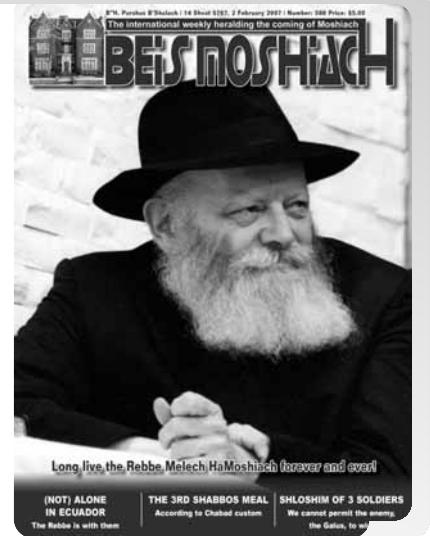


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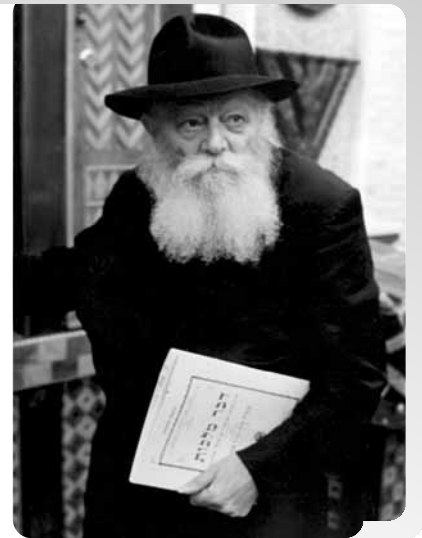
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# THE PLEASURE OF 'NOT EATING' THE THIRD MEAL

LIKKUTEI SICHOS, VOL. 21, PG. 84-88  
TRANSLATED BY BORUCH MERKUR



1. The Sages of the Talmud [Meseches Shabbos 117b, end] note that the word “today” appears three times in the verse that speaks about the eating of *mahn* (manna) on Shabbos: “Moshe said: Eat it today, for today is Shabbos to G-d; today you shall not find it in the field.” From here the Sages learn that there is an obligation to eat three meals on Shabbos.

Although a meal is principally defined as the eating of bread [Shulchan Aruch of the Alter Rebbe, Orach Chaim 274:5, 188:10], we find, however, that concerning the third meal there is the following disagreement among the Poskim in the Shulchan Aruch: There are opinions that maintain that also the third meal requires the eating of bread, but “there are those who are lenient...[ruling] that one is able to fulfill the [requirement of eating the] third meal with any food made of the five varieties upon which is said the blessing, ‘...Who creates various species of grain (*mezonos*),’ as this [category of food] is termed ‘sustenance’ (*mazon*). And there are those who are more lenient, permitting its fulfillment even with items that are commonly served as a side dish to be eaten with bread, such as meat, fish, and the like... There are those who are more lenient [still], permitting its fulfillment even with fruit” [Shulchan Aruch of the Alter Rebbe, Orach Chaim 291:7; see also Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 291:5].

The Alter Rebbe, in his Shulchan Aruch, concludes [citing the Mechaber, ibid]: “But one should not at all resort to relying on any of this [leniency], unless it is absolutely impossible were it any other way, for example, if one is extremely full and it is impossible for him to eat bread without causing himself to suffer.”

Regardless, the custom of our Rebbes, our leaders, is known – that in the vast majority of instances, they would not eat bread for the third meal; they would fulfill the

requirement of the meal with a mere taste [of some food]. [See HaYom Yom for 22 Adar I. See Footnotes 7 and 9 in the original.]

The reason for this is as follows: Since the third meal is learned from the third instance of “today” mentioned in the verse, where Torah states, “(today you shall) **not** (find it in the field),” indicating the negation of finding the *mahn*, it is, therefore, appropriate that this should be acknowledged in the third meal through not eating any bread, exemplifying the “you shall not find it” [quality] of the *mahn* (bread).” [L’vush 291:5. See also Piskei Dinim of the Tzemach Tzedek there, pg. 357b, end]

The (inner) explanation of this matter, as it is explained in Chassidus [HaYom Yom ibid, etc. – see FN 9], is that the third meal of Shabbos corresponds to the Shabbos of the Future to Come (as it is stated (also) in Bach, Orach Chaim 291), of which it is said, “In the World to Come there is **no** eating and **no** drinking, etc.” [Brachos 17a]. The spiritual manifestation that is revealed then is at the level of “*ayin*” (nothingness) (as it is stated in B’chai [Parshas B’Shalach, also cited in Piskei Dinim of the Tzemach Tzedek there]). Thus, the meal is also not a typical meal. [It is a unique meal, rather] that emphasizes the, “you shall **not** (find it)” – meaning, we **don’t** eat any bread; we fulfill our obligation with a mere taste [of some other food].

2. Our holy Torah is one Torah. Thus, the inner dimension of the Torah (and its customs) and the legal portion of the Torah are “all one” [FN 13: for the exoteric and the esoteric dimensions of Torah are the body and soul of the Torah respectively (Zohar III 152a)]. That is, all parts of the Torah correspond one with the other and they all adjoin in a single channel. Thus, it is understood that a custom of the great among the Jewish people (and

those who follow in their footsteps) done **from the outset** according to the inner dimension of the Torah is not on their part a leniency and a case of a secondary alternative according to Torah law, G-d forbid.

We must [however] understand: It is true that according to the inner explanation of the matter, the third meal is higher than eating, and this serves as the rationale for not eating bread [then], however, according to Torah law, it is, nevertheless, a leniency, to the extent that the Alter Rebbe says, “one should not **at all** resort to relying on any of this” (unless in an instance of a secondary alternative, [e.g.,] when one is already full [and cannot eat any more]). How then does this correspond to the fact that according to Chassidus it is considered to be an especially beautiful way of doing the Mitzva to not eat bread?

3. We may assert the following explanation:

Concerning the Mitzvos of eating three meals on Shabbos, the Alter Rebbe says “that the Mitzvos of the three meals of Shabbos **are only** for the sake of pleasure” [FN 85: *Shulchan Aruch*, Orach Chaim 288:2, **and in the same manner** he wrote regarding the third meal in 291:1. See also 167:23], meaning that regarding all the three meals of Shabbos, the requirement is not the eating (of bread) unto itself [FN 16: as it is regarding the eating requirements of Pesach, sacrifices in general, and other cases] but the concept of **pleasure** associated with it.

According to this – that with regard to all the meals of Shabbos, the commandment is connected with **pleasure**, and not with the eating unto itself – in a case where a person suffers from the eating, not only is there no obligation of eating incumbent upon him, but more so: there is a perspective that obligates him **not** to eat (and the wording of the Alter Rebbe, “it is not necessary for one to cause himself to suffer by eating” [291:1], possibly means that he is not obligated and that it is practically forbidden), since such eating is the opposite of the concept of the meals of Shabbos, **the opposite of pleasure**.

The above explanation is paralleled in what the Alter Rebbe explicitly writes in connection with the concept of fasting and not eating on Shabbos: “Regarding a person for whom eating is harmful, for whom it is then pleasurable for him not to eat, it is not at all necessary [for him] to eat. In fact, **it is practically forbidden** for him to

eat, so that he will not suffer on Shabbos” [288:2].

And just as this is so with regard to foregoing eating in general, so it is also concerning the particulars of eating. Namely, if one would suffer were he to eat **bread** in the Shabbos meal, **from the outset** there is no requirement for him to eat bread. In fact, were he to eat bread, he would be doing something that is the opposite of the intent of the Shabbos meal.

4. Accordingly, we may say:

Regarding the fact that from the outset there is a requirement to eat bread for the third meal, this is specifically when it is considered to be pleasurable for the person to do so.

This is not so, however, when one has no pleasure in eating bread, knowing with complete faith that in the time of the third meal, [which is described as] *Raava D’Raavin* (the [time] of Ultimate Desire [On High]), the aspect of “today you shall **not**” shines, the aspect of “**ayin**” (nothingness), and that this time is a semblance of Yom Kippur (which is called “*Shabbos Shabbason*” (the Ultimate Shabbos)) and a semblance of the World to Come (when “there is no eating and no drinking”). Thus, it is **painful** for him to eat bread. In such circumstances, from the outset the requirement to eat bread in the third meal does not apply. On the contrary, for him it is an especially beautiful way of doing the Mitzva, **according to Torah law**, that he should not cause himself to suffer by eating bread, fulfilling his obligation to have a meal, rather, with the slightest taste [of some food]. [See FN

20 for the parallel between this rationale and with regard to not sleeping in a sukka during Sukkos, as discussed in *Likkutei Sichos* Vol. 29, beginning on pg. 212.]

We may assert that for this reason it was the custom of our Rebbes, our leaders, to fulfill their requirement to have a meal with a mere taste, for they felt the [G-dly] light that illuminates at the third meal. Of course, the Chassidim, being **bound** to them, learn their Torah (for the sake of acting in accordance) and go in their ways.

5. We must still, however, understand:

Since there is an illumination of “today you shall not” in Mincha time on Shabbos, [at first glance] no meal whatsoever should be required during that time, like Yom Kippur, when it is forbidden to eat (as we find [FN 22: Zohar III 95a, cited in Magen Avrohom 444:2 (in the

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*...It is, nevertheless, a leniency. How then does this correspond to the fact that according to Chassidus, it is considered to be a hiddur to not eat bread?*

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name of the Shla)] that Rebbi Shimon bar Yochai replaced the third meal of the eve of Pesach, when it fell out on Shabbos, with words of Torah (describing the [Supernal] Chariot)). Why [then] do we connect this with the custom [to maintain] that there **must** be a taste (at least of fruits)?

In several places in Chassidus [FN 23: *Or HaTorah*, *Hemshech* 5666 and *Hemshech* 5672 mentioned in FN 9] it is apparent that the fact that at the third meal there must be the slightest taste [of some food] – unlike Yom Kippur, when eating is prohibited – is not in virtue of the advantage of the third meal, but on the contrary: it is because it is no more than a **semblance** of the World to Come (and Yom Kippur).

However, in a handwritten note of my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, in the name of his father, the revered Rebbe (Rashab), *nishmaso Eden* (whose soul resides in heaven), it is written: “The fact that [with regard to] the third meal [it says], ‘today you shall not, etc.,’ means that there is no need for bread. However, one must sample some [food] item. [Indeed, we find in Meseches Shabbos 118b that] ‘Rebbe Yossi said: May my portion be of those who eat three meals.’”

From this expression and the development of the topic – [saying] “one **must** sample some [food] item” and supporting this by citing the statement of Rebbe Yossi, “**May** my portion **be**, etc.” – the implication is that the fact that “one must sample, etc.” is [actually] an **advantage** and virtue (of the third meal).

At first glance, it is also not so clear why the Rebbe [Rashab], *nishmaso Eden*, would cite the statement of Rebbe Yossi as proof for his words. That is, if he is speaking here about the requirement of eating the third meal according to the law, he should have brought first and foremost reference to the requirement itself [in the context of Torah law, not from the Talmud]. And if he is speaking about the inner reason of, “one must sample, etc.,” how is this proved by [quoting] Rebbe Yossi?

6. We may assert the following explanation, with a prefatory discussion of the statement of Rebbe Yossi:

At first glance, it is not understood: The requirement to eat three meals on Shabbos is a ruling that is explicit in the discussion there [in the Talmud]. So what does Rebbe Yossi mean by wishing himself, “**May my portion be**, etc.”? [That is, why would he wish himself the seemingly extra

merit of eating the third meal when it is actually an explicit obligation?]

The Maharsha explains that the reason why Rebbe Yossi said, “May my portion be of those who eat three meals, etc.,” and likewise with regard to his saying, “May my portion be” with regard to several other matters brought there in the Gemara, is “in order to inspire others.”

However, at first glance, it is not clear: It goes well to say that with regard to those matters that are an especially beautiful manner of performing a Mitzva, the approach of the pious, and the like, it is appropriate to say the phrase, “May my portion be” in order to inspire others. But how is it appropriate to say this specific phrase with regard to the three [Shabbos] meals, which are outright obligations?

We cannot answer that Rebbe Yossi’s statement was intended as a precaution of “the eyes of the wise are in his head” – that he should not fill his belly in the morning meal in order that he may [also] partake of the third meal, for it is difficult to say that Rebbe Yossi should wish upon himself, “May my portion be,” regarding something so obvious.

7. We may assert the following explanation of the matter:

The fact that in the World to Come “there is no eating and no drinking,” does not mean to say that then the advantage of the Jewish body will be diminished, its [very] existence being nullified or at least its significance. It means, rather, that in the World to Come the adjoining of

the body with the soul will not be [sustained] through physical eating and drinking [as it is today].

As it is known, Chassidus [*Likkutei Torah*, Parshas Tzav 15c, and in several other places] rules according to the opinion of the Ramban – that (the ultimate stage of) the World to Come is the time after the dead have been resurrected, when there will be souls in bodies, indicating the especial advantage of the Jewish body unto itself.

Accordingly, we may posit that there is an **advantage** in the fact that there is a nominal eating [requirement] for the third meal, being that the meal is a semblance of the Future to Come, when there will again be a body which will receive its reward. For this reason the body must feel pleasure also at this meal – [but] through a mere taste, [i.e.,] together with the concept of “**nothingness**,” of “you shall **not** (find it),” for which reason we do not eat bread.

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*Indeed, the soul will  
be nourished by the  
body. The soul will  
have to approach the  
body in order that it  
should appreciate the  
level of His blessed  
Essence and Being*

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Moreover, it is clarified in several places [T'shuvos U'Biurim Section 11, end – see FN 33] that the meal of the Leviasan and the Wild Ox of the **Future to Come** will be a physical meal [i.e., it is not simply intended as a metaphor signifying a spiritual experience].

We may assert that the [obligatory] nominal taste alludes to this. (However, this is a great innovation, requiring further study and the discovery of a precedent.)

8. In a deeper sense, we may say:

The fact that the ultimate reward of the Future to Come is specifically with regard to souls in bodies is because then the advantage of the body over the soul will be revealed. Indeed, the soul will be nourished by the body [Hemshech V'Kacha 5637, Ch. 91-2 – see FN 35]. The soul will have to approach the body in order that it should appreciate the level of His blessed Essence and Being, Whose existence is from His very essence.

Accordingly we may assert the following with respect to the third meal: The fact that there must be at least a nominal taste [of food] emphasizes an advantage. Namely, it underscores the advantage of the body, thus further characterizing the Shabbos of the Future to Come [as a

profound physical experience].

9. And this is the (inner) intent of the words of Rebbe Yossi:

“May my portion be of **those who eat** three meals on Shabbos” – one may **eat** (the slightest amount) for the third meal. In fact, this should be pleasurable for him. Indeed, it lends itself to the appreciation of the advantage that will be first revealed in the Future to Come, the advantage of the body.

And this is the proof the Rebbe Rashab, *nishmaso Eden*, brings from the statement of Rebbe Yossi: Since Rebbe Yossi said, “May my portion be, etc.,” notwithstanding the fact that it says, “today you shall **not**,” he thereby gave the potential to eat a nominal amount for the third meal in a manner that it should be an advantage ([even] wishing upon himself, “May my portion be”). Not only does this not detract from the, “today you shall **not**,” but on the contrary, it is [emblematic of] the greatness of the advantage of the Shabbos of the Future, the soul being nourished from the body.

(From the address of Shabbos Parshas Balak 5716 and of Acharon shel Pesach 5739)

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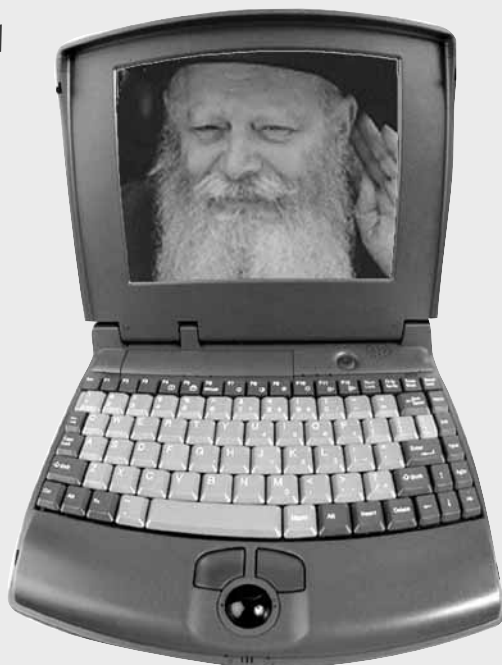
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# A DAILY DOSE OF MOSHIACH & GEULA: 14 - 20 SHVAT

*Selected daily pearls of wisdom from the Rebbe MH"m  
on Moshiach and the Redemption.*

COLLECTED AND ARRANGED BY RABBI PINCHAS MAMAN, SHLIACH, RISHON L'TZION, ERETZ YISROEL  
TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY

## 14 SHVAT: BARREN TREES WILL BEAR FRUIT IN THE FUTURE TO COME

...Then, there will also be the concept of "a tree of the field" in its fullest sense – "even barren trees will bear fruit in the Future to Come," as "in the days of Adam HaRishon," when barren trees will turn into fruit-bearing trees, signifying the elevation of transforming darkness into light.

Furthermore, there is its model in the avoda of man, namely, "man is [comparable to] the tree of the field" – the ultimate level of t'shuva, in a manner of transformation – "his intentional transgressions become merits," reaching the avoda of t'shuva for tzaddikim: "Moshiach comes to bring the tzaddikim to repentance."

*(Seifer Hisvaaduyos 5748, p. 330, muga)*

## 15 SHVAT – CHAMISHA ASAR B'SHVAT: PRECIOUS STONES AND GEMS

"A land of wheat and barley and vines and pomegranates; a land of olive oil and honey."

*(D'varim 8:8)*

The Jewish People are compared to a land where

precious stones and gems have been hidden, only that there is a need to look for them, an intensive search (since they are located in special places in the earth). One must dig deeply in the earth (since in most places, they are not on the face of the earth, rather within its depths) – as compared to the work of plowing.

...except that there is a need for far greater toil (and since the toil is greater, so too the find – "you toiled and you found" – is greater)... (and) thus the elevation is made all the greater, according to the distinction between the toil of plowing to make things grow and the toil of digging ...

We must utilize the time of "the Rosh HaShana of trees" to increase and be strengthened in all matters of the avoda of "a land of wheat and barley and vines and pomegranates; a land of olive oil and honey," whether in relation to ourselves or in relation to activities with others

...

May it be G-d's Will that the good resolution in all the aforementioned (that "G-d sees into the heart") will immediately and speedily bring the reward – that "we will go with our young and our old" (and we will travel

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*Thus, in the days of  
Moshiach, there won't  
even be a need for  
this minimal  
occupation.*

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with “Clouds of Glory”) to our Holy Land, the whole Eretz Yisroel (not only the land of the ten nations), “a land of wheat and barley and vines and pomegranates; a land of olive oil and honey” (“to eat from its fruit and be satisfied from its goodness,” and to bless “on the land and on its fruits”),

and a land filled with precious stones and gems. And in Eretz Yisroel itself – to Yerushalayim the Holy City, to the holy mountain, to the Beis HaMikdash, to the Kodesh HaKadoshim (where there is also found the Even HaSh’iya, “from where the world was founded”).

(Chamisha Asar B'Shvat 5752)

### **16 SHVAT: ALL INVOLVEMENT IN THE FUTURE TO COME WILL BE IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF G-D**

“And the whole world will have no occupation other than to know G-d.”

(Rambam, Hilchos Melachim, Chapter 12)

The precise wording, “The whole world will have no occupation other than to know G-d,” even negates such pursuits that are obligatory according to Torah in these times, according to the ruling of the Rambam in Hilchos Talmud Torah (3:9) – that one whose profession is Torah must work “a little each day for his livelihood.” Thus, in the days of Moshiach, there won’t even be a need for this minimal occupation.

(Likkutei Sichos, Vol. 27, p. 238)

### **17 SHVAT – THE PURPOSE OF THE EXILE: REVELATION OF A NEW LIGHT**

The inner purpose of the Exile is the revelation of new light. And as we approach this revelation of new light, the influence of G-dly revelation becomes more distant. Therefore, as this process continues, as we approach the Redemption, as we get closer to Moshiach, the more intense the Exile becomes.

(Likkutei Sichos, Vol. 2, p. 362)

### **18 SHVAT: OUR GENERATION IS THE FIRST GENERATION OF THE REDEMPTION**

It is clear that our generation is the last generation of the Exile and the first generation of the Redemption.

Thus, even in his times, my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, proclaimed “Immediate T’shuva, Immediate

Redemption” (*HaKria V’HaK’dusha* 5701-5702), and “Stand ready, all of you” to greet Moshiach Tzidkeinu (*Igros Kodesh*, Rebbe Rayatz, Vol. 4, p. 279),

and all the more so today, decades after this proclamation was made.

(Seifer HaSichos 5748, Vol. 2, p. 584)

### **19 SHVAT: THE TIME AND SIGNS OF THE REDEMPTION – THE 42 JOURNEYS IN THE WILDERNESS OF THE NATIONS HAVE BEEN COMPLETED**

In simple terms – ...all details of the forty-two journeys “in the wilderness of the nations” in the time of the Exile have already concluded,

and we are already standing “by the Jordan River at Yericho,” beyond the Jordan at Yericho, eastward towards the rising sun.”

(Shabbos Parshas Matos-Massei 5751)

### **20 SHVAT: TRUST IN THE COMING OF MOSHIACH—EVEN WHEN WE DON’T SEE A SOURCE FOR IT ACCORDING TO LOGIC AND NATURE**

The trust in the coming of Moshiach must be in the manner spoken about regarding Chizkiya, who had totally confidence in G-d, to the point that he said to G-d, “I do not have the strength to kill, to pursue, [and even] to sing, rather I will sleep on my bed and You will do.” That is, without looking upon Sanheriv surrounding Yerushalayim with all his army, promising to make peace on special conditions, he had complete confidence in G-d, to the point that he went to sleep on his bed, and his sleep was sweet due to this trust (not as one who worries so much

that it is impossible for him to sleep), and G-d goes to war on his behalf, as is written, “And the angel of G-d went out and smote the camp of Ashur, etc.”

By the same token, each person must believe with absolute certainty in the coming of Moshiach, without any doubt and in a manner of “I will await him every day,” even when from the aspect of logical [and natural] “estimations,” he doesn’t see any source for this,

and this very trust will hasten and speed up his arrival, speedily *mamash*.

(Likkutei Sichos, Vol. 7, p. 527)

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*Each person must believe with absolute certainty in the coming of Moshiach, without any doubt and in a manner of “I will await him every day,” even when from the aspect of logical [and natural] “estimations,” he doesn’t see any source for this.*

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# **‘IF MY HUSBAND HAD FREE TIME...’**

*A compilation of short stories about Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka  
for Chaf-Beis Shvat.*

## **IT'S EASY TO REMEMBER THE NAME**

R' Yosef Yitzchok Lipkin relates that he would frequently visit Rashag's house in his final years and was one of Rashag's personal assistants:

The Rebbetzin once apologized for asking and said, "Does Rashag remember your name?" I told her he did.

"I am sorry for asking, what is your name?" asked the Rebbetzin.

When she heard that my name was Yosef Yitzchok, she said, "It's not hard to remember my father's name."

## **DON'T REMAIN IN DEBT**

Someone who frequented the Rebbe's home related:

It was Erev Pesach and I was asked to come to the Rebbe's house; it was urgent. When I arrived, the Rebbetzin gave me five dollars that she owed me for my work at the Rebbe's house. I asked, "Why did the Rebbetzin have to exert herself just to pay me five dollars? I could have managed over Pesach without it?"

The Rebbetzin's answer surprised me and taught me something. She said, "I was taught not to go into

Yom Tov in debt."

## **IF IT'S NOT TOO HARD**

Throughout the years, the Rebbetzin would prepare a thermos of tea for the Rebbe, and one of the bachurim would be sent to the Rebbe's house to get it. The thermos was usually ready and waiting between the two doors so that it wasn't necessary to ring the bell and bother the Rebbetzin.

In the early years of the nesius, the pay phone in 770, which was located near the small zal, once rang. Rabbi Gershon Mendel Garelik, who was a bachur in yeshiva at the time, answered the phone.

"Who is this?" said a woman's voice.

"Who is this?" he replied.

This was repeated until Rabbi Garelik realized it was the Rebbetzin.

"If it's not too difficult for you, could you come to the house and take a thermos for the Rebbe?"

Naturally, Rabbi Garelik said he could and he ran to the Rebbe's house, took the thermos, which was ready, and when he returned to 770 he put it near the Rebbe's room.

## **WEIGHING EVERY WORD**

During the court case over the s'farim, the other side once claimed that the Rebbetzin had approved of the removal of the s'farim from the library of Agudas Chassidei Chabad. It was claimed that the Rebbetzin had expressed her approval to her sister.

The other side explained that the fact that such an astonishing statement of the Rebbetzin hadn't been publicized until then and nobody knew about it was because the Rebbetzin had said it shouldn't be publicized.

When the Rebbetzin heard about this she said that the only time she had said not to publicize something was when her father, the Rebbe Rayatz, had left exile in Kostrama for home.

## **IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE THE REBBE**

In the U'Faratzta album that was published in the 80's, there is a picture of the Rebbe with a serious expression on his face, at the end of the book. Someone was present when the Rebbetzin looked through the album. When she saw the picture of the Rebbe she said, "It doesn't look like the Rebbe."



## IN HONOR OF THE MEMORY OF REBBETZIN CHAYA MUSHKA

Some renovations were made in the Rebbe's home in the 70's. The Rebbetzin didn't feel well at the time. Despite this, on 8 Teives, the yahrtzeit of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka, the wife of the Tzemach Tzedek, the Rebbetzin hosted some women and sat and spoke with them for a long time.

Someone who frequented the house who knew that the Rebbetzin was careful about her health asked the Rebbetzin, "Why did you host the women if you did not feel well?" The Rebbetzin answered that since it was the yahrtzeit of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka, she wanted to honor her memory with this visit.

## THE REBBE KNOWS WHAT TO DO

Someone once asked the Rebbetzin to mention the name of a certain sick person to the Rebbe for a bracha. Then the person asked the Rebbetzin whether she thought it

## *The Rebbetzin said, "My husband knows what needs to be done on his own."*

was a good idea for him to go to the Ohel of her father, the Rebbe Rayatz, in order to pray for the sick man.

The Rebbetzin said, "My husband knows what needs to be done on his own."

## A SATISFYING FARBRENGEN

One time, the son of one of the mekuravim to the Rebbe's household went over to the Rebbe's house at the end of a farbrengen that ended very late. The Rebbetzin asked him whether he wanted to eat something and the person said he wasn't hungry.

The Rebbetzin said that wasn't surprising since, "A farbrengen satiates."

## TIPPED THE SCALE

After the passing of the Rebbe Rayatz, the elder Chassidim tried to convince the Rebbe to accept the nesius. The Rebbetzin, with all her modesty and humility and the great sacrifice it entailed, declared that it wasn't possible that the mesirus nefesh of generations would go to waste.

It was this statement that helped tip the scales in favor of the Rebbe accepting the nesius.

## IN THE REBBE'S "FREE TIME"

When the Rebbetzin visited Paris in 1954, she had some free time to relax. She said, "If my husband had the same free time, he would be making a siyum already on the tractate Bava Basra (one of the longest and most complex tractates of the Gemara)."

The Rebbetzin added that Pesach was approaching and despite the Rebbe's tremendous burdens, he managed to find time to prepare a siyum for Erev Pesach (being a firstborn child).



# WE HAVE BEEN CHOSEN FOR A MISSION!

BY RABBI YOSEF HECHT  
CHIEF RABBI OF EILAT, MEMBER OF CHABAD RABBINICAL COURT OF ERETZ YISROEL  
TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY

*We believe with absolute certainty that on Yud Shvat, 5710 or 5711, G-d said to the Rebbe, "Go and redeem the Jewish People." G-d placed upon him the responsibility of concluding the Exile, bringing the Redemption, and redeeming the Jewish People. Did the Rebbe argue with G-d too? Did he also ask questions when he was asked to accept the mission? Maybe, we'll never know. Delivered in honor of the Shloshim for the victims of the tragic automobile accident near Eilat.*

As we commemorate the *Shloshim*, we naturally find ourselves having visions of that Tuesday morning, when (HaTamim) Levi (HaKohen Hendel) was sleeping at our home. I woke him up, and with his characteristic zeal, he immediately got up together with my son (may he live and be well and have a complete recovery), Moshe, and I told them that they would have to get ready quickly, as it was already late. They

had to go to the mikveh, daven, and then go out on *mivtzaim*. Levi prepared a few things that he wanted to take with him, since he knew that he would be traveling the whole day, and he wouldn't be back until late. This was truly an exciting experience for these *bachurim*.

I saw that Levi had taken a few things with him so he could eat during the day, knowing that he

would come back very late, but as he ran to the car on his way to the mikveh, he left his things on the kitchen counter. "Levi," I called out to him, "you forgot your things on the counter."

"Nu," he said, "you can have them."

He didn't realize what he had said at that moment, but we will always remember those words. We are united in great pain. They went out on *mivtzaim* – Levi, Moishy, and Yoni – and were consumed in a Heavenly thunderbolt. The pain is very great.

As Chief Rabbi of Eilat, I must state here that thousands of Eilat residents who read the news in the papers and saw it on television, called continuously to join in their families' sorrow. The whole city was involved in the events of this terrible tragedy. Anash throughout Eretz Yisroel and the world are surely united in this pain, united in a cry and scream of "*Ad Masai?*"

We have just heard the Rebbe's *sicha*, where he said that the Exile should have long since been finished, yet it still manages to sting us, as we unite in a painful cry of "When will

it all end?"

However, together with this, we must know that this cry has to spur us on to a new outlook on ourselves, our shlichus, these final days or weeks or minutes of the Exile, and **to different modes of conduct**. It's impossible for such a thing to happen on the Rebbe's shlichus without arousing us to think about how to reach a totally different mode of conduct.

I don't think that we feel our responsibility enough. We've tried a little of this and a little of that, but the question really is: Do we have the responsibility to bring a final end to this Exile? Has the Rebbe placed this responsibility upon us? I have no doubt that everyone here would answer in the affirmative, and therefore, each of us must take upon himself a different path in our view of our lives, chassidus, our hiskashrus to the Rebbe, and what the Rebbe wants from us.

In our study in Chumash about the Exodus from Egypt, we learn how G-d came to Moshe Rabbeinu and told him: Go and redeem the Jewish People. Moshe Rabbeinu proceeds to argue: Who am I anyway? In what merit should they be redeemed? What should I tell them Your name is? I'm not a public speaker. For seven days, Moshe Rabbeinu argued with G-d, and eventually he went.

The first Redeemer is the last Redeemer. We believe with absolute certainty that on Yud Shvat, 5710 or 5711, G-d said to the Rebbe, "Go and redeem the Jewish People." G-d placed upon him the responsibility of concluding the Exile, bringing the Redemption, and redeeming the Jewish People. Did the Rebbe argue with G-d too? Did he also ask questions when he was asked to accept the mission? Maybe, we'll never know.

In the maamer of Yud Shvat

5711, the Rebbe says that we are in the seventh generation, and all seventh are beloved, "even though in several matters, it was perhaps not according to our will." This is what the Rebbe says there. Everyone can interpret this as he wishes, but there is clearly a great difference between the first Redeemer and the last Redeemer.

When Moshe Rabbeinu accepted the mission, he didn't need soldiers. G-d said to him, "Take the staff of G-d in your hand, and make the signs with it." You have to strike the Egyptians, and after ten plagues,



Pharaoh will give in and send you out. Go forth with strength, raise your staff, and strike them.

However, when G-d told the Rebbe to go and redeem the Jewish People, I assume that the first question that the Rebbe asked was: With whom will I be working? This Redemption will require soldiers. We have to bring the light and unity of G-d to every corner of the earth in order to break the coarsest of klipos. We must gather in the Exiles of Israel, and we need people to do this! Who are You giving me to achieve this goal? I accept the

mission, but I need people with me.

It is quite obvious to us that the Rebbe's mission is by far the most complicated and complex mission since Creation. There has never been one that required bringing the kingdom of the House of David into the doubled and redoubled darkness of Exile as we know it, and to the entire Jewish People. An objective beyond all proportions.

Each of us here living in Eretz HaKodesh knows that the enemy takes hostages into captivity. They guard them from every direction, and it requires a commander to get them released. He needs an elite unit with the choicest men available. He won't go out on the mission unless they provide him with the very best.

The Jewish People are prisoners under the hiding and concealment of the Exile. Am Yisroel, the children of G-d, are surrounded and being held captive by klipos from every direction. We must break through the roadblocks and redeem them, and G-d told the Rebbe, "Do it." For this purpose, the Rebbe needs the best units available. We are these people, each of us sitting here. All members of Anash throughout the world. We are the elite units that G-d gave to the Rebbe in order that he can carry out his mission to its completion. The soldiers are after their period of training. Would the Rebbe stand by watching and expect any less than the very best from us?

We must raise ourselves up and know how to take responsibility. The responsibility is ours because we are the people with whom the Rebbe works. We are the people with whom the Rebbe must bring the Redemption, and he believes and accepts the fact that we are the ones to do it. This is a tremendous responsibility. We must recognize the abilities we have been given. How can we possibly allow them to be wasted on unimportant matters?

Every moment of delay causes deep anguish to the Rebbe.

We now bring another example from the army: When a military unit is engaged in fierce combat with the enemy, resulting in the loss of several soldiers in battle, what does this do to their comrades-in-arms? What thoughts cross their minds? It brings them to a steadfast determination that they cannot allow the enemy to prevail! We must fight on with even greater ferocity and motivation.

During the recent battle, three lost their lives. Why? We don't know. No one could possibly know. Yet, all of us are members in the same unit. The same platoon. This is the same troop that G-d gave to the Rebbe in order to carry out this mission.

What should this arouse within us? We cannot permit the enemy – the darkness of the Exile – to win! We will fight on with renewed strength and momentum. The very fact that we see how G-d inexplicably took our beloved friends in the midst of the conflict obligates all of us to accept this decision.

In the first halacha of *Shulchan Aruch*, we learn that when a Jew wakes up from his sleep, he must imagine that G-d, the King of all kings, is standing near his bed and urging him to go out on his Avodas Hashem. What is a chassid of the seventh generation supposed to think after the Rebbe said, “*Hineh Hineh Moshiach Ba*,” this is “the first generation of the Redemption,” “*Aht Aht Kumt Moshiach*,” these are the final seconds, etc.? What should a chassid think when he gets up from

his bed and sees the Rebbe standing there and saying, “You are the people with whom I am working, and I need you to rise above all things that are not good – rise above them, and come closer to dedicate yourselves with new devotion to this mission – **and we will be victorious! However, this depends upon you rising above**

*During the recent battle, three lost their lives. Why? We don't know. No one could possibly know. Yet, all of us are members in the same unit. The same platoon. This is the same troop that G-d gave to the Rebbe in order to carry out this mission.*

**them!** You are the people with whom I must work.”

Let's think for a moment in this direction with the knowledge that it is the absolute truth, as we must say this because it is the absolute truth.

Torah states in connection with the fortieth year in the desert, “You are the children of Hashem, your G-d.” What

does “you” mean”? You are now entering the land to go to war. Do not give in. Know who you are. We must instill this knowledge in our children, sons and daughters. All of them must know that we have a great privilege to be those whom G-d has allowed to be the Rebbe's soldiers to bring the Redemption.

As a result, we are quite certain that within a short period of time, we can reach the Redemption, when the Rebbe will provide us with all the good that we need in the clearest and most revealed manner.

We will conclude with the Rebbe's own words: “*A chassid arbet farn Rebbin, a chassid iz vi a tzig*” (a chassid works for the Rebbe, a chassid is like a goat). The goat knows just one thing: she has to give milk. Her food and her other needs are all the concern of its owner. She knows that she needs to give milk and that she doesn't have to worry about anything else.

The Rebbe is expecting us to give the milk, “Honey and milk under your tongue” above all else, and thus, the Rebbe makes certain to give us the goodness that we need from his full, open, and holy hand.

With G-d's help, we will certainly merit most speedily the hisgalus of the Rebbe, and we will joyfully be reunited with these boys, whom we miss very much already, and all of us together with their families will go forth to the True and Complete Redemption, when our longing eyes shall see the king in all his glory – immediately, mamash.

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# ANYONE CAN BE A WARRIOR

BY BORUCH MERKUR

*No one ever said it's going to be easy to serve G-d, and to never sway. This challenge is the fate of the Beinoni, a warrior for life, fighting for his life against the Evil Inclination. But now, being on the very threshold of Redemption, things are about to change – in fact, the change has already begun! \* A new series about the service of G-d. \* Part 2*

## MASTER, WARRIOR, AND SLAVE

Man was created as a pure and holy being, in both body and soul, inside and out. The challenge he confronted at that time, at the time of his creation, was entirely foreign and external to him, embodied in the form of the Snake. After succumbing, however, to the incitement of the Snake and being poisoned with its evil, man fell from the heights of his original purity.

Later, Yaakov's descendents, the Jewish people, revisited this supreme level of holiness at Mount Sinai, where they all experienced the reality of G-dliness<sup>13</sup> and ridded themselves of the Snake's venom, the entrapments of the Evil Inclination. However, this recovery was short-lived. After the revelation at Mount Sinai, when the reality of G-dliness faded from their minds and hearts, many turned to idolatry and worshipped the Golden Calf, thereby becoming re-contaminated with wickedness and impurity.

Since that time, the challenge each individual, for the most part, faces is waging an ongoing war against the Evil Inclination. The Snake's venom still festers within, but each

person must strive to fend off its every attempt to dominate and take control of his behavior.

Obviously, people experience varying degrees of success in this war. There are those who utterly fail, feeling utterly overwhelmed and possessed by their Evil Inclination. On the other extreme, there are those who have gained full mastery over their Evil Inclination, annihilating it completely or even transforming it to an ally. And then there are those who are faced with a never-ending battle against the Evil Inclination, forced to contend with it constantly throughout their life's experience.

Thus, an individual may assume one of three roles: **Master** – the righteous person (*Tzaddik*) who has expelled the evil from within him or even transformed it to good; **Warrior** – a person who finds himself in the middle ground (*Beinoni*) in the struggle between the forces of good and evil, but who never succumbs to evil to the extent that he acts wickedly, doing a forbidden act or failing to do something that is required of him; **Slave** – one who has succumbed to wicked behavior (*Rasha*) and is in effect possessed by his Evil Inclination, to varying degrees.

## TWO KINGS, ONE CITY

The focus of this series is the Warrior, the Beinoni, one who has complete control over all his (conscious) behavior but must constantly struggle against the evil within him to succeed. The *Tanya* expresses this struggle in terms of a parable of a war of two kings – the G-dly Soul (associated with the Good Inclination) and the Animal Soul (associated with the Evil Inclination) – over a “small city,” the person's body:

*The body is called a “small city.”<sup>14</sup> Just as two kings wage war over one city, which each wishes to capture and rule, that is to say, to dominate its inhabitants according to his will, so that they obey him in all that he decrees for them, so do the two souls – the G-dly [Soul] and the vitalizing Animal [Soul], which comes from the Husk (Klipa [i.e., evil]) – wage war against each other over the body and all its limbs.*

(*Tanya* Ch. 9)

The two kings strive for control over the body. The victor determines whether the body will be used for the purposes of good or evil, to follow G-d's will (the concern of the G-dly Soul) or one's own desires (the concern of the Animal Soul). The distinction of the Beinoni is that he never allows the Animal Soul to prevail; he always succeeds in defending the city and its inhabitants, allowing the body and all its limbs to be dedicated solely to the service of G-d. Thus, the Beinoni is the ultimate warrior, always on guard to fend off its adversary and standing strong to fulfill his purpose.

### ANYONE CAN BE A WARRIOR

Of course, to maintain complete control over the body and one's behavior – including thought, speech, and action – in the face of such adversity seems a daunting and formidable task. But we are all charged with this task and we are assured that we have the ability to succeed: "The rank of Beinoni is one that is attainable by every person, and everyone should strive for it, for every person can at any time or any moment be a Beinoni."<sup>15</sup>

Thus, the soul is administered an oath, as mentioned above, before incarnating in this world, not to be wicked, not to succumb to the Evil Inclination. Were the soul not capable of living up to this oath, how could it be required to take it?

Of course, the soul must also swear that it will be righteous, gaining mastery over the Evil Inclination and expelling it from within him or transforming it entirely to good. Yet, for the most part, this goal is unattainable, as it says in *Tanya*:

*Now we can understand the redundancy of the oath, "Be righteous; do not be wicked," for at first glance the following quandary is raised. Since "An oath is administered to it [i.e., the soul]: Be righteous," why is it necessary for it to further swear that it won't be wicked? The reason is that not every person merits to be righteous; a person does not have so much determination of choice in this matter... Thus, it must swear a second oath: at least "do not be wicked." For in this regard the determination of choice and the permission is granted to every person to prevail over the sprit of desire in his heart and to conquer his [Evil] Inclination to the extent that he will not be wicked for even a single moment all his days, both with regard to turning away from evil and with regard to doing good.*<sup>16</sup>

There are evidently two different levels of expectation with regard to these two clauses of the oath. With regard to the latter half, "do not be wicked," since we do in fact have the power to fulfill this directive, we are expected to fully succeed in it, reaching the rank of Beinoni. However, with regard to the first half, "Be righteous," since we do not fully possess the

power of determining whether we will truly be righteous, whether we can transform our inner nature to be entirely good and holy, we are not expected to succeed in this matter per se; we may suffice with a sincere attempt, as *Tanya* continues:

*...nevertheless, one must also establish scheduled times to commune with his soul to despise evil... [Indeed] with regard to all pleasures of this world, the wise man foresees what becomes of them, for in the end they rot and become worms and refuse. Conversely, [one must also establish scheduled times] to take pleasure and rejoice in G-d through contemplating the greatness of the Infinite One, blessed be He, according to his capacity. He may well realize that he will not attain this level in the truest sense, just in fantasy, nevertheless, he should do his part in fulfillment of the oath administered [to his soul], "Be righteous," and G-d will do as He sees fit. Furthermore, habit reigns in every discipline and becomes second nature. And when one is accustomed to despise evil, he will actually hate it to some*

*degree in truth. And when he accustoms his soul to rejoicing in G-d through contemplating the greatness of G-d, the principle is that self-impulsion induces heavenly inspiration.*<sup>17</sup> *With all that, perhaps a spirit from above will descend upon him, and he will merit that the aspect of spirit (ruach) rooted in some righteous individual will gestate within him so that he may serve G-d with true joy, as is written, "Rejoice, O righteous ones, in G-d,"*<sup>18</sup> *and it will truly be fulfilled in him the avowed oath, "Be righteous."*

The advice given here for one to "do his part in fulfillment of the oath...", "Be righteous," is: 1) to meditate on the

abhorrence of evil and the greatness of G-d; and 2) habituate oneself to this mindset so that it becomes second nature. Nevertheless, there are no guarantees here; there is only a mere possibility of actually becoming a Master, a Tzaddik. It seems, for the most part, that we are eternally doomed to contend with and confront the evil within.

But the Rebbe introduces a tremendous innovation in this regard that is unique to this generation, the generation that will experience the ultimate Redemption...

#### NOTES:

<sup>14</sup> as in the verse, "You have been shown, in order to know that the L-rd He is G-d; there is none else besides Him" [D'varim 4:35].

<sup>15</sup> Koheles 9:14

<sup>16</sup> *Tanya Likkutei Amarim Ch. 14, beg.*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, second section.

<sup>18</sup> Zohar II 135b

<sup>19</sup> T'hilim 97:12

# (NOT) ALONE IN ECUADOR

BY CHANI NUSSBAUM

*Far from any other Jewish center, facing difficulties with chinuch and kashrus, fighting the high assimilation rate and the lack of Jewish awareness that have taken root over decades, live a young couple with two children, Rabbi and Mrs. Tomer and Rivka Rotem, two-year-old Sholom and baby Menachem Mendel. They are on shlichus and though seemingly alone, the Rebbe is with them.*

While preparing to write this article, I received from Rivka's family, a bunch of letters that Rivka wrote to them over the first two-and-a-half years on shlichus. These letters are full of stories, experiences, hashgacha pratis in addition to disappointment, descriptions of hardship, and stories of neshamos. Here are a few excerpts:

"Shlichus is an amazing thing; if you're not on shlichus you simply can't understand.

"It's a big responsibility to be shluchim of the Rebbe and to deal with the spiritual state of the Jews of a country.

"Often we are asked the eternal question, 'What do you live off? Surely you have salaries and budgets!' Always, but always, the answer is, 'Ezri mei'im Hashem' (my help is from

Hashem). People can't believe that we have no salary or budget. The Rebbe does not abandon his shluchim for even a moment. When we do the work that he wants us to do, Hashem's emissaries appear, though sometimes it seems to us that it's after the final moment. True, we try, in the normal fashion, to raise money, but the phrase 'do not trust in the generous' is driven home to us time and again.

"A few times we wrote to the Rebbe that we need money urgently and the answer was, 'enclosed is my check,' and that day someone came to the Chabad house and made a sizable donation.

"We are in an environment that is completely different, which is in the process of getting to know and relate

to 'aliens' like us, i.e., religious Jews in general and to the Rebbe and his teachings in particular. It's hard to believe how with all the progress there are still concepts so remote from the world of the Jews of Ecuador. It indicates the size of the job the Rebbe demands of us, which he still expects of us.

"When we read in *Beis Moshiach* or *Ateres Chaya* about shluchim and shluchos around the world, we see that every single shliach experiences difficult beginnings. In addition, the different circumstances that each shliach has to contend with, presents specific challenges. It's not easy living like this, but baruch Hashem, we get to live with the Rebbe every minute and when you rely on the Rebbe then the difficulties turn into challenges and the miracles roll about, and that's how we bring the Geula."

\* \* \*

Three years have passed since Rivka and her husband Tomer Rotem went on shlichus to Ecuador. Both of them are children of men who fought on the frontlines of the IDF and found their way to Judaism through putting on t'fillin. No wonder then that the children of these men went out to war to the spiritual desert of distant Ecuador. That is where the shluchim's two children were born. Despite the high assimilation rate, the Rotems are finding and returning Jewish neshamos to their Father in heaven,



Public menorah lighting in Ecuador

with the kochos of the Rebbe.

It began even before they married: “My husband helped Rabbi Shneur Zalman Blumenfeld, shliach in Peru, for three years before we married. That’s how he got to know South America. After our wedding we wrote to the Rebbe saying we want to go on

shlichus. In the answer we opened to in the *Igros Kodesh*, was a letter written to Rabbi Blumenfeld of Brazil, the father of Rabbi Blumenfeld in Peru.

“We consulted with Rabbi Blumenfeld of Peru and decided that the best thing for us to do would be

to go on shlichus to Ecuador. This was the only country in South America that Chabad had not gone to. With a letter from the Rebbe’s secretary and director of Merkos L’Inyanei Chinuch, Rabbi Sholom Mendel Simpson, appointing us to shlichus, we were on our way.

“When we arrived, we saw we had not erred. There were difficult conditions: few Jews and most of them assimilated; being far from any center of Judaism was very hard, and there was much work to be done. Many would avoid shlichus to a place like this, but baruch Hashem, we have seen siyata d’Shmaya. The Rebbe’s kochos have accompanied us and continue to accompany us throughout.”

In order illustrate the ko’ach of the meshaleiach, Rivka began with a story about the local mikva:

“When we arrived we found a small community. There was a shul building which had a mikva, *bor al gabei bor*, but the mikva wasn’t kosher since it was built without the proper supervision. Since we arrived on Erev Pesach, we looked for a mikva to immerse our new dishes in for Yom Tov. To be sure, we asked Rabbi Rosenfeld, shliach in Colombia, about the kashrus of the local mikva and he told us it was pasul d’Oraisa! We had to immerse the dishes in the river.

“I met a woman, a former Israeli, who was happy to inform me that there was a mikva here. She said her husband is an agronomist by profession and she used to be a public relations person for the Elite company. Both of them had visited many countries of the world and wherever they went they observed family purity. I had to tell her that the mikva was not kosher.

“Her first reaction was a bitter cry, ‘Now I know why we haven’t had any children all this time that we’ve been here.’ I told her, ‘Hashem saw your efforts to observe family purity under



Tomer teaching children about baking matzos



all circumstances and he protected you so your children would be born in purity.’

“Since she was a typical tough Israeli sabra, when she wanted something she turned over worlds and nothing fazed her. She began to do whatever had to be done to get the mikva fixed so it would be kosher. This was no simple matter since she was going up against the establishment, but the k'hilla had no choice but to fund her plane tickets to the nearest country until a rav came to fix the mikva.

“Her efforts bore fruit and we brought Rabbi Feigelstock from Argentina, who took care of everything and that's how we have a beautiful, kosher mikva here! This happened without our having to spend a single dollar. It's all thanks to the dedication of that woman. This was apparently her shlichus here. Today she lives in Eretz Yisroel and we felt our work was done for us by others. We feel that she came to Ecuador just for this, for shortly after the mikva was rendered kosher they left for Eretz Yisroel, though not before receiving the Rebbe's bracha. Hashem has many emissaries.

“This story was the talk of the day in the community. Thanks to the buzz, the mikva became something special and over time more families are keeping the laws of family purity.”

I asked Rivka about kashrus:

“My husband is a shochet and he takes care of the meat. At first the sh'chita was done primitively with the soaking and salting being done in our bathtub. After much effort we arrived at an agreement with the local slaughterhouse and so we moved up a level to industrial sh'chita for the purpose of raising the quality and lowering the price of kosher meat. We hope to get permits from the Health Department so we can market the meat and chicken in supermarkets.

“As is necessary, we are involved



**Tomer Rotem giving out matza to the Jews of Quito**

in mitvza kashrus starting when the animal or chicken is alive, supervising throughout until the salting, packing and marketing until it reaches the

plate of every Jew.

“As for bread and baked goods, until recently I baked everything myself. Then we found a bakery and after a careful examination of the place, everything was found to be okay and so my husband lights the oven twice a week and the bread that is baked there is pas Yisroel.

“We have no dairy products. If someone comes from New York or some other Jewish center, he brings some hard cheese with him and we make do with that. My husband wants to go to a dairy farm and supervise the milking and provide chalav Yisroel milk to any Jew who wants it, but that's a project that requires a big investment.

“We've put up a kosher list on the Internet with what can and cannot be eaten here. We want to let the local Jews know that observing kashrus doesn't mean you have to stop eating. You need to know what is permissible and what is not.

“I am happy that awareness of

## THE CHABAD HOUSE IN ECUADOR

The Chabad house in Ecuador was founded in Adar 5764 by Rabbi Tomer and Rivka (formerly Sharon, of Kiryat Tivon) Rotem. It is located in the capitol city, Quito.

Ecuador is on the west coast of South America on the equator, between Peru and Colombia.

The Jewish communities in Ecuador are in the two main cities of Quito and Guayaquil. The Jewish population numbers a few hundred families. Most are descendents of German Jews who fled to Ecuador after the Holocaust.

Ecuador is a charming and exotic country, which is visited by many tourists including many Jewish ones.

The Jewish population is mostly ignorant of basic Judaism, which is why the young generation readily intermarries. The assimilation rate is very high and poses a danger to the continuation of the Jewish community.

The Chabad house's goal is to provide an infrastructure for active Jewish life and to be involved in tz'daka, materially and spiritually. The Chabad house graciously offers authentic Judaism to all Jews, and is mekarev Jews to their people and G-d in a pleasant manner, emphasizing the importance of Jewish tradition.



Lighting the Chanuka menorah  
with girls of the k'hilla

*“Whenever I heard stories of shluchim, I didn’t understand the difficulty in raising children alone. It’s only now, as I see my two-year-old that I understand how important friends are for him, something which he doesn’t have in Ecuador.”*

kashrus has grown since we arrived. For Pesach, the supermarket here, which is owned by a Jew, began to import kosher for Pesach fish and matza with an OU hechsher. That’s major progress for a place like Ecuador.”

As for chinuch, Rivka began with a story that shows how important a Jewish chinuch is in a place like Ecuador:

“A French Jew, whose mother is a Holocaust survivor, came to us. His mother decided to erase any memory of her Jewish past. She changed her name, married a gentile, and named her children non-Jewish names.

“Her son who lives in Quito heard

about us. Today he is making progress, putting on t’fillin every day, has stopped working on Shabbos, and walks to shul every Shabbos. He learns a lot via the Internet and he began learning the Rebbe’s sichos with my husband. Those who see him today who know his background are amazed by his transformation and Jewish pride.”

Rivka told me about the local school, which many Jewish students attend. The Rotems decided to imbue as much Yiddishkait as they can in this school:

“Baruch Hashem, we have been able to make significant changes in the school’s curriculum. At first it was forbidden to mention G-d and now,

Hashem can be mentioned and even the content of the Rebbe’s sichos can be taught.

“When we came to our new apartment, there was a grocery store on the ground floor. When the owner saw us she was very excited and she pointed at her Magen David necklace and said, ‘I also have Jewish roots.’ I asked her on which side and she said, ‘My mother’s side.’ I continued to ask whether her mother’s father was Jewish or her mother’s mother. She immediately answered, ‘My mother’s mother.’ She even showed me documents that testified to her being Jewish.

“I asked old women in the community whether they knew her mother, whose name was Gita Gumpel, and they said they did. Then I told her that she and her children were Jewish and this is how an entire family discovered their Jewish identity after many years in which they lived and were known as Catholics.

“We were mekarev Mrs. Gumpel’s seven children. One of the grandsons began making progress and with great courage he would show up at his non-Jewish school with tzitzis sticking out of his pants. The principal of the school was a former Minister of Education and he acceded to his request to be free of any obligation to show up on Saturday. He comes to us for the davening on Shabbos. In a



Sholom, the Rotem’s oldest son, joining in the Purim preparations

letter, the principal wrote that he allows him to practice his Jewish religion. All this in Ecuador!

“The boy is putting on t’fillin, keeping Shabbos, and even repeats a sicha of the Rebbe on Shabbos. This story teaches us that no Jew goes lost.”

One story leads to another:

“An Israeli woman lives here, a former kibbutznik, who is married to a local gentile. She has taken an interest in her Judaism lately and is discovering a wonderful world that she never knew before. She helps us out too. When I need a babysitter, we prefer leaving the children with her than with a non-Jew, so we all benefit.

“The assimilation here is very high, so education is our first order of priority; in that lies the future of our community. When we arrived here we started private lessons for children in their homes, based on belief and experience that there’s nothing like the personal touch with children and their families.”

As for Rivka’s own children:

“Our children are not old enough for school yet. I preferred to give birth here far from my family in Eretz Yisroel so that the k’hilla would experience a Jewish birth, a bris mila and all the accompanying customs. The Jews here knew nothing about a bris and the various honors associated with it and now they’re talking excitedly about a future upsheren, may it take place in Yerushalayim!

“All these events help the community to go beyond its history, to move forward. This is the only reason we are here.

“Whenever I heard stories of shluchim, I didn’t understand the difficulty in raising children alone. It’s only now, as I see my two-year-old that I understand how important friends are for him, something which he doesn’t have in Ecuador.

(This interview took place as the

## FINDING CHABAD WITHOUT THE INTERNET

On Motzaei Rosh HaShana, one of the T’mimim who came to help us for Yom Tov, was walking on the main street when a Jewish man from California came over to him. The person told him that he was on his way to an Internet café in order to locate Chabad in Ecuador or some other place where he could daven on Yom Tov when he saw the Chabad bachur.

This man did indeed come to us and we gave him an apple and honey and from then on he came nearly every day. He came every Shabbos to daven. On Yom Kippur he fasted and was with us for the davening. At his aliya on Yom Kippur we made his bar mitzva and he kept on wanting to know more and more.

He had come to Ecuador under the auspices of an organization that matches young people from around the world who want to learn or improve their Spanish, with local families. They live with the families, integrate into the community and study at university or language school. Two days after he arrived he found us and he spent most of his time here.

Even when he left for the US, he contacted the shluchim in his area and he received t’fillin as a gift from a “t’fillin bank.”

So this young man found Chabad without the Internet. The Rebbe has his ways.

Rotems were on vacation in Eretz Yisroel.) “Our son is in preschool here and he’s blossoming. Chinuch is really a tremendous hardship on shlichus and if not for the kochos of the Rebbe, I wouldn’t be able to manage.”

My conversation with Rivka ended with a fascinating story connected with the opening of the local Chabad house.

“We want to buy property for the Chabad house so we can grow, because our programs are expanding and our home, which doubles as the Chabad house, is too small. We also want to open a Judaica store, a bakery, a restaurant to raise awareness of kashrus, a Jewish library, a place to learn and daven and of course a mikva, since the existing mikva, though very nice, is outside the city. Aside from that, we want to have the mikva under our own supervision.

“We also want to open a Chabad preschool for which there is a great demand. Over the years we have

opened to answers from the Rebbe in the *Igros Kodesh* on a few occasions that speak about working with children and youth.

“We asked my brother-in-law, who is learning in 770, to write to the Rebbe for us. A few days later he called and said, ‘The answer is to Mr. Bauman from the city Ambatu, Ecuador! My husband remembered that the next day he had an appointment with a Jew who was born in Ambatu, regarding buying a piece of property that is suitable for what we have in mind. We knew we were on the right track.

“The Rebbe put his finger on a suitable place and that’s the property that is intended for us. We are now in negotiations and we have to obtain the money for it. So perhaps this article could serve to announce that whoever can help us buy the property, each according to his and her means, will be blessed. Then, in addition to a nice story, something practical will come out of this interview.”

# THE THIRD SHABBOS MEAL

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

*Many mistakenly think that Chabad doesn't eat the third Shabbos meal. Actually, in Chabad we don't wash for a full meal, but the meal itself is a big mitzva and confers many blessings on those who eat it. \* Can one fulfill his obligation with divrei Torah? Why don't we wash? The following article addresses the Chabad customs surrounding this meal.*

## THE SHABBOS MEAL AND THE CONNECTION TO OUR PARSHA

We don't eat the Shabbos meals merely to stave our hunger. Eating the Shabbos meals is a mitzva and as strange as it might sound, through the Shabbos meals a person is connected to the holiness of Shabbos.

The food eaten on Shabbos – the wine, challa, fish, meat, etc. – are suffused with G-dly energy and when they are digested by the body they fill a person with holiness and draw him close to the holy, spiritual reality of Shabbos.

It is a mitzva to eat three meals on Shabbos, one on Friday night, a second one Shabbos morning, and a third meal in the afternoon. Chazal say (Shabbos 118), "Whoever partakes of three meals on Shabbos is saved from three negative things ...

whoever takes pleasure on Shabbos is given an unlimited portion, like Yaakov, as it says in Parshas VaYitzei, "u'faratzta – and you shall spread forth west and east and north and south."

The source for the mitzva of three meals is found in connection with the manna, which the Jewish people ate in the desert. The verse says the word "today" three times in connection with eating the manna on Shabbos: "eat it today," "Shabbos today," "today you will not find it." From here we derive the mitzva to eat three meals on Shabbos.

The Avudraham explains that the reason for the mitzva of the third meal is so that a person won't fill his stomach at the morning meal: "If he fills his stomach in the morning, he will fall asleep and will be idle from the study of Torah and cleaving to the

sanctity of Shabbos. But when he knows that he has another meal to eat, he won't fill his stomach in the morning and his heart will remain free to delve into Torah. Thus, all his meals will be for the sake of the mitzva."

In Kabbala and Chassidus it is explained that eating three meals on Shabbos is in order to accomplish three spiritual, holy things which take place on Shabbos: 1) holiness and purity of the physical body – the Friday night meal, 2) increased Divine holiness of the neshama (the additional neshama) – at the daytime meal, 3) connecting the holiness of the ethereal, spiritual neshama (of Shabbos) with the physical body – the afternoon meal.

This article doesn't define and enumerate the details of each of the three meals but focuses on the third meal, discusses the custom of Chabad regarding this meal, and explains the significance of the third meal according to Chassidus.

## THE MITZVA AND THE CUSTOMS

It says in *Shulchan Aruch* (siman 291): On Shabbos afternoon, before sunset, "one should be exceedingly careful to have a meal," "even if he is sated." It is customary to daven Mincha before the meal.

This meal is exceedingly important and the RM"A of Panu

writes, “There is no time more precious and important than this meal (except for the meal that Hashem will hold with the coming of Moshiach)! The kabbalists warn strongly against ever missing this meal.

Some say that one must eat bread at this meal and some disagree and say that mezonos is enough (cake, etc.) or a dish one usually eats with bread (like fish) or even fruit. In his *Shulchan Aruch*, the Alter Rebbe paskens that one must eat bread, except regarding a person who is full, who would find eating bread distressful – he can eat mezonos instead or not eat at all. Chassidim and those who follow kabbalistic customs eat fish at this meal.

The holy Sh’la emphasizes that this meal has to be held “with joy and goodness of heart and he should speak words of Torah at the table.” Many of the great Chassidim would have this meal together and with simcha. The Baal Shem Tov once said in a light vein that since this is the time that one experiences the departure of the extra neshama that one receives on Shabbos, therefore people gather in order to “pass away among Jews.”

The Arizal wrote a special liturgical poem for this meal which begins with the words, “*B’nei Heichala*.” It contains many deep secrets, and on various occasions at farbrengens on Shabbos the Rebbe said it should be sung with the Alter Rebbe’s niggun.

### THE CUSTOM OF LUBAVITCHER REBBEIM

Although from the outset one should eat bread at the third Shabbos meal, the Chabad Rebbeim did not eat bread but only mezonos and fruit. The Rebbe said that his father, the mekubal Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Schneersohn, ate only fruit, and the Rebbe said, “One does not need bread but one should eat something.”

In Tosafos it’s brought that even in the time of the Talmud most people were not particular about eating three meals on Shabbos (and therefore, R’ Yossi notes that he was accustomed to being particular about eating three meals).

In the Talmud it says that by eating mezonos at the third meal one

fulfills the mitzva, and the Meiri writes, “Some of the rabbis of France wrote that it can be done with fruit or light foods,” and most of the poskim permitted this – “bread is not necessary” and “light foods... are instead of bread.” This is also understood from what is written in *Maggid Meisharim* – that the Maggid

### THE THIRD SHABBOS MEAL – HALACHA L’MAASEH

1. The Alter Rebbe says in *Shulchan Aruch* that one can be lenient and wash for the third meal after sunset.
2. The Baal Shem Tov extended the third meal into the night.
3. One who extends his meal and continues and eats a k’zayis of bread at night too, if Rosh Chodesh or Yom Tov fall on Sunday, when he bentshes he says *R’tzei* and *Yaaleh V’Yavo*.
4. It is not our custom for someone who has yahrtzait during the upcoming week to try to lead the *zimun* at the third meal the Shabbos before.

### CHABAD CUSTOMS

1. The Chabad Rebbeim generally did not eat bread at the third meal and sufficed with tasting something because you must eat something at this meal. Sometimes they did not taste anything but only learned Chassidus. The Rebbe said something should be eaten at the third meal, mezonos or fruit or the like, and Chassidus should be studied.
2. The Rebbe Rayatz said one can fulfill his obligation of the third meal with the mezonos eaten in the morning before davening.
3. In the summertime, the Rebbe Rashab would generally make Kiddush and eat mezonos for the second meal, daven Mincha and then wash for a meal and eat bread. From the Rebbe it seems it is preferable to eat bread at the second meal and just to have a taste of something at the third meal.

### REVIEWING CHASSIDUS

1. “The holy day of Shabbos is especially propitious for learning p’nimius ha’Torah, especially at Mincha time, which is a very auspicious time Above,” and therefore, after Mincha, the rav or someone else who knows how to speak, should review a maamer Chassidus by heart in shul in public.
2. The one reviewing the maamer needs to study the maamer well on his own in advance so that he understands it well, and then he should review it publicly so that the people listening understand the maamer.
3. Maamarim that people can understand should be reviewed.
4. It is customary in Chabad congregations and Yeshivos Tomchei T’mimim that after Mincha everybody gathers and sings Chassidishe niggunim and then they sing the niggun that is sung before the maamer, and a maamer is reviewed.



told Rabbi Yosef Karo (the author of *Shulchan Aruch*) that at the third meal there is no eating and drinking except for a *k'zayis* of a cooked food.

However, we need to understand why the Chabad Rebbeim weren't stringent about eating bread at the third meal in order to fulfill the mitzva b'hiddur and according to all opinions. This is especially puzzling when the source in Torah for eating three meals on Shabbos is from the word "today," which is written three times in connection with the manna on Shabbos. According to this, write the poskim, since the obligation to eat the meals is learned from the

manna, bread must be eaten at each of the three meals.

### THE THIRD MEAL IN KABBALA

The reason lies in understanding the special spiritual energy that is in the world on Shabbos afternoon, an ethereal spiritual energy that is close to the G-dly soul and not to the physical body. Rabbeinu Bachyei explains that the reason we learn the mitzva of the third meal from the verse, "today you will not find it [the manna]" is because at this time of day there is a loftier G-dly influence given to the soul and not the body.

(The Rebbe Rashab explains that the phrase "today you will not find it" has two meanings: 1) you will find the aspect of "not" – "the revelation of the aspect of 'not,'" the Essential Ayin; 2) "today (i.e., nowadays) you will not find it" – due to its great loftiness the light cannot be ascertained today and therefore, "now it is only a sampling ... but you will find it in the future ... the main revelation will be in the future.")

The *Levush* learns from this that if at the third meal one did not eat bread but other things, one fulfilled his obligation, because the main thing at this meal is the neshama's "eating," not the body.

Therefore, says the Tzemach Tzedek, one does not eat bread at the third meal but only mezonos or fruit, for at this time a loftier level of G-dliness flows forth, "a sampling of the future to come." And just as in the future we will not need to eat and drink, so too with the third meal, which is like the future to come, there is no eating of bread but only a little eating, mezonos or fruit, or the like.

The spiritual level of the third meal is like Yom Kippur, and just as on Yom Kippur we may not eat because we are elevated to the spiritual level of the neshama ("we are likened to ministering angels"), which is above the physical involvement with the body's eating and drinking, so too at the third meal, which is like Yom Kippur, we don't eat a meal over bread, only mezonos and fruit.

The Tzemach Tzedek says, "Specifically at the third meal we fulfill our obligations with other foods," because "the third meal is higher than the two meals of the night [before] and the daytime," and just as "on Shabbos Shabbason [i.e., Yom Kippur] there is no eating and drinking at all, because it is so lofty," so too "at Mincha on Shabbos (even

though it is not quite like that, still) there is no eating of bread.”

### THE THIRD MEAL IN NIGLEH

The Rebbe explains that the justification according to Kabbala not to eat bread at the third meal has a source according to Nigleh too. The mitzva of eating the meals on Shabbos “is only because of pleasure,” and there is no inyan of eating for its own sake. Therefore, it is paskened l’halacha that someone who finds eating distressful, “has no need to cause himself distress and eat,” because the purpose of the eating is pleasure. Furthermore, “a person to whom eating is harmful, in which case it is pleasurable for him not to eat – does not have to eat at all and it’s almost **forbidden for him to eat** so that he is not distressed on Shabbos.”

A person who does not enjoy eating bread at the third meal because he feels the holiness of this time which is likened to the future to come, or even if he does not sense this but he knows and believes that this is the way it is, has no obligation to eat bread. On the contrary, if he eats bread he is acting in opposition to the intention of the Shabbos meal and in opposition to the sanctity of this time!

### LEARNING THE SECRETS OF TORAH DURING THE THIRD MEAL

The Rebbe Rayatz related that after the Alter Rebbe paskened to eat the third meal, instead of doing that he said Chassidic discourses on explanations of the Zohar. The Rebbe Rashab also related that he did not eat a third meal every Shabbos and sometimes he did not eat anything but sufficed with reviewing Chassidus.

This was the practice of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai during the times when he could not eat the third meal: 1) “on Erev Pesach which fell on

Shabbos, he was involved in the secrets of Torah instead of a third meal”; 2) for the thirteen years that he was in a cave and had no bread but only carobs, “he would learn the supernal secrets during the three meals to fulfill the obligation of three meals.”

The RM”A of Panu explains that Rashbi considered learning to be “instead of a meal” and “it was very dear to him instead of a meal” (for

*The Rebbe points out  
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someone will disprove  
his chiddushim...”*

learning the secrets of Torah was considered like he was eating “supernal bread”).

However, the Rebbe points out in humorous vein that for most people, “Although one can fulfill his obligation of the third meal with divrei Torah, he should be careful not to rely on saying his own chiddushim because it is possible that after Shabbos someone will disprove his chiddushim and then it will turn out that what he learned instead of eating

the third meal wasn’t divrei Torah, and therefore, he did not fulfill his obligation of eating a third meal.”

Practically speaking, the Rebbe said to eat mezonos or fruit or the like in addition to learning Chassidus. The Rebbe also said, “Shabbos is especially conducive to learning p’nimius ha’Torah, especially at Mincha time, which is a very propitious time Above.” Therefore, at this time one should review a maamer Chassidus in public, in shul, but “not to review difficult maamarim but easy ones that are easy to explain to the human intellect, those that will be grasped by the listeners.”

The fact that at the time of Mincha on Shabbos there is a very lofty level of G-dliness explains two additional things: 1) there is no Kiddush at the third meal: Whereas we recite Kiddush at the first two Shabbos meals we do not recite Kiddush at the third Shabbos meal. Why not? Because when a Jew says Kiddush, he is drawing down the holiness of Shabbos and this is only possible Friday night and Shabbos day, but Shabbos afternoon there is a much higher level of G-dliness that a Jew is unable to draw down into the world. Therefore, we do not recite Kiddush then and the holiness comes down on its own, as a gift, without our input.

2) Moshe Rabbeinu passed away on Shabbos at Mincha time (which is why we say, “tzidkascha tzedek” at Mincha): When Moshe passed away he merited a very elevated level, as it says, “nobody knows the place of his burial,” which refers not only to his physical resting place but also to the G-dly level that he merited when he died, which nobody knows because it is so lofty. This is connected with the fact that at the time of the third meal there is a very lofty level of G-dliness, which is why he died at this time and he merited this level.

*Sources: Likutei Sichos vol. 21, p. 84. HaShabbos B’Kabbala U’B’Chassidus vol. 2, p. 630, etc.*

# READY IN PURITY AND JOY

BY RABBI YAAKOV SHMUELEVITZ, MENAHEL OF THE CHABAD HOUSE IN BEIT SHAAN

*Baruch Hashem, today we have three men's mikvaos that are open every morning in Beit Shaan and at a nearby kibbutz so all residents of Beit Shaan who want to immerse before Shacharis can do so. 20 years ago though, it wasn't this way at all. How the change came about is the subject of part 2 of "Stories from My Chabad House."*



I am sure that most shluchim, my brothers and friends scattered around the country, are dealing or have dealt with very similar problems. Therefore, I allow myself to tell you my story as one example out of many, so Chassidim reading this can get an idea of what life on shlichus is like. Perhaps, thanks to this, more and more young people, and those who are young at heart, will be inspired to join the Rebbe's army of shluchim.

On my first day in Beit Shaan, at the beginning of Kislev 5746, literally the first day, I went to the offices of the religious council and asked where I could immerse the next morning. The people at the religious council were very happy to hear that a shliach of the Lubavitcher Rebbe had arrived (the rav of the city at that time as well as the head of the religious council and the secretary

had learned in Chabad schools in Morocco and highly esteemed the Rebbe and Chabad). They were quite enthusiastic in their reaction (kissing me on each cheek, which is the local custom) but made it clear that there was no mikva for me to use the next morning since the mikva was open to men only Friday afternoon.

I began to explain to them that this is a Chabad custom and they said they were familiar with the custom but there simply was no mikva available. Another smile here and another story there and I didn't leave the office until they told me where I could immerse the next morning.

They finally told me they would have a meeting especially for my sake and they would give me an answer in the afternoon. I went there in the afternoon, nervous about what they would say. They told me, "We will

give you the key to the mikva and you can immerse there every morning but this is on condition that you don't give the key to anyone and that you don't tell anyone that you got a key, because this is being done especially for you since we know that for a Lubavitcher, going to the mikva in the morning is obligatory like tallis and t'fillin."

I thanked them heartily, we shook hands, and I left with the key. It was clear to me that the Rebbe's bracha accompanied me, like an angel, because they themselves had said that nobody else could have a key.

A few days went by and I don't know how the word got out or whether someone saw me entering with a key, but someone from Beit Shaan appeared at the religious council and said that he too wanted a key to the mikva (later on I heard that he said, "I've been living here for



twenty years and didn't get a key and this Ashkenazi just showed up and within a day he got one!").

The religious council decided it couldn't discriminate, so they gave him a key too. The next day a third and fourth man showed up and after a while there were many keys floating around. Everybody may have immersed for the sake of Heaven but they were not exactly meticulous when it came to keeping the mikva nice and clean. The people in charge got upset and they changed the lock.

The very day they changed the lock I was told about it and they explained the reason for it and – they gave me the new key. A second and third person showed up and after a while the mikva was a *balagan* once again and they changed the lock and we started over again.

*Everybody may have immersed for the sake of Heaven but they were not exactly meticulous when it came to keeping the mikva nice and clean. The people in charge got upset and they changed the lock...*

It reached a point where the *balagan* got out of hand. One time someone forgot to lock the mikva

and little children went in unsupervised. Thank G-d, none of them was hurt, but the religious council told me that they could no longer take responsibility and from then on there would be no key for anyone.

A difficult period ensued. The Beis Chabad already had some mekuravim who immersed every morning and now they were unable to do so. Having no choice, sometimes we immersed in springs in the mountains even if it was winter. Sometimes we immersed before sunrise. Sometimes we got permission from one of the kibbutzim to immerse in a fish pond (!), and sometimes we even got the key to the mikva unofficially and had to immerse secretly and quietly.

The situation couldn't go on like this. I spoke to the head of the religious council again and again but he insisted he could do nothing. I had no recourse but to go over his head and speak with the person appointed over him at the religious ministry of the northern district. The district director came to Beit Shaan for a meeting with me and the head of the religious council.

To my surprise and delight they decided that within a few days they would find someone to be the one to open the mikva in the morning between 4 and 6 and he would be the only one with the key and he would lock up after us. I was thrilled, but my joy was short-lived because two days and two months went by and the mikva wasn't opened. There were all sorts of excuses and reasons and I saw no resolution.

I tried a different approach. I wrote a letter that would be given to the head of the religious council and began collecting signatures of well-known figures in the yishuv. The letter said something like this: We join the petition to give Rabbi Yaakov

### A LETTER

Following my earlier chapter (in issue 587), I received a lot of feedback. I'd like to respond to one comment.

One person said: You aren't saying anything new. Obviously you have to be pleasant! We know that!

I'd like to respond with a story, a true story about a young shliach who went out on shlichus several years ago. Since the shliach was dynamic and very energetic and talented, many Jews participated in his programs and even invited him to many events such as simchos, yahrtzait, etc.

The rav of the city felt hurt. He watched as this young fellow came to his town and garnered all the praise. The rav asked Tzach in Kfar Chabad to take the shliach away. The discussion lasted many months and there were arguments and tension. Obviously I am not justifying the rav but if you go in "ways of pleasantness," this doesn't happen.

The end of the story was they decided to use "ways of pleasantness" and things worked out. If that shliach had read the article about "ways of pleasantness" (and the upcoming chapters), and would have occasionally visited the rav, brought him mishloach manos, matzos and doughnuts, and invited him to Chabad house events, then the rav would have seen that the Chabad house was a blessing for him! If he benefited from the Chabad house, the unpleasantness wouldn't have happened.

Being careful about "ways of pleasantness" will bring much bracha and peace between Anash, between shluchim, and between Anash and shluchim and all the Jewish people.

Yaakov Shmuelewitz



The mikva of the religious council in Beit Shaan  
Inset: Rabbi Shmuelevitz near a sign with the hours of the mikva

of Chabad a key to the mikva so he can use the mikva in the morning.

I could have signed up hundreds of people but I didn't want to create a commotion throughout the town, so after thirty people signed I took the letter to the addressee and showed it to him. I said I would continue to approach more people.

This step that I took upset him

because he saw it as undermining him. He got up in a fury and informed me that he had decided that as long as he sat on that chair he would not give me the key. What he didn't know was that I had a key already and I only wanted to gain his approval.

I can't describe all the efforts and attempts we made over the years so

we could fulfill this basic requirement of immersing every morning before davening. In the meantime, the head of the religious council was replaced for tragic reasons, which I won't get into now, and slowly, slowly the decision was reached that the mikva should be opened every morning, officially and in an orderly way.

At this same time another mikva was built, in the courtyard of the mekubal Rabbi Machloulf Lasry, which was also opened at certain hours to the public.

Recently, another mikva was built at Kibbutz Ein HaNetziv, thanks to the Chabad shluchim there, the Fash family. The chanukas ha'bayis of the mikva was celebrated with great pomp last Yud-Alef Nissan with the participation of all the rabbanim of the kibbutz and the district, directors of the kibbutz movement and the Rebbe's shluchim who work at kibbutzim, Rabbi Roi Tor and his family.

Today, the three mikvaos are busy places. Dozens of Lubavitchers and mekuravim use them every morning. There are even cards for the regulars that are provided by the religious council. There are keys, a mikva attendant, and Emek Beit Shaan which is ready, in purity and joy to greet Moshiach Tzidkeinu immediately.

*Yaakov Shmuelevitz invites Anash and shluchim to submit stories to him that can be useful to shluchim.*



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# MOSHE EMES

BY SHNEUR ZALMAN BERGER

*Shabbos Parshas Shmos, three in the afternoon at the Ziv hospital in Tzfas. Shma and “Yechi” were recited by mashpia Rabbi Chaim Ashkenazi and his sister, shlucha Malka Wilschansky, because they sensed that their father, Rabbi Moshe Ashkenazi, would soon pass on. \* Rabbi Moshe Ashkenazi served as rav of the Chabad k’hilla in Tel Aviv for nearly fifty years and was a member of the hanhala of Yeshivas Tomchei T’mimim Kfar Chabad-Lud. \* Hundreds of Chassidim, rabbanim, mashpiim, shluchim, and T’mimim participated in his funeral.\* His son Mordechai said, “You were a man of truth and you looked forward to the hisgalus of Moshiach in truth.”*

## FROM SHANGHAI TO YERUSHALAYIM

Rabbi Moshe Ashkenazi a”h was born on 21 Av 1920 in Vladivostok. His father was Rabbi Meir Ashkenazi who was a descendent of Chabad Chassidim from the time of the Tzemach Tzedek (see *Beis Moshiach* issues 583 and 584 for articles about R’ Meir Ashkenazi). R’ Moshe had two sisters. From a young age his father educated him

in the ways of Chassidus.

R’ Meir was the rav of Vladivostok. He took the position upon the request of the old rav of the town, Rabbi Daniel Chaskind, so he could serve as rav and shochet. R’ Moshe was only three years old when his family began to wander from place to place. His father accepted a position as rabbi in Shanghai, China and the family, including the grandfather, Rabbi

Shneur Zalman Ashkenazi and his wife, moved to that faraway city. R’ Moshe lived there until age 12.

When R’ Moshe’s grandparents decided to emigrate to Eretz Yisroel, R’ Meir decided to send his only son along with them so he could learn in Eretz Yisroel. Upon arriving in Yerushalayim he began to learn in Yeshivas Toras Emes. He was very happy to be a talmid in a Lubavitcher yeshiva but the gap in knowledge between him and his peers in yeshiva was great. He had learned in the Jewish school in Shanghai and only learned a little bit with his father in his free time, and he lagged behind the other students.

His father foresaw this problem and had arranged with the mashpia Rabbi Moshe Yehuda Reichman a”h to serve as his son’s tutor. He learned with the celebrated mashpia for two years until he had caught up with boys his age, and then he began learning in a regular class.

When he first started out in yeshiva it happened that he wasn’t concentrating on his davening. The mashpia, Rabbi Alter Simchovitz called him over and rebuked him, explaining how a Lubavitcher bachur ought to daven.

That conversation changed the boy and he began to relate to davening and to learning more seriously. Whenever he told his family about this conversation with R’ Alter, he had tears in his eyes.

Rabbi Efraim Wolf, who later ran

the central Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim, was R' Moshe's good friend. The Ashkenazi family notes that the two friends were born on the same day: 21 Av, 1920. The two

of them learned and farbrenged together and in their youth they were involved over a long period of time in raising money for a needy family. Years later they both ran

Agudas Chassidei Chabad and Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim.

R' Moshe's youth wasn't easy. He lived in the yeshiva and only occasionally visited his grandparents. He was far away from his parents, so far that his father had no idea how his son was doing. It reached the point where he heard a rumor that his son was walking idly about the streets of Yerushalayim. He had no way of finding out whether this was true or not.

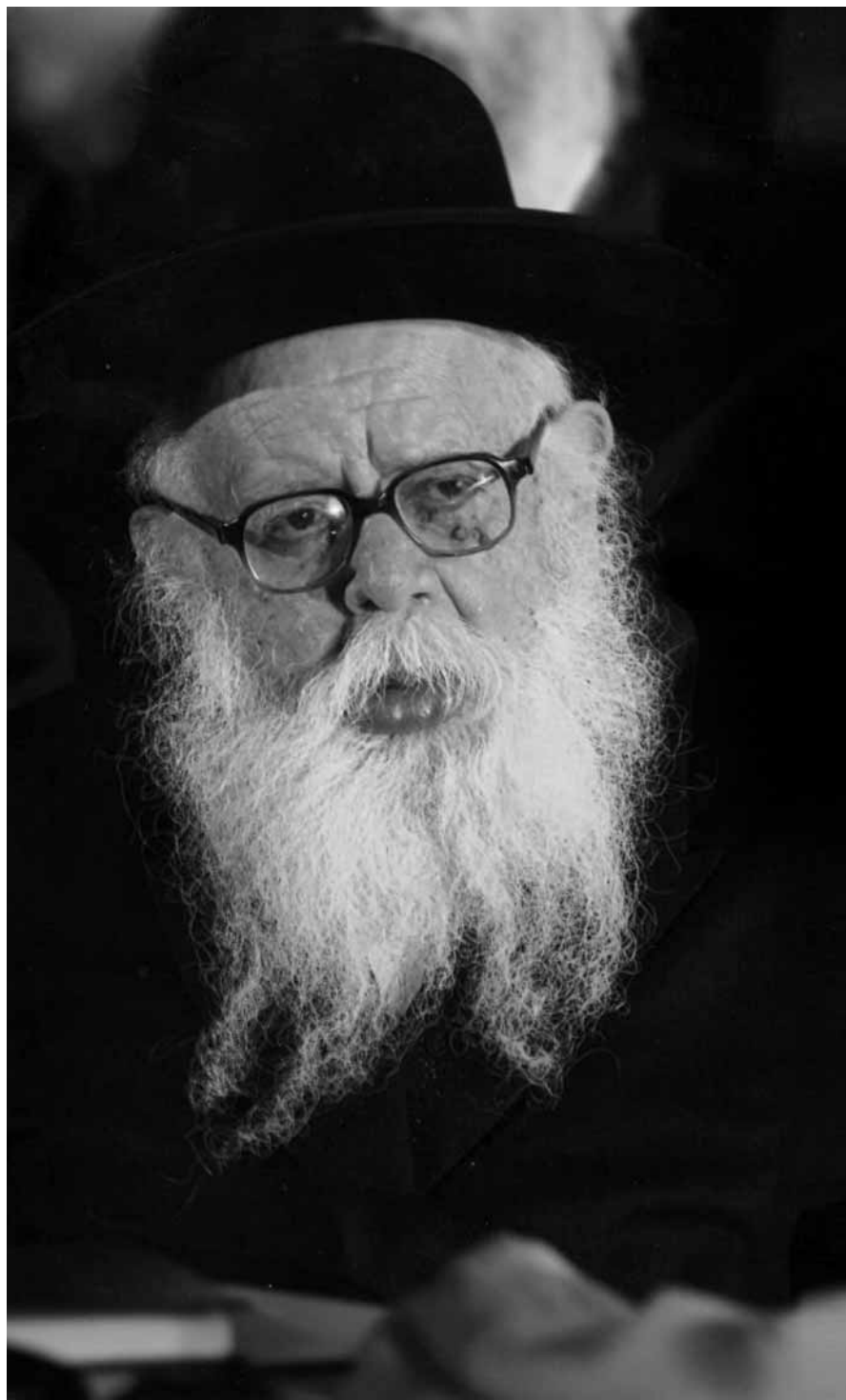
He sent a letter to the Rebbe Rayatz in which he related the rumor and asked the Rebbe for help. The Rebbe's secretary, R' Chatshe Feigin, sent him a letter in which he quoted from a report that R' Alter Simchovitz had sent to the Rebbe in which he described each talmid in detail, including R' Moshe. R' Alter described R' Moshe's diligence in his learning and his serious davening. The rumor dispelled, R' Meir was able to breathe a sigh of relief.

### A WEDDING DURING THE WAR

R' Moshe did a shidduch in Iyar 1942 with Devorah Karasik, daughter of Rabbi Eliezer Karasik, rav of the Chabad community, menahel of the Chabad yeshiva in Tel Aviv, and member of the hanhala of Aguch in Eretz Yisroel (and later the chairman of Aguch).

It was wartime and the kalla's family wanted to postpone the wedding because of the general situation and even more because in those days nobody knew what had happened to the rest of Devorah's family. However, the Rebbe Rayatz sent a telegram which said the wedding should not be postponed and if possible, it should be held in Elul.

Rabbi Moshe and Rebbetzin Devorah married on 5 Elul 1942.



They lived for a short time in Yerushalayim in the home of his grandfather, R' Shneur Zalman Ashkenazi, and two months later they moved to Tel Aviv where R' Moshe learned in Kollel. After a while he began to work in diamonds and he supported the Chabad yeshiva in Tel Aviv, which his father-in-law ran.

His wife Devorah was appointed as a member of the hanhala of N'shei Chabad and years later was appointed chairwoman of the organization. As a young couple they had two small rooms in which they and their little children lived. Nevertheless, their home was open and they frequently hosted bachurim who learned in the yeshiva in Tel Aviv, such as R' Zushe Partisan a"h, R' Dovid Morosov (may Hashem avenge his blood), and R' Sholom Feldman.

When his sister-in-law Rivka married Rabbi Tzvi Hirsh Chitrik, R' Moshe went to New York, where he saw the Rebbe for the first time. The Rebbe instructed him to try and arrange work in New York and because of this he stayed in New York for eight months. It was only after he saw that he had no opportunities for suitable work that he returned to Eretz Yisroel. This was after Tishrei 5712.

In 1958 the Ashkenazi family left Eretz Yisroel for Brazil as per the Rebbe's instructions. About two years later, on 5 Nissan 5720, his father-in-law, Rabbi Eliezer Karasik passed away leaving a void. He had been a Lubavitcher rav who was extremely involved in life in Eretz Yisroel and in Tel Aviv in particular and there was nobody to succeed him.

R' Eliezer's daughter Temma Gurary had a yechidus and the Rebbe told her to tell her brother-in-law in Brazil to return to Eretz Yisroel and to take his father-in-

law's place. The message was conveyed and that's when the Ashkenazi returned to Eretz Yisroel.

R' Moshe wrote a few years ago of the important jobs he was assigned by the Rebbe:

"I merited to be a member of Aguch from way back, ever since I was sent back to Eretz Yisroel by the Rebbe MH"M to accept the rabbanus of the shul and Chabad community in Tel Aviv as the successor of my father-in-law, R' Chaim Eliezer Karasik, as well as his



**Rabbi Moshe Ashkenazi serving as army chaplain during the War of Independence**

other roles that he filled in Chabad askanus in Eretz Yisroel for many years, and I thank Hashem for this."

Rabbi Sholom Chaskind, distinguished Chassid in Tel Aviv for dozens of years relates:

"When the Rebbe instructed that Rabbi Ashkenazi be appointed rav of the k'hilla, it was decided that a committee would take care of this officially. The members of the committee were: R' Shmaryahu

Gurary, R' Ben-Tzion Schneersohn, Dovid Harabi and me. We spoke with the people who davened at the Chabad shul on Nachalat Binyamin Street, and when they heard what the Rebbe wanted, of course they agreed. We informed the Rebbe of this in a letter.

"Rabbi Moshe Ashkenazi was the rav since 1960. Throughout these many years he gave shiurim and helped members of the k'hilla.

"We all saw how he often received the Rebbe's bracha: you should have long years over your kingdom."

These three jobs that the Rebbe gave him, R' Ashkenazi fulfilled faithfully, with devotion, and for the sake of Heaven, with no monetary remuneration. He gave shiurim in Nigleh and Chassidus, was a listening ear to his congregants, and even in later years when it was hard for him to walk, he insisted on walking to shul saying, "The Rebbe told me I will live long over my kingdom and I must fulfill this."

As a member of the hanhala of Aguch and the central Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim, he regularly attended meetings and was very active. He expressed his opinions and ideas about how to fulfill the Rebbe's wishes. He did all this for close to fifty years.

He went to meetings for the yeshiva by bus, despite repeated requests by the menahel Rabbi Wolf that he travel by taxi. Rabbi Ashkenazi refused to do so since he did not want to waste communal funds. It was only when R' Wolf's driver had to be in the Tel Aviv area or it was necessary for another member of the hanhala to come from Tel Aviv that R' Moshe agreed to travel by taxi to Lud

Two years ago, R' Moshe told me a bit about the transformation that the mosdos Chabad underwent at that time:



The funeral



At his wedding, in the center of the photograph is the Sadigora Rebbe of Tel Aviv z"l

"When the Rebbe accepted the nesius, he created a revolution. The Rebbe started with a *shturem*, which the Chassidim found hard to digest. The Rebbe wanted the mosdos chinuch in Eretz Yisroel not only to take in the children of Chassidim, which did not comprise a large number, but thousands of others.

"The Rebbe's tactic was to think big and the Rebbe wanted each

school to take in thousands of b'nei Torah on the one hand, and from the new immigrants and ordinary folk on the other hand. The askanim in Eretz Yisroel tried, but it was hard for them to operate according to the Rebbe's vision that the Rebbe constantly reiterated. As some years went by we saw how much greater our potential was than we had thought."

## PUSHED WITH THE YOUNG CHASSIDIM

R' Moshe Ashkenazi's hiskashrus to the Rebbe was known. A word from the Rebbe was "holy of holies" to him and that is how he raised his children. When a letter had to be written to the Rebbe, it was hard and complicated work. R' Moshe's son, the mashpia R' Chaim (a frequent contributor to *Beis Moshiah*), describes the preparations to write the letter:

"My father would write a rough draft, copy it to another draft and then copy it a bit differently, rip it up, write again, and despair. The next day he would again write several drafts, and that's why it took so long each time, sometimes even weeks, until a letter was sent to the Rebbe.

"There were times that after all the preparations and rough drafts, that he concluded that he wasn't a keli to write a letter and he stopped writing the letter in the middle."

Every year, towards the end of Teives, R' Ashkenazi would go to Europe, where he was involved in business for several days. From there he went to the Rebbe for the Shabbos before Yud Shvat and he would remain there for a month until after Shabbos Sh'kalim.

Why did he spend an entire month with the Rebbe at that time of year? The answer lies in what happened in one of the first years he spent with the Rebbe during Shvat. When he had a yechidus the Rebbe asked him whether he would be remaining for Shabbos Sh'kalim. Since every word of the Rebbe was holy to him, from then on, whenever he came to the Rebbe, he stayed until after Shabbos Sh'kalim. Then he would return to Europe on business and continue to Eretz Yisroel.

R' Moshe's son-in-law Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Wilschansky, remembers how his father-in-law would ask the Rebbe for permission

to leave the country each time, “Even in the years when there weren’t so many answers, my father-in-law would not leave Eretz Yisroel before getting the Rebbe’s bracha.”

When the Rebbe was in shul, R’ Moshe did not sit. He always stood whether it was at a farbrengen or during davening or a sicha. R’ Moshe did not think of sitting behind the Rebbe like the other older Chassidim his age, but would push amongst the young Chassidim. He found himself a spot from where he could see the Rebbe during davening, the Haftora, or farbrengens.

R’ Moshe’s devotion to the Rebbe was tremendous. When he heard that the Torah scroll of the famous printers from Slavita was in the possession of their descendents in Eretz Yisroel, he wanted to buy it from them but the heirs asked for a huge sum of money. R’ Moshe took a loan of 500 liros, an enormous amount for those days, in order to buy it and send it to the Rebbe as a gift. He donated the paroches for this Torah scroll l’ilui nishmas his father.

He paid back the loan in installments every month until he paid it all off. Some time later, he met the director of the gemach who wondered why R’ Moshe hadn’t repaid the loan. R’ Ashkenazi reminded him that he had made large payments every month and the debt was paid off but the director of the gemach insisted he had not received a single lira. R’ Moshe said that since he didn’t want the Rebbe’s gift to be at all questionable, he would pay the debt again. Within a short time the director of the gemach received 500 liras yet again.

The broadcasts of the Rebbe in Tel Aviv took place in R’ Moshe’s house. Not only did he host the Chassidim in the middle of the night but at the end of the

*Towards morning he heard knocks at the door from the border police who wanted to see his passport. He went to get it and to his dismay he couldn’t find it. He searched his papers, his pocket, every possible place, until he had to say the passport was missing...*

broadcast his wife served cake and drinks.

Someone once complained about R’ Moshe to the Rebbe, to which the

Rebbe responded, “I never heard a bad word about him.” The Rebbe repeated this story.

On another occasion, the Rebbe told R’ Moshe’s son R’ Nosson a”h that he had a good heart like his father.

R’ Mordechai Ashkenazi, rav of Kfar Chabad, relates an open miracle that his father had with the Rebbe:

“One year when my father attended the last Mincha before his trip back to Europe, he stood in the small zal very close to the Rebbe. When the chazan reached the bracha, “Sim Shalom,” the Rebbe looked at my father for a long time until the chazan finished the bracha. Then the Rebbe looked back at his siddur.

“My father was very shaken by this. He wondered why the Rebbe had stared at him in the middle of chazaras ha’shatz. He informed the family back in Eretz Yisroel about this.

“From New York he flew to Europe and while traveling on



At a meeting with the chief rabbis of Israel at that time, that took place as per the Rebbe’s instruction in Cheshvan 5746, from right to left: Rabbi Yaroslavsky, Rabbi Zushe Partisan (Wilmowsky), Rabbi Levi Bistrizky, Rabbi Moshe Ashkenazi, Rabbi Y.Y. Wilschansky, Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu – Sephardic Chief Rabbi, Rabbi Avrohom Shapiro – Ashkenazic Chief Rabbi, Rabbi Yosef Gliksberg, rav of Givatayim. Standing in the back is R’ Berke Wolf.



Rabbi Ashkenazi (first on the right) visiting a school in Brazil

business he took a train from Zurich to Vienna. He paid for a private sleeper car on the train and went to sleep. Towards morning he heard knocks at the door from the border police who wanted to see his passport. He went to get it and to his dismay he couldn't find it. He searched his papers, his pocket, every possible place, until he had to say the passport was missing.

"He was very nervous not because of the passport but because he had packets of diamonds that he took out of Eretz Yisroel legally but in Europe they were considered illegal. If they confiscated the diamonds he would lose a fortune and be severely punished.

"As he thought about this, the train stopped. The border police had decided to stop the train because of my father until they found out what was going on. After a long discussion, the train

continued without a search being conducted. He promised that as soon as they arrived in Vienna he would go to the Israeli consulate to obtain a temporary travel pass. My father felt that this was the significance of the Rebbe's gaze.

"I'll tell another special story that my father had. At one of the yechiduyos that he had after Yud Shvat, my father left the Rebbe's room and could not remember a word of what the Rebbe said. He sadly wrote this to the Rebbe and the Rebbe answered briefly, "During yechidus, the Sh'china, etc." (In other words, when the Rebbe speaks in yechidus, it's like "the Sh'china speaking from Moshe's throat," and therefore, it is not possible to repeat what was said in yechidus)."

Although R' Moshe went to the Rebbe many times, each trip entailed extended Chassidishe preparations. His daughter Malka

Wilschansky relates:

"It was the middle of Elul 5755 when a family member was able to give my father a free ticket but he had to travel immediately. 'To travel without first preparing?' wondered my father, and he stayed home. That was my father. He could not go to the Rebbe without preparing first."

By the same token, the mashpia of the Chabad k'hilla in Tel Aviv, R' Sholom Ber Butman relates:

"Once, R' Moshe had a yechidus and he handed his note to the Rebbe. The Rebbe read his questions, responded, and then asked, 'What else?' In other words, what else did R' Moshe want to ask. R' Moshe said, 'I am not ready.' Every question he asked the Rebbe was asked after much thought and preparation."

[To be continued be"H]



# OUR SPIRIT WILL BE VICTORIOUS

BY SHAI GEFEN

## AT THE GATES OF HELL

Opening an Israeli newspaper, one can't help but rub his eyes in shock, "what is going on here? Are the people who govern our lives and are charged with the responsibility of handling foreign affairs and security truly out of touch with what Am Yisroel is going through? Can it really be that they didn't have enough with experiences of the Disengagement and the Lebanon War?

According to a report in *Maariv*, there is currently an interoffice committee working on advancing the destructive plan of giving over most of Yehuda and Shomron to murderers, and to expel tens of thousands of Jews from their homes. Olmert did proclaim on numerous occasions that the plan is on hold, but as we have emphasized repeatedly, the hold is not permanent and when the politicians need the political capital, they will make sure to revive it.

What is going on here? Are we really living in a time of total desensitization? It appears that the answer is Yes. The Rebbe said about those leaders that give away territory that they are operating in opposition to the Evil Inclination, because even it opposes giving away land, for that approach is diametrically opposed to simple reason.

Due to all the corruption scandals

erupting almost daily, implicating those in the highest positions of government, it's not inconceivable that the plans surrounding the Disengagement and Realignment are also linked to bribery and payoffs from hostile sources. I have no doubt that the day will yet come when it will come to light that top leaders accepted bribes and payoffs to promote the interests of the Palestinians and the Arabs in general.

Once again, we are taught an important lesson: We can't be silent even for a moment. We must warn and cry out, to shout and expose the sinister plots of the politicians, because the only thing they fear is exposure. Hopefully, that will be effective.

## "I WILL FIGHT WITH FULL FORCE"

The phenomenon that every top official in the government and armed forces who was involved in the Disengagement is now entangled in the legal process, having resigned or facing impeachment, is something that bears study. Each one is occupied with mourning, worrying or deteriorating health. The Disengagement Chief of Staff, Dan Chalutz, did not manage to last a year and seven months. He who was considered a prodigy and success story, who was appointed to his position to carry out the

Disengagement with "firmness and sensitivity," has now resigned in the face of the failures in leading the war in Lebanon. Leading ministers and top officials, who also stood behind the Disengagement crime, are all currently occupied, whether in the interrogation rooms of the police department, in courtrooms or with their personal affairs.

It is difficult to say that all this is just coincidence. We clearly see that there is Someone in charge.

In one of his sichos, the Rebbe explains that the punishments Hashem inflicted upon the Egyptians were for three reasons. Firstly, to punish those who harm the Jewish people. Secondly, to show the Egyptians that there is Someone in charge of this world. And thirdly, so that the Jews would also understand that Hashem runs the world.

I can still vividly recall the scene on Motzaei Yud Shvat, when the then minister Moshe Katzav stood across from the Rebbe, and the Rebbe warned him: **I have fought throughout that there should be a Shamir government. And just as I did all in my power that there should be a government led specifically by Shamir, if they continue in this direction regarding these talks, then I, Menachem Mendel, will be the first to fight full force and with all my abilities against Shamir, so that the**



## government be disbanded!

The Rebbe's words are clear and concise. We see how every Prime Minister who brought harm upon Am Yisroel through conceding land did not survive politically and left office in shame and in an unnatural manner. As such, it is clear to us that all of the commotion and chaos in the upper echelons of the government and military is a result of carrying out the Disengagement and their intention to perpetuate this crime with the Realignment Plan, and it is all Divine intervention.

We must all continue to pray that they do not succeed in their diabolical plans, and the current situation will serve as a warning to those who follow them.

## THE RESIGNATION OF CHALUTZ

Public pressure produces results, and this led to the resignation of Dan Chalutz as Chief of Staff at the last moment before being fired. It is appropriate to devote a few lines directed to him personally:

In your letter of resignation, you spoke of taking responsibility, etc. Those are all very big words, but for

some reason we did not see a word of regret that you stood at the helm of the implementation of the plan of shame, which has brought calamity upon the people of Israel. Even as you have fallen from your high perch, you didn't have the sense to express regret. This is an unpardonable sin.

I did read quotes from your friends claiming that you do feel badly that you succeeded in carrying out the Disengagement, now that those who you expelled with firmness and sensitivity are wandering the land stripped of everything, facing uncertainty and many hardships. Some have taken ill and many have no source of income. Families have broken up, many of the youth are off the proper path, and some have even died from heartbreak. You should know that the crime of Disengagement will haunt you for generations.

There is only one way for you to attain a modicum of atonement for what was done, and that is if from today onward, you devote your time to helping these Jews try to restore things to their original state as much as possible. Only then, can you retire

*Many times the Rebbe spoke about how our security comes from Hashem, and when we conduct ourselves according to His will, we are guaranteed complete security. The Zionist leadership will not succeed in all their experiments with various peace formulas and disengagements. The results of such attempts are already a foregone conclusion. It is only following the path of Torah and standing strong regarding the security of Jews without concessions, which will bring the long hoped for peace.*



Our spirit will vanquish them.

to your personal life with a still heart.

Mr. Chalutz: we still remember your provocative statements against the settler community and the delegitimization campaign that you organized against them. At the end of the day, the one forced to resign and leave due to his personal failures is you. The one in whose name will be engraved the failure and destruction will be you. We are not here to gloat over your downfall or to attack you while you are in pain, but the current situation in which you were a full partner in bringing about – will not be forgotten or forgiven.

A little less than a year ago, you were the presenter at an impressive IDF awards ceremony, where you gave out awards to outstanding soldiers. Amongst those soldiers was a young man named Chananel Dayan, who refused to shake your hand, and the entire country was in an uproar. You had him discharged from the army and took other disciplinary measures because he had the nerve not to bow down like everyone else. This individual, whose family was evicted from their home and homestead in Gush Katif, turns out to be like the little boy who proclaimed that “the emperor has no clothes.” Less than one year later, the entire nation has exposed the nakedness of the Chief of Staff and the army.

Another point that you would do well to remember: During a celebratory interview you gave to one of the large papers, you proclaimed that you are an atheist. Aside from the desecration of Hashem’s name in that a Jewish Chief of Staff in a Jewish country makes such a proclamation in front of the whole world, it is abundantly clear that the moment you uttered those words, all Divine Assistance was taken from you, and not only you, but the entire army which you headed.

Many years ago, there was a king named Pharaoh, who proclaimed “the Nile is mine and I made myself,” and in the end he was forced to run out in middle of the night and admit, “Hashem is the Righteous One, and I and my nation are the wicked ones.”

### CEASEFIRE OR WEAPONS BUILDUP?

More than a month has passed since a ceasefire was announced regarding shooting missiles into Eretz Yisroel. Of course, the agreement has not been kept to for even one day. However, in Israel this is what passes

*The Rebbe’s words are clear and concise. We see how every Prime Minister who brought harm upon Am Yisroel through conceding land did not survive politically and left office in shame and in an unnatural manner.*

for a “ceasefire.” We have already become accustomed to ideas like “unilateral withdrawal” and “unilateral disengagement,” and so now we have “unilateral ceasefire.” In fact, everything that goes on here is pretty much one-sided.

Well, it turns out that while we are enjoying this wonderful “ceasefire,” the other side is building up their firepower. The head of the foreign contacts division of the Planning Section of the IDF, Brigadier General Uri Dekel, said at a convention in Hertzliyah that

“ Hamas is utilizing the quiet to smuggle war materiel through the Philadelphi Corridor, and we have to ask ourselves if they will succeed in reaching Ashdod with their new missiles.”

Here we have a top officer admitting openly that the ceasefire is endangering Ashdod, and the community at large remains silent just as the army stands by helplessly without any response. Later there will be investigative committees to look into who is responsible for looking the other way and remaining silent in the face of the current information that we possess. Everyone can see up front all the failures and negligence of those whose job it is to make the decisions, but practically, we only act after a disaster. Only then do we appoint investigative committees.

What will the leadership tell us when the time comes, as to why they allowed the creation of a mini-Iran in Gaza? Why did they carry out the criminal Disengagement?

The current situation defies all logic. People are no longer willing to put their faith in those establishments which think that “my strength and the power of my hand wrought this prowess for me.” We are now witnessing how all that power is rendered worthless, and how a small band of dedicated youths are succeeding in defeating a large army with nuclear capabilities.

Perhaps, part of the explanation lies in the words of the admission made by a leading military man that “there was always politics in the army, but not like today. We need to rid ourselves of this completely.” These words were spoken by former general Matan Vilnai at the convention of the Interdepartmental Center in Hertzliyah. He concluded, “If the military will not change, nothing will work.”

Many times the Rebbe spoke

about how our security comes from Hashem, and when we conduct ourselves according to His will, we are guaranteed complete security. The Zionist leadership will not succeed in all their experiments with various peace formulas and disengagements. The results of such attempts are already a foregone conclusion. It is only following the path of Torah and standing strong regarding the security of Jews without concessions, which will bring the long hoped for peace.

### SPIRIT VANQUISHES ARMAMENTS

The "sweet singer of Israel" writes in T'hilim, "Grant me wisdom from my enemies." As such, it is worthwhile citing a recent quote from the leader of Hezbollah, Sheikh Nasrallah. He spoke about how his organization defeated Israel in the recent war as a result of "spirit and

culture of resistance." In his words, "What occurred in the last war has no connection with armaments or the number of dead here or the number of those killed there, and not even with financial losses. What happened is that our spirit defeated their spirit, and when the spirit is defeated, what can weapons accomplish?"

As we come from the yahrtzait of the Rebbe Rayatz, who led a fierce battle against a gigantic superpower, it is pretty clear what he is talking about. The Rebbe leading a small band of Chassidim did not submit in the face of the countless agents, soldiers, officers, and informants of the NKVD; rather, they continued their work to spread Judaism.

Many did not comprehend the stubbornness of the Rebbe in this war, which was seemingly a quixotic war against a superpower that could

not be toppled. They saw it as an unwinnable war fought in vain. However, the Rebbe did not concede and in the end, after many decades, the massive superpower disintegrated and the soldiers of the Rebbe are alive and well, and continuing their holy work. In Russia and other countries of the former Soviet Union, there is a Jewish revolution taking place on an unprecedented scale, which the Rebbe said is thanks to the struggle led by the Rebbe Rayatz in his time, with great mesiras nefesh. It turns out that the spirit vanquished the armaments.

Perhaps the time has come to understand, once and for all, that spirit defeats superior firepower and the victory of the Jewish nation depends on faith and trust in Hashem, and the realization that "not with power and not with strength, but with My Spirit, says Hashem."

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# GEULA: THE MAIN THING

BY RABBI YEHESKEL LEBOVIC

## HASHGACHA PRATIS AND SPECIAL ENDEARMENT

Chassidus speaks of the extreme endearment which G-d displays towards each and every Jew. This endearment is described in *Tanya* chap. 46: "G-d left the upper and lower realms, not choosing any of them, but only his people Israel, taking them out of Egypt...Himself...in order to bring them close to Him in a true closeness and unity."

The example that the Alter Rebbe gives is of *one* lowly individual who is lifted from the mire by a loving king who brings him into his inner chambers.

Now, it is well known that according to Chassidus, as taught by the Baal Shem Tov, *hashgacha pratit* (detailed Divine Providence) applies to every detail of Creation, down to inanimate matter (*domem*).

According to other opinions, such as that of the Rambam (however see *Derech Chaim* of the *Mitteler Rebbe* p. 25), *Hashgacha pratit* applies only to man and not to the rest of Creation. The question then which arises is this: while according to the Rambam, the advantage of man over the rest of Creation and the endearment that G-d professes towards man is thus evident, how is that kind of endearment indicated according to Chassidic teachings, inasmuch that every part of Creation is supervised by *Hashgacha Pratit*?

## WHAT'S THE MAIN THRUST?

The answer to this will emerge by analyzing several statements of Rashi (Shmos 12:12), commenting on G-d's

statement: "I will pass (across Egypt)." Rashi states: "like a king who passes from place to place, and in one swoop and one instant, all of them (the firstborn) will be struck."

We must understand what prompts Rashi to offer this explanation and what is elucidated by it. The Rebbe (*Likkutei Sichos* vol. 36 p. 48) explains that Rashi was bothered by a different expression in another pasuk (Shmos 11:4) wherein Moshe quotes Hashem: "I will go out into Egypt and every firstborn will die." As we do not find such expressions in regard to the preceding plagues (after all, G-d the Omnipresent does not have to "go out anywhere"), this implies that there was to be some special action and special attention given to the Jewish people during the last plague. This then is similar to G-d having said earlier (Shmos 3:8): "I have come down (to Egypt) to save them." It all points out to the special endearment that G-d displays towards the Jewish people in protecting them and bringing about their salvation.

And this is why that pasuk says "and all firstborn *will die*" (rather than "I will strike them"), implying that the *main* action and attention is directed to the salvation of the Jews and that the plague of the firstborn is *secondary* to that special attention and salvation.

However, upon reaching the pasuk (Shmos 12:12), "I will pass across Egypt and I will strike every firstborn", Rashi questions *that* implication: doesn't this pasuk imply just the opposite, i.e., that the main thrust of the action is one of punishing the firstborn rather than one of salvation?

## SALVATION IS THE MAIN THRUST

To answer this, Rashi states that it is comparable to a king traveling from place to place: the main purpose is the trip and travel. And, *by the way*, as he is traveling, certain incidental issues crop up in the places which he visits and stops at. Likewise, at the time of the Exodus, G-d did take special action in regards to the *salvation* of every single Jew and that is the *main* purpose of his "travel" and "passing and going out into Egypt." Whatever else happened, including the striking of the firstborn, is incidental to this main purpose. His "striking them" is secondary to the *main* purpose, i.e., the display of special endearment towards the Jewish people in terms of their salvation.

This is even more pronounced in Rashi's comment on the pasuk, "and there shall be no destructive force" (in Egypt, at the time of the Exodus) (Shmos 12:13), which, he explains, is addressing the case of an *individual* Jew finding himself in an Egyptian home at the time of that very first Seder in Egypt.

One might think that in this extreme case, the Jew who, after the whole nine yards of the preceding nine plagues, would dare step foot in an Egyptian home, instead of joining his brothers at the Seder being celebrated in all Jewish dwellings at the night of the Exodus and brazenly ignoring G-d's prohibition to leave the Seder site "until morning" – well, such a Jew would be asking for it and might not be "passed over." To offset such a notion, the pasuk adds this phrase ("there shall be

no destructive force”) to teach that even such a Jew, though having stooped to such a low level, would still be “passed over” and redeemed.

Here we have a case of even one lone individual who is granted special hashgacha pratis and “passed over.” We thus can conclude that, even according to the Baal Shem Tov’s understanding of Hashgacha pratis, there are varying gradations and levels, the highest reserved for man in general and the Jew in particular.

### THE TRUE MEANING OF PASSING OVER

This explanation sheds a new depth and perception on the whole episode of “Passover.” It’s not that

there had to be a tenth plague and that, in turn, some passing over was required in order to spare the Jewish firstborn, but just the opposite: the main thrust throughout is the special attention and endearment, the special *quality* of hashgacha pratis which Hashem displayed towards the Jewish people during all ten plagues, starting from the moment that G-d said, “I will go down to save them.” *Whatever* else had to take place for that to occur came to pass “in passing, in one swoop.” The fine details of hashgacha pratis were thus reserved for the benefit of the Jewish people, while the secondary and incidental elements deserved only “cursory” Hashgacha pratis.

### ...AND SO IT WILL BE AGAIN

As we reach the blessed time of the *Geula Shleima* through Moshiach – similar in many ways to the Exodus from *Mitzrayim* – we again shall be recipient to Hashem’s display of endearment, with every single Jew being *schlepped* out of this *Galus* and brought to a state of *Geula*. And, incidentally, “by the way,” *whatever* has to take place vis-à-vis our enemies, will occur in one neat swoop, b’karov mamash!

*Lilui nishmas Esther Hadas bas HaRav Sholtiel Isaac and nishmas Shlomo ben Avrohom Dov HaKohen, in conjunction with their recent Yahrtsaits.*



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