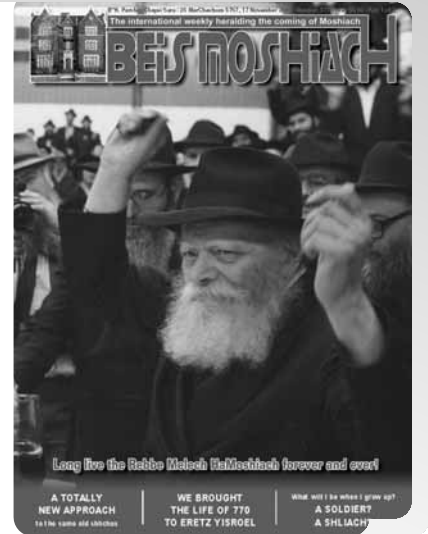


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U.S.A

744 Eastern Parkway
Brooklyn, NY 11213-3409
Tel: (718) 778-8000
Fax: (718) 778-0800
admin@beismoshiach.org
www.beismoshiach.org

ERETZ HA'KODESH

ת.ד. 102 כפר חב"ד 72915
טלפון: (03) 9607-290
פקס: (03) 9607-289

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF:

M.M. Hendel

ENGLISH EDITOR:

Boruch Merkur
editor@beismoshiach.org

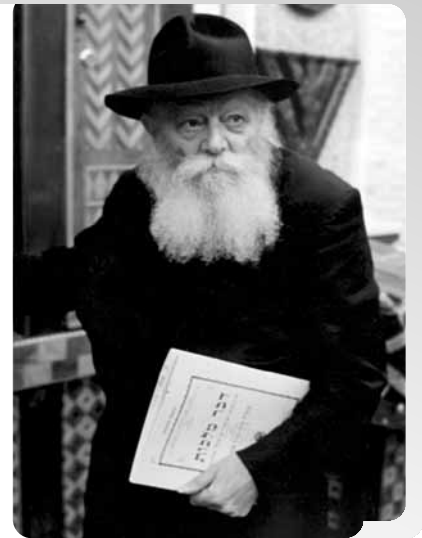
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GOOD FOR THE JEWS, GOOD FOR THE WORLD

LIKKUTEI SICHOS, VOL. 35, PG. 94-100
TRANSLATED BY BORUCH MERKUR



1. “Avrohom proceeded and took another a wife whose name was K’tura. She bore for him Zimran, etc.” [Chayei Sara 25:1-2]

There is a well known quandary regarding this verse. Several passages preceding it relate that the birth of Yitzchok, which occurred when Avrohom was 100 years old, was miraculous, (not only with regard to the [advanced] age of Sara but also) for Avrohom (who) was at an age when, according to the natural order, one cannot conceive:

“Avrohom fell upon his face and laughed, saying in his heart, ‘**Shall a hundred-year-old conceive?** (And shall Sara, a ninety-year-old, give birth?)’” [Lech 17:17]; “Avrohom and Sara were old, well on in years, etc. Sarah laughed at her insides, saying, ‘After I have withered, shall I again have clear skin, and **my husband is old!**’” [Footnote 3 in the original: VaYeira 18:11-12; see *ibid*, verse 13]; “She said, ‘Who is the One Who said to Avrohom, etc.’ For I have borne a son in **his old age!**” [ibid 21:7]. [It was so incomprehensible that a man of his age should conceive a child that] “the scoffers of the generation were saying that Sara was impregnated by Avimelech [her captor]” [commentary of Rashi at the beginning of Parshas Toldos].

According to the above citations, it needs to be understood why, when Avrohom conceived six more children, 40 years after the birth of Yitzchok, when he was 140 years old [see FN 6], Scripture does not mention that this was miraculous and wondrous and etc.

The Ramban writes [Lech 17:17] concerning the birth of Yitzchok that it is not a wonder that a hundred-year-old conceives [FN 7: see also Ramban VaYigash

46:15], citing his proof from the aforementioned – that “after these 40 years he begot many children from K’tura.” This interpretation, however, cannot be applied to the approach and opinion of Rashi [the foremost commentator of the literal meaning of Scripture], for the literal reading of the selections quoted above does not suggest this. If Rashi maintains this position he would have mentioned it. In fact, his commentary itself [Lech 17:17] suggests the opposite, as he writes: “Although in the early generations, 500-year-olds would conceive, in the days of Avrohom the life expectancy had already diminished and a weakening of strength was introduced to the world. Go and learn from the [people of the] ten generations from Noach to Avrohom, who hastened their reproduction – 60 year-olds and 70-year-olds.”

Even if one maintains that Avrohom was not subject to a weakening of strength until he was 100 [see FN 10] (or that (after the time of “Avrohom and Sara were old”) he was rejuvenated to his youth and he conceived when he was 100 years old [see FN 12]), it is related (reiterated) in our Torah portion regarding the time following that stage in his life, “Avrohom was old, well on in years” [FN 13: 24:1; see above, pg. 89 ff]. That is, he was subject to additional aging after that period. Therefore, the conception of the children of K’tura at the age of 140 was indeed miraculous.

The latter point finds expression in the words of the Midrash [B'Reishis Rabba 48:16] on the passage, “Avrohom was old” – “Said R. Yochanan: It is already written, ‘Avrohom and Sara were old.’ Why does the Torah reiterate, ‘Avrohom was old’? Since the Holy One Blessed Be He had rejuvenated him to the days of his youth, it had to be written a second time, ‘Avrohom was old.’ Rav Imi said: Here it refers to aging that has

moisture and later it refers to aging that has no moisture” [FN 15: see at length the commentaries on the Midrash]. In light of this Midrash, even if one maintains that the birth of Yitzchok was miraculous with respect to Avrohom (that age and the weakening of reproductive strength did not prevail over him), nevertheless, a miracle was required for the conception of the children of K’tura, which occurred after it was again stated, “Avrohom was old, well on years.” [See FN 16]

2. We may propose the following point to explain the matter:

In the story of the birth of Yitzchok it is related, “Sara said, ‘G-d has made laughter for me; whoever hears will laugh for me’” [VaYeira 21:6]. Rashi comments, “Many barren were remembered with her; many ill were healed on that day; many prayers were answered with her; there was much laughter in the world.” The miracle of the birth of Yitzchok was in a manner that brought salvation and deliverance throughout the world, to the extent that it brought about that there was much laughter in the world.

With this we will understand the comment of Rashi on the phrase, “(She said, ‘Who is the One Who said to Avrohom) Sara would nurse children’” [Ibid 21:7] – “Why does it say ‘children’ in the plural? On the day of the banquet, the noblewomen brought their children with them and she nursed them, for they had been saying that Sara did not give birth but she merely brought an abandoned child from the marketplace.” So too in Parshas Lech Lecha [17:16] Rashi comments: “Through the suckling of breasts when she was in need of this, on the day of the banquet for Yitzchok. For people were slandering them,

saying that they brought in an abandoned infant from the marketplace and claimed, ‘he is our child.’ Each woman [attending the banquet] brought her child with her, leaving behind her wet nurse, and [Sara] nursed them all.”

At first glance, if the reason for this was only in order to prove that Sara gave birth to Yitzchok and that it was not an abandoned child from the marketplace, it would have sufficed that they all saw that she nursed Yitzchok, or that she nursed some other infants, but why did she need to nurse “**them all**”? The reason is that it conveys

something additional. Namely, that the miracle of the birth of Yitzchok brought about many instances of beneficence, to the extent that there was “much laughter in the world.” Therefore, this was expressed also in the fact that she nursed the babies of **all** the noblewomen.

Accordingly we may assert that just as we find with regard to Sara that the miracle of the birth of Yitzchok precipitated several **addition** miracles relating to her and in her merit, and miracles that brought salvation and deliverance to the **world** (“Many barren were remembered **with her**...were

answered **with her**,” to the extent that she nursed the babies of all the noblewomen), similarly with regard to Avrohom: The miracle of the birth of Yitzchok brought about additional miracles to him, begetting more children in a wondrous and miraculous manner (after mentioning that “Avrohom was old, well on in years”), and these children were not Jewish but of the gentile nations (**resembling** the situation regarding Sara described above).

[To be continued be”H]

ADD IN ACTS
OF GOODNESS & KINDNESS
TO BRING MOSHIACH NOW!

A TOTALLY NEW APPROACH TO THE SAME OLD SHLICHUS

INTERVIEW BY AVROHOM REINITZ

*In honor of the Kinus HaShluchim, which marks 15 years since the Rebbe said, “prepare the entire world to greet Moshiach,” Beis Moshiach interviewed Rabbi Chaim Shlomo Cohen, shliach in Montreal and director of the Merkaz Dovrei Ivrit. We discussed the avoda of shlichus which ended and the shlichus that began at the Kinus HaShluchim 5752, the great chiddush therein, about how to explain the Besuras HaGeula and the identity of the Goel, even after 3 Tamuz, about the need for avoda p’nimius in order to be ready for Geula, and the need for avoda p’nimius in the process of kiruv to Chassidus. * Part 1*

*In the sicha at the Kinus HaShluchim 5752 the Rebbe said that the avoda of shlichus is over and the only thing left to do in the avoda of shlichus is to greet Moshiach. What did the Rebbe mean

when he said that the avoda of shlichus is over? What ended in Cheshvan 5752 and what is the new avoda that began immediately after that kinus?

At the beginning of that historic

sicha, before the Rebbe got into the details of the new shlichus, the Rebbe prefaced by saying that from time to time there is a chiddush in shlichus, a special shlichus that permeates all of shlichus and is the gateway through which all aspects of shlichus go. This means that we’re not talking about a new shlichus that takes a different direction; we are continuing with the same shlichus, in the same direction, but at the same time, all of shlichus must be permeated with inyanei Moshiach.

On the one hand, we’re talking about the same shlichus as always: to hasten the Geula through hafatza of Torah and mitzvos and the wellsprings of Chassidus. On the other hand, the shlichus is completely illuminated with an entirely different light, the light of Geula. In his sichos, the Rebbe compares it to a midget on a giant’s shoulders. When the midget looks off into the distance, he is not ignoring what the giant sees; he simply sees beyond it.

We could say that until now, shlichus was about building a house

and preparing the electrical infrastructure, while now, shlichus is about turning on the light. You don't turn on the light in a vacuum, but by means of the wires and the existing infrastructure.

In other words, until the Kinus HaShluchim 5752, the main avoda was in "going out of Egypt." Chassidim would say, "the Sh'china is in galus." Farbrengens would focus on answering the question, "how are we going to get out of Galus?" – both with respect to inner avoda and taking the message

outside.

At the Kinus HaShluchim 5752, the Rebbe said that from now on, the avoda of shlichus has to be permeated with this point: how are we entering the era of Geula?

In other words, the details of shlichus didn't change. The shluchim have to keep on promoting the Rebbe's ten mitzvaim and all the rest of the horaos we got over the years, like Tzivos Hashem, a letter in the a Seifer Torah, etc. The chiddush is in the general spirit of how the work is done, which should be

answering the question: how does this lead us to greet Moshiach? As the Rebbe put it in that sicha (s'if 11): "all the details and the tiniest details in the avoda of the Jewish people are openly permeated with one single point and goal: **the revelation of Moshiach Tzidkeinu.**"

***This spirit is such a great chiddush that it could be said that the avoda of shlichus is over and a new avoda began?**

Definitely. Take for example the revelation of Toras HaChassidus, a big chiddush according to all opinions, but what exactly was the chiddush? The answer is that it was a general spirit in which the details of avodas Hashem – the davening, learning, and mitzva fulfillment – remained exactly as they were before the revelation of Chassidus. So what changed? This general spirit permeated every aspect of avodas Hashem and wrought a tremendous change. Today we know that Judaism without Chassidus is like a body without a soul. After the revelation of Chassidus the body remains the same body but a neshama was infused into it. Chayus.

So too with shlichus. Even as the details remain the same, the general spirit can bring about such a change that you definitely can describe the avoda of shlichus that began after the Kinus as a new avoda. It's an enormous change.

***Tell us about it.**

First of all, it raises our anticipation for the Geula to another level. It's like a prisoner who sits in jail for many years. Throughout all those years he hopes to be released from jail, but when he is told that his release form was signed and now he is only waiting for that letter and his actual release, his excitement and longing for freedom are intensified.

Similarly, in our situation, we've been in Galus for nearly 2000 years



and we've always looked forward to leaving Galus. Now we've been informed that the time has come and we need to begin preparing for Geula. Our desire to leave Galus has to change into anticipation for Geula.

In the details of shlichus there is an enormous change in the whole approach. In the past, when you were mekarev someone, it was necessary to take him out of his inner galus and correct wrongdoings. Today, the main avoda is in increasing the light, to instill the light of Geula in him and then in his family and surroundings.

The Rebbe gave us the ability so that with light alone we can change a person's way of life. When that Jew is illuminated with the light of Geula, he is removed from previous sins as a matter of course.

Today, it's much easier to be mekarev people to Torah and mitzvos and Chassidus Chabad. This is because people are interested in being involved in positive things and when you are occupied only with light and the light is so strong that it can illuminate even the darkest of places, you can be involved solely with the positive and all negativity melts away automatically.

In that sicha the Rebbe gives us the ability to take the most spiritual concepts, that until then were only spoken of at Chassidic farbrengens, and use them on the outside. When the Rebbe speaks about Geula, he refers primarily to the revelation of G-dliness that will take place then – that it will be apparent to all that Elokus is everything and everything is Elokus.

The Rebbe tells us that we can publicize this insight to the world now, in such a way that all the details of the avoda of shlichus are permeated with G-dly inyanim.

I gave a shiur to a group of Jews who hadn't participated in shiurim

at the Chabad house before. We learned about the avoda of Avrohom Avinu and about how every Jew also has to leave his limitations and live with Elokus. They loved it and said that this shiur completely changed their way of thinking. They understood that they have to look at the G-dliness within everything. This is the outlook of Yemos HaMoshiach.

***You speak about the general spirit that permeates all mivtzaim. Isn't there a separate mivtza called Mivtza Moshiach?**

The Rebbe definitely said to

We're not talking about a new shlichus that takes a different direction; we are continuing with the same shlichus, in the same direction, but at the same time, all of shlichus must be permeated with inyanei Moshiach.

publicize inyanei Geula in and of itself, whether with ads or brochures or shiurim. These things aren't part of any other mivtza but are an inyan unto itself. However, is it right to say that this is the Rebbe's revolution? That this is the message of the Kinus HaShluchim? Definitely not!

These things, as an inyan unto itself, we had beforehand. The Rebbe spoke about shiurim in inyanei Geula and Moshiach on

Shabbos Parshas Tazria-Metzora and again on Shabbos Parshas Balak. The Rebbe also devoted an entire sicha to the inyan of the prophecy of Geula on Shabbos Parshas Shoftim. This was long before the Kinus HaShluchim 5752. In other words, Mivtza Moshiach, as something distinct, began in the summer of 5751.

The revolution in the sicha at the Kinus HaShluchim 5752 can be seen in that the Rebbe took the inyan of Moshiach and connected it to all the mivtzaim. The Rebbe says, **"This is a general and essential chiddush which is not merely another detail (or generality) in shlichus, but is the most essential and all-encompassing point."**

That means that it isn't another detail or general idea or another mivtza; it is something essential that permeates every aspect of the avodas ha'shlichus. The general spirit of Geula which infuses all the mivtzaim is the great chiddush in the avodas ha'shlichus!

Today, when reviewing a sicha of the Rebbe, everything has to be connected to Moshiach. When you learn the horaos that the Rebbe derives from a topic, you should say: Now the Rebbe is teaching us how to better prepare ourselves for Geula, by fulfilling the horaos of the sicha we just learned.

***At your Chabad house you don't just publicize the Geula but also point out who the Goel is: the Rebbe MH"M. How do you explain this to your mekuravim?**

In principle, we handle this like we explain anything else – from t'fillin to mezuzos, kashrus to family purity. You simply sit and learn. When you learn *On the Essence of Chassidus*, where it explains at length what Geula is and what the role of Moshiach is, everybody understands that the Rebbe is Moshiach. It's a natural outcome.



The gist is that the Rebbe is the Rosh B'nei Yisroel, the *yechida klalis* who unites us with Hashem, and he reveals the G-dly light in the Geula. This is Melech HaMoshiach.

After years of experience, I can say with certainty that nobody can oppose a good explanation of the truth. Even those who are poisoned against the topic of Geula have nothing to say when faced with clear logic. The most they can say is: I don't want to argue with you on this subject because I am sure you are more of an expert than me...

I'm not going to tell you that whoever hears it is convinced. There are some people who find it hard to give up certain assumptions that they developed since their childhood, but if they listen, they can no longer say that we are wrong. They concede that there's truth to what we say, even though it's hard for them to be convinced and to believe it.

I once sat with a misnaged who began accusing Chabad of heresy. I opened the Rambam and we began learning Hilchos Melachim together,

where it says that whoever doesn't believe in Moshiach or doesn't anticipate his coming, denies the Torah and Moshe Rabbeinu!

I asked him: if you were standing at a bus stop in the winter and the temperature outside was zero degrees and you saw lights in the distance, what would you think – that it's a bus or a truck?

He answered: definitely a bus.

I asked him: what would you think about someone who thought it was a truck?

He answered: that he's definitely not waiting for a bus! If he was waiting for a bus then he wouldn't think it was a truck.

The same is true for anticipating Moshiach. One who anticipates his arrival, looks to see who it might be. If you don't look, that's a sign that you're not waiting for Moshiach and such a person needs to do some stocktaking about whether the Rambam is writing about him when he says, "he denies the Torah and Moshe Rabbeinu."

He asked me: and what if turns

out that you're wrong?

I answered that since this was an open prophecy of the Rebbe, we are 100% sure that the Rebbe will bring the Geula and build the Beis HaMikdash. But even according to his perspective, we won't be any worse than Rabbi Akiva and all the sages of his generation, regarding whom the Rambam writes that they thought Ben-Koziva was Moshiach.

Another important thing we learn from Rabbi Akiva: The Rambam writes about Rabbi Akiva that "he would say about him [Ben Koziva] that he is Moshiach." The Rambam could have written it shorter, "he said" rather than "he would say," but he is teaching us that when we find someone who meets the halachic criteria of Moshiach, we should be constantly talking about him. At every opportunity we should be publicizing that he is Moshiach.

When you talk to simpler people, they don't need to analyze the fine print to understand this; it's enough that they know that the Rebbe takes care of every Jew. They accept the idea that the Rebbe is the most suitable person to be Moshiach. I remember that when Rabbi Yosef Shlomo Zevin a"h heard Chassidim talking about the Rebbe being Moshiach, he said: I don't know of anybody else who is suitable!

***After 3 Tamuz, when we don't see the Rebbe, how can we continue to publicize that the Rebbe is Moshiach?**

We need to do it the same way we did before. Namely, by explaining the message. Obviously it's harder now since there is more that covers over the truth and more explanations are needed, but it's definitely possible. Since we are talking about a wide range of delicate issues, it's a good idea to tailor the explanations to the person you're speaking to.

Some people's emuna is strong

and it can be explained to them based on the Rebbe's sichos about the eternal life of the Nasi of the 7th generation and about what it says in Chassidus that every generation must have a physical, living nasi, and based on what the Rebbe said dozens and hundreds of times that this is the final generation of Galus. Obviously, the Rebbe, who is the nasi of the final generation, continues to live despite what happened on 3 Tamuz. Therefore, there is no change in our belief that he is Moshiach.

Then there are people who find it hard to accept this faith. For people like these you have to speak to them in terms of their mindset. In the Gemara we find many instances of Tanaim explaining things this way. By this I mean that although we ourselves believe that the Rebbe is *chai v'kayam*, there's nothing holding us back from explaining to someone who finds this hard to accept, even if he thinks there was a real change on 3 Tamuz, that the Rebbe is still Moshiach.

There are many approaches to explain how the Rebbe is Moshiach even if you take 3 Tamuz at face value, but I think that the best way is to bring the hundreds of sichos in which the Rebbe says that the Rebbe Rayatz is the Moshiach of our generation. Although we as Chassidim believe that the Rebbe was referring to himself, the very fact that the Rebbe said something that can be understood literally proves that to the Rebbe it wasn't a halachic problem to say that the Rebbe Rayatz is Moshiach even though he passed away on Yud Shvat!

Actually, the Rebbe referred to this directly when he was asked how he could say the Rebbe Rayatz will redeem us when T'chiyas HaMeisim takes place after the coming of Moshiach. The Rebbe explained that T'chiyas HaMeisim for certain

individuals will take place before Moshiach comes, and therefore, there's no reason why the Rebbe Rayatz can't be Moshiach.

What do we see here? The only point that the Rebbe addressed was resurrection! The Rebbe definitely knew the Rambam and the other sources which say that Moshiach must be alive, nevertheless, the

We learned about the avoda of Avrohom Avinu and about how every Jew also has to leave his limitations and live with Elokus. They loved it and said that this shiur completely changed their way of thinking. They understood that they have to look at the G-dliness within everything. This is the outlook of Yemos HaMoshiach.

Rebbe said that the Rebbe Rayatz is Moshiach. Undoubtedly, the Rebbe chose to explain it in such a manner so that even according to the Rambam there is no problem believing that the Rebbe Rayatz can be Moshiach even after his passing.

***What happens if, after all the explanations, people still don't accept what you say?**

We explain as best as we know how and if that doesn't help we need to say a chapter of T'hillim and daven that what we say comes from the heart and enters the heart of the person we are talking to. This is what the Rebbe Rayatz said: If you asked a Jew to put on t'fillin and he refused, you need to say a chapter of T'hillim with tears!

***Each year, at your Chabad house, you are mekarev many Jews to the Rebbe and to Chassidus Chabad on some level or other. You personally meet with most of the people who come to the Chabad house. How do you rate your success in explaining the whole inyan of Geula to people? Do most of them accept what you say?**

Those who come to our Merkaz Dovrei Ivrit are people who are interested in listening, people who want to get involved. People like this come with an attitude of wanting to change. When you explain to them about Geula and Moshiach, emphasizing that belief in this requires personal and very intense inner work, to reveal the personal Geula in order to bring about the collective Geula – they see it as an enormous challenge.

The Rebbe in his sichos draws a parallel between the general Moshiach and the individual spark of Moshiach within every Jew. We speak a lot about the close connection every Jew has with the Geula process. We don't speak about the Geula as a process that takes place in the world with no connection to us. We connect everything to our personal avoda.

When the mekuravim hear that all their Torah and mitzvos are connected to Geula, they see everything differently. They come to be strengthened in their observance and they discover that everything has to be permeated with Geula.

[To be continued be"H]

THERE IS OBVIOUSLY WHAT TO FIX, BUT SHOULDN'T THE REPAIR COME FROM 'WITHIN'?

RABBI SHOLOM DOVBER HA'LEVI WOLPO
TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY

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

Naturally, we have not been waiting two thousand years for a medina such as this. We are all hoping for a medina that will go in the path of Torah and halacha in all matters. We are also waiting for Melech HaMoshiach to rule over it. But perhaps today's State of Israel is the beginning and the means to

prepare this final process. This is the way of He Who causes everything in order to bring the final purpose of the Redemption.

Furthermore, regarding the spiritual damage, etc., on the contrary, we have to work hard that the religious and chareidim should come in and become partners in the state institutions. When the Torah

observant increase in number in the state institutions, government ministries, media, courts, etc., then "they shall conquer the country from within."

It was specifically the Lubavitcher Rebbe who emphasized the saying that when we place the letter Alef in "gola" (Exile), it turns into "geula" (Redemption).

Therefore, if as you say Medinat Yisrael is “gola,” nevertheless, since “there is no king without a people,” today’s State of Israel opens the process whereby very soon, with G-d’s help, someone can be elected prime minister who is from the seed of Dovid, expert in Torah, etc., and he will place the letter Alef in the gola of Medinat Yisrael and transform it into the seat of G-d’s kingdom, even in the revealed sense.

ANSWER:

1. When the perception of the concept of Moshiach is so limited that the aspiration is for “a prime minister expert in Torah,” it should come as no surprise that the seat of G-d’s kingdom for that Moshiach is the medina. It is quite obvious, however, that the greatness of Moshiach is **not** that he will be privileged to serve as prime minister of the Zionist state, and clearly the beginning of the Redemption through Moshiach is not based upon the rotting foundation of the Zionist state, which is the total opposite of the kingdom of Dovid and only delays the time of his revelation and sovereignty even more.

2. The Exile does not serve as a throne for Melech HaMoshiach, and needless to say, neither does the exile of Medinat Yisrael. Melech HaMoshiach will be the head of “the initial sovereignty” in the words of the Rambam (Hilchos Melachim 11:1), i.e., the kingdom of Dovid as it was in the days of Dovid and Shlomo. When he will reign, we will merit the destined fulfillment of “I will make pass the spirit of impurity (including the Zionist impurity) from the earth.” In his time, we will return to serving G-d in the Beis HaMikdash “as the command of Your will,” with a new heart and a new spirit, and even the Gentiles will say, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of

G-d.” **This Melech HaMoshiach will have no need for Herzl and Ben-Gurion to prepare his throne.**

3. When Moshiach will come in a Divine revelation, he will place the Alef from “*Alufo Shel Olam*” (Master of the World) into the darkness of the Exile, transforming everything into the light of Redemption. We’re not talking here about the negative aspects of the Exile; he will place the light of the Redemption only into permissible things (in the language of chassidus, “*klipas noga*”), and not *ch”v* turn a sin into a mitzva. The reality of the medina is such that it will have no rectification even in

Even the Gentiles will say, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of G-d.” This Melech HaMoshiach will have no need for Herzl and Ben-Gurion to prepare his throne.

the days of Moshiach, except through its total nullification (in kindness and mercy).

4. Regarding your question that Melech HaMoshiach must be “a king over a people,” you may be surprised to hear that Moshiach’s initial revelation will be in Chutz LaAretz, as explained by Ramban on the Shir HaShirim that you quoted. Similarly, it is written in Hoshea (2:2): “Then shall the children of Yehuda and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land,” and the Metzudas Dovid comments: “One

head – this is Melech HaMoshiach. And they shall come up – from the lands of the Exile, they came up to their land.”

According to the Rambam, this does not yet mark the actual ingathering of the exiles, rather the beginning of the revelation of Moshiach, who will come with those who accept him as king, and he will go up with them to Eretz HaKodesh, and afterwards, he will fight the wars of G-d, build the Beis HaMikdash, and eventually gather in all the exiles.

5. In connection with what you wrote about conquering the medina from within, the reality proves the exact opposite: Many of the **religious** military commanders gave orders for the disengagement out of a Zionist attachment to the holiness of the Israel Defense Forces, which **superseded their attachment to the holiness of the Torah and the Shulchan Aruch.**

The army’s chief rabbi cooperated throughout the entire process of the disengagement. The **religious** justice on the Israeli Supreme Court ruled that the synagogues must be destroyed. The **religious** President of Israel, who has a synagogue in his official residence, releases terrorists who kill Jews afterwards, and he assists the disengagement process with his shameful behavior. Even the chief rabbis of Israel don’t come out against the frightful expulsion, claiming before the media that “halacha has no opinion” on this matter *r”l*. The religious Knesset Members even went so far as to remain in the government and keep it from toppling until after the horrible decision was finalized, and the chareidim even stayed in the coalition when the disengagement was carried out. Furthermore, the political leaders among the settlers “fought” against the expulsion, as

they gave their cooperation and coordinated their positions with the expellers, accompanied by hugs and kisses for them.

Even in the not too distant past, it was specifically the religious and chareidi Knesset Members who enabled the Camp David “peace process” and the tragic Oslo Accords to pass with their support or their abstention from voting – all for a bowl of lentils in the form of honor, money, power, and prestige.

6. In short, the religious who have been made into part of the regime serve as the government’s protective vest, providing it with a kashrus stamp of approval to do whatever it wishes. This situation is not about to change, rather it will get worse with each passing year. This is because the medina is so rotten to the core, it corrodes anyone who becomes a part of it,

and in the words of the wisest of all men (Mishlei 2:19): “All who come to her do not return.”

7. The fact is that with all the claims that the national religious community has against the government’s conduct, the national anthem with the words “to be a free people in our land,” containing not a hint of faith in G-d and fulfillment of Torah and mitzvos, is still the holy anthem to anyone who remains faithful to “*is’chalta d’Geula*,” sung at every festive occasion while standing and in an aura of holiness. The Zionist flag worn by the destroyers of Gush Katif remains the national emblem for anyone still loyal to “the first blossoming of our redemption.” Therefore, there is no conquering of the medina from within here by the religious community, rather **a conquest of the national religious**

community from within by the secular state.

8. It is important to note that in the opinion of the Rebbe, despite all the aforementioned, we still have an obligation to participate in the elections, not *ch”v* to be part of the Zionist actions *r”l*, but on the contrary, because anyone who holds a blue identity card of the State of Israel bears responsibility even for the corrupt doings of those who issue them. Therefore, we must go and vote for representatives **who will spend four years in the Knesset protesting on our behalf against the terrible things that the medina does**, and even the religious parties can lessen the edicts against religion (despite the fact that in recent years, they have even cooperated with the worst of the anti-religious laws *r”l*).

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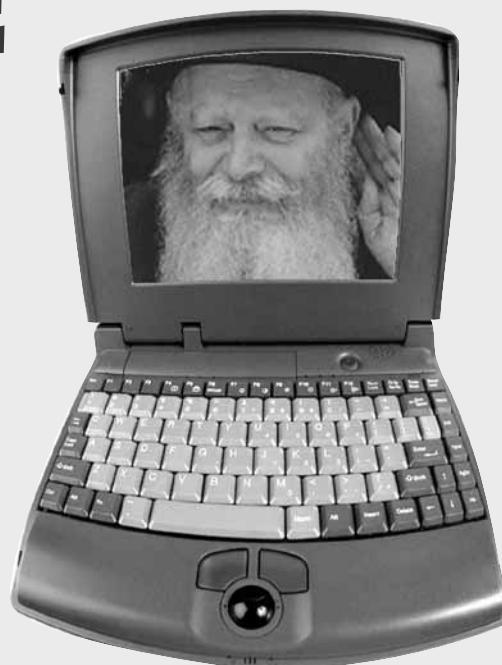
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30 YEARS SINCE THE SHLUCHIM LEFT FOR ERETZ YISROEL

WE BROUGHT THE CHAYUS OF 'BEIS CHAYEINU' TO ERETZ YISROEL

INTERVIEW BY MENDEL TZFASMAN

*It was the day after Yud Shvat 5736 when the first shluchim received the Rebbe's parting bracha and left for the airport with singing and joy, accompanied by hundreds of people. * Beis Moshiach takes a look back in this interview. * Part 1*

Tell us what preceded your being selected as shluchim. What were the requirements to be chosen?

R' Greisman: At the end of the Yud-Tes Kislev farbrengen 5736, the Rebbe suddenly began to say an unusual sicha with his eyes closed. The Rebbe spoke about the special connection our Rebbeim had with Eretz Yisroel, being involved in spiritually building it up, starting with the Alter Rebbe, who sent money and Chassidim to Eretz Yisroel; continuing with the Mittlerer Rebbe, who founded the Jewish yishuv in Chevron; up to the Rebbe Rayatz, who founded Kfar Chabad.

We didn't know what the Rebbe was leading up to but then the Rebbe suddenly announced the special shlichus, "In the coming days (or weeks) a group of ten Jews will go (to learn Torah and fulfill mitzvos, especially those mitzvos that pertain to Eretz Yisroel) to kollel and the Chabad yeshiva in the Old City of Yerushalayim. Ten Jews will also go to Tzfas."

The Rebbe explained in the sicha why specifically Tzfas and Yerushalayim. The Rebbe said that those who were prepared to go on this mission should sign up with the secretaries and confirm with the administrations of the Chabad

mosdos in the Old City and Tzfas (some of whom are here now) about the details.

R' Hendel: The day after the farbrengen, a large number of men, older men as well as bachurim, stood at the office of Merkos L'Inyanei Chinuch to sign up. The secretaries themselves didn't know what the criteria were for who would be picked.

A few days later the secretaries began publicizing some details about the shlichus. Whoever was going to get married in the upcoming year or whoever was still in the first year of marriage was excluded. Those with more than two children or who had a spiritual job in a mosad were excluded.

R' Gurary: They say that the number of applicants was 300, 180 of whom signed up the morning after the farbrengen. In the sicha, the Rebbe made it clear that "obviously all those going must be healthy, physically and spiritually. Although there are doctors in Eretz

Yisroel too (and the air of Eretz Yisroel makes one wise), the point is not to go there for a cure. So those going must be healthy physically and spiritually.”

R' Wilschansky: The Rebbe used unusual phrases like “a person’s shliach is like himself” and “I take the responsibility of this trip upon myself.”

How did you find out that the Rebbe had picked you?

R' Greisman: On Tuesday, 6 Teives I was told I was accepted. Every day after kollel I would go and find out if there was any news. That day Rabbi Binyamin Klein came out of the Rebbe’s room with a list. He told me that my name was on the list and he wanted to know:

PARTICIPANTS:

RABBI YOCHONON GURARY
Chief Rabbi of Cholon

RABBI SHMUEL GREISMAN
Director of the committee for the writing of a Sefer Torah for Jewish Children

RABBI YISROEL HA'KOHEN HENDEL
Rav of the Chabad k'hilla in Migdal HaEmek

RABBI YOSEF YITZCHOK WILSCHANSKY
Rosh Yeshivos Chassidei Chabad in Tzfas and Chaifa

1) whether I would be going willingly and happily, 2) whether my wife agreed, 3) were we in good health.

I immediately answered yes to all the questions, but R' Klein said my answer had to be given in after

explicit consent from my wife.

R' Gurary: I heard the good news along with other good news. It was Friday 8 Teives and I was in the hospital since my wife had just given birth to our daughter. R' Klein called us at the hospital and told us we were accepted.

R' Hendel: By Shabbos Parshas VaYigash, everybody who had been picked knew who they were but we didn’t know each other. Along with the announcement of the names we were told we had to finish preparing to leave in the next month and that the trip would take place immediately after Yud Shvat.

R' Wilschansky: 11 T'mimim were picked for shlichus in Yerushalayim and another 8 married



The shluchim receiving a volume of *Likutei Sichos* before going on shlichus

men for shlichus to Tzfas. At first the Rebbe had spoken about a “holy congregation,” which implies ten men, but later on we learned that the Rebbe was sending eleven.

The T'mimim Yaakov Reitzes, Aharon Eliezer Tzeitlin, and Yosef Kramer joined our shlichus to Tzfas. Before that, they had been shluchim, as bachurim, in Australia. The Rebbe said that since they had been among “balabatim,” they know how to manage with them.

What did your families think about this? After all, it wasn't easy to leave the family and the environment you were accustomed to and to go to the Tzfas of those days.

R' Hendel: No, it wasn't easy, but baruch Hashem, we managed. The Rebbe looks out for his shluchim.

R' Wilschansky: My wife, who is Israeli, was happy to go back to Eretz Yisroel and her family, though when we arrived in Tzfas it wasn't at all easy. The housing situation in the old city wasn't great and the better apartments in the south of the city were very far from the few places where you could buy the few kosher products that came to the city.

For most of the women who were English-speaking, it wasn't easy finding work. Because of the difficult parnasa situation, in addition to the fact that the families coming from America were used to a higher standard of living, the kollel – headed by Rabbi Kaplan a”h – in consultation with R' Zushe Wilamovsky, raised the monthly kollel stipend.

R' Greisman: The joy in being the Rebbe's shluchim superseded all the material problems. At the time, no Americans thought about shlichus to Eretz Yisroel, but, “What does it matter if it's America or Eretz Yisroel? Its all the command of the



The Rebbe asked the shluchim to learn in order to receive smicha...as well as practical courses in chinuch and communal work, etc., including, for those suited to it, to try and obtain positions in rabbanus and dayanus in suitable places.

—Rabbi Yochanon Gurary

king!” We slowly settled in, and R' Kaplan a”h really looked out for us. Ultimately, since we had only recently been bachurim who came from the dorm in 749 [Eastern Parkway, which had pretty dismal living conditions at that time], we had no problem getting settled

anywhere.

You and your wives were born in the US or France. How did you adjust to the language and Israeli mentality when your primary role was to speak, influence, and inspire others?

R' Greisman: They focused on every word we said even with our broken Ivrit and we managed to make an impact.

I remember that when the Rebbe announced Mivtza Chinuch, we went around to all the schools in the Tzfas area and spoke to children and their teachers, and through them we reached their parents. Following a concerted effort promoting Mivtza Chinuch, the Levi Yitzchok school in Tzfas opened. So yes, an impact was definitely made.

R' Hendel: Before I married I learned in Kfar Chabad and I spoke Ivrit. I had a heavy accent, but that didn't limit me. The Rebbe once told R' Leibel Kaplan that he was sending shluchim from out of the country since Israelis are impressed by Americans. This is why R' Kaplan always wore a tie, so he would look American.

It might sound strange, but our accents actually helped us. Israelis are constantly chasing after what America has to offer and they try to imitate Americans in every way, so this helped us American shluchim.

R' Gurary: When you come with the kocho of the meshaleiach, then it makes no difference who and what you are, what you do and don't know. You are simply not limited.

We saw this at the reception we got when we arrived at the airport. Thousands of people from around the country came to see us; so too at the President's home, at the Knesset, the Tzfas municipality, etc.

R' Wilschansky: I spoke Ivrit, thanks to my time spent with the Israelis in 770, and from home which is why I was one of the main speakers at first (R' Greisman spoke mainly in English and R' Mentlick [who accompanied the shluchim on the trip] spoke Lashon HaKodesh and Yiddish).

At first we were going to fly as new immigrants via the Jewish Agency, but in accordance with what was done at the time, when there were seats available on El-Al, the Jewish Agency arranged a flight for *olim*. We could have traveled in two or three groups or waited for a later date when we could travel together. However, the Rebbe emphasized that we should leave the day after Yud Shvat.

We didn't understand the significance of Yud-Alef Shvat at the time. Since then, of course, the Rebbe explained the significance of "11": It is "the one which is higher than ten." This point is expressed in the 11th of Nissan, the Rebbe's birthday, and in the 11th day of the 11th month (Shvat) of the year 5711, the day the Rebbe accepted the nesius, as the Rebbe put it, the beginning of "a new era."

The Rebbe once said that Yud Shvat pertains to the sixth generation and Yud-Alef Shvat pertains to the seventh generation. Those who seek out *remazim* discovered that the trip, which was actually a "new inyan" in the Rebbe's nesius, took place in the 26th year (gematria of Havaya) of the Rebbe's nesius. This alludes to the revelation of G-d's name in the world – the coming of Moshiach – which was expressed at that time in the sending of shluchim, who are literally like the sender, to the Holy Land, as a preparation for the revelation of G-d's name with the true and complete Redemption.



The Rebbe himself said in the sicha of Yud Shvat: "There are things that require so-and-so's aliya to Eretz Yisroel and even the aliya of an entire 'holy congregation' ... therefore, we are sending from here a 'holy congregation' ... in order to strengthen the spiritual state there."

--Rabbi Y.Y. Wilschansky

In other words, this wasn't just ordinary shlichus but as the Rebbe himself said in the sicha of Yud Shvat, "there are inyanim that can be done in Eretz Yisroel even when one is (physically) outside Eretz

Yisroel. Then there are things that require so-and-so's aliya to Eretz Yisroel and even the aliya of an entire 'holy congregation' ... therefore, we are sending from here a 'holy congregation' ... in order to strengthen the spiritual state there."

We felt as though the Rebbe was saying: I cannot go to Eretz Yisroel at the moment. By your going – a person's shliach is like himself – I am there in Eretz Yisroel and preparing it to gather in the "outcasts of the Jewish people."

The Rebbe sent you to Eretz Yisroel in order to strengthen the yishuv there. Was the Rebbe specific about what you should do?

R' Greisman: As the Rebbe said, the goal was to learn Nigleh and Chassidus during the day and in our free time to spread the wellsprings. The Rebbe also sent a Mivtzaim Tank with us, which was a surprise. At the Yud Shvat farbrengens, the donors of the tank approached the Rebbe and gave him the keys. The Rebbe surprised them by saying that the tank would go with the shluchim and they should give him a different key.

At the time, we didn't know what to do with the tank. Should we use it all day or just part of the day? Should we take turns so that every day someone else would drive it around or else have others put it to work?

Rabbi Chadakov told us in the Rebbe's name: "Just as when a Jew travels he needs to have t'fillin, so too when a group travels, they need a tank with them. When they go on mivtzaim [during time off from learning] they should use the tank. Just as a Jew who owns t'fillin should lend them to someone who doesn't have t'fillin, the same with the tank [i.e., during learning times, have others put it to use]."

R' Hendel: When we went on shlichus we still didn't know what our objectives were, i.e., where and how we should operate. Generally, when a shliach goes on shlichus, it's a focused effort. With us, the shlichus was to learn most of the day and work in our free time. This is what did for three years. We knew that our job was, as the Rebbe put it, "to build the land – Eretz Yisroel – physically and spiritually. Physically, by living there (whether by renting or buying), and spiritually, by learning Torah and being involved in mitzvaim, spreading Judaism."

On Rosh Chodesh Shvat 5739 a general letter came from the Rebbe to all the shluchim. This letter proved to be a turning point in our shlichus. The Rebbe specified: Found new mosdos in Tzfas and Yerushalayim, a mikva, schools, preschools. Help the existing communities in Nachalat Har Chabad and Kfar Chabad. Help the mosdos Chabad (Aguch, Tzach, N'shei U'Bnos Chabad, kollelim and yeshivos) and start more and more new Chabad mosdos in appropriate places or places that need them.

Before that, in the summer of 5738, R' Mendel Futerfas approached R' Goldberg and myself and asked us to come to Migdal HaEmek to run and breathe a Chassidishe spirit into Rabbi Grossman's yeshiva, which was called "Migdal Ohr – Chabad." The year before there had been a group of T'mimim who came from the yeshiva in Kfar Chabad.

When we got a positive answer from the Rebbe, we went to Migdal HaEmek along with the shliach R' Y.Y. Gurewitz, and since then, step-by-step, the Chabad mosdos have developed into what they are today.

R' Gurary: In that same letter, the Rebbe asked the shluchim to



The Rebbe once told R' Leibel Kaplan that he was sending shluchim from out of the country since Israelis are impressed by Americans. This is why R' Kaplan always wore a tie, so he would look American.

--Rabbi Yisroel HaKohen Hendel

learn in order to receive smicha, Yoreh Yoreh, and for those suited to it, Yadin Yadin, as well as practical courses in chinuch and communal work, etc., including, for those suited to it, to try and obtain positions in rabbanus and dayanus in suitable places.

The words the Rebbe used were "to build the land physically and spiritually," and in hindsight we see that this was precisely what the Rebbe meant. I was elected rav of

Cholon and other shluchim were appointed as roshei yeshivos, menahalim, etc., and all of us are involved in building the land physically and spiritually.

R' Wilschansky: The Rebbe emphasized that men, women, and children were sent. In other words, representatives of all the tribes. This was definitely a preparation for the promises of Geula and one of the signs of Moshiach, "and he gathers the outcasts of Israel," and as the Rebbe said at the Yud-Tes Kislev farbrengens about the goal of shlichus: "This will be a preparation and preface and 'vessel' for 'I will lead you upright' ... with the coming of Moshiach Tzidkeinu, 'and the earth will be full of the knowledge of Hashem like waters cover the sea,' for Moshiach will teach Torah p'nimius ha'Torah – to the entire nation."

When you arrived in Eretz Yisroel did you immediately see specific areas that needed chizuk?

R' Greisman: The main project the shluchim took on was simply, "to bring the Rebbe to Eretz Yisroel." In other words, we worked to strengthen the connection to the Rebbe, to make everyday talk revolve around the Rebbe, to travel to the Rebbe, to write to the Rebbe, and to "live" with the Rebbe.

We went to farbrengens of Anash and spoke about the Rebbe with love. We spoke enthusiastically about the atmosphere in 770, about traveling to the Rebbe, writing to him, etc., and words that came from the heart entered the heart.

When the Rebbe initiated any new campaign, we would go out with a big shturem to spread the horaa among Anash so they in turn would pass it along to their relatives and people around them.

You have to understand that

back then, the only Chabad house in Eretz Yisroel was Rabbi Zimroni Tzik's Chabad house in Bat-Yam. Other than that, there was no ongoing Chabad work, in the Rebbe's name, in any other city!

R' Hendel: Remember, aside from Kfar Chabad, Nachala, Lud, and Yerushalayim there were no other Chabad enclaves and most Lubavitchers were in these places. This had to change.

R' Wilschansky: I remember that at the time, R' Greisman would call R' Groner and would be briefed about news from 770, the sichos and maamarim that were said on Shabbos, and about the Rebbe's health. Hundreds of regular subscribers would call R' Greisman in order to hear the news from 770. This service expanded after the Rebbe's heart attack in 5738. This sort of connection with the Rebbe didn't exist beforehand.

Not being in touch with what was going on in 770 meant it was hard to "live" with the Rebbe.

R' Gurary: There is no comparison between now and then. Today, a trip to the Rebbe is no big deal, but back then very few people traveled to the Rebbe, and even then, once in several years. Following the many farbrengens and the chayus we brought from 770, thousands of people became mekushar to the Rebbe.

30 years later, what do you see



Look at a map of Eretz Yisroel and begin counting Chabad houses and how many places of shlichus opened up in the past 30 years. Through the shluchim sent to Yerushalayim and Tzfas in 5736-8, the Rebbe conquered the land.

--Rabbi Shmuel Greisman

as the big changes you were able to make with the ko'ach of the Rebbe?

R' Greisman: Look at a map of Eretz Yisroel and begin counting Chabad houses and how many places of shlichus opened up in the past thirty years. It is all because of the Rebbe's ko'ach. Through the shluchim sent to Yerushalayim and Tzfas in 5736-8, the Rebbe conquered the land.

R' Hendel: The entire Migdal HaEmek of today is thanks to this shlichus. A yeshiva, Talmud Torah, preschools, mikva, a large community, a shul, etc. – all these were established with great miracles. All the success that began with the arrival of the shluchim to Migdal HaEmek, happened with the unlimited ko'ach of the meshaleiach. This is only one example and it's true for every area where the shluchim operated.

R' Gurary: There is no comparison. It's like two different Eretz Yisroels. It began on a small scale, when we went out in the evenings with the tank from moshav to moshav, to put up mezuzos and promote chinuch, mitvza Neshek, kashrus, taharas ha'mishpacha. In the first two years we went out with the tank in the evenings from moshav to moshav, night after night, and today there are thousands of Lubavitcher homes throughout the country, each house being a Chabad house in its own right.

[To be continued be"H]



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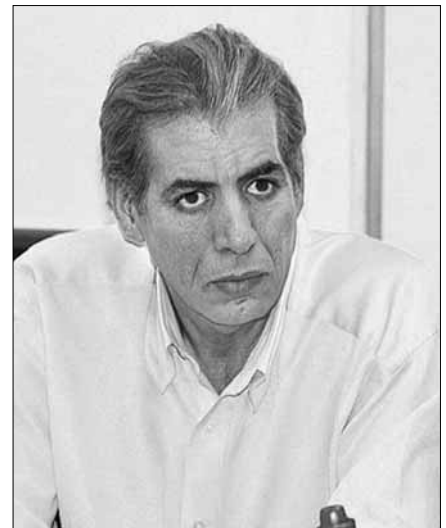
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1000 KASSAMS ON A PARALYZED CITY

INTERVIEW BY SHAI GEFEN

*Mayor of Sderot Eli Muell demands that the government allow the army to do its job. "The city is paralyzed. The streets are empty. Residents are hiding in their homes, afraid to go out. School is in two shifts." * The mayor praised the work of the Chabad house, especially at this difficult time. * Mayor Eli Muell in an interview with Beis Moshiach, given as the army began its invasion of Gaza.*



The interview with the mayor of Sderot, Eli Muell took place November 3rd. The number of Kassams that fell during the interview, served as stark proof of the terrible situation the residents of Sderot have to contend with. The mayor was happy with the military campaign taking place at that time, but he was apprehensive too. He hoped that the army would finish the job.

The Disengagement is still fresh in Muell's mind. He warned about it, led the protesters, and even dared to oppose the family of Prime Minister Sharon. When the army left Gaza and closed the gates, Muell stood in the last line. The media asked him for his reaction and he said, "We will return here under more difficult conditions."

He knew what he was talking about. The mayor of Sderot has been forced to become "district commander," and is one of the most popular mayors in Israel.

Since the Disengagement you have clamored about the terrible situation that Sderot and the area is in. Now finally, the army has gone in. Are you satisfied?

I don't think the credit is mine. The army finally realized that we can't allow the Gaza Strip to be the largest terrorist training camp in the world right under our noses. We knew this all along. I don't want to say that I'm happy, but it's a good beginning.

Is it too little too late?

I would rather not talk while our soldiers are in danger. Let's wait until

they return and we'll see what they accomplished. It's an ongoing campaign and we still don't know where it's leading.

You had spoken about destroying Beit Chanun.

Steps are being made in that direction. It's obvious to me that they will have to do that. We tried everything and it didn't help. There is no objective to simply destroy, as much as our goal is to protect our security. The way the Americans operate in Afghanistan, they would have done this a long time ago.

Are you still hearing that there is only a political solution?

Even according to those who are ready to make political concessions, there's nobody to talk to. Due to lack of action, people will be killed in the



meantime because of terrorist acts. Everybody knows the devastating consequences when the Strip is armed and becomes the largest terror camp in the world. There is no place in the world that offers such ease and convenience for terrorists like the Gaza Strip, which has no authority and is just a band of terrorists.

Are Al Qaeda and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard already in the Gaza Strip?

As far as I know, yes. All enemies of Israel have gathered in one place and they're making every effort to annihilate Israel and to attack settlements.

For a year and a half, ever since the Disengagement, you have been sounding the alarm, but it seems no one is listening. Kassams keep falling in Sderot and nobody cares.

What can I do other than cry out? I am ignored. The public understands me, but the one who makes the decisions is the government and for reasons of its own it delayed this military campaign. At least they've changed direction on that.

What would you like to see as the ultimate goal of this campaign?

The Israeli government must give clear instructions to the army so that the campaign ends in such a way that the terrorists understand that it doesn't pay for them to shoot one more Kassam at settlements. This is the only success we will recognize.

We need plain talk: there is no political process and there will not be any political process. There is nobody to talk to. Olmert canceled his meeting with Abu Mazen, realizing that it's a waste of time. What remains to be done is to preserve our security in the best possible way, but that isn't happening; an entire region is suffering from this hell every day, every hour.

You opposed the Disengagement. Do you feel justified by that position you took?

I was the only mayor who spoke up against the Disengagement, and was one of the main opponents amongst my fellow mayors. I attended all the demonstrations and didn't give up until the last minute.

I am not here to say, I told you so; I want change. So what if I was right? Unfortunately we are right time and again but we continue to suffer. Does my being right rebuild Gush Katif and the northern Strip? Will it return these wonderful Jews to their homes? We did not succeed in preventing the Disengagement and now we are paying the price, big time.

Do you think the leaders learned their lesson?

Unfortunately, life goes on as usual. There's nothing new under the sun. You can see the gap between reality and the political perception from what happened on the eve of the outbreak of the war in Lebanon. The agenda of Olmert's government was Convergence. Three days before the war began they were still talking about it. This was the script and nobody bothered to check it out.

Hashem brought the second war in Lebanon upon us and was in effect saying to them, "See where you are living, wake up!"

How are the residents of Sderot?

The streets this week were empty. The residents are holed up in their homes, afraid to go out. Many residents left Sderot this weekend to get a breather. We decided that students will not learn in unfortified classrooms and therefore, there are two shifts of instruction.

The people here are very tense and mad. Take into account what they've been going through for a year. The campaign that just began is

Even according to those who are ready to make political concessions, there's nobody to talk to. Due to lack of action, people will be killed in the meantime because of terrorist acts. Everybody knows the devastating consequences when the Strip is armed and becomes the largest terror camp in the world. There is no place in the world that offers such ease and convenience for terrorists like the Gaza Strip, which has no authority and is just a band of terrorists.

small comfort and we hope that the army will indeed eradicate terror and the enemy stops shooting.

How long is the campaign expected to last?

They said a week to ten days and this is what they asked us to prepare for. It could end up taking longer.

You were supposed to appear at the UN this week in order to report about Sderot.

People from the UN visited us and heard our complaints and asked me to come. The world only hears about Gaza and Jibala and nobody reports what's going on in Sderot – how many citizens are affected by Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Businesses in Sderot are heading towards bankruptcy. I had to postpone my visit because of the campaign.

I can barely leave my house. I have unwillingly become the “district commander.”

You were nearly injured yourself.

A few weeks ago a Kassam landed ten meters from my house. Last Thursday another Kassam landed about a hundred meters from my house. As much as we are habituated, it's still an unpleasant experience.

Surely you remember the promises, what would happen if Arabs would shoot Kassams after the Disengagement.

They said the earth would shake, but the only earth that shook was the earth in Sderot and the neighboring yishuvim. Since the Disengagement they have shot 1000 Kassam missiles at Sderot. The shooting of Kassams has increased significantly. We said that the Disengagement would legitimize terror, but they didn't listen to us.

Even according to the positions of the supporters of the Disengagement, they ought to at least eradicate terrorism. I want to know how they

simply left with no guarantee. Abu Mazen didn't promise a thing. If they're expelling Jews already, at least there should be something in exchange.

The funny thing is, the delusional supporters of the Disengagement tell me that we attained a better standing in the world because of it. What a

Rabbi Moshe and his brother Chananel, are doing holy work. If only there were more like them. They are modest people who contribute towards the community. They are the light at the end of the tunnel for the city of Sderot, which is why we help them as much as possible. Their whole purpose is to give, to help, to support.

joke. Do the French love us because of the Disengagement? How are we better off in the world's eyes because of it? I see no improvement.

The Disengagement caused the greatest split among Jews, a gash that cannot be stitched together. It's a recovery process that will take years. They took people who are the salt of

the earth and threw them out and abandoned them. They have no land, no house, nothing.

When did the first Kassam land here?

The first Kassam shot at Sderot was in April 2001. I saw it fall with my own eyes. One can say that Sderot stopped functioning properly since the Kassams and even more so after the Disengagement. It's not the same city.

You are neighbors of the Defense Minister.

He's not in the right party. I never supported his views. Ask him these questions, how he feels and allows this to go on. I don't agree with his politics. I hope that he also understands that you cannot achieve peace through talks. And even if you can, there is no one to talk to. This has been true since Arafat and even more so since Hamas rose to power.

When the IDF was in Gaza it ruled the area. It had good Intelligence and it was very hard to build hothouses of terror. Today, after a year and a quarter, they have armed the entire Gaza Strip with Anti-tank missiles and roadside bombs. What I said came to pass and the army is going back in under more difficult conditions.

The Chief of Staff Chalutz said that Gaza has an underground city. The terrorists have been working hard this past year. There are dozens of tunnels through which they are smuggling thousands of tons of weapons.

You sound like you've despaired.

Oh – I'm hearing the siren! Another Kassam is landing. Just yesterday seven or eight barrages landed here.

What do you have to say about the work of Chabad in your city?

I am a friend of the Pizem family. I must mention Rabbi Moshe and his brother Chananel, who are doing

holy work. If only there were more like them. They are modest people who contribute towards the community. They are the light at the end of the tunnel for the city of Sderot, which is why we help them as much as possible. Their whole purpose is to give, to help, to support.

Although I am not religious, you don't have to convince me about the importance of the work of Chabad. I do, however, put on t'fillin and I say: without Torat Yisroel, Am Yisroel will not endure. Am Yisroel, Eretz Yisroel, and Torat Yisroel go together. If you remove one of them from the equation, Am Yisroel will not endure.

In conclusion:

Despite the situation I am still optimistic. We are a nation that constantly anticipates the Geula. I am sure that one day the leadership will look at things the right way. In the past we have had false prophets who spoke about peace and led us off the cliff. They said, "Kassamim Shmasamim," "flying objects," and they called us "cry babies." We forgive them but are waiting for them to sober up because the time has come.

The delusional supporters of the Disengagement tell me that we attained a better standing in the world because of it. What a joke. Do the French love us because of the Disengagement? How are we better off in the world's eyes because of it? I see no improvement.

mean that you've achieved the goals."

An average of 5-8 Kassams were fired at the Negev and other Israeli areas on each of the last several days.

Postscript:

November 7

The week-long Operation Autumn Clouds designed to reduce Kassam rocket attacks against Sderot and Ashkelon has ended. The IDF says its goals were reached, though Kassams were fired even yesterday.

Nissim Keinan, broadcaster from the Sderot and Gaza regions, said the IDF Gaza offensive accomplished a "drop in the ocean" of what needs to be done.

Keinan said, "Yes, it was a successful operation, but it appears that the terrorist activity will simply revert right away to the way it was before. We're talking about looking for a needle in a haystack, because Beit Chanoun, where the offensive took place, is just a small town of 30,000 people, but what about Beit Lahiya and all its terrorists? And what about Jebalya, and the entire area of the Shati refugee camp, and the Khan Yunis area, and Dir el-Balach. I mean, the entire place is swarming with terrorists. Just because you took care of one place and confiscated weapons and ammunitions, it still doesn't





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WHAT WILL I BE WHEN I GROW UP?

BY URI LICHTMAN

Every army has its infantry, the troops who go out and do combat, taking the risks and ultimately securing victory. However, those frontline heroes can't do the job alone. They need help and support from the soldiers who work from behind the lines, as well as from civilian employees of the army. In the Rebbe's army, all of these different roles exist and need to be filled by the Chassidim. The Rebbe made every one of us into a shliach. No Chassid can stand on the sidelines and so each Chassid must honestly ask himself, am I a combat soldier, a rearguard soldier or a civilian employee?

I sat down on the green velvet couch and looked at my grandfather as I waited for him to speak. He had called me the night before and told me what was on his mind:

"I've been thinking and worrying for some time now. Two years have gone by since you got married and you are still sitting in kollel. You have to go out to work. Tomorrow, please stop by and visit and I'll try and share my thoughts with you."

Now we were looking at each other, he with narrowed eyes, a sure sign that he was deep in thought. I decided to start the conversation:

"Saba, I never learned a profession; I know no other language aside from Hebrew; I have no particular organizational or business talent. I really need help and guidance."

Silence. Saba ran his fingers through his beard.

"You've given up, eh?" said my grandfather mockingly.

My grandfather was in business for decades. He has been active and energetic despite the difficult conditions he has had to contend with at the different places of employment and jobs he has had.

"Listen Uri, there are no magical solutions to finding work. You need to accept the fact that you have to support yourself and that means going to work."

Saba thought for a moment and then added, "You know that throughout my life I worked at many professions around the world. I saw the world and met many sorts of people. You need to try to find work for yourself so you can support yourself under decent conditions. There's no choice in the matter. Without work you won't be able to bring home bread to your family."

"Maybe you should consider opening a store to sell something that appeals to you?" suggested Saba and he hinted that he would think about helping me get started with some financial aid.

I laughed to myself. Who me? A salesman? In a store? To stand facing customers and try to convince them to buy? I had never tried and I didn't think I would be successful. How would I know how to sweet-talk and persuade people to buy my

merchandise? I didn't say all this to Saba but just said:

"Selling is for someone suited to it. It's work that requires powers of persuasion and communications skills. It's not for me."

Saba looked at me, closed his eyes, and then said, "I told you, you have to go out to work. You can't? So what will you do? Go to work and get adjusted. When you start working, you can ask experienced people how to do it, how to set up a store, how to do the accounts, and all the rest."

Saba knows me well and by the expression on my face he realized that I didn't like his answer, so he went on to his next suggestion:

"I recently heard about a job as a mashgiach kashrus in Africa. Maybe

that suits you. In Kenya there's a big company that exports Nile Perch. They are responsible for the fishing, the packing, and the exporting. You can be the mashgiach.

"Obviously you go there without your family, there is no Jewish community, no minyan and no kosher food, other than Nile Perch of course. It's not easy, but it doesn't require any special training. Every mashgiach goes only for a few months and he spends the rest of the year at home in Eretz Yisroel. I think it suits you."

Away from the family for months?! Among gentiles? Since my bar mitzva I hadn't missed a single minyan and now even on Shabbos and Yom Tov I would daven alone? Without a minyan and Krias

ha'Torah? What about friends? No way. Kenya is not for me.

"Saba, I should go without a minyan and friends, among goyim in distant Africa? I can't do it. That's far worse than opening a store."

"My dear Uri, you're spoiled. You have to go to work. What about polishing diamonds? You can learn how to do it, become good at it and maybe down the road you could become a diamond merchant, one of those who can close a deal with a handshake and 'mazal u'v'racha.' That seems right for you."

My grandfather was trying to help, but apparently I was spoiled. I had to go to work and he wouldn't leave me alone until he saw me providing for my family. It suddenly all seemed threatening: to take on jobs, to obligate myself to a timetable, to deal with people.

"Diamond polishing is a very demanding profession and *epes* it's just not for me. I'm going to daven Mincha. I'll be back."

I hadn't davened with such kavana in a long time. I felt that I was at a crossroad in my life. I felt that I was still not comfortable with making my way in the world. As on other occasions when things were on my mind, I took one of the Rebbe's s'farim. I picked *Seifer HaShlichus* deliberately, not only because of the gold letters that seemed to jump off the cover, but because something drew me to it, as though my neshama wanted to know: what is my shlichus?

I began leafing through the chapters and started reading. I took note of the parts that seemed pertinent to me.

"When you go on shlichus ... you must remember that it is not just for the benefit of the place you're going to but also for the personal benefit of the shluchim, for whom it will be fulfilled, 'and the man spread forth very, very much' – all barriers, the concealments,



(For illustration purposes)

are broken through. This is accomplished through copious hafatzas ha'Chassidus. And then too, in their personal lives they grow 'very, very much.'" (p. 46).

The Rebbe promises success. It's a blank check, "and the man spread forth very, very much," no less. I continued to read:

"We are living in a time that does not require actual mesirus nefesh. There is no need to 'be torn up,' even materially. If you work [at shlichus], you will have honor and money, among other things ... as you see that those who took on shlichus are not lacking materially and with Hashem's help they will not lack materially in the future either."

I continued to read and a new world was opened before me: shlichus in the Rebbe's army. I began to understand that the Rebbe wasn't merely saying it's important to go out on shlichus, but that every Chassid has to go on shlichus. The Rebbe screamed that young men should not remain behind in Yerushalayim or 770 but should go on shlichus.

You know the feeling when something that was previously not understood begins to become clear? It's a liberating feeling of dissipating tension. That's just what I felt at that time. I could practically feel the new light that suddenly filled me and in more Chassidishe terms: the ko'ach that I just received from the Rebbe to go out on shlichus!

I returned to my grandfather's apartment two hours later, determined to go out on shlichus. I knew that Saba preferred a job with a salary than shlichus, but I felt that this suited me. I suddenly felt that what I had gotten in my years in yeshiva, at farbrengens, in Chassidishe communities I had been in, in my learning in kollel, had been the right preparation. I felt that it had all been leading up to this.

I had done my homework well. I

took the Seifer HaShlichus from the bookcase.

"Saba, the Rebbe demands that every Chassid go on shlichus. He even promises material and spiritual success. Listen to what the Rebbe says about the life of a shliach:

"He is not benefiting another; they are doing him a favor. For instead of the worries about making a living over here, which don't give him rest day and night, he is given a task that prevents that ... Accept shlichus and you will succeed. Firstly, because Hashem's midda is

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'measure for measure,' and many times over. With this reward you will merit to see children occupied in Torah and fulfilling mitzvos and daughters married to Torah scholars, and you will be able to fulfill Torah and mitzvos comfortably because this is what Hashem wants. The nice furniture and the nice dishes and the nice home that you want, you will get there. And this is in addition to your reward here and in the future."

"Right Uri." Saba waved his hand to stop me. He wasn't used to his grandson speaking so much. "You

don't need to preach to me about the obligation to go on shlichus and about the positive consequences of going, but there are some people suited to shlichus. You say it's hard for you to take on work with difficult conditions, so maybe there are exemptions from shlichus for certain Chassidim?"

"I'll read you another excerpt from the Rebbe's sicha and this will answer your question:

"Nobody should wait until he is called and instructed to go to a particular place. Since he knows that the Rebbe wants him to spread Chassidus throughout the world, he needs to take a map and look for a country or city that still lacks the 'spreading of the wellsprings,' where he can work and come and volunteer and say, 'There is a certain desolate place and it is yours; decree upon it that it should be rebuilt' (Yalkut Shimoni). If he doesn't do this, even though he was not commanded but since he knows that this is what the Rebbe wants, it's an inyan of 'the scepter of the king.'" (p. 76).

"Look Saba, how the Rebbe contrasts the spiritual state of those who remained behind in Tel Aviv or Brooklyn with those who went on shlichus:

"When I spoke with your intended son-in-law and your daughter, I immediately explained that even if it entailed difficulty ... and even an inyan of mesirus nefesh, who could one expect this from if a Tamim son of a Tamim and a T'mima daughter of a T'mima are not suited to it? ... Fortune has smiled upon them being that this suggestion, in my opinion, is good for them materially, no less than spiritually. My reason is the kind of future they can hope for if they want to settle in the US or Tel Aviv. Experience has shown what is the best case scenario that can be hoped for for young men like him who have settled in those places.

"Since you are on the scene, you surely know the 'tachlis' of those young



(For illustration purposes)

men who are [on shlichus] in your community. And over the weeks you spent in Brooklyn, surely you contemplated what happened with those young men, similar to your prospective son-in-law and daughter, who settled in Brooklyn and in New York.

“On the other hand, if my suggestion moves from the potential to the actual, and they go to one of these places, one can hope that the blessing of my father-in-law, the Rebbe, will accompany them on their way in life and within a short time they will be able to settle in properly, he, as a leader of a Jewish community – and I say ‘leader’ and not rav,’ because according to my view they can arrange that under his leadership will be a rav and melamed and shochet and various mosdos, etc. In addition, with the proper effort exerted, his daughter can also undertake an important position in such a life.” (p. 47-8).

Saba began to pepper me with questions:

“On shlichus you will have to speak with people and bring them to shul. For that you need communication skills and the powers of persuasion. Do you have them?”

“If you go to a new place where there is no organized community, you will be far away from friends and you won’t have a minyan even on Shabbos and Yom Tov! As your children grow older you will have to send them to schools far away.

“Shlichus is a complicated profession because you need to understand people, to deal with them, and to speak to their souls. You said that taking on big responsibilities is not for you, right?”

Saba finished talking and Savta Beila, who had been sitting silently on the side the entire time, burst out laughing. It was hard for her to stop. It was only after she drank a cup of lemonade that she calmed down and was able to explain what prompted her amusement.

“My dear husband, it looks as though someone else held the first part of your conversation. You yourself said that you can go into business, no problem, and learn from experienced people.

“You brought up the idea of going to Kenya, of living there without a minyan and friends. So why shouldn’t Uri and his wife be able to

live a life on shlichus in a city without a minyan and friends?”

“Shlichus is a difficult profession? Yes. Polishing diamonds is also complicated but since you established that ‘you must go out to work,’ it was clear to you that your grandson had to overcome the difficulties. When you understand that you can make a go of it by polishing diamonds, certainly the Rebbe’s ko’ach will enable him to polish Jewish neshamos.”

Savta fell silent and exchanged glances with Saba, as though checking to see what impact her speech had had on him, and then she said firmly, “Uri and Rivka’le will go on shlichus and we, who were not as fortunate, will help them financially, and if they like – with advice too.”

* * *

Saba and Savta, Aba and Ima, my shver and shvigger, brothers and sisters, all gathered round us in the airport. Savta made sure that the apple cake was in the hand luggage in the event that the suitcases were lost en route on our way to what is considered a Third World country. Hugs and kisses, tears too, and we boarded the plane with our baby Avrami.

I closed my eyes and felt a pleasant feeling of being a combat soldier, a soldier going to wage war at any price, on the shlichus of “ha’Ramatkol ha’gadol mi’kulam.” I knew that not much time remained for me to enjoy this feeling before I would reach my actual place of shlichus.

* * *

Ring ... ring ... “Uri, what’s doing? This is Mendy.”

“Oh hi, it’s been a long time since we last spoke, actually, since I went on shlichus.”

I could picture Mendy. In kollel we had spent many hours learning together and now, a year had passed

since we last spoke. Oh right, I forgot that it costs \$2.50 a minute to call here...

During our conversation Mendy told me that various problems at home prevented him from being a "combat soldier," as he put it, on the Rebbe's shlichus, and he wanted to know about other possibilities. He wanted to hear my opinion, not only as a friend who spent our newlywed days together but also as a shliach.

"Mendy, I know about the problems you're talking about, but you should know that at least you can be an 'ordinary' soldier, like in the army there are combat soldiers who fight on the frontlines and there are the regular soldiers who remain in the rear and help the war effort.

"You have to find a position within the Rebbe's army whether as a teacher in a Chabad school or other jobs at the Chabad house in your area, and maybe even as a mashpia in a high school. You have what it takes. Any position in the Rebbe's mosdos will make you a soldier. Close to home, yes, but a soldier."

Four months went by and the phone rang. I guessed it was Mendy

*You know the feeling
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liberating feeling of
dissipating tension.
That's just what I felt
at that time.*

and I guessed right. I had thought a lot about him and prayed that all his problems would be solved.

"What can I tell you," he sighed. "I did everything to find a job within the Rebbe's army. This week I got a job at a hi-tech company with a salary that isn't bad. I did not merit to be a soldier in the Rebbe's army..."

I took a deep breath. The bachur with the analytical mind – it suited him well,

"Mendy, you should know that

you have the ability to be a civilian-who-works-for the army. There are civilians who work for the army who aren't actual soldiers, but their assistance to the army is vital. Listen to me and be a civilian-who-works-for the army of the Rebbe. Put t'fillin on with people in your department, give out brochures before Shabbos, invite people to your home for Shabbos, and in your free time do mitvzaim: t'fillin, mezuzah, kashering kitchens, giving shiurim, etc. You can arrange a chavrusa to learn Chassidus, halacha, or Nigleh.

"When you do well, G-d willing, in your position at the hi-tech firm, you'll be able to do 'avodas ha'kodesh-avodas Z'vulun' as I once saw the Rebbe refer to it in a letter, and provide financial help for shluchim on the frontlines."

* * *

Take the opportunity. We all need to enlist in the Rebbe's army to fight the final battle of Yemos HaMoshiach; to spread the wellsprings and the Besuras Ha'Geula until the fateful moment, the revelation of the Rebbe MH"M, may it be now.

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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 2*

[Continued from last week]

In 1959, Sholom Ber moved to Eretz Yisroel, where he married his wife Gittel and his oldest son Yeshaya was born. A few years later, due to his work he moved to Milan, Italy.

One day an unfamiliar Jew entered the Ohel Yaakov shul in Milan. After the davening, the rav and shliach in Milan, Rabbi Gershon Mendel Garelik, went over to greet him. How surprised R' Garelik was when the man told him: My name is Sholom Dov Ber Friedman, the son of Yeshaya Friedman, a Tamim in Lubavitch!

The Chassidic spark that flickered in R' Sholom Ber's neshama back when he was a child in Donilowitz was reignited and a

great friendship developed between him and R' Garelik.

Within a short time R' Sholom Ber got involved with the work of Chabad. He opened a kosher l'mehadrin restaurant in the Ohel Yaakov Shul that served as the only kosher l'mehadrin soup kitchen in all of Milan. Countless needy people benefited from this establishment.

After starting the restaurant, R' Sholom Ber took on the project of building a mikva Chabad under the Chabad school building in Milan. He personally took part in building the mikva and provided for the contractor, who managed to create "something from nothing."

The non-Jewish contractor was the guard in R' Sholom Ber's office

and it was only because of R' Sholom Ber's pressure and powers of persuasion that he agreed to take on the difficult task – to build the mikva according to all the Chabad specifications. In addition, R' Sholom Ber raised the money for the job.

With all this, R' Sholom Ber's fame as an *ish chesed* was due to his punctiliousness in the mitzva of Hachnasas Orchim. There were many guests who would arrive for Kabbalas Shabbos at the Ohel Yaakov Shul. Relatives and rabbis had a place to eat on Shabbos, but poor people, the handicapped, itinerant fundraisers, and all those who hadn't arranged a place for Shabbos, had nowhere to go.

R' Sholom Ber stayed behind in shul after everybody else left in order to make sure that every Jew had a place to eat the Shabbos meal. His wife Gittel, of course, was his partner in this mitzva, as she was the one who put in great efforts to prepare the Shabbos food – without even knowing how many guests her husband would bring home.

* * *

700 kilometers south of Milan in a suburb of Rome is the town of

Ladispoli. This was a peaceful Italian town until Jewish refugees began leaving Russia at the end of the 70's. The Joint had offices in Rome that dealt with the Jewish refugees and arranged their papers so they could continue on to the US. Ladispoli became a transit point for Russian Jews.

In Rome proper, there was no place to house the refugees for the three to four months it took to work on their papers. At first the refugees were put up at hotels, but this was very costly and the Joint sought a cheaper alternative. They researched suburbs of Rome and looked for a town with many apartments for rent which could house many refugees. Ladispoli met their needs and from that point on they referred all Russian refugees there and that is how it became the way station for the thousands who came and went.

These Russian Jews were supplied with the minimum gashmius but had zero in ruchnius. The only program for them, provided by the Jewish Agency, was a course to learn Ivrit. R' Sholom Ber, who had a warm spot for the Jews who left his homeland, decided to get involved.

Starting from about 1974, R' Sholom Ber traveled to Ladispoli every month in order to organize Jewish activities for the refugees. He couldn't do more than that since he lived in Milan and there still wasn't a permanent shliach in the area. The only option was to make frequent visits there.

After a few years, as the number of Russian Jews increased to the point that there were about 5000 living in Ladispoli, R' Sholom Ber decided that at least for Tishrei and Nissan he needed to move his family there so he could arrange the t'fillos in Tishrei and Pesach s'darim.

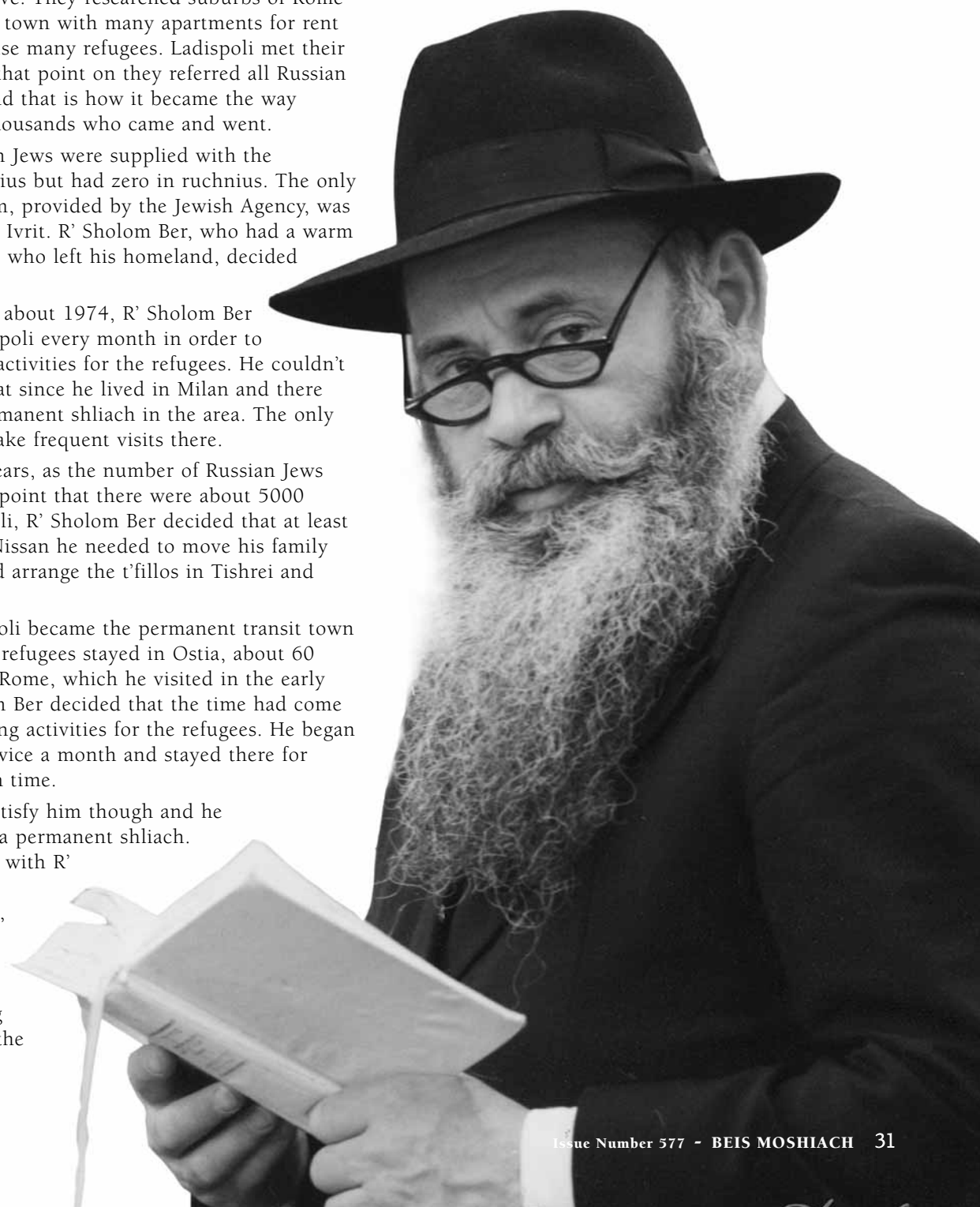
When Ladispoli became the permanent transit town (before that, the refugees stayed in Ostia, about 60 kilometers from Rome, which he visited in the early years), R' Sholom Ber decided that the time had come to arrange ongoing activities for the refugees. He began traveling there twice a month and stayed there for several days each time.

This didn't satisfy him though and he wanted to bring a permanent shliach. Upon consulting with R' Garelik and R' Yitzchok Chazan, he asked the Rebbe whether to look for a Russian speaking shliach to serve the town. The Rebbe

agreed and the shliach chosen was Rabbi Tzvi Hirsh Bisk, who was born in Moscow and left at age ten.

R' Sholom Ber took care of all the shliach's material needs including putting up a permanent building for the Chabad house in Ladispoli. This was especially important since R' Bisk did not speak Italian and all organizational matters that had to do with workers and local officials were taken care of by R' Sholom Ber.

R' Bisk took care of all the ongoing programs throughout the year – the shiurim, t'fillos, mitzvaim,



etc. Later on, Jewish refugees from Iran also came to this town and R' Sholom Ber enlisted R' Michoel Namdar, a Lubavitcher who speaks Persian and is a businessman in Milan, to help out.

R' Sholom Ber continued to visit the town and continued to spend Tishrei and Pesach there, with his entire family, in order to help out with the tremendous work that is needed at those times of the year. This included meals for thousands of people which entailed renting halls, organizing huge kosher kitchens, obtaining huge quantities of kosher food products, etc., etc., a project R' Sholom Ber took charge of himself.

Loyal to the Rebbe's approach that in order to reap ruchnius you must provide Jews with gashmius, he sold kosher food to the refugees at wholesale prices throughout the year. He covered the losses of this "business" out of his own pocket!

He simply **enjoyed** every minute of his work with Russian Jewry, to the point that he always went to the market to purchase the fruits and vegetables for the meals and never delegated the job to others. Erev Yom Tov it was a sight to behold him leading a procession of cooks with huge pots in order to immerse them in the sea. The refugees who relaxed on the beach were astonished by the sight and indirectly learned that Judaism doesn't consist solely of the recitation of Yizkor on Yom Kippur but includes immersing pots in the sea...

The highlight of the year was definitely the mass s'darim that R' Sholom Ber held each year for thousands of Jews in Ladispoli. One year, the number of Jews in the town was 10,000. How do you organize a seider for so many Jews? R' Sholom Ber rented a huge movie theater whose two floors could contain 2500 people, a sports

stadium that holds 2000 people, and another two large halls.

What a beautiful sight it was: R' Sholom Ber ran the largest seider on the first floor of the movie theater; on the next floor his son R' Aryeh Leib was in charge; R' Bisk was in charge at the sports stadium and bachurim from 770 were at the other halls. Even the Israeli papers reported at length about these amazing s'darim.

R' Sholom Ber's greatest pleasure was to travel and personally receive the matzos for these s'darim from the Rebbe. When the Rebbe said the words, "This is for the Jews of Ladispoli," this gave him the strength and chayus for the entire massive undertaking.

At the seider itself, he would emotionally explain what a great privilege they had to receive matzos from the Lubavitcher Rebbe and he would invite them up, one by one, and give them a piece from the Rebbe's matza.

R' Sholom Ber was also a good businessman. He used his talents in business on the speaker's lectern as well. At the end of every speech, as well as in personal conversations, he would always wish everybody that the following year, when they sat in their own homes, he would be able to be hosted by them and eat kosher Yom Tov meals with them.

It often happened that after he spoke, extremely emotional Jews

CHASSID AND MEKUSHAR

R' Sholom Ber was a Chassid and was utterly mekushar to the Rebbe, who was mekarev him with kiruv after kiruv, with open affection. Aside from his tireless efforts to fulfill the Rebbe's mitvtzaim and horaos, he did not miss an opportunity to travel to 770, to the Rebbe.

Over the course of a year, R' Sholom Ber often went to 770. Even when he went to N.Y. on business, he arranged his daily schedule and business appointments according to what was happening at Beis Chayeinu. Every free moment he spent in 770, at t'fillos, dollars, and farbrengens on special occasions. On Shabbos, if the Rebbe didn't farbreng, he would sit and farbreng with other Chassidim.

He regularly visited 770 on the Chag Ha'Geula-12 Tamuz, when he received a bracha for his yearly business trip to Japan. He often told of various horaos he received in connection with these trips. At farbrengens, the Rebbe always told him to say l'chaim on a large cup. When he went to the Rebbe for the aliya la'Torah of his son, Aryeh Leib, after the davening, the Rebbe asked him to bring the entire family to *Gan Eden HaTachton*. There he gave a *Tanya* with his signature to all the men and a siddur to all the women.

R' Sholom Ber once decided to fast the *taaniyos BH"V* (the Monday, Thursday, and Monday series of fasts following Sukkos, Pesach, and Shavuos). When he came to yechidus, his wife complained about this. The Rebbe made a gesture of surprise and said, "I must have healthy shluchim who can travel to Bologna, Rome, Milan..." The message was clear, R' Sholom Ber was the Rebbe's "itinerant shliach" in Italy. The Rebbe's demand in yechidus was effective and he increased his work and involvement in the Rebbe's work in the cities of Italy and in general.

went over to him and promised him that he would be able to come to them, as soon as they arrived in the US, and be hosted and served kosher food. Indeed, scores of those refugees ended up becoming baalei t'shuva as a result of their experiences in Ladispoli.

The Yomim Tovim were special days for the thousands of Jewish refugees. When speaking about the impression and Kiddush Hashem in the city, it's interesting to note the preparations made for Sukkos.

Each year, R' Sholom Ber put up a huge sukka that could hold 2000 people. Needless to say, a sukka this size required lots of s'chach. For this purpose, R' Sholom Ber enlisted his sons and a few other Jews who took large machetes to cut palm leaves that grow there.

As they cut the branches they created a large traffic jam; drivers stopped to watch the bearded, kippa and tzitzis-wearing men who stood in the middle of the street and cut leaves.

While in Ladispoli, R' Sholom Ber also worked with Iranian Jews, hundreds of whom came to Italy in the years 1980-1990. He brought R' Namdar from Milan for the Yomim Tovim. R' Namdar worked energetically and spent his own money on various programs to spread the wellsprings among the Iranian refugees until a permanent shliach arrived.

In 1977, R' Garelik told R' Sholom Ber that in a little while a shliach would be coming to Rome, Rabbi Yitzchok Chazan, and many preparations needed to be made before he arrived. A man like R' Sholom Ber didn't need to hear another word. Despite his work in Milan, he didn't hesitate for a moment, resolving to devote his help to the shliach he had never met. As in everything he did, he carried it out himself from

beginning to end.

The "mobile shliach" of Italy immediately traveled to Rome, 650 kilometers from Milan, and began making all the necessary preparations for the arrival of the shliach. First, he had to meet with the people of the Jewish community of Rome and explain that the intention of the new rabbi who was coming to their city was only to strengthen the existing Jewish community. There was no plan, G-d forbid, for interfering or competing with them.

He impressed the community for

money for programs and for a salary for the shliach. Fundraising wasn't beneath him and he helped acquire large sums of money for all the Chabad mosdos in Italy from donors and various sources. When the outside support wasn't enough, he always made up the difference out of his own pocket, without fanfare, and these were significant sums.

Just as he did with Rome, so he did with Bologna. The city is known for its medical schools and because of the conditions in Israel thousands of Israeli students have



R' Sholom Ber with R' Bisk making an eiruv tavshilin in Ladispoli

he was a neutral person – a Lubavitcher, but a private businessman not connected with the Establishment – who left his work and came that distance for one purpose only: to prepare the ground for the shliach! His words which came from the heart were effective and the community agreed to cooperate.

R' Sholom Ber didn't suffice with that but took care of all the gashmius arrangements for the shliach, starting with finding an apartment and furniture and raising

gone to Bologna over the years in order to become doctors. When R' Garelik saw that no one was taking care of their spiritual healing, he decided to bring a shliach to Bologna.

Once again, R' Sholom Ber was the one who looked for a suitable apartment for the shliach, found a center for his activities, and made all the other necessary arrangements. He also committed to covering a large percent of the monthly budget, which he gave each month to the shliach. R'

Sholom Ber and the shliach to Bologna, Rabbi Eliyahu Borenstein, became fast friends.

Who would have dreamed of a mikva in Bologna? R' Sholom Ber raised the money and spoke with contractors and hired architects and built a beautiful mikva in the Jewish community building. Ten years later, the mikva couldn't be used anymore and a new mikva had to be built. Once again, R' Sholom Ber took care of things.

Half a year earlier a beautiful mikva had been dedicated in Ladispoli and since the Jewish refugees stopped coming it was no longer used. With great effort, R' Sholom Ber managed to sell the building in Ladispoli and with the money he got he paid for the new mikva in Bologna in a building all its own.

In general, mikvaos were R' Sholom Ber's pet project. He was involved in the building of **all** the mikvaos Chabad that exist today in Italy.

Loyal to the Rebbe's approach that in order to reap ruchnius you must provide Jews with gashmius, he sold kosher food to the refugees at wholesale prices throughout the year. He covered the losses of this "business" out of his own pocket!

* * *

With the collapse of the Iron Curtain, Ladispoli ceased to be a transit point. Refugees stopped coming and the shliach, R' Bisk left. He was accustomed to working with Russian Jews and wanted to continue doing so. At this time, shluchim were starting to go to Russia and R' Sholom Ber was the pioneer in helping those shluchim.

R' Sholom Ber had a warm spot for the Rebbe's hometown of Dnepropetrovsk, where the shliach Rabbi Shmuel Kaminetzky invited him to make the Pesach s'darim, "like in Ladispoli." Indeed, he went and not only for Pesach, and he worked there with the enthusiasm which was his trademark.

On 3 Tamuz 5756 R' Sholom Ber visited 770. Shortly after he returned to Italy he fell sick and never recovered. He went to Eretz

Yisroel where he spent his final days and passed away on 11 Elul 5756 and is buried on Har HaZeisim in Yerushalayim.

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THE REBBE'S BLESSING SIX YEARS EARLIER

BY NOSSON AVRAHAM

The following is an amazing story heard from Rabbi Yisrael Gliss, shliach of the Rebbe MH"M in Dimona.

Rabbi Yisrael Gliss serves as the shliach of the Rebbe MH"M in the city of Dimona, in the southern part of the country, for the last twenty-one years. His outstanding success in establishing a wide range of outreach activities, which includes a network of preschools and more recently, a Chabad school, is a shining example for his fellow shluchim to strive towards.

I met Rabbi Gliss the week before Rosh HaShana of last year, and our conversation veered into the many challenges that a shliach faces each and every day. As we talked, he laid out for me an amazing sequence of events that began with a clear answer that he received six years earlier through the *Igros Kodesh*.

As a result of that answer, he opened a Chabad school in the city, and he saw the answer he received back then come full circle, when the municipality granted him this past year the rights to the building for which he had waited for six years!

"It was about fifteen years ago," Rabbi Gliss opens his story, "when our activities in Dimona underwent a significant expansion, and due to the demand of many local parents, we opened two preschools. The response

was staggering and this was reflected in the registration numbers. Very quickly, the preschools filled up with little ones whose parents wanted to provide them with an authentic Jewish educational experience.

In later years, the registration kept growing and we were forced to open an additional preschool. As with the first two buildings, getting the third building was not a simple matter, and it required a great deal of intercession and pulling strings by way of contacts in various government offices.

"The municipal city government also maintained a network of preschools, and therefore, it wasn't very difficult to figure out why the municipal commissioner of education was afraid of creating a competing system. This was in addition to the 'normal' fear of preschools run in the spirit of Torah and Mitzvos.

"Seven years ago, we realized that we needed to open an additional preschool in order to not have to turn away the many parents who applied to our school. Additionally, at that time, an idea began to germinate in my mind to open an elementary school as a follow-up to the preschools. I knew that many of the children continue on to non-religious schools and the bulk

of our work with them ends up going down the drain. The only way to resolve the problem would be to open a proper religious school *al taharas ha'kodesh*. At that point, though, the idea was more of a pleasant dream than a practical idea.

"Near the buildings that housed the original preschools, there stood another building that I wanted for the additional preschool. The place was used for art classes for the students of the local public school, which was nearby. Truthfully, I had many concerns that made me hesitant to approach the municipality to petition for the building. I knew that the commissioner of education had a ready excuse to turn me down, because the building was already in use, despite the fact that the art classes did not take place on a regular basis. The main thing for him would be that Chabad not get the building.

"I didn't have much time to indulge too much in rumination and worrying. The new school year was fast approaching, so I set up an appointment with the municipal commissioner of education.

"After careful consideration, I decided to try a somewhat devious approach. I would tell him that I want the building for an elementary school, even though I had no such concrete plans. He would certainly hand me a firm refusal, and as a compromise, I would tell him that at least he should give me the building for another

preschool.

"The meeting was set for a certain day of the week and before I set out for the municipal offices, I sat down to write to the Rebbe for his blessing. In my letter, I did not mention the strategy I planned to use. I only asked for a blessing to get the building for the preschool, easily, without a lot of arm twisting and aggravation. I placed the letter in Vol. 13 of the *Igros Kodesh*, and when I looked at the pages I opened to, I was in shock.

"On the first side, page 166, the Rebbe writes, **'It is surprising that it is taking so long for you to decide as to the manner of your participation in the expansion of Oholei Yosef Yitzchok ... and time is a loss that never returns. and I await good tidings in all the abovementioned.** To me, this was a clear answer regarding the preschool, as like its predecessors, it would be part of the Oholei Yosef Yitzchok network of schools.

"However, what really surprised me is that on the second side, page 167, the Rebbe writes, **'I received the notices about the date for the laying of the cornerstone for the *beis seifer* (i.e., elementary school).'**

"For a few moments, I was completely thrown by the response, as I hadn't mentioned anything in my letter about a full-fledged school or my plan to use it as a bargaining chip.

Now, in light of the Rebbe's answer, it became clear to me that the Rebbe wants us to open a school. On the spot, I resolved that at the meeting I would not use my original plan; I would ask for both the building for another preschool and also one for a school.

"I went off to the meeting, which turned out to be friendly. First, I brought up the subject of the new preschool I wanted and was quite surprised when the commissioner of education readily agreed to grant me the building. He only requested that I inform the administration of the nearby school, for some of its classes used the facility for art classes a few times a week. This was going too quickly, faster than I had anticipated.

A few long seconds of silence went by as I digested the events and tried to figure out how to present my next request for a building to be used for a school. Amazingly, while I was at a loss as to what to say and how to say it, his mobile phone suddenly rang and I heard him say, 'There is no option. The Yoseftal school will have to close at the end of this school year.'

"I didn't have to be a big 'mekushar' to realize that this was amazing Divine Providence through which the Rebbe was pushing me to overcome my fears and present my next request. When he ended his call

and hung up the phone, he asked me what else he could do to help me. Without hesitation, I told him about my plans to open a Chabad school and I asked him for the building of the Yoseftal school, which I heard two minutes earlier would be shutting down. I figured that this was not just a random chain of events, but it was specifically that building which was meant to be given to Chabad.

"This time, things went a little more difficultly. He got very angry and started berating me about our chinuch, which encourages unemployment and lack of productivity, and he insisted that we must integrate with the existing government-religious schools. When he finished his rant, I saw that nothing would be gained by talking to him. However, since I knew that the Rebbe wants a Chabad school in Dimona, I told him that I planned on filing a formal petition with the Department of Education to found a school and that when they asked for his recommendation that he not torpedo it. Surprisingly, he acquiesced.

"I left his office half satisfied. After all, I did get the building for a new preschool without any effort, however, the Rebbe wants a school and I knew that now I had to turn the world upside down till I managed to get a school off the ground.



The Chabad preschool in Dimona



The Chabad elementary school in Dimona

“For a period of a few weeks, we searched for an appropriate site to house the school, and in the end, we found a building that used to house the offices of HaPoel HaMizrachi. Since the school year was rapidly approaching, we rushed to rent the place and do the necessary renovations. It was a nice and compact building and when we entered the office that would serve as the principal’s office we were surprised to find a large and beautiful picture of the Rebbe gracing one of the walls, which made everything just perfect.

“Registration for the new school was opened, and the first nucleus began learning at the beginning of the school year. On the first day of studies, I felt a sense of satisfaction, but at the same time, I felt uncomfortable. I couldn’t shake the feeling that the Yoseftal building, which was large and spacious, should be given to us. The thought remained in my head throughout the year. Additionally, when I saw that the city government allocated rooms in the building to various organizations, thus deviating from the original purpose of the building, I was quite upset.

“The reputation of the Chabad school took off and registration grew as well. Now, the building was too small for all the classes and we requested a suitable building from the municipality, and of course, I specified that I wanted the Yoseftal building. Parents and students held a number of protest rallies opposite the municipal offices, but nothing seemed to help. Instead, they agreed to give us a different building, which cost us hundreds of thousands of shekel to renovate.

“That building only served our needs for three years. Over those three years, the school grew and expanded, while getting into serious financial difficulties. Thankfully, the Chassidic philanthropist, Lev Leviev, agreed to incorporate our school into the Ohr Avner network, which he supports,

and by doing so he undertook the financial costs of the institution.

“At the end of the 2004 school year, everybody already knew about the quality education that we provide and the registration rolls swelled considerably. The building could no longer hold all the children. At a meeting with the Mayor, he promised us that when the next school closed down, he would give us the building. There are a number of neighborhoods in the city where the population is aging, and I knew that over the next year at least one school would have to close. All I could do was wait until there was some positive development for our needs.

“One bright day, during the summer vacation, the word got around that the Afikim school had closed its doors. I was very excited, because I thought that if we got that building, it would attract many kids from that neighborhood who would prefer to go to school close to home.

“However, when I contacted the Mayor’s office to arrange an appointment to meet him, his secretary informed me, ‘You are invited to a meeting, but you can forget about the Afikim school building.’

“From that instant, over the next ten days, we mounted a constant pressure campaign aimed at the mayor and the city council. The pressure tactics had the desired effect, and they realized that they would have to keep to their word. It was the eve of 12 Tammuz, when we were invited to a meeting at the municipality, which was attended by the deputy mayor and the commissioner of education. I came along with Rabbi Nissim Chamu, who worked day and night to utilize any possible contacts to influence them to give us the building of the newly closed school.

“Right at the beginning of the meeting they informed us that they wanted to solve our problem, but there was no way that they could give

us the Afikim building, since the neighborhood community board was furious at them for closing the school. If we got the building, they would make a huge commotion demanding that it be given to them.

“Instead, they offered us a building in the center which had housed a school that closed down a few years prior. The school was called Yoseftal. They also committed to evicting the various organizations before the new school year.

“When we went for a tour of the facility, they informed us that they would be giving us the use of one floor. Obviously, we refused, and that began a lengthy negotiation until they agreed to give us the entire building as long as we withdrew our demand for the Afikim site. While we were still talking, it finally hit me. I called over R’ Nissim Chamu and told him excitedly, ‘We are finally getting the building for which the Rebbe gave his blessing six years earlier.’ I couldn’t get over my excitement. I had waited for six long years, and in the end it arrived.”

The 2005 school year opened on time, after the building underwent the necessary renovations. Finally, the students moved into a permanent building and would no longer have to move from place to place.

Rabbi Gliss is confident that now that the school has a permanent home, it will only continue to grow, especially as it is the building that the Rebbe approved by way of his holy blessing.

He also wishes to express his tremendous gratitude to Lev Leviev, who agreed to handle all the financial issues of the school.

“Incidentally,” Rabbi Gliss concludes, “when we entered the principal’s office in the Yoseftal building, I was once again taken aback to find a large stunning picture of the Rebbe hanging on the wall, as if just waiting for us to move in...”

THE MARRIAGE OF YITZCHOK AND RIVKA AND THE CONNECTION TO THE KINUS HA'SHLUCHIM

BY RABBI YOSEF KARASIK, DISTRICT RAV BAT CHEFER-EMEK CHEFER

*How did the shidduch between Yitzchok and Rivka succeed when the chasm between them was so great? How is it possible for the prayer of Eliezer, a Canaanite slave, to be accepted when the prayers of the greatest prophet, Moshe Rabbeinu, and that of Shlomo HaMelech, were not accepted? What is the connection between this successful shidduch and the Kinus HaShluchim? * A fascinating look at the parsha according to Midrash, Kabbala, and Chassidus Chabad.*

A SUITABLE COUPLE OR NOT?

People often wonder, what is the most suitable shidduch: one in which the couple are similar to one another with the same background, in which case their union will be more successful and will be easier, or is it more suitable when they complement one another, in which case there is greater harmony? Which type of shidduch will last and in the most pleasant way?

Let us examine the shidduchim of the Avos and Imahos – Avrohom and Sara, Yitzchok and Rivka:

Avrohom and Sara were more or less similar in all ways:

Family and yichus – they were relatives, Avrohom being Sara's uncle. She was the daughter of his brother Haran.

Age – a ten year difference.

Origin – both were born and raised in the same place, Ur

Kasdim.

Faith in Hashem – both were born to goyim who did not believe in one G-d and both went through a process in which they came to believe in one G-d.

Actions – both were baalei chesed who hosted guests and fed them, and both taught faith in one G-d, "Avrohom converted the men and Sara converted the women."

Yitzchok and Rivka, however, were dissimilar:

Family and yichus – Yitzchok was born to Avrohom and Sara, tzaddikim who believed in one G-d, ovdei Hashem who fulfilled Torah and mitzvos. Rivka's father was Besuel, a wicked swindler. Her brother Lavan was no better.

Age – there was a 37-year age difference!

Origin – Yitzchok was born in Eretz Yisroel and he never left. Rivka was born in Ur Kasdim, outside the land of Israel.

Spiritual level – When Rivka met Yitzchok, he was already on a high spiritual level. He had been circumcised and through the Akeida he had been elevated to the level of a korban to Hashem! (Unlike Avrohom, who, when he

married Sara, was uncircumcised and hadn't yet reached a lofty level in faith in Hashem, which was from the age of 40, as the Rambam explains.) Rivka lived outside Eretz Yisroel as "a rose among the thorns."

After their first meeting, when Rivka saw Yitzchok for the first time, she sensed his lofty qualities and she fell from her camel and bowed towards him. This signified awe and her realization of her distance from his lofty spiritual level.

During her lifetime, says the Torah, when she didn't feel well during pregnancy, "and the sons wrestled within her," she went to the beis midrash of Shem and not to her husband Yitzchok, since there was a certain distance between them. (This would also seem to be the case in the difference of opinion between Rivka and Yitzchok regarding giving brachos to Eisav.)

THE SPIRITUAL LEVELS OF AVROHOM AND YITZCHOK

Seemingly, a shidduch with someone on a different standing is more suitable for Avrohom and not for Yitzchok, for Avrohom embraced the midda of *chesed*, benevolence, which entails reaching out and influencing even one who is furthest away. Yitzchok's approach, on the other hand, emphasized the midda of *g'vura*, justice or severity, which entails dealing with each person according to what he or she deserves, no less and no more, a quality that does not lend itself to bridging differences.

THE AMAZING SHIDDUCH OF YITZCHOK AND RIVKA

Despite the differences in the spiritual levels of Yitzchok and Rivka, the Torah tells us about special qualities that pertained to

this particular shidduch: 1) the term "love" between husband and wife is used for Yitzchok and Rivka (and not Avrohom and Sara), as it says (24:67), "and he took Rivka and she became his wife and **he loved her.**"

2) After the death of Sara Imeinu, Avrohom married a woman named K'tura and had another six children. Even in the lifetime of Sara, Avrohom had a concubine, Hagar, who gave birth to a son. Yitzchok had no concubine, nor did he marry someone else after the death of Rivka.

3) The story of the shidduch between Yitzchok and Rivka is described in the Torah at great length and it is told twice, as Chazal say, "better is the conversation of the servants of the Avos than the Torah of the children, for this section about Eliezer is written twice in the Torah, whereas many principles in Torah are only alluded to."

4) Of all the prayers that have ever been poured forth throughout history, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai emphasized the prayer of Eliezer for the shidduch of Yitzchok as an outstanding prayer which was answered immediately.

The following is a quote from Rashbi (B'Reishis Rabba 60:4): Three people had their prayer and request of Hashem answered immediately: 1) Eliezer, servant of Avrohom, when he sought a shidduch for Yitzchok, as it says, "and he had barely finished speaking and behold, Rivka came out." 2) Moshe Rabbeinu, when he asked that the earth open its mouth and swallow Korach. 3) Shlomo HaMelech, when he asked that a fire descend from heaven on to the altar in the Beis HaMikdash.

Of the three, Eliezer's prayer is the greatest, because the others were answered only after they

finished their prayer whereas Eliezer was answered before he finished praying. This is surprising for Eliezer was a Canaanite slave who lived before Mattan Torah, while Moshe and Shlomo were Jews, tzaddikim, who lived after Mattan Torah.

How could the prayer of a slave be greater than the prayer of Moshe Rabbeinu, "the teacher of Yisroel," "no other arose like him," and the prayer of Shlomo, "the wisest of all men," who built the Mikdash and the Malchus Yisroel?

This is because the prayer of Eliezer was for a shidduch for Yitzchok, and this shidduch, the union of Yitzchok and Rivka, was more foundational than all others, which is why this prayer succeeded in so wondrous a fashion!

SYMBOL OF THE MARRIAGE OF KLAL YISROEL

In Chassidus it explains that the shidduch between Yitzchok and Rivka is symbolic of the marriage of the Jewish people and it represents the avoda of a Jew in the world. As the Rebbe puts it: "The marriage of Yitzchok and Rivka is an all-encompassing matter which transcends everything; it is the concept of the general connection between the higher realms and the lower, as well as the general concept of Torah and mitzvos and the connection of the soul and the body."

Yitzchok Avinu symbolizes the G-dly soul (alluded to in the configuration of the letters of the Divine name, which numerically add up to the number 45 – "*Mah*") and Rivka Imeinu symbolizes the level of the physical body of a Jew (the configuration of the Divine Name which equals 52 – "*Ban*"). The connection between Yitzchok and Rivka reflects the Jew's avoda in the world: the union of soul and

body, spiritual and physical.

The beginning and empowerment for the avoda of all Jews in the world was with the marriage of Yitzchok and Rivka and since this is so vital, the prayer for this shidduch was answered immediately.

THE SUN WARMS THE MOST DISTANT SPOT

This can be understood with an analogy from nature which sounds paradoxical. When you have two extremes, despite the distance between them, the connection

than out in space.

The shidduch and joining of two extremes in the shidduch between Yitzchok and Rivka was a successful one. Likewise, the connection between the spiritual world of the neshama and the physical world of the body, creates a more powerful and enduring bond.

SHABBOS OF THE KINUS HA'SHLUCHIM

The Rebbe assigned a holy mission to every Jew, to be mekarev our brethren to our Father in

“shidduch” between the holiness of the atmosphere of the shul and beis midrash and the secularism of the environment distant from Judaism and faith in Hashem.

Sometimes, in the avoda of shlichus, feelings of fear or even despair arise: we are in the midst of such darkness, how can we fulfill our shlichus to fix the world?

Our parsha comes and teaches us that this has happened before. Avrohom sent Eliezer out of the country and that is where his prayer about combining two extremes was answered. Eliezer accomplished what even Moshe and Shlomo did not.

Therefore, we need not be fazed by the difficulties of Galus and the hardships of shlichus, because when a Jew davens to Hashem, his request is immediately answered. What's needed is the little finger of a Jew, that he should ask, and immediately and even before he finishes his prayer, he will merit success that surpasses his expectations, in his avodas ha'shlichus, to be mekarev everyone he meets to our Father in heaven and to hasten the Geula.

IN DISTANT PLACES

The Rebbe once said that there is a special quality to shlichus in the most remote places, referring to places that are particularly far spiritually as well as to places that are physically distant. Sometimes, the greatest and most successful influence takes place in the furthest places.

In the merit of the avodas ha'shlichus at all points on the globe, and the great achdus at the Kinus HaShluchim, may we speedily merit “and gather us together from the four corners of the earth to our land” with the true and complete Redemption!

Sources: Hisvaaduyos 20 Cheshvan 5742 etc.

A Chassid who lives in the rarified atmosphere of Tomchei T'mimim, who has spent his entire life in avodas Hashem, in Torah and mitzvos, is sent “out of the country” to a distant place, devoid of Judaism. His job is to make a “shidduch” between the holiness of the atmosphere of the shul and beis midrash and the secularism of the environment distant from Judaism and faith in Hashem.

between them is the strongest, as in the kabbalistic saying, “the beginning is wedged in the end and the end in the beginning.”

It's like the warmth of the sun, which diminishes the further you get from the sun's rays. Out in space, it's freezing, but in the furthest place from the sun, on earth, it's much hotter. Why? Because the connection between the beginning and the end, despite the distance, is stronger. That is why, on earth, the point furthest from the sun, the heat is stronger

heaven and to bring the Geula. This Shabbos, thousands of shluchim gather, from all over the world, to encourage and be encouraged in their avoda of shlichus.

Shlichus is an avoda that also combines opposites:

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IN THE CITY OF BROTHERLY LOVE

BY CHANA KATZ

Every once in awhile, life comes to a fork, after which the flow is never quite the same.

This is a story of a young couple who enjoyed life in the Litvish world, while beginning to taste the fruits of Chassidus. One startling day, at the couple's Shabbos table, a prominent Litvish rabbi started to make very serious accusations against Chabad, statements which made the couple reel from their veracity. From the little the host and hostess had learned about Chabad, these charges seemed grossly unfair and the host rose to his feet in protest. In the end, the couple came to reckon with a truth that changed their path and affected the entire community as well.

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On the surface, this northeastern Philly town seemed peaceful enough. The Litvish community went its way, and the Chabad community went its way, but the two pretty much kept to their own Dalet amos. But as we said, that was how it appeared on the surface – at least when the couple, Nechama and Shraga C. first settled there.

About the same time that her brother was being mekarev to Chabad, Nechama C. married Shraga, who was of Litvish

ancestry. Desiring to live a Torah lifestyle, the two became connected to the Torah community through Eitz Chaim. Shraga's brother-in-law, Shalom, smiles when he recalls, "I tried to teach (Shraga) a few things in Kabbala, but he fell asleep."

Desiring to live in a frum community, Nechama and Shraga had moved to Rhawnhurst and became very involved in the large Litvish congregation there. Described by those who know them as a warm, truth-seeking couple, Nechama and Shraga became well-respected in their community and Shraga rose through the ranks of his synagogue to hold a prominent position on its board. Meanwhile, it didn't take long until Nechama and Shraga made acquaintance with their new next door neighbors, a warm, Chassidic family, the Shem Tovs.

The two families developed a relationship and the couple even asked Rabbi Shem Tov to be the sandek at their son's bris. But the couple remained Litvish, and if anything, kept quiet about their growing relationship with the Chassidim. While on the surface the two communities had co-existed for years, there was an uncomfortable undercurrent that flowed just beneath. After time, though, Shraga realized that he could learn things from the Shem

Tovs that he wasn't able to learn any place else, and in a quiet way, he would often finish the davening at his own shul and rush over to the Shem Tov's in time to catch the week's lesson.

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One day, while hosting a prominent Litvish family for Shabbos, Nechama and Shraga received a big shock. "They started going off about Lubavitch, how you can't eat their meat or drink their wine! And we asked, 'How do you say these things? These are very serious accusations against another group?'"

The prominent Litvish rabbi answered that his line of thought went higher than him – to the head of the yeshivot!"

Said Nechama: "My husband, being a philosophy major and a truth-seeker, said he couldn't see sending our children to a yeshiva where this kind of thing was taught." They approached the upper levels of the yeshiva and again found themselves hearing strong accusations against Chabad. They returned to the Chabad rav in their community and asked him to explain the charges that had been made against the movement. "The (Litvish) rav wanted to know why the Rebbe never went to Moshe Feinstein's funeral or why he never

left 770,” said Nechama. “We went to Rabbi Shem Tov and he patiently explained that the Rebbe sent shluchim on his behalf and actually had a very close relationship with Rabbi Feinstein and after many times of going back and forth we saw that the yeshiva heads were not interested in hearing the truth.

“The emes is the emes,” said Nechama. They started to go to different Chabad teachers and learn more about Chassidus.

In time, Nechama and Shraga’s connection with Chabad grew stronger. And the separation between the two communities began to blur. This wasn’t just any couple in the community that had made a now-pronounced change in shita, but a couple that was respected and valued for their contribution to the Litvish community. As Shalom explained: “If it was anyone else, the community would have seen this as a threat. But my sister and brother-in-law are so pure-hearted. When they were under the chuppa she cried pure tears that Moshiach should come.”

While the Litvish community was trying to absorb this new ripple in their community, another chapter in this story had already begun...

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Nechama and Shraga continued to learn Chassidus, doing things they had never done before, such as going to Kaparot and turning to the Chabad rav with important questions. One such question involved a decision Nechama had been trying to make involving her career. A graduate of the prestigious university, Harvard, Nechama had been enjoying a successful career with a very high-paying job. The problem she faced was that the fruits of success were taking away time she wanted to

devote to her growing, young family. She sought a way to give more to her family and utilize her knowledge not in the business world, but as a shlucha.

Rabbi Shem Tov guided Nechama to the Rebbe for direction.

Meanwhile, there had been a

“My whole objective is to do away with the unbiased hatred. The fact that this little school exists and that people go there who are not Chabad to me is a hope that people can live together and recognize that we’re all frum Jews, and Hashem doesn’t expect us to follow Him the same way. No one is right or wrong. We’re both part of Hashem.”

pre-school in the Litvish community which had operated quite successfully for some 21 years. The school was run in a home in the residential neighborhood and had never run into any difficulties. After two decades of running in this manner, a non-Jewish neighbor suddenly

determined that the school in the yard next to her was causing a disturbance. The city authorities, finding that the school had been running without the proper permits, issued a closure order.

There had never been a Chabad pre-school in the community, and Nechama, wanted to open the school in the Chabad center and make it professionally run.

“I waited and waited to see if she would reopen,” said Nechama, “and I went to ask the Rebbe to intercede. I said it should just be to create achdus for the community, to bring people together and not to create more of a rift – for it to be a kiddush Hashem.”

By the time Nechama learned that the woman was not planning on reopening her school, she spent a tumultuous six weeks trying to begin a school from scratch. “We had six kids, and then we had 15, then it went down.. It was an arduous process – finding a teacher. How many are available in August?!”

The six weeks passed and this past fall the doors to the community’s first Chabad kindergarten opened with 15 students.

“Everyone seems happy and we tried very hard to make it professional,” said Nechama, who became the school’s administrator. “Most of the children are not Chabad; I think two are. My hope was to attract non-Chabad families. My whole objective is to do away with the unbiased hatred. The fact that this little school exists and that people go there who are not Chabad to me is a hope that people can live together and recognize that we’re all frum Jews, and Hashem doesn’t expect us to follow Him the same way. No one is right or wrong. We’re both part of Hashem.”