzenelenbogen (Mumme Sarah) knew they had to work quickly and smuggle out those who were still in the city. In the

meantime they needed additional sums of money in order to bribe the heads of the secret police to look the other way. Most of Anash did not have the money to buy forged papers and tickets and definitely not for bribes.

All felt that every additional day meant increased danger and who knew what would happen, so a beis din of 23 men convened once again and they decided that every Lubavitcher had to bring all his money and

SECRET "LOAN"

The wealthy Chassid R' Shmuel Gurary had many business ventures in Kremenchug, mostly tobacco and cigarettes and R' Yisroel Noach was his accountant. R' Yisroel Noach took care of this professionally and reliably to the point that when the communists took control and robbed R' Gurary of his wealth, expelled him from his home and city and nationalized his businesses, they kept R' Yisroel Noach on in his position. He was retained as a government employee.

At the same time, R' Yisroel Noach worked surreptitiously as the accountant and menahel gashmi and ruchni of Tomchei T'mimim in Kremenchug. One time the yeshiva's coffers were empty and he didn't even have a few coins to buy bread for the talmidim. Two things were clear to him: first, the talmidim had to continue learning as per the Rebbe's horaa and second, they didn't have to suffer starvation because the hanhala didn't have money. "If there is no flour, there is no Torah," and if they wanted the talmidim to learn, they had to find a way to replenish the coffers.

R' Yisroel Noach had the idea of illegally "borrowing" money from the government concern in which he worked and using it for Tomchei T'mimim, intending to repay it shortly thereafter.

This decision, to "borrow" money from a government establishment was a dangerous one. If they came and checked the books and discovered that money was missing, they would immediately accuse the accountant who was responsible for income and expenditures of embezzlement. Then, without an investigation and without a trial, not even a trial of S'dom and Amora, they were likely to shoot him. Shooting a suspect like this in the head was nothing to the communists.

With complete faith and trust in Hashem's help, R' Yisroel Noach resolved to take this dangerous step and he hoped that miraculously some money would come into the yeshiva and he would be able to return the "loan" before a government inspection took place and a discrepancy was discovered.

Before he could return the money, a government

committee came down to verify that the business was being run properly and that the balance matched the exacting standards of the Soviets. Unfortunately for R' Yisroel Noach, they soon discovered that money was missing. A commotion ensued in the factory office and several names of suspects were wanted for cross examination. However, nobody suspected R' Yisroel Noach and nobody asked him anything! This was because of something that had happened earlier.

R' Yisroel Noach went to the bank every month and withdrew a large sum of money in order to pay the salaries of the employees of the factory. He usually went from the bank to the factory accompanied by guards, but one time, when the sum was small, he figured he did not need protection and he went alone.

Just then someone attacked him, thinking he had a large sum of money as usual and it would be easy to overcome a powerless Jew walking alone and wanting to rob him. R' Yisroel Noach didn't easily succumb but began to fight.

Passersby saw what was going on and began yelling at the robber and the robber was frightened and fled. After this incident, the communists esteemed R' Yisroel Noach as a loyal citizen who endangered himself in order to save the money belonging to the Motherland.

Therefore, when it was discovered that money was missing, they didn't consider suspecting R' Yisroel Noach. On the contrary, the members of the committee spoke to him in a conciliatory manner as to one who was holy and devoted, that he shouldn't be afraid and should be calm and they would deal with the situation and help him find the thief.

R' Yisroel Noach concluded: When you listen to the Rebbe and act on behalf of Tomchei T'mimim loyally and with bitachon, Hashem sends the money from unexpected sources.

This is just one small example to illustrate what R' Yisroel Noach was like, to describe his Ahavas Yisroel and his mesirus nefesh for Tomchei T'mimim.



R' Nissan Nemenov speaking to Yisroel Noach

valuables to the beis din. This would be used to pay for the expenses of the trip for those who did not have the money. The beis din stressed that the money they took was a loan and when they reached safe shores everybody had to repay their loan.

Anybody who had cash or jewelry or silver brought them and the beis din made a list of all who gave and who took, yet it still seemed that the amount was not enough.

As I already said, my father gave

R' Mendel Futerfas and Mumme Sarah suitcases full of money, an enormous sum in American dollars, to take it abroad for a fee. When R' Mendel and Mumme Sarah saw that not enough money had been raised they decided of their own accord to give my father's money in the suitcases to the beis din.

Knowing my father's generosity they were sure that if he was there that he would definitely volunteer the entire sum himself. They also relied on the p'sak din that the money for the trip was a loan that

was meant to be paid back. Surely my father wouldn't mind having his money used to save hundreds of Chassidim, and he would receive the money owed to him based on the list compiled by the committee, when the people arrived at their destination on the other side of the border.

A COURAGEOUS DECISION

R' Mendel Futerfas and Mumme Sarah remained to help more and more families leave Russia. I heard from my father that before the last eshalon left and it was clear that they would not be able to arrange another one, they asked R' Mendel to escape.

R' Mendel knew that the NKVD were working assiduously to close all escape routes and that the noose had tightened so that even the border guards who had enabled the Chassidim to cross the border, taking bribes and looking away, were also afraid now to take the chance. Some people who were involved in the smuggling had been imprisoned and obviously it was the last opportunity to get out.

R' Mendel said: As long as there is one Tamim in Russia, I'm not leaving.

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THE FIGHT MUST CONTINUE

BY SHAI GEFEN

THE SICHA FOLLOWING THE HEART ATTACK

In Parshas Lech Lecha, we read Hashem's statement to Avrohom, "I have given this land to your children." It's painful to read this as we see

dozens of Jews, who settle our land with supreme sacrifice, exiled from their land by Jewish police whose goal is to destroy outposts on the hills of Yehuda-Shomron.

The prime minister, who is

accused left and right of moral corruption, is trying to divert the public from his failings by attempting to expel Jews from their home. The Defense Minister who failed before the eyes of the world, who is unable to stop Kassam missiles from landing

BEHIND THE SCENES OF THE SICHA OF MOTZAEI SHABBOS LECH LECHA 5738

On Motzaei Shabbos Lech Lecha at eight o'clock, the Rebbe delivered a sicha from his room. It included a maamer (*k'ein sicha*) "Lech Lecha." The sicha was said in an hour and eight minutes and the Rebbe spoke about the imperative to settle all territories of Eretz Yisroel at once.

At four in the morning, the Rebbe asked the secretary, Rabbi Leibel Groner, to quickly call Rabbi Berke Wolf, who had extensive contacts in the Israeli news media, and to ask him to delay publicizing the sicha since there was something the Rebbe wanted to add that he didn't want to say in the sicha. It would be added as a footnote and sent to him forthwith so it could be transmitted, along with the sicha, to the newspapers. The Rebbe told Rabbi Groner to urge the *manichim* (those who wrote up the sicha) to finish as quickly as possible so the Rebbe could edit it.

Sunday, 11 Cheshvan: After the Rebbe davened Shacharis in his room, he wrote two notes that pertained to the sicha said the night before. They referred to Israel's developing nuclear program and proof thereby that legally, they could decide to settle all the territories.

In the meantime, the manichim finished writing the sicha and it was immediately given in to the Rebbe for editing. When the Rebbe finished editing

it, he asked that Rabbi Wolf be called again and given the sicha and additions and asked to have it translated into Ivrit in a style suitable for the papers, and that he try to have it publicized in its entirety.

Rabbi Groner asked whether the additions should be included within the edited sicha (for the local public) and the Rebbe said no, as it was intended only for publicity in Eretz Yisroel and that later on he would decide about the edited sicha. Then Rabbi Groner reported that Rabbi Wolf suggested that he give the news release directly to the Israeli newspapers and not to the news agencies so as not to get entangled with the censors that disallow all mention of nuclear weapons. The Rebbe agreed and noted that the paper *Sh'arim* (of Poalei Agudas Yisroel) would print it without any changes.

Monday, 12 Cheshvan: Towards morning the Rebbe asked Rabbi Groner to find out from Rabbi Wolf about any progress in publicizing the sicha of Motzaei Shabbos in the Israeli papers. When he reported that the censor had forbidden mention of nuclear weapons and that Rabbi Maidanchik suggested that he photocopy the sicha and personally give it over (so it should appear that he was doing so of his own volition) to all the Knesset members and government ministers, especially to the prime minister Menachem Begin.



on his city of Sderot (which is within the Green Line), and who turned the IDF soldiers into target practice in the war in Lebanon, is trying to build up his position on the backs of the settlers.

We watch as our leaders don't manage to do the minimum in protecting our country and how they fail at whatever they do yet, incredibly, top priority for them is dismantling outposts.

One of the incredible sichos the Rebbe said on Parshas Lech Lecha was said nearly 30 years ago in 5738 on Motzaei Shabbos, in his room. It was after the Rebbe's heart attack on Shmini Atzeres and since that time,

every Motzaei Shabbos, the Rebbe said a sharp sicha on the topic of shleimus ha'Aretz, from his room. One could see how deeply this affected the Rebbe (see sidebar).

This special sicha was edited by the Rebbe and it deals with the obligation to settle the entire country all at once, thus saving Yehuda and Shomron and forestalling complaints by the nations of the world:

From the verse, "I have given this land to your children," we learn that despite there being goyim who contest whether certain parts of Eretz Yisroel belong to the Jewish people and even claim, "you are robbers" – still, they do not need to be reckoned

with. Furthermore, their contesting it is temporary and only for show; they actually know quite well that all of Eretz Yisroel belongs to the Jewish people.

In order to reveal this, what's necessary is "get up and walk the land to its length and breadth" – to settle all parts of Eretz Yisroel, especially those areas that are contested. This settling ought to be as it was with

The Rebbe said not to give it over to all the Knesset members for it would create the impression that Lubavitch was stirring the pot too much, but only to Begin, Ezer Weitzman (the Defense Minister) and Arik Sharon (member of the defense and foreign affairs committee).

The Rebbe also said that Rabbi Maidanchik should speak with each one of them separately and explain the importance of the matter and stress that the comments about nuclear weapons were not intended to be publicized in either Eretz Yisroel or abroad. The Rebbe also said that he should speak to Chaim Landau (then minister without portfolio) especially as he had been present during the Rebbe's hakafo and when the Rebbe spoke to him about the failure of the Yom Kippur War when they didn't take the opportunity of conquering Damascus, Landau expressed his sorrow over these things not being publicized in the Israeli papers.

Several hours later, Rabbi Wolf called and reported that the censor prevented publicity of the news release on the radio. And when executives from the radio station complained to the censor that that

very day they had publicized what an American congressman had said – that Israel had 15 nuclear bombs and had gotten them secretly and America had even aided them in this, the censor said, "When an American congressman says it, he speaks on behalf of the US. Israel can deny it but when the Lubavitcher Rebbe says it, and it's known that he gets information from sources high up in the Israeli government, it's as though those sources are admitting to it."

The censor also said that the public regards what the Lubavitcher Rebbe says just the way it regards what the prime minister says!

When the secretary repeated this to the Rebbe, the Rebbe asked who the member of Congress was and noted that apparently he had also gotten his information from sources in Israel. The Rebbe also said that

the censor didn't understand that zealously withholding anything that mentioned nuclear weapons was equivalent to admitting that it was true. The Rebbe said: if it wasn't true, would they publicize it? And because it's true they don't publicize it? That doesn't make sense!

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regards what the
Lubavitcher Rebbe
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regards what the
prime minister says!*

Avrohom Avinu: when he walked in the land he built “an altar to Hashem.”

Therefore, in all those places we need to establish a beis midrash and mikva. By doing so, this will clearly show that “I have given this land to your children,” and the nations of the world will recognize this.

Obviously, they should not G-d forbid bring on pressure from the nations by the bizarre behavior of settling only certain points, because by doing so they show that they reckon with the claim of those who contest!

There is no logical or rational reason to differentiate between settling these few areas and settling the length and breadth of the territories, for the same “commotion” and “talking” of the nations exists just the same, regardless.

When they go with the truth, there will be no difficulties, since “I have given this land to your children” – I have already given it.

Since “action is the main thing,” the main thing is actually settling the land.

You should know that you are doing this on the shlichus and with the power of Hashem, for this way the settling has increased power. And regarding this ko'ach, there is no place for holding back at all, G-d forbid. When they use this approach, not only will the nations not contest it, on the contrary: this will lead to, “praise Hashem all the goyim, laud him all the nations, for His kindness has overcome us” – even the “goyim” and the “umim” who say and openly praise that “His kindness has overcome us” and that Hashem’s chesed has overflowed to “us,” will help the Jewish people with all the help that they still need because the Jewish people are still in galus, before the is’chalta d’Geula.

That [we are still in galus, before

the is’chalta d’Geula] is evident from the very fact that to the great astonishment and surprise mixed with great sorrow, till this day they still haven’t settled all parts of Eretz Yisroel. This behavior goes counter to straight thinking, because they are bringing on constant pressure! Due to the double and redoubled darkness of galus they are afraid and they submit before “the sound of a blowing leaf” of the non-Jew, even though

*What’s necessary is
“get up and walk the
land to its length and
breadth” – to settle
all parts of Eretz
Yisroel, especially
those areas that are
contested. This
settling ought to be as
it was with Avrohom
Avinu: when he
walked in the land he
built “an altar to
Hashem.”*

rationally they know that this is merely “the sound of a blowing leaf.”

HE GAVE US A HEART TO KNOW

This year marks forty years since the Six Day War, when we returned to land in Yehuda and Shomron which Hashem gave us in a miraculous fashion, as a gift in a positive manner, as the Rebbe spoke about at length.

The Rebbe even added that G-d forbid we should be ingrates and spurn the gift Hashem gave the Jewish people, for this itself is a serious thing. This is aside from the point that giving away land endangers lives.

It says in Chazal that a person understands his teacher after forty years. In other words, now we can start to understand what the Rebbe said over the years, as Rashi explains on that verse, “Hashem gave you a heart to understand” – that until forty years He was not strict with you, but after forty years, He will be strict with you because now one has the understanding.

It’s no secret that for decades Chabad suffered from the Left and the chareidim because of its battle for shleimus ha’Aretz for which the Rebbe was moser nefesh. Because of shleimus ha’Aretz, the Rebbe’s mosdos and shluchim suffered. As the Rebbe said, he knows that melamdim in Chabad are suffering because of his war for shleimus ha’Aretz.

Since we are in the fortieth year of the battle that the Rebbe began shortly after the Six-Day War with great fanfare, we need to do all we can to bring the Rebbe’s message to every single Jew. If previously it took years to understand the dangers the Rebbe was referring to, now everybody can see the fulfillment of the Rebbe’s prophecies.

Those who remember, or who have studied the history, know that distinguished Jews and rabbanim debated the Rebbe and said that giving away land would bring us peace! The Rebbe said, no! Giving away land would endanger millions of Jews! It sounded unrealistic back then.

The Rebbe was always careful not to use derogatory words or to say things which could endanger a Jew, but when it came to shleimus ha’Aretz, the Rebbe warned that they were endangering the lives of millions

of Jews. The Rebbe didn't speak like this about anything else.

This year, at the beginning of the fortieth year, we saw the consequences of withdrawals. Missiles flew over and into many of our cities and the lives of millions of Jews were in danger. Even security experts admitted that this was made possible because of the withdrawals that the government had made.

Those rabbanim and Admurim who mocked Rabbanei

Chabad, when the latter went to them to tell them what the Rebbe's view is, had to flee from their vacation spots in the north thanks to Nasrallah's missiles. Who knows what will happen in the south, may Hashem protect us, as this part of the country is being used by terrorists to stockpile massive quantities of weapons.

WHAT NOW?

Now is the time to convey the Rebbe's message. Now, as the Rebbe's words have come true and Hashem gives us the heart to understand, etc., is the time to promote shleimus ha'Aretz. Who knows how much aggravation we would have been spared if the Rebbe's message would have been heeded in previous years; how many Jewish lives would have been saved. We can definitely explain what the Rebbe said to every Jew, in his language, and if we do, we can expect to see enormous changes.

As for those who are nervous about Chabad's image or about losing money for important Chabad work, they need to know that the Rebbe wants us to work on shleimus ha'Aretz in the name of Chabad! As the Rebbe said, even though melamdin are suffering because of this, the fight must continue!

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BRIG.GEN. (RES.) AHARON LEVRAN, FORMER SENIOR INTELLIGENCE OFFICER IN AN INTERVIEW WITH BEIS MOSHIACH:

'THOSE WHO DIDN'T WANT TO RULE OVER ANOTHER NATION ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THAT NATION RULING OVER US'

*In an interview with Beis Moshiach, Brig.Gen. (Res.) Aharon Levran analyzes the situation in the Gaza Strip and says it will be hard to remedy the situation but not impossible. He says that the Disengagement Plan led to the war in Lebanon and is despondent over the nation not having "gotten" the devastating consequences of the war in Lebanon. He mocks the officials who expressed regret over having supported the Disengagement Plan: "Where were they when they could have made a difference and stopped the process?" * An interview by Shai Gefen.*

The Philadelphi Corridor and the anarchy in the Gaza Strip are making lots of people lose sleep. Now they're talking about entering and re-conquering Gaza. As a former ranking officer in Military Intelligence how do you view what's going on in the Gaza Strip?

I won't be innovating much if I

say that after the unfortunate Disengagement Plan which I would call, "a historic and evil crime of the highest order," we are paying the price. We thought that by leaving Gaza and uprooting the yishuvim, we would improve the security situation but the security situation has worsened.

Though beforehand the situation wasn't rosy either...

I hear all sorts of cynics say, "There were Kassams beforehand too." There's an enormous difference. Nobody expected that after we left Gaza that they would continue shooting Kassams at us. If you gave them a prize, where is the benefit as a result of giving the prize!? Not to mention that the shooting has increased since we left the Gaza Strip.

The epitome of stupidity was giving away the three yishuvim in the north of the Strip, Eli Sinai, Dugit, and Nisanit, because giving them away means that the terrorists can shell Ashkelon. It should be 100% clear: the terrorists have the ability and the means to reach Ashdod and in my estimation they will be capable of shelling Ofakim, Netivot, and maybe the outskirts of Beer Sheva too.

I'd like to add something to the question you asked about there being Kassams before they left the Strip too. Look at what happened at the Philadelphi Corridor. When we were there, there weren't that many tunnels through which they smuggled huge quantities of

weapons.

It's a fact that where you have an actual presence, there aren't any Kassams. When you're not present on the ground, more dangerous military hardware can pass through.

What military hardware are you talking about?

Not only about advanced Anti-

tank missiles, the fatal kind that we had in Lebanon that caused so many losses but also about Anti-aircraft missiles that will force the IDF to think twice before entering Gaza on missions. Look at what's happening with the tunnels; they dug hundreds of tunnels and transported, thus far (according to information from the IDF) 19 tons of operative explosive materials, besides the many weapons and trained fighters.

Didn't the kidnapping of the soldier Gilad Shalit generate a new stance on the part of the political echelons re the military?

On June 25th they dug the tunnel by means of which they attacked our post near Kerem Sholom and they kidnapped Gilad Shalit. Over four months have passed since then and the government isn't doing anything to get him out. The Arabs attack, kill, wound, and kidnap and now they are negotiating with them to release Shalit in exchange for 1000 prisoners. Whoever heard of anything like this?

The Hamas government is responsible for whatever goes on there and the government here hasn't destroyed it. Life goes on as though nothing happened.

There was a Disengagement, we got a slap, and continue acting foolishly. I have no other way of describing it. We are constantly asked to prop up and bolster the scarecrow called Abu Mazen while people don't see that there is nobody to talk to. The man is powerless, spineless.

Do you sense that there is complete collapse?

The situation wasn't simple beforehand either; the security situation was shaky even when we ruled Gaza but after the Disengagement the security

situation deteriorated thousands of times over. We see where our withdrawals got us.

The slogan the Israeli Left used was they don't want to rule over another nation. I say, those who don't want to rule over another nation are responsible for that nation ruling over us and striking at us nonstop.

Surely you remember the warnings our leaders declared when they signed the agreements, if and when the other side broke the agreements...

Certainly. Rabin said it with Oslo, and then Barak said the same thing when he fled from Lebanon in May 2000. He promised that the heavens would fall if they did something. Ditto for the Disengagement. The heavens did fall; the question is, on whom. In the war in Lebanon this past summer, we got the answer.

What would you do in order to turn the clock back?

There are several things I would do immediately in order to regain a minimum deterrence, to regain our security and stop the downhill slide. First, re-conquer the northern part of the Gaza Strip, Dugit, Eli Sinai and Nisanit and annex them to Israel. I think this is an immediate need.

As for the problem with the Philadelphi Corridor, it's not simple. I would adopt the approach of the former General of the Southern Command, Yom Tov Semia, who spoke about the mistake in leaving at the outset. He is in favor of going back and retaking it and not as a forty meter strip but to extend the strip to 500 meters, and if necessary, to destroy many of the houses in Rafiach and to build a wall opposite Rafiach.

What was smuggled to the Gaza Strip since the Philadelphi Corridor

BIO:

Brig.Gen. (Res.) **Aharon Levran**, a former senior Intelligence officer, who served thirty years in the IDF, has also held other high postings in the IDF, including Deputy Commandant of the National Defense College. He is a graduate of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in Middle Eastern studies and Political Science. In 1984 he joined the Tel Aviv University Center for Strategic Studies as a senior associate and was editor of the annual *Middle East Military Balance*.

His book on the Gulf War and its repercussions for Israel was published in 1983 (Hebrew, Bar Ilan University Strategic Center) and in 1997 (English, Frank Cass Publishers). **Aharon Levran** has also written many articles on Israeli Strategic Affairs and is currently working as a freelance researcher, consultant and lecturer on Strategy and National Defense.



was opened?

Not everything can be said yet and there aren't precise numbers on some of the things. What's clear is that we're talking about tons of explosives and the most advanced Anti-tank missiles which will destroy our tanks as they did in Lebanon.

And this is thanks to Egypt...

It just compounds the crime. We made an agreement that Egypt will close the border. What a joke. As you will remember, right after the criminal Disengagement, the Knesset changed the peace agreement with Egypt and allowed them to retain large forces on the border with Israel in order to guard the border.

My question is: Did Israel really think that Egypt would do our work for us? The Egyptians are happy to see us at odds with the Palestinians. What will happen now when we need to reenter the Philadelphi Corridor and this will lead to clashes with the Egyptian forces already there?

I will go back to the basic point that I said earlier. As hard as it was in the past, the situation today is a thousand times worse and it's harder to fix the situation, as I said earlier. We have lost any sense of the word "conquest," which is the most important thing, as well as the most elementary fact in any conflict between nations, and yet this is profane and illegitimate to us.

They don't want to fight and don't want to win. How did Olmert put it at the "Peace Now" conference in the US? "We are tired of fighting and tired of winning."

What is the reason for our weakness?

Israelis are tired of fighting and tired of winning as Olmert said. Another reason for our weakness is that throughout the years we had

the upper hand not because we were superior to them, as much as that the terrorists were sloppy. In recent years however, the terrorists have become more and more sophisticated, they have displayed patience and long-term determination and we saw what happened in Lebanon.

How come in recent years Israel has lost on all fronts? How come all our leadership is unsuccessful

*Over four months
have passed since
then and the
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and kidnap and now
they are negotiating
with them to release
Shalit in exchange for
1000 prisoners.
Whoever heard of
anything like this?*

including during the last war in Lebanon?

The reason is because to us, the word "conquest" has become a dirty word. The word "kibbush" is rejected by the Israeli mentality and this is a result of decades of Leftist propaganda. The most fundamental goal in wars and skirmishes is to win and conquer. Even after Shalit was kidnapped they kept on telling us that they weren't going in to

conquer but were entering in order to leave because G-d forbid we should conquer it. That is the source of the problem.

The residents of Sderot are concerned and upset. There isn't a day without Kassams. What should happen next?

In order to stop the Kassams on Sderot, as the mayor of Sderot, Eli Muell said – they need to wipe Bit Chanun off the face of the earth. That's the place from where they are shooting the Kassams at Sderot.

I heard that the Chief of Staff is talking about aerial attacks. I don't rule that out although in Lebanon aerial attacks didn't fully prove themselves. In the end I am positive that they will have to do all the things I mentioned here: conquer the northern part of the Strip immediately, as well as the Philadelphi Corridor which includes extending the Strip and dealing immediately with the Kassams shot at Sderot.

Although the Convergence Plan is temporarily shelved, what will happen if it's carried out?

After the experiments in Gaza and Lebanon you don't have to guess what will happen in Yehuda and Shomron. Every area that Israel abandons makes the situation worse. This was true in Lebanon and Gaza. Remember that Yehuda-Shomron is the length of the State of Israel from north to south.

Do you think the politicians learned their lesson?

I will tell you the truth. I was sure that after what happened in the war in Lebanon (the most justified war we've ever fought), I thought the nation would wake up but unfortunately, I was wrong. Most are dense and believe what they always believed.

You don't sense a sobering up



A tunnel used to smuggle arms dug near the Philadelphi Corridor, under cover of a civilian building

like in the apologies of Tzachi HaNegbi, Yiftach, Ron Tal and the others?

What a fiasco. When they had the ability to sit at the table and make decisions, all they did was tag-along. Politicians, even those who could be identified with the authentic Right, held on to their seats and even got themselves some decent promotions. It's hard to judge people like them. If you are a Brigadier-General and you have a chance at being a full General, even though you know the situation is serious and intolerable, you assuage

your conscience and say if you don't go along with it, someone else will follow orders.

What do you think they should have done?

Get up and say, "I cannot carry this out." "This is a tragedy," period. There are other personal motives at play here, as opposed to the main issue, which is how we must act.

Do you support a government commission of inquiry to investigate what happened in the war in Lebanon?

I don't think the judges are doing the work any better than what the public knows. The public knows about the big things themselves. The commission that people are asking for is only to force the removal of Peretz, Chalutz, and Olmert. To accomplish this we could make do with a fierce political struggle that would lead to their resignation.

In light of the threats from East and West, is Israel presently fighting for its existence?

Some of the threats are serious. The enemy shows signs of progress all the time and we saw this in the war against Hezbollah, and so we can't just laugh it off. We need to know that our situation is not simple.

Do you think there will be Round Two with Hezbollah?

It's very likely although there is a change in that there is an international force that doesn't make life easy for Hezbollah. Hezbollah felt the power of our air force which destroyed many of their long-range missiles.

We also know that they are backed by Iran and we don't know what tomorrow will bring. Iran also has a say in this. However as far as the Gaza Strip is concerned, it's close to certain that the situation will heat up and get more serious.

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FROM THE FORESTS OF POLAND TO THE CITIES OF ITALY

BY AVROHOM REINITZ

*R' Sholom Ber Friedman who passed away a decade ago, was an unusual man who personified both "Chassid" and "Chesed." His adventure-filled life included learning in Lubavitch, living as a partisan in the forests of Poland, and working as the Rebbe's "roving shliach" in Italy. * Part 1*

It was at the end of the 70's when a Jewish jewelry merchant staying in Milan with merchandise worth half a million dollars was caught by the police. Since he didn't have the documents and receipts to prove the source of his jewelry, he was arrested and his merchandise confiscated, and was accused of stealing the jewelry.

In addition, he was accused of smuggling jewelry to Italy, a crime for which he could sit in jail. After a police interrogation in which he failed to prove his innocence, he was given a trial date and was released.

Broken and worried he left the police station and rushed to call his only friend in Milan, Rabbi Sholom Ber Friedman, who hosted him frequently for Shabbos meals. After listening to his story, R' Friedman told him that the best thing to do would be

to inform the Rebbe and to ask for his bracha.

Although he belonged to Mizrachi circles, the jewelry merchant agreed that R' Sholom Ber should ask for a bracha for him, in his name. R' Sholom Ber quickly called the Rebbe and asked the secretary to convey the Jewish merchant's request to the Rebbe. A few hours later the phone rang and the secretary passed along a message from the Rebbe: tell the merchant not to worry.

R' Sholom Ber immediately conveyed this message but the situation was not at all encouraging. The judge who was going to handle this case decided to make a serious trial and all signs pointed to his turning the trial into an "example."

When the merchant met with R'

Sholom Ber and updated him about his dire situation, R' Sholom Ber told him that when Chassidim ask the Rebbe for a bracha, they make a keili for the bracha. He suggested to the merchant that he make a positive commitment to set aside a significant amount of money for the Rebbe.

The merchant agreed and said he would give the Rebbe \$3000. R' Sholom Ber knew this was a small sum for this man and didn't look pleased. The man upped his pledge to \$6000, but R' Sholom Ber was still dissatisfied. In the end, R' Sholom Ber told him that \$18,000 would be a nice amount for him to give. The man thought a bit and then agreed.

Two days before the court case, R' Sholom Ber called the Rebbe's secretaries and asked that the man be mentioned for a bracha once again. The Rebbe's answer, which came only a short time later, was identical to the previous one: tell the merchant not to worry.

The next day, the day before the trial, the judge told the merchant's lawyer that he wanted to meet with the merchant that day. The very surprised merchant was afraid that the judge wanted to extract information from him directly, circumventing his lawyer. After consulting with his lawyer he decided to meet with the

judge.

When he entered the judge's office, the judge looked kindly at him and asked him to tell his version of events. The man told the truth that he had not attempted to smuggle jewelry into Italy and that he had bought all of it in Milan from reputable stores. Even though he had no documentation, it was the truth.

The judge listened closely and when the man finished, the judge invited the lawyer to his office and told him that he would tell the police to return all the confiscated merchandise and free him immediately. The stunned lawyer stood there open-mouthed and the merchant realized he had experienced a miracle. The Rebbe's words, "Not to worry" echoed in his ears.

* * *

Aryeh Leib Friedman, the son of R' Sholom Ber a"h, heard this story two months ago from the merchant. Because of the open miracle he experienced, the merchant went to see the Rebbe and was part of a general yechidus in the Rebbe's room. He gave the Rebbe an \$18,000 check, as he had committed to doing.

"The Rebbe gave me brachos," he said, "but didn't even glance at the check that I had put on his desk."

The merchant concluded his amazing story, "I am not a Lubavitcher but I'll tell you that whoever did not see the Lubavitcher Rebbe missed out on seeing a true shepherd of Israel. And whoever did not see your father, missed meeting a genuine Chassid, a man of chesed, who radiated passionate ahavas Yisroel."

R' Sholom Ber Friedman was indeed a genuine Chassid. He left the story of his life on four small tapes, which his children found after his passing, in his desk drawer. When they put the first tape into the tape recorder they trembled upon hearing their father say, "I would like to tell you the story of my life in order that my children and grandchildren will know..."

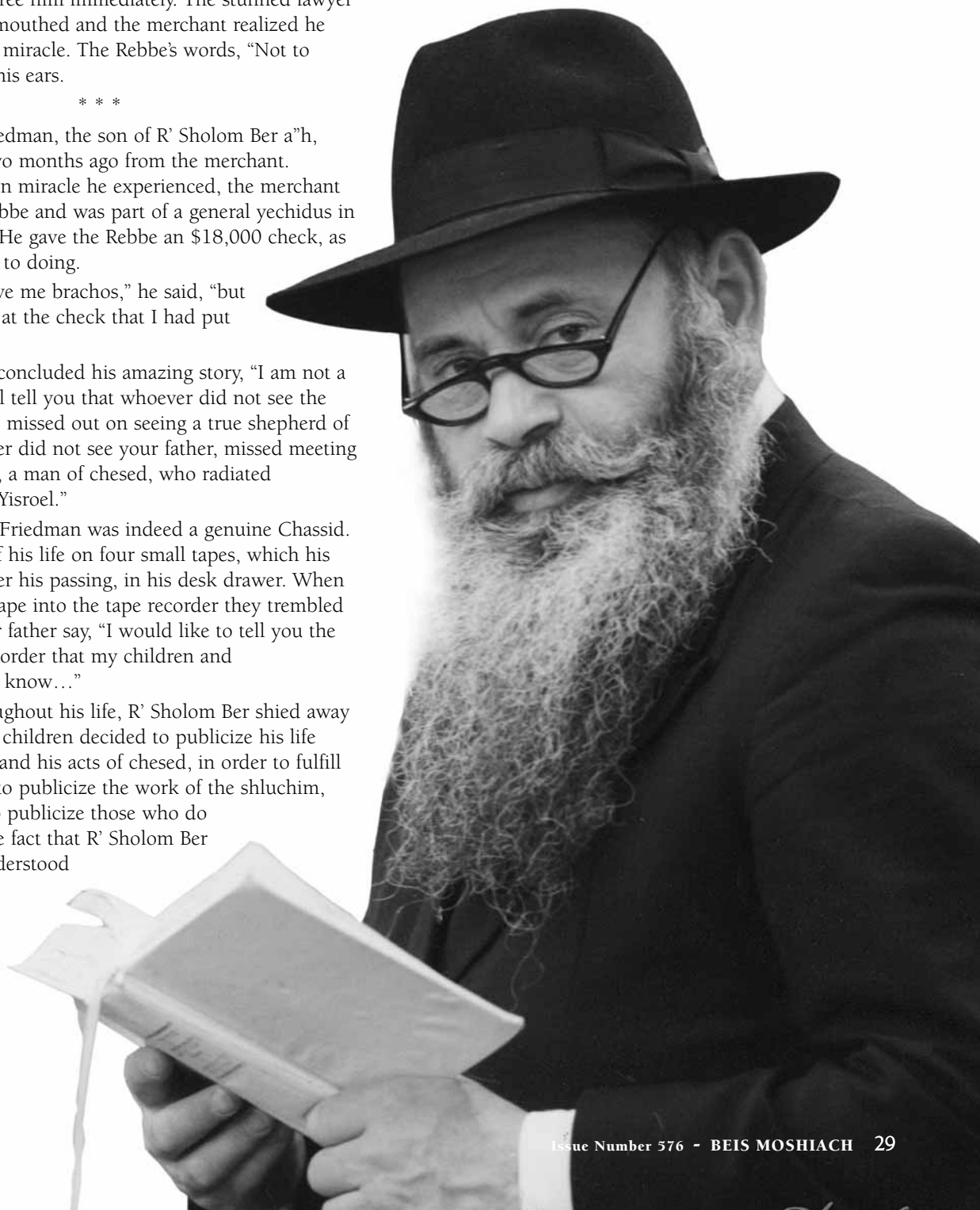
Although throughout his life, R' Sholom Ber shied away from publicity, his children decided to publicize his life story, his shlichus and his acts of chesed, in order to fulfill the Rebbe's horaa to publicize the work of the shluchim, for "it's a mitzva to publicize those who do mitzvos." From the fact that R' Sholom Ber left tapes, they understood that he wanted his legacy to be transmitted to future generations.

* * *

R' Sholom Ber was born on 18 Nissan 5692/1932

in Donilowitz in White Russia. His father was Rabbi Yeshaya Friedman, a Tamim from Lubavitch in Lubavitch, and he named his son after the Rebbe Rashab. R' Yeshaya was a shochet, a mohel, served as a halachic ruler in his town, and was a successful fur merchant.

Sholom Ber grew up in the peaceful town and later would speak longingly of those wonderful days in the town that stood near endless forests in the heart of the beauty of nature, about the fair that took place there, and about the *datche* (summer home) they traveled to each summer.



Sholom Ber absorbed a Chassidishe chinuch, as was befitting the son of a Tamim. He also learned the mitzva of hachnasas orchim and the chesed that was part and parcel of their home.

While still a child, Sholom Ber experienced the first tragedy of his life. His mother, Chasia Bunia, passed away. In addition to the burden of parnasa, now his father also had to care for his little children. Not much time elapsed before the next tragedy struck with the outbreak of World War II and the annihilation of European Jewry. Sholom Ber was the sole survivor of his family and the most compelling memory that he would always relive was the story of his rescue which he related many times:

In the first days after the Germans entered his town, they took a certain number of men five kilometers into the forest, where there was a big house that the Germans wanted to live in. Since the house had been abandoned for a long time, they needed men to fix it up – carpenters, builders, etc. The job was a lengthy one and life in the town continued, seemingly, as usual.

Then came the fateful day when the Germans came in large numbers for the purpose of destroying all the Jews in the ghetto. That day, Sholom Ber was in that big house in the forest where he had been sent the day before to assist the doctor who had been brought there by the Germans. His father decided to send his young son because he figured it would be easier to flee from there.

Sholom Ber woke early in the morning in terror as he heard a tremendous noise. He looked out the window and saw two trucks packed with German soldiers entering the makeshift construction site. The child was terrified and he understood that something horrible was going to happen.

Indeed, as the sun rose the Polish police and the German soldiers began gathering together all the youth on the second floor of one of the buildings

R' Sholom Ber immediately conveyed this message but the situation was not at all encouraging. The judge who was going to handle this case decided to make a serious trial and all signs pointed to his turning the trial into an "example."

(Donilowitz had once belonged to Poland and the police were Poles, who delighted in helping the angels of death in murdering our people).

People were crowded in a large room and suddenly the order was

given by the Germans that all the women and girls leave. Fear began to creep into their hearts and then outright terror when they heard the sounds of gunfire.

Sholom'ke noticed a neighbor, who was a carpenter, holding an ax and breaking one of the windows. The carpenter jumped out. Sholom Ber's older brother, Aryeh Leib, followed him and without hesitating for a second, Sholom Ber slipped after them, out the window. They had to jump two stories and miraculously they didn't break any bones. R' Sholom Ber always told how he felt as though he had landed on a soft covering of cotton.

From the frying pan and into the fire is where the three of them fell, into the courtyard swarming with Germans and Polish police. Aryeh Leib began to run to the right, the carpenter began running straight in the direction of the forest, a second passed and Sholom'ke began following the carpenter into the thick of the forest. They ran for several minutes with their pursuers, two Polish policemen, at a distance.



Sholom Ber at a menorah lighting

After a while, Sholom'ke felt he couldn't run any more and he shouted to the carpenter, who was running a few meters ahead of him, to wait a little because he had no strength to go on. The carpenter told him to hide behind one of the trees and the carpenter did the same.

They hid and waited a few minutes and when the first policeman passed near the carpenter, the carpenter smashed his head with the ax and the two of them continued to flee.

In the meantime, the second policeman continued pursuing them. After a few minutes they could hear the sound of a shot. Sholom Ber felt the bullet whistle by his ear. A second shot and this time Sholom Ber felt pain in his ribs. He felt the area and his hand came back covered with blood. He decided to fall down and play dead (years later he said how Hashem had done this chesed and had given him the ability to feign death, which saved his life).

After the policeman left the area, Sholom Ber picked himself up with



Sholom Ber receiving a dollar from the Rebbe

difficulty and limped towards the first house in the nearby village. It was the home of gentiles. The farmer's wife took Sholom Ber into her house and gave

him a wet rag to cleanse the wound. He wiped away the blood and then saw two holes in his body, one in his back and one in his stomach. He was relieved that the bullet had exited his body.

Shortly thereafter, the farmer came home and began questioning Sholom Ber. Sholom Ber tried to make up a story that he had been playing in the forest and fell and hurt himself, but the goy said he knew what had taken place in the forest and that some Jews had tried to run away.

The farmer left the house and Sholom Ber knew he was in danger, so he fled immediately. He ran a few hundred meters and there, behind a thick tree trunk, he watched the farmer enter his house again, accompanied by a Polish policeman. His life had been saved once again.

Sholom Ber continued to run for his life into the forest until he met a band of partisans with whom he lived until the end of the war. Then he served in the Russian army. He remained a "soldier" till the end of his life.



R' Sholom Ber at a the chuppa of one of his mekuravim

[To be continued be"H]

BRINGING LIGHT TO THE CITY ON THE OCEAN

BY CHANI NUSSBAUM

*When Rabbi Noam and Kochava Cohen arrived in Ocean City as the shluchim, there wasn't even a shul. The few people who davened on Yom Kippur, did so alone, at home. Things have changed a lot since then! * In this interview, Kochava tells us of the difficult early days, about the warm community, and the miracles they see every step of the way. * Shlichus in Ocean City, Maryland.*

She arrived as a newlywed, to a place with nothing as far as Yiddishkeit is concerned, not even a shul. Today, one decade later, Kochava and Noam Cohen have established a beautiful community with a shul, a mikva, a Jewish library, programs, and more. They are the hub of the community, the couple whom many look up to. They are shluchim who do their work tirelessly and with pride.

THE EARLY DAYS

Kochava (nee Souisa) was born and raised in Eretz Yisroel in Kiryat

Gat. She attended the schools in Kiryat Gat and then in Tzfas where she was well-prepared for her life on shlichus. Then she married Noam Shimon Cohen, also an Israeli.

Only a month and a half after their wedding, there she was, on shlichus in Ocean City, Maryland. The adjustment period was difficult, not only because they were newlyweds, but also because they were adjusting to life in America, its culture and mindset.

"My husband began working

here when he was still a bachur," says Kochava. "He saw that the place was crying out for a rav, and he began doing terrific work here. He was well-liked by the local Jews and he planned on continuing his work there after he married, as a formal shliach.

"We wrote to the Rebbe and received brachos. When we arrived here as a newly married couple, it was a spiritual desert. The few people who davened on Yom Kippur, did so alone, at home.

"We arrived shortly before Pesach 5756. Our first official project was a Hachnasas Seifer Torah celebration and opening a shul. That Hachnasas Seifer Torah won't be forgotten by the Jews here for many years to come. It was an uplifting and moving event. The Torah was donated by someone who came here because his children opened local businesses. When he saw the spiritual emptiness, he decided to donate the Torah. He also recognized the importance of having a rabbi here and from then until this day, he has been a tremendous supporter of ours.

"It was very hard for us at first. We left all our wedding gifts in Eretz Yisroel since there was no

point in bringing them with us. The first touching moments here were the day after we arrived when many Jews, young and old, men and women, came to welcome us and to help us out. I was thrilled to meet these wonderful people who were happy to see us.”

ON THE WATERFRONT

Ocean City, Maryland is the easternmost point of the US. It's on the water, hence its name. It's about a three hour drive from Baltimore and about four and a half hours from Crown Heights.

Ocean City is the Eilat of America. The city is on the beach and is a vacation spot with hotels, restaurants, an amusement park, and other attractions. It is a relatively small city and everything is nearby. The city hosts millions of tourists from around the world, every year, including many Jews.

Very few American Jews live here. The rest are the 200 Israeli families who make a living here. Over the years, stores have opened that sell beach and vacation-related items. The Israelis families are a tight-knit bunch, and they all help

one another. They were an unofficial community who had everything but a shul or anything else Jewish, until the Cohens came and set down Lubavitch roots.

“There's the local community here and in addition, many tourists come to us through the Internet. They often come unexpectedly, but we are always ready for pleasant surprises.”

CHABAD HOUSE IN THE KITCHEN

When I asked Kochava to tell us a bit about her work, she is happy to oblige:

“Every Sunday I run a Sunday School for the children of the community, those who attend public school during the week. Our program takes place in the shul but our curriculum is the same as an official school. We have a room that is set aside as the classroom which is equipped with everything we need.

“I give shiurim to women, and these take place mainly in the winter during off-season. During the tourist season there is work around the clock and many of the



Rabbi Noam Cohen and his son



women help their husbands in their businesses. I pick a different topic each time: chinuch, shalom bayis, or other timely topics.”

A shiur with Kochava is unlike any other Torah shiur. Her shiurim are comprised of three parts: a sicha on the chosen topic accompanied by breakfast, a video of the Rebbe, and then a workshop for the children centered around arts and crafts projects connected with Jewish holidays and the like.

“Every Shabbos, we host a family from the community and sitting together at the meal really brings us close together. Lately we began having a large Kiddush after the davening on Shabbos, which includes a chulent and other delicious things. I saw this idea at my sister in California when I visited her in the winter and I liked it. The food definitely attracts people.

“After I finish setting up for the Kiddush in shul, I set a separate table at home for the women, because I can’t take my baby to shul on Shabbos. This arrangement brings about much achdus among the women and leads to a warmer feeling about Judaism.

“In general, to see people who in Eretz Yisroel stayed away from shul and from everything it represents, while here they are so active and feel so connected to the shul, well, there’s no greater nachas ruach than that.

“I personally take care of the shul. I have a cleaning lady clean my house but I feel it’s a z’chus to clean the shul myself.”

In the summertime, when the women of the community are busy, are you on vacation too?

“G-d forbid! In the summer we work with tourists. We have a project of preparing sandwiches in the morning. Every morning our

kitchen becomes a commercial kitchen in which we make lots of kosher sandwiches that we sell to tourists. I am sure that a significant percentage of the tourists would buy treife food if not for our sandwiches.”

That’s not the only food service the shluchim provide. Since you can’t buy many kosher products at the supermarket, certainly not chicken and meat, many local residents come and buy products from Kochava’s freezer.

“My freezer has become the supplier for the local population,” Kochava laughs.

Speaking of kitchens, Kochava told me about something that the women of the community initiated:

“Every so often they organize and come to cook together in my kitchen. It gives me a wonderful opportunity to teach them the laws of a kosher kitchen and concepts in kashrus while doing hands-on work together.

“I can say that a large part of the work at the Chabad house takes place in the kitchen!”

MIRACLES ABOUND

Kochava has some amazing stories that happened with the Igros Kodesh:

“One of the women in the community told me that she would be undergoing an operation the next day. Her doctors recommended it since it was five years since she had given birth to her son and she hadn’t had another child. She asked me to write to the Rebbe and ask for a bracha for a successful operation.

“Together we wrote a letter and how astounded we were to open to a letter in which the Rebbe negated an operation and recommended exercise which would surely help.

“I said to her with absolute confidence, ‘Don’t worry and don’t do the operation. Trust in the Rebbe’s answer.’ The next day she canceled the operation but there had been a number of births at that time in the community thanks to that operation and after thinking it over she decided to go ahead with it. She didn’t tell me about this.

“When a doctor examined her, she was shocked to hear him say, ‘There is no need for an operation. I



Some of the children in the community with the T'mimim who work with them



Children taking part in Jewish programming by the shluchim



The children of the Sunday School

recommend simple exercises.'

"Naturally, she came running to tell me about this and this story strengthened her emunas chachamim and made waves in town. Thanks to her faith she had another child.

"Here's another story. One of the women in the community didn't feel well for a long time and she came to me and together we wrote a letter to the Rebbe, asking for a bracha for a refua shleima. We opened to a letter in which the Rebbe wrote about the

great Tanna, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai.

"She was excited by the answer and told me that in Eretz Yisroel she would go to Rashbi's gravesite every year, but now that she lived in Maryland it had been years since she had gone. She decided, because of the Rebbe's answer, 'When I go to Eretz Yisroel I will go the gravesite of Rashbi.'

"She did indeed go to visit Eretz Yisroel and remembered her promise. She went to the tziyun of Rashbi and since then she began to feel better until she was completely well."

The Rebbe's letters are not only a healing for the body but also for the soul as the following story illustrates:

"The mother of one of the women here came to visit her from Eretz Yisroel. She joined her daughter at one of the shiurim. From the outset I could see that she was very bitter. In a conversation I had with them after the shiur, I heard that her son had been killed in a training accident in the army and she was inconsolable.

"The family did a lot in memory of the son but the mother was still full of complaints against Hashem.

"In a lengthy personal conversation I had with her, I said, 'No evil descends from Above.' We also spoke about the resurrection of the dead and I told her that I was sure he was sitting in Gan Eden with tzaddikim.

"She decided to write to the Rebbe and to pour out her heart. In the answer she opened to the Rebbe wrote, 'In connection with the loss of your son, no evil descends from Above...and he is certainly in Gan Eden.'

"At the end of the letter the Rebbe wrote that we are already in the generation of Geula and

Moshiach is about to come, and he wrote many brachos. Incredibly, from that day on the woman recovered. It was touching to see how the Rebbe had removed from her all her bitterness.

“The answer greatly moved the bereaved mother but it moved me too. I was happy to know that I had merited to say what the Rebbe said, having said the right thing at the right time. This story made a great impression on people and connected more women to the Rebbe MH”M.”

CONSTANT HASHGACHA PRATIS

When Kochava Cohen tells about the help they get from the Rebbe and stories of hashgacha pratis, she relates a story that took place five years ago after the birth of her twins. A wealthy man came to their home and said, “Now you need a bigger home. There’s a development near the shul. Pick the house you want to live in.”

The Cohens moved to a big two-storey home with the second floor used for guests and the bachurim-T’mimim who regularly come and help out with the shlichus.

“At first, our new house was opposite a church. This mitigated our joy in the new house. It really bothered us a lot but there was nothing we could do about it. Then one day, the church became a motel and we breathed easier and thanked Hashem and the Rebbe.

“Every year, for Yud-Alef Nissan, we commit to some addition in our work. One year we decided to start a Jewish library that was so needed here. The problem, of course, was the money for it.

“While we still wondered how to go about it, I met an American girl. When she realized that I was the rabbi’s wife, she told me that she was a nurse and one of her patients had asked her for a Jewish rabbi



The mikva in Ocean City

because he urgently wanted to speak to one. I took the information from her and went to his home.

“It turned out that the sick man had had a friend who was killed in the Six Day War and he had always wanted to do something in his friend’s memory. In our conversation with him he decided, on the spot, to pay for the costs of the new library. He gave us the money for it then and there. Five days later, even before we had even found out who the library would be named for, the man died!

“Once again we saw the hashgacha pratis that helps us in our work.”

From a library to the mikva – the

shluchim built a mikva next to their house four years ago which is used by the local women as well as visiting tourists.

FAMILY ON SHLICHUS

“We waited for children for five years,” says Kochava, “then I gave birth to twin girls. Two years later I had a son and then I had another son. When my father came here for the bris, to be the sandek, he said to me emotionally, ‘Kochava, you know, I was always sure you would have children; I had no doubt about it, because you are the Rebbe’s shlucha.’

“When my twin girls were born, my mother came here to help me. She couldn’t help but be impressed

by the concern exhibited by the women of the community towards me. When she returned to Eretz Yisroel she arranged a farbrengen for all the Lubavitcher women in Kiryat Gat and among other things she told them about the wonderful atmosphere among the women here in Ocean City.

"The same thing happened when I gave birth to my second son. Several women came to my home and one woman cleaned, another one bathed the twins and my older son, and a third cooked for the week. It was touching to see the feelings the women have for one another here and for me to be on the receiving end of their devoted help.

"The twins don't go to kindergarten since there isn't one. I started a private preschool in my house with one room set aside for it with all the equipment. I'll take the opportunity to thank a teacher of mine from whom I learned a lot about teaching, Mrs. Yehudis Landau, whose lessons help me today with my children.

"My freezer has become the supplier for the local population."

"It's not easy for my girls since they don't have a social circle. The only ones they can talk to as 'friends' are the T'mimim who come here to help out with the shlichus."

Kochava doesn't hesitate to tell me about how hard it is to be away from her native land, Eretz Yisroel.

"Right now I can't make a trip to Eretz Yisroel to visit with family since we are still waiting for green cards and if we leave before that, we won't be able to come back. The work here is too great for us to allow ourselves to abandon it for a few years."

Kochava was not able to attend her sister's wedding in Eretz Yisroel. It was the second family wedding she missed "but I try to have my mind rule my emotions and to think

about it logically.

"I was sitting and musing about the upcoming wedding, about the preparations being made there, the excitement, and how once again I wouldn't be there. I was feeling sorry for myself and then the phone rang, and you asked me if you could interview me for this magazine. This made me think: You're on the map of the Rebbe's shluchim. You aren't far!

"If that wasn't enough, a few hours ago I got a call from a woman in Eretz Yisroel who had been a guest of ours. She was a former Knesset member and still has good connections. She promised she would do all she could to speed up our resident permits.

"The Rebbe looks out for us. We were invited to the wedding of Rabbi Kaplan's daughter. He is the shliach in Baltimore. The wedding took place the same day as my sister's so I was able to dance and rejoice at a wedding!

"Yes, we give our all to the Rebbe and he doesn't remain owing but is mashpia to us in abundance."



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‘IT’S A GOOD THING THAT YOU WROTE’

BY SHAUL EISENBERG, KIBBUTZ KFAR GILADI, ERETZ YISROEL

TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY

Since we didn’t seem to have any alternative, my mother, with a heavy heart, signed the consent form. (There’s an answer from the Rebbe, so what are we worrying about?) Nevertheless, even now I didn’t feel calm about the treatment, but I didn’t have the courage to write to the Rebbe again on this matter after I had already received an answer. A “heart-stopping” personal story.

In light of the Rebbe MH”M’s instructions to publicize the miracles and wonders that G-d does for us, I wish to tell the following story that happened to my mother.

My mother had been suffering from chest pains for some time, and after a series of extensive tests, the doctors came to the conclusion that she needed to have bypass surgery. The procedure was scheduled for Wednesday, the 3rd of MarCheshvan. As a result, she had to enter the hospital the day before, Tuesday, to undergo the final preparatory tests for the operation.

Since my mother has diabetes, she suffers from sharp pains in her legs that do not allow her to lie down for more than an hour. This

created a serious problem, because after the surgery, she would have to rest in a prone position for about six hours. When we tried to explain this to the doctor, he said that there is no choice except to do everything so that she can lie down.

On Monday, the day before she entered the hospital, I wrote to the Rebbe MH”M about the entire matter, asking whether my mother should have the bypass surgery despite all the problems, and concluding with a request that if she should have the operation, the Rebbe should give a bracha that everything will be fine.

The Rebbe’s answer in *Igros Kodesh* (Vol. 21, p. 228) stated: “I was pleased that he writes that he is

going to a place for convalescence. May G-d Alm-ghty strengthen his health, and he should vigorously increase in activities of Torah, mitzvos, and yiras Shamayim.”

Naturally, I was happy to receive such an answer, however, contrary to previous occasions, I wasn’t calm for some reason. The feeling of something ominous pervaded my heart.

On the Tuesday prior to the scheduled surgery, we arrived at the hospital, and my mother immediately went in for her tests. After the tests were concluded, the doctor called us into his office and explained to us that due to a variety of problems revealed by my mother’s recent tests, there was a danger that she could have a heart attack right on the operating table or *ch”v* even worse. As a result, the doctor asked my mother to give written consent to have the surgery. Since we didn’t seem to have any alternative, my mother, with a heavy heart, signed the consent form. (There’s an answer from the Rebbe, so what are we worrying about?) Nevertheless, even now I didn’t feel calm about the treatment, but I didn’t have the courage to write to the Rebbe again on this matter after I had already received an answer.

I would like to stop here for a moment to tell a little about myself

and my mother. I am a baal t'shuva, born in the Soviet Union. My mother does not classify herself as Torah observant; she keeps the mitzvos of lighting Shabbos candles and kashrus, but no more. Nevertheless, she is a great believer in the Rebbe MH"M.

After she went through the routine of checking in for her hospitalization, I went home to rest, since I knew that the following day was due to be a difficult one. The nagging and disquieting feelings didn't leave me for a moment.

At ten o'clock that evening, my mother called from the pre-op ward, and told me that one of the non-Jewish nurses had come to her quietly and said, "Listen! I'm not allowed to tell you anything because I work here, but don't do the bypass surgery. In your situation, we're talking about a dangerous procedure. Today, there are many easier and more precise tests that you can do without endangering your life."

Naturally, after hearing this, I felt that there really was some

foundation to my concerns, and I immediately sat down and composed another letter to the Rebbe. I wrote about all the dangers that the doctors warned us about, adding what the nurse had told my mother, and again asking the Rebbe for his opinion: Should she go through the bypass surgery, despite everything?

The Rebbe's holy answer appeared in *Igros Kodesh* (Vol. 21, p. 354): **"Regarding his question about removing the cataract, since the specialist said that there still remains a little sight in the eye, he shouldn't rush to have an operation, and it is preferable to not to do it. Instead, it would be proper to visit [this doctor] from time to time or to ask him in advance when to come to him again and examine the eye. May He Who heals all flesh and performs wonders guide them in the better way with apparent and revealed good. I am awaiting good news on the content of the pidyon nefesh."**

After such a marvelous answer, I immediately called my mother and told her not to agree to the bypass surgery!

The next day, I met with the director of the bypass surgery department, and before I had a chance to say anything, the doctor informed me that due to my mother's condition, they will pass up on the surgery. Instead, they will do a CT heart scan, which is more precise and poses no danger.

My mother said one thing: "It's a good thing that I know that there's a Rebbe, and that it's possible to write to him and receive his answer. It's a good thing that you wrote. What do people do who **don't** know that you can write to the Rebbe?"

Therefore, I turn to everyone with a request: We are privileged to have such a great and outstanding leader in our generation as the Rebbe MH"M, who is concerned for everyone just as a father is concerned for his only son. Write to the Rebbe about your concerns and publicize everywhere that you can write to him, and thus we will help more Jews and connect them to the Rebbe.



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MIVTZA NESHEK

BY SHLOMO YITZHAR

Stories of Mivtza Neshek – lighting up the world with the candles of Shabbos and Yom Tov.

UNEXPECTED FARBRENGEN

On 24 Elul 5734, in an unusual sicha for the N'shei U'Bnos Chabad, the Rebbe asked that the minhag that every Jewish girl light Shabbos candles from age three with a bracha, be renewed. One small flame would join many others and this would bring an awesome light into the world in anticipation of the imminent Redemption. The Rebbe explained since then, in many sichos, the great merit one attains by joining the worldwide circle of those who increase light, and even gave coins for bracha and hatzlacha to those who were lighting for the first time.

Numerous miracles took place when women undertook this mitzva. Thousands of women from all over the world took on the responsibility of spreading "Mivtza Neshek" (Neshek is an acronym for Neiros Shabbos Kodesh, the holy Shabbos lights, and is a play on words too, since the word Neshek means "weapons") wherever Jewish women could be found, in malls, hospitals, schools, senior centers, on the street, and homes.

The day after this remarkable sicha, planeloads of guests arrived to spend Tishrei with the Rebbe, and the Rebbe held a farbrengen in their honor. The Rebbe explained that one of the reasons that he was rushing to

farbreng, aside from the inyan of Hachnasas Orchim (referring to a planeload of Chassidim who had already come to 770 and another plane that was on the way, whose passengers landed in middle of the farbrengen) was:

"so that they could publicize to the farthest point, wherever a little Jewish girl might be who didn't know she needed to ask her father and mother to prepare a Shabbos candle and a match for her so she could light it. Therefore, the earlier we speak about it here, and the faster it travels to a second and third place...we must hope that as many women and girls join, even the little ones, so that they light candles already tomorrow evening and make a physical light too and all the more so, an internal spiritual light."

The signal was given and the Chassidim got to work. The guests, who had just landed and still didn't know where they were sleeping that night, were caught up in the Rebbe's enthusiasm. The Rebbe spoke about light, light, and more light. Instead of going to sleep and trying to get rid of their jet-lag, the guests thought about whom they could call back home to spread the Rebbe's instruction about lighting Shabbos candles already that Erev Shabbos, Netzavim-VaYeilech.

LIGHTING, BY THE REBBE

How important the mivtza was in hastening the Geula we see from the fact that many of the guests who passed by the Rebbe's sukka and received lekach from him were asked by the Rebbe, "*Ihr bentcht licht??*"

Simchas Torah night, many guests went to 770 to participate in the hakafo, which are famous as being the most joyous in the world. Some of the guests, who were still swept along in the momentum of the new mivtza, saw the potential, but how could they light candles with women and girls in shul without candles, without fire and without a place to put them?

Where there's a will... Someone who lived nearby ran home and brought candles. Someone else brought a lit candle which miraculously wasn't extinguished by the gusty autumn wind.

There were candles and a fire but where should the candles be lit? A quick glance around the women's section of Tishrei 5735 and they saw many women crowded around a large table that was in constant danger of collapse, where everything was made of wood from the floor to the walls, the benches and ceiling. There was no place to put the candles without endangering everybody crowded around to listen to the farbrengen before the hakafo.

Then, one of the women noticed that the paper towel dispensers were made of metal! One by one the women and girls lit from existing flames and said the bracha, lighting



two for married women, one for single girls. What a rare privilege, to fulfill the Rebbe's new instruction in his shul! The feeling of excitement ran high. For girls, this was the first time in their lives that they were performing this mitzva – and under such circumstances!

All felt that this wasn't a one-time occurrence but the first in a chain of light that would continue to grow. Slowly but surely the lights began to glow. They had to be very careful not to light too close to the wall and not to walk past it quickly. Nearly all the candles were used up and from the heat the wax began to melt and fear of danger ended the mitzva.

* * *

The hakafof of Simchas Torah, the incredible joy with the Rebbe, who conducted the singing, an experience you wanted to last forever... Alas, the davening ended and the Rebbe, a king accompanied by the song of thousands of joyful subjects, left the shul. The Rebbe was going to pass the side door of the women's section, which was opened each time the Rebbe went to Gan Eden HaElyon after a farbrengen. Those who stood in the narrow doorway could receive a blessing through a glance or even a word from the Rebbe.

This time, many women competed to get a spot. Rabbi Chadakov noticed that one of the women was still holding candles despite the extreme crowding. He apparently realized what she had done hours before. He motioned to her to stand opposite the place the Rebbe would pass and she quickly looked for the women who had helped her. He motioned to them to stand with the candles so they would be obvious and to wait for the Rebbe. All this took seconds because the Rebbe was very close.

Then the Rebbe passed by and the women stood as soldiers on parade. The Rebbe looked at them and at what they were holding and smiled and said, "*Gutt Yom Tov.*"

* * *

From then until this day, the mitzva has grown. Mivtza Neshek goes on wherever Lubavitchers and their mekuravim live. Let us peek into a senior citizens home somewhere and we will gather interesting tidbits about this mitzva that has been going on for over thirty years!

A senior citizens center is not always the ideal place to do Mivtza Neshek. There are various wards. The residents don't always understand what you want. The average senior home in Israel is comprised of various

independent wards. We gathered stories of Mivtza Neshek in one such place. Week after week, ladies and girls are witnesses to what a little bit of light can do!

SAVTA DIDIDI

We'll call her Goldie. She has been part of Mivtza Neshek for thirty years, even before it acquired its name. When her oldest daughter reached the age of chinuch, she thought it might be an idea to start lighting candles with the residents of the local senior center.

She took her daughter along for a number of reasons, one (perhaps the most important) being that she would look at the old women through the eyes of the heart and wouldn't be frightened by their external appearance. It would be easier for her to hide behind her daughter and the little girl would open up the women's heart (and her own).

Little Nechama fulfilled her mother's expectations. She wasn't scared at all and didn't look at externals. The old women gave her lots of love. There wasn't a single old woman who could refuse Nechami when she held out a candle.

One Friday, Nechami and her mother noticed new residents. Generally, residents came alone, either

a man or a woman, but this time it was a couple who came to live together.

At first glance, they noticed that the old man was in the wrong division. Although he was in a wheelchair he was completely lucid, intelligent and a pleasant conversationalist. When they asked the staff what was going on, they were told that the woman needed to be treated there and he wanted to be with her.

Goldie and Nechami went over to the woman with candles in hand. They greeted her and suggested that she say the blessing over the candles. She motioned towards her husband. He explained that she had had a stroke and could not speak, so he would say the blessing instead of her, in her presence. They agreed of course and she sat near him with tears in her eyes. When he finished saying the bracha, she responded with a loud, "Didididi."

"Didididi" was the only sound she could make and this was her "amen."

Over the years this became their routine. Nechami and her sisters who had been born in the interim and joined the Mivtza, called them "Saba and Savta Dididi." Every Erev Shabbos they went to them because she wanted to be first. She lit and he said the bracha and she answered with a loud, "Dididi." The children waited all week for Mivtza Neshek but their favorites were Saba and Savta Dididi.

One week, Goldie and her entourage went down the ramp in the direction of the ward. Goldie's heart always skipped a beat because who knew what had happened during the week? Who was new and who, G-d forbid, was gone? The children didn't think about these things and they immediately got to work. They prepared the tray where they would place the lit candles, they divided the candles into pairs, lit a "shamash" and

went towards the dining room where all the residents of the department waited for their beloved weekly guests.

A quick glance told Goldie that something was amiss. Near the first table sat Savta Dididi and near her were another three women. Where was Saba Dididi? What happened to him? He had been hale and hearty aside from weakness in his legs. Oy vei. Savta Dididi looked very sad.

"Savta, Shabbat Shalom, where is Saba?"

*There were candles
and a fire but where
should the candles be
lit? There was no
place to put the
candles without
endangering
everybody crowded
around to listen to the
farbrengen before the
hakafos.*

"Dididi."

"Something happened?"

"Didididi."

"Savta, we are going to light candles and this time you must say the bracha because Saba isn't here (Goldie was afraid to guess where he was and she certainly wasn't going to say anything to Savta)."

"Didididi."

"Savta, say, 'Boruch ata...'"

"Boruch ata ..."

What?! The children began

screeching, "Savta Dididi is talking!" An entire bracha, with effort and slowly, but an entire bracha! Unbelievable! The staff gathered round. They always noticed the women's alertness and happiness when Goldie and the children came, but that Savta Dididi should say a bracha? That was an open miracle!

Goldie and the children couldn't stay long. Shabbos was approaching and they had to finish the department, and there were still the women in the next ward. They raced up the steps to their house, yelling to their father – Savta Dididi spoke! Right after Shabbos, in their weekly report to the Rebbe, they wrote about the miracle along with their sorrow over Saba who was gone.

The next Friday Goldie went down the ramp again. What surprises awaited her this time? Who knew? A deep breath and the children burst in as she followed.

A double surprise awaited them. Saba was sitting in his usual place near his dear wife, Savta Dididi. He seemed fine. Goldie exhaled a deep sigh of relief as she said the "mechaye ha'meisim" (resurrecting the dead) blessing without Hashem's name. It turned out he had merely been hospitalized for a few days and he felt well, baruch Hashem.

As they handed Savta Dididi the candles, they wondered whether the previous week had been a one-time miracle due to necessity. It turned out, the answer was no. Savta lit the candles, covered her eyes and said the bracha along with Goldie!

WHEN YEHUDIT LIT CANDLES

Yehudit was a young woman when she was struck with Alzheimer's. In her recent past she had had a senior position in the Histadrut, Israel's national labor union. She was friends with all the elite, and in the best of Israel's



tradition, she was the source of protektzia for many.

Unlike the rest of the residents of the senior home who wore clothes that weren't especially nice, Yehudit was always dressed fashionably. Everything looked right about her until she began...

Whoever came to the department knew Yehudit. She would always sit opposite the entrance so whoever walked in saw a nice-looking woman sitting with one leg crossed daintily over the other. If they hadn't met her before they thought she was one of the staff or a visitor. They didn't dream that a woman of her age and appearance was a resident until...

Yehudit would get up and walk over to the innocent newcomer. She would demand aggressively, "Give me cigarettes." That's when a staff member would appear from somewhere to separate the shocked visitor from Yehudit and would calm her. All this continued until the next visitor came down the ramp.

Goldie, needless to say, was frightened of Yehudit. Even her children, who loved the residents and smiled at everyone, were afraid of her at first. Slowly, they came to realize that she wouldn't harm them, and they even began pitying her.

They tried to offer her Shabbos candles while a staff member motioned that it was a waste of time. Yehudit was a person high up in the Labor party and she certainly wouldn't be willing to light.

That doesn't mean they didn't try, week after week. They always asked, "Yehudit, are you ready this time? Come light candles. See the light, look. Everybody lit already."

You can't say Yehudit didn't react. She reacted by getting out of her chair and with quick steps towards the children (who had learned not to be frightened) she demanded cigarettes.

Soldiers of the Rebbe (with Neshek-weapons in hand) don't give up too quickly. The staff said they should leave her already since it was pointless, but there were two reasons why Goldie and the children didn't walk away. First of all, because she was a Jewish woman and second, they wanted Yehudit, with her glorious past in the Left, to light Shabbos candles at least once. It was a matter of didan natzach for them.

Erev Shabbos Chol HaMoed Sukkos there was double the work at the senior home because in addition to the candles they brought the four minim for both men and

women to use. The boys were enlisted to help out because every pair of hands was needed.

Yehudit sat in her usual spot opposite the ramp, looking out for potential cigarette donors. Goldie didn't have much time to be nervous. The day was short, Shabbos was approaching and there was much to do. They wanted the staff to shake the four minim, the residents too, and then there was the usual Mivtza Neshek.

They had to watch out so nobody would decide to pull off myrtle leaves or take a bite out of the esrog. It wasn't easy, and it all had to be done with love, understanding, and patience, along with speed.

Goldie went over to Yehudit first with the rest of the children scattering throughout the dining room and bedrooms. In her heart she asked the Rebbe for a bracha that Yehudit would finally agree to cooperate.

For the first time since Mivtza Neshek began, Yehudit remained seated, looking at the lulav with an understanding look. She inclined her head in agreement, took the lulav and said the bracha. Goldie didn't hesitate for she didn't want to lose the momentum. She quickly called over one of her daughters and asked her for candles. She offered them to Yehudit.

Yehudit had been swept up in the enthusiasm of the staff and Goldie and her helpers. She enjoyed the positive attention and her Jewish neshama was definitely aroused. Goldie took the four minim from her and gave her candles. Yehudit said the bracha word by word, perhaps for the first time in her life, and the entire department with the staff and residents, and of course Goldie and her children, happily answered amen.