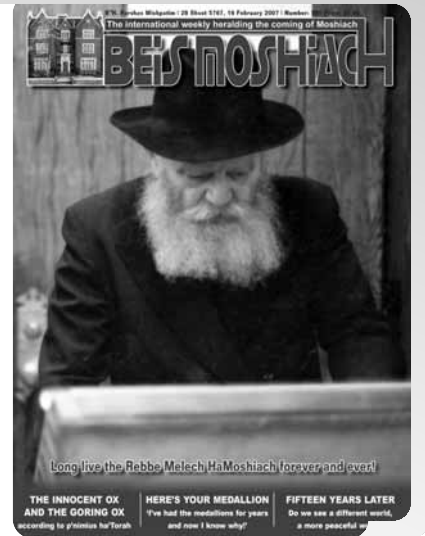


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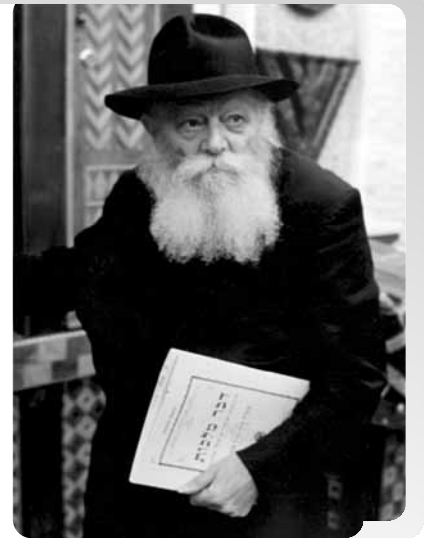
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TO KNOW G-D: IT'S NOT ENOUGH TO BELIEVE

LIKKUTEI SICHOS, VOL. 26, PG. 114-123
TRANSLATED BY BORUCH MERKUR



[Continued from last week]

5. The explanation of the matter:

The topics the Rambam speaks about in these three chapters – the (conclusion of the) discussion of the Supernal Chariot and the Act of Creation – are not only matters of contemplation for the sake of **thereafter attaining** Love of G-d and Fear of Him per se; they are connected to the Mitzva of **Knowledge of G-d**, or more so, they constitute a veritable portion of this Mitzva.

As it is explained in the Perush on the Rambam [Laws of the Foundations of the Torah, beg.]: “Included in these two Mitzvos (to know that there is a Deity and that there is no other god with Him) is the concept of the Act of Creation and the Supernal Chariot, for from this knowledge they will come to know the proofs for the existence of the Creator and that He alone is the first and the foundation of all” [FN 44: though he does add later that it also leads to Love of G-d and Fear of Him].

And as it is also emphasized (that the matters discussed in these three chapters are a continuation to the discussion of **Knowledge of G-d** in the first chapter) in the very wording of the Rambam [Ch. 2, Laws 9-10]: a) In the second chapter, after the lengthy discussion about angels, Rambam changes course to explain at length how **G-d** “knows Himself...knows everything...recognizes His truth, knowing it as it is, etc. He is the One Who knows, etc.” b) At the conclusion of the chapter [Law 11], he says: “These words that we have said **regarding this matter**, in these **two** chapters, etc., all the principles mentioned in these **two** chapters are referred to as the Supernal Chariot.” Both chapters together constitute **a single** concept: the Supernal Chariot. c) In the conclusion of Chapter 4 [Law 13], the Rambam says, “The subject matter of these **four** chapters...is what the Early Sages called ‘**Pardes**.’” All four

chapters together constitute **a single** concept: Pardes.

(The reason Rambam connects the “great principles” with matters concerning (contemplation which brings to) Love of G-d and Fear of Him [ibid Ch. 2, Laws 1-2] but not with the Mitzva of Knowing G-d (which is discussed in the **previous** chapter) is because Rambam arranges the topic of Knowledge of G-d in the context of the Mitzvos that are relevant to it. And since the “great principles” pertain (also) to the Mitzvos of Love of G-d and Fear of Him, Rambam, therefore, arranges them in a manner that they constitute (not only a continuation to the previous chapter, as mentioned, but also) a detail of the Mitzvos of Love of G-d and Fear of Him.)

Accordingly, we may say that for this reason Rambam brings in his work the “great principles of the acts of the Master of the Worlds.” That is, in order to fulfill the Mitzva of Knowledge of G-d, which means (as mentioned above in Section 3) that one has (intellectual) **knowledge** of the **manner** of G-d’s existence (“His existence is more... complete”), it is **necessary** to (at least) know also **these** “great principles,” for (as brought above) “from this knowledge they will come to know the proofs for the existence of the Creator and that He alone is the first and the foundation of all.”

6. According to the above – that the discussion of the Supernal Chariot and the Act of Creation (which Rambam brings in his work) is necessary for the Mitzva of Knowledge of G-d, or more so, they comprise a portion of it – we can also explain the final law, the conclusion and seal of the book *Mishneh Torah* [end of Laws of Kings], which reads as follows:

“In that time...the sole occupation of the entire world will be to know G-d alone. Therefore, the Jewish people will be great sages, knowing esoteric matters and grasping

knowledge of their Creator according to the capacity of man, as it is said [Yeshayahu 11:9], ‘for the earth shall be full with the knowledge of G-d as water covers the ocean.’”

We must understand:

a) What are these two concepts – “knowing esoteric matters and grasping knowledge of their Creator”? From the fact that Rambam precedes the latter with, “the sole occupation of the entire world will be to know G-d **alone**,” it follows necessarily that the “esoteric matters” are connected with, “**to know** G-d.” What then entails the distinction between “esoteric matters” and “knowledge of their Creator”?

b) The syntax of the Rambam suggests that the qualification, “according to the capacity of man,” refers specifically to “grasping knowledge of their Creator” but not to “knowing esoteric matters.” What is the reason for this?

c) How is the (addition of the) conclusion of the verse, “as water covers the ocean,” relevant here? From the words, “**the earth shall be full** with the knowledge of G-d,” we know that “the sole occupation of the entire world will be to know G-d alone” [so quoting the conclusion of the verse appears to be extraneous here].

Moreover, Rambam also describes the Days of Moshiach in Laws of Repentance [9:2], saying “that in those days, knowledge, wisdom, and truth will become abundant, as it is said, ‘for the earth shall be full with the knowledge of G-d,’” but there he does **not** quote the conclusion [of the verse], “as water covers the ocean.”

7. According to what is explained above – that in order to fulfill the Mitzva of Knowledge of G-d we must know the concepts of the Supernal Chariot and the Act of Creation – it may be asserted that the two terms mentioned above correspond to these two matters – the Supernal Chariot and the Act of Creation – as follows:

The meaning of the term “esoteric matters” (without the explanation and supplementation that this is in reference to the Creator) means matters regarding the “Act of Creation.” Although they are things “that are composite of matter and form” [FN 56: “the terminology of the Rambam, Laws of Foundations of the Torah 2:3, regarding celestial bodies, etc., which comprise a portion of the Act of Creation (which is not so of angels; they pertain, rather, to the Supernal Chariot).], they are, nevertheless, “**deep** matters” [ibid 4:10], requiring an “expansive mind to get a clear

grasp of the meaning and explanation of all the matters” [ibid 4:11]. Therefore, Rambam refers to them as “esoteric matters.”

On the other hand, since this is the “Act of **Creation**” [and not the Creator Himself], we may indeed come to an understanding of the matter.

Thereafter, a loftier concept will be attained – namely, “grasping knowledge of their Creator,” matters pertaining to the Supernal Chariot. Even with regard to angels, since they are “form without any matter” [ibid 2:3, end], a person, a being comprised of “matter and form,” cannot have a true comprehension of them. How much more so is this the case regarding “knowledge of their **Creator**”; it is **certain** (as Rambam explains [ibid 1:10 – and see FN 63])

that it is not possible that “a living man, who is composed of body and soul,” should comprehend “the truth of existence as it is.”

Thus, Rambam is compelled to add, “**grasping** knowledge of their Creator **according to the capacity of man**.”

8. Accordingly we will also understand why Rambam quotes the end of the verse, “as water covers the ocean” – with the following preface:

The difference between the Supernal Chariot and the Act of Creation is (as Rambam says [ibid 4:10]) that the matters covered in the Act of Creation do not possess the depth ascribed to those matters discussed in the Supernal Chariot (a point which is the determining factor with respect to the **law** (a significant legal distinction) regarding the proper approach to teaching about the Supernal Chariot or the Act of Creation, as explained in Rambam

[ibid 4:11].)

In fact, this [difference regarding the relative depth of the subject matter] is not only a distinction with regard to the “quantity” of comprehension – that the matters discussed in the Supernal Chariot are more profound than the matters discussed in the Act of Creation – it is different in “quality” and the manner of comprehension, as follows.

The Act of Creation, since it involves matters regarding the Creation itself [i.e., something finite], can be understood in a manner of **affirmation** (“the comprehension of the affirmative”). This is not so, however, regarding the discussion of the Supernal Chariot, matters which are connected with the classification of the Creator (“grasping knowledge of their Creator”) [FN 65:

In order to fulfill the Mitzva of Knowledge of G-d, it is necessary to know these “great principles,” for “from this knowledge they will come to know the proofs for the existence of the Creator and that He alone is the first and the foundation of all.”

See Rambam's *Elucidation of the Mishna* on Meseches Chagiga (2:1) and his Preface to *A Guide to the Perplexed*, where it describes how the Act of Creation is considered to be wisdom of nature, whereas the Supernal Chariot is considered to be wisdom of the **Divine**. (The fact that this includes a discussion of angels is understood according to the explanation in *A Guide to the Perplexed* Vol. 3, Ch. 45.). It is not possible to comprehend the latter in a manner of affirmation, but only by way of negation ("knowledge of that which is negated").

As the Rambam explains at length in his book *A Guide to the Perplexed* [Vol. 1, Ch. 58 ff], it is not possible to apply any affirming descriptions to G-d; only negating descriptions.

(For example, the fact that it is said that G-d is "wise" means only that we negate all that is the **opposite** of wisdom from applying to Him. Similarly with regard to other descriptions.)

Thus, we cannot understand G-d with an affirming comprehension, but only in a manner of grasping that which is negated.

Of course, knowledge of that which is negated is nonetheless **knowledge**. In fact, Rambam explains [FN 67: *ibid*, Ch. 59-60; quoted in *Likkutei Torah* on Parshas P'kudei 6c] that through [contemplating] numerous negations "you will approach comprehension and you will become closer to Him"; "Negating descriptions will bring you close to the knowledge and comprehension of G-d, may He be blessed."

Nevertheless [as it is explained in *A Guide to the Perplexed*, *ibid*], even the highest manner of comprehension of that which is negated does not amount to grasping the **essence** of the Creator; "the truth of existence" remains beyond comprehension.

9. With this preface we will understand the difference in the terminology Rambam employs in referring to the Supernal Chariot and the Act of Creation:

With regard to the Supernal Chariot, Rambam says: "These words that we have said regarding this matter, in these two chapters, are like a **drop from the ocean** (*tippa min ha'yam*) of that which needs to be elucidated on this topic" [Laws of the Foundations of the Torah 2:11]. Whereas, when he speaks about the Act of Creation, he says: "All these matters that we have spoken about regarding this topic are like a **drop from a bucket** (*k'mar mi'dli*)" [*ibid* 4:10].

According to the aforementioned it is understood simply: Matters concerning the Act of Creation are limited, as they are matters pertaining to Creation [something finite]. Therefore, despite the fact that Rambam only mentions principles and outlines of the various chapters in the discussion, etc., for which reason it is considered as only "a drop" (*k'mar*), it is only as the measure of a drop

compared to a **bucketful**. Indeed, the quantity of water held by a bucket is [itself] greatly restricted, **extremely** limited.

Whereas, with respect to the Supernal Chariot, the Rambam says, "like a drop from the **ocean**," for "ocean" signifies something unlimited, to the extent that in the realm of **Torah law**, an "ocean" is (called) "water that has no end." [FN 70: This topic is elucidated in Yevamos 121a; Rambam Laws of Divorce 13:16.]

Notwithstanding the fact that the water of an ocean has limitations (as the Gemara says, "they know how to measure how many drops are in the ocean"), nevertheless, the very fact that it is called "water that has no end" is proof that the water of the ocean is such an extremely great quantity that, **according to Torah**, we can (at least figuratively) describe it as having "no end."

10. We may further assert that Scripture explicitly supports this notion with the verse, "All rivers flow to the sea, but the sea does not fill up" [Koheles 1:7], meaning that the sea can never reach its capacity. Accordingly we may say regarding the water of the ocean that the reason why it is called "water that has no end" is because (since the ocean **does not reach capacity**, it can absorb and) **in potential** it can contain a limitless quantity of water. That is, the water of the ocean in actuality is limited in quantity and "they **know** how to measure how many drops are in the ocean," however, **in potential**, the ocean is not filled [to capacity] with all the drops; it is a body of water that has no end.

And since the matters discussed in the Supernal Chariot surpass the boundaries and limitations of Creation, they are considered as an "ocean," water that has no end.

Accordingly it is also understood why the Rambam adds in the end of his work the conclusion of the verse, "as water covers the ocean." Namely, he thereby suggests that – notwithstanding the fact that in those days there will be, "grasping knowledge of their Creator according to the capacity of man," nevertheless – since this is "knowledge of their **Creator**," it is always (also) **beyond** the created being, "as water **covers** the ocean" (it can be grasped only through knowledge of the negated, as mentioned above).

11. From all the above we also derive an instruction relevant to the **study** of the Supernal Chariot and the Act of Creation:

Rambam writes in the Preface to his work (in "The Enumeration of the Mitzvos According to Rambam's Order of the Laws") that in *Seifer HaMada* he includes "all the Mitzvos that compose the main thrust of the law of Moshe Rabbeinu, peace unto him. **The person must know them first, before everything [else].**" From this it is understood regarding *Seifer HaMada* itself that the topics that Rambam arranged in **the beginning** of *Seifer HaMada* and which are called "Laws of **the Foundations of the Torah**" must be

studied before learning the other topics in *Seifer HaMada* (how much more so regarding topics from the later thirteen books of *HaYad*).

And in Laws of the Foundations of the Torah itself, we must first of all know the “**foundation** of the foundations and the **pillar** of wisdoms.” Since that all “The subject matter of these four chapters regarding these five Mitzvos...which the Early Sages called ‘Pardes’” is necessary in order to fulfill the “foundation of the foundations, etc., to know that there is a primordial Being, etc.” (as discussed above at length), it comes out that, in addition to the **obligation** to study these matters in general, we must **preface** the study of **these** matters to the study of other Torah matters. [FN 75: Also see the Rambam’s *Letter Regarding the Resurrection of the Dead*, end of Ch. 1 and Ch. 2, beg. And see *Rosh Amana*, Ch. 19. Above pg. 34.]

12. Based on the above, at first glance, an in-depth look into the following words of Rambam is required: “I say that it is not fitting for one to stroll in the Orchard (*Pardes*) unless his belly is **full** with bread and meat ... [i.e.] to [first] know the [laws of the] prohibited and the permitted, etc.” [Laws of the Foundations of the Torah 4:13]. That is, the topic of *Pardes* (discussed in these four chapters) may be studied only after we know many laws of the Torah (bread and meat).

Moreover, the Rambam writes in the Preface to his work: “A person reads from the Written Torah first and thereafter he reads from **this**. From this he will know the entire Oral Torah; he will not have to read another book **among them**.” After [study of] the Written Torah, one need not study other books of the Oral Torah (and obviously not “the [legal] investigations of Abaye and Rava” nor filling one’s belly with bread and meat). But the **first thing** the Rambam begins teaching is [none other than] the Supernal Chariot and the Act of Creation!

Furthermore, **Rambam** arranged these four chapters in his work, regarding which he says in his Preface – that it is “for [both] the small and the great.” Obviously, the “small” person’s belly is not **full of bread and meat**.

13. The explanation of the matter is that Rambam actually forewarns of this [confusion] with his precise choice of words: “it is not fitting for one **to stroll** in *Pardes*” (**departing** from the terminology of the Sages, “they **entered** *Pardes*” [Chagiga 14b], which he himself cites). “To stroll”

does not at all mean to enter, but rather, being in *Pardes* **at length** and in a manner of strolling, **having pleasure** [see Chagiga *ibid*], delving into these topics with a deep and expansive contemplation, to the extent that one **takes pleasure** in the matter. **This** manner of the study of *Pardes* must be only after one’s “belly is **full** with bread and meat.” Also, as Rambam rules [in Laws of the Foundations of Torah 4:10-11; 2:12], “The Early Sages commanded that we may not teach these matters in public.” [FN 84: And see Rambam’s introduction to *A Guide to the Perplexed*. Therefore, (since we do not teach the Supernal Chariot nor the Act of Creation in public) he writes (in *A Guide to the Perplexed*) only outlines of the various chapters in the discussion, and this too, only by way of **allusion**, etc. Look there.]

*...delving into these
topics with a deep and
expansive
contemplation, to the
extent that one takes
pleasure in the matter
("strolling" in Pardes).
It is this manner of the
study of Pardes that
must be only after
one's "belly is full with
bread and meat."*

This is not so, however, with regard to the matters discussed in the four chapters in Rambam; they are without lengthy explanation **and etc.** [Thus, their study cannot be considered as “strolling.”] The Rambam himself **emphasizes** that it is merely “like a drop from the ocean of that which needs to be elucidated on this topic” (similarly with regard to the Act of Creation, it is “like a drop from a bucket”), as explained above. In fact, they are not even classified as “outlines of the chapters” (for even the outlines of the chapters regarding the Supernal Chariot may not be taught in **public**; how much more so is it not “for the small and the great [alike]”), but only as general information (albeit **foundational**). Thus, it is not at all classified as “to **stroll** in *Pardes*.”

14. On the other hand, concerning the study of these matters in **this** manner (general information), as the

Rambam arranges them in his work – **on the contrary**: This must be studied “**first of all**,” for the “foundation of the foundations and the pillar of wisdoms” is that we should have **knowledge** of G-d. Indeed, the other laws of the Torah stand on this **pillar** and are founded on this **foundation**.

And from being involved now in the matter of knowledge of G-d, we will soon merit “the Days of Moshiach,” when (in the wording of Rambam, mentioned above) “the sole occupation of the entire world will be to know G-d alone...‘for the earth shall be full with the knowledge of G-d as water covers the ocean.’”

(From the addresses of Yud-Alef Nissan, Acharon Shel Pesach, and Shabbos Parshas Emor 5744, Shabbos Parshas VaEira 5745)

A DAILY DOSE OF MOSHIACH & GEULA: 28 SHVAT – 4 ADAR

*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

28 SHVAT: BEFORE THE SIN OF THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE

In the days of Moshiach, the avoda of the Jewish People in elevating good from bad will be completed, and they will attain the perfection that existed prior to the sin of the Tree of Knowledge.

(Kuntres Torah Chadasha M'Iiti Teitzei 5751)

29 SHVAT: THE HIDDEN GOOD IN THE AFFLICTIONS OF THE EXILE

“So says G-d, ‘Preserve justice and do righteousness, for My salvation is near to come and My benevolence [is soon] to be revealed.’” (Yeshayahu 56:1)

In the Future to Come, it will be revealed how the Exile is really a matter of “righteousness.” Now, the matter is on the level of faith, as our Sages, of blessed memory, have said (P’sachim 87b): “G-d did righteousness with Israel by spreading them among the nations” – they believe that it is so, but the intellect neither understands nor grasps the matter.

However, in the Future to Come, they will see clearly how the Exile was a matter of righteousness, as it is said (Yeshayahu 12:1): “I will thank You, Hashem, for You were angry with me.” That is, the good hidden in the afflictions of the Exile will be revealed in the Future to Come. It will likewise be revealed how these afflictions are specifically what caused the Jewish People to merit the revelation in the Future.

(Likkutei Sichos, Vol. 20, p. 361, Vol. 4, p. 1081)

30 SHVAT: THE PURPOSE OF THE EXILE: RAISING THE SPARKS

The purpose of the descent into Exile and the scattering among the nations was in order that the Jewish People will elevate the holy sparks that fell and were scattered throughout the world.

When a Jew comes to a place where there are G-dly sparks to elevate and he does his avoda there, (in addition to purifying and elevating the sparks) the place where the sparks are situated (i.e., the entire world) is transformed into holiness.

This is what our Sages, of blessed memory, have said: “Eretz Yisroel in the future will spread forth into all the lands” – after the completion of the Divine service of Exile, when the world is subjugated and transformed into holiness, then the holiness of Eretz Yisroel will spread forth to all the lands.

(Likkutei Sichos, Parshas VaYechi 5747)

1 ADAR: PURIFYING THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD IS SIMILAR TO THE PURIFICATION IN THE FUTURE TO COME

Since we are at the end of the time of Exile, close to the destined fulfillment of, “Then I will transform the nations to have a clear language, etc., to serve Him as one,” we must also strive to be involved in the purification of the nations of the world by influencing them to fulfill the Seven Noachide Laws, “since G-d commanded them in the Torah, and made known to us through Moshe

Rabbeinu.” This is similar to the purification in the Future to Come, when there will be fulfilled the destiny of, “Then I will transform the nations, etc., to serve Him as one,” “And the sovereignty will be G-d’s.”

And as has been mentioned many times, it is much easier in these days to have an effect upon the nations of the world – in the ways of pleasantness and appropriate for outreach, etc. – since connections exist with the nations of the world in any event, in relation to matters of commerce and the like.

(sicha of the Rebbe shlita)

1 ADAR I: JOY BREAKS THE BOUNDARIES OF THE EXILE

Chassidus explains that “joy breaks through boundaries.” Joy can enable a Jew to break through his various limitations, and attain the highest achievements.

Moshiach is also defined as one who breaks through boundaries, as it is said, “the one who breaks through boundaries rises before them – this is Melech HaMoshiach.”

We learn from this that by “joy breaking through boundaries,” we bring the True and Complete Redemption, when “Then our mouths will be filled with laughter.”

...to the point that in the Future to Come, the joy will be at the fullest level – joy in G-d will then be on account of His being and essence, of our own accord, as on the level of tzaddikim, so it will be for every Jew.

(Shabbos Parshas B'Shalach 5752)

1 ADAR II: THE JOY THAT BRINGS THE REDEMPTION

There’s a story about one of the great tzaddikim that when he was a small child, he asked his father for an apple. When his father refused to give it to him, the child cleverly and quickly said the bracha, “*Borei Pri HaEitz*.” Since the father didn’t want to see his son violate the prohibition against “making a bracha in vain,” he immediately gave the fruit to the child.

Regarding the subject of the Redemption, we must also be “clever” and conduct ourselves as did this child: If we start already being joyful with the joy of the Redemption, out of absolute faith that G-d will quickly send us the Moshiach, this joy itself will compel G-d, as it were, to send Moshiach immediately.

(Likkutei Sichos, Vol. 20, Parshas Lech Lecha)

2 ADAR I: REDEMPTION IN THE MERIT OF SIMCHA

One of the Polish tzaddikim gave the following interpretation on the verse, “Then they will say among the nations” (T’hillim 126:2):

“Then they will say among the nations” – when Moshiach will come, the nations will say, “G-d has done great things for them” – G-d did great and wondrous things with the Jewish People.

And we respond to them that in fact, “G-d has done great things for us” – and why?

Because “we were joyful” – in the merit of the simcha.

(sicha of the Rebbe shlita)

Regarding the subject of the Redemption, we must also be “clever” and ... start already being joyful with the joy of the Redemption, out of absolute faith that G-d will quickly send us the Moshiach, this joy itself will compel G-d, as it were, to send Moshiach immediately.

2 ADAR II: GETTING USED TO THE REDEMPTION

As we are standing literally on the threshold of the Redemption, every Jew must accustom himself to the Redemption and place himself in a situation and feeling of Redemption by transforming his personal day into “a (personal) day of Redemption,” and turning his private domain into “Eretz Yisroel” by doing his service at this moment and at this place to the fullest extent – in thought, speech, and action.

(Shabbos Parshas Pinchas 5751)

3 ADAR I: THE HALACHIC IDENTITY OF MELECH HA'MOSHIACH

“If a king will arise from the House of Dovid who is learned in Torah and involved in mitzvos as Dovid his father, according to the Written and Oral Torah, and will compel all Israel to walk [in the ways of Torah] and strengthen it, and fight the wars of G-d, it may be presumed that he is Moshiach” (Rambam, Hilchos

Melachim)

The Rambam’s seifer of halachos is the only halachic source that relates clearly to the subject of Melech HaMoshiach; in everything connected to the identity of Moshiach, no one differs with the Rambam.

We are talking then about a clear and absolute halachic ruling that when a Jew is found whose activities are identified with this process, he is “presumed to be Moshiach,” and we are to believe in him and anticipate that he will build the Beis HaMikdash and gather in the Exiles of Israel to Eretz Yisroel.

(Likkutei Sichos, Vol. 3, Yud Shvat)

3 ADAR II: THE TIME OF THE REDEMPTION HAS ARRIVED

The nullification of the Exile is through the nullification of the reason for the Exile (which came through the opposite of Ahavas Yisroel).

Thus, as we stand after the conclusion of our actions and our Divine service, on the verge of the Redemption, the reason for the Exile has surely already been repaired.

...thus, at the end of this time period, without the slightest possible doubt, the time of the Redemption has **surely** arrived, and in the language of our Sages, of blessed memory, "all the appointed times have been finished."

(Shabbos Parshas Mishpatim, Shabbos Parshas Balak 5752)

4 ADAR I: THE APPOINTMENT OF MOSHIACH HAS ALREADY TAKEN PLACE

And since the appointment of Dovid Malka M'shichei has already taken place, as it is written (T'hilim 89:21): "I have found Dovid My servant, I have anointed him with My holy oil," there only must be the acceptance of his sovereignty by the people, and the connection between the king and the people in complete revelation.

...Moshiach Tzidkeinu, (he is) the shliach referred to in, "Send, I pray, by the hand of the one You will send," my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, and as continued afterwards by his successor.

(Shabbos Parshas Mishpatim 5751, Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sara 5752)

4 ADAR II: THE MOST AUSPICIOUS TIME FOR REDEMPTION

It has been said many times that all the appointed times have been finished, everything has been completed, and the Redemption should have come long ago. Yet, due to reasons totally not understood, it has still not come. We learn from this that in any case, the Redemption must come immediately at this moment, mamash, and in layman's terms, this is the "hechste tzait" (the loftiest and most auspicious time) for the True and Complete Redemption.

(Shabbos Parshas Bo 5752)

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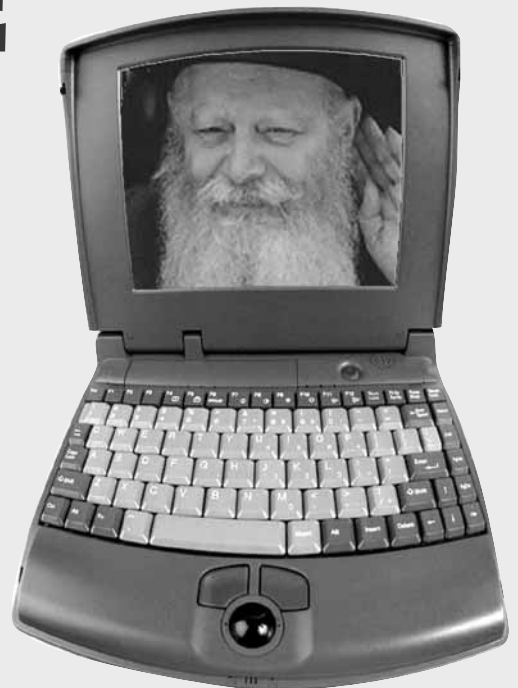
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ב"ה

THE SOUL CONNECTION BETWEEN MAN AND HIS POSSESSIONS

*The laws of the innocent ox and the goring ox are surprising and cannot be understood except through Sod. * A fascinating look at the parsha from the perspective of Chazal, Kabbala, and Chabad Chassidus.*

DAMAGES

A person whose animal caused damage, must pay in full for the damage as the Torah says in parshas Mishpatim 21:35, “If an ox shall strike...and his owner does not watch him, he shall surely pay.” However, that is only if the ox damaged in the usual way, such as breaking things while walking. An ox does not pay attention to objects on the ground as it walks. In this regard it is called “muad” (likely to do damage) and its owner must watch it to ensure it doesn’t trample other people’s things. This is why the owner is “obligated to pay the full amount of the damages from the finest of his property.”

If the ox causes damages not in the usual way – such as by goring, for oxen don’t typically gore – the animal is called “tam” (lit., simple, i.e., not

considered likely to do damage) and the owner pays only half of the damages. This is because the owner is not responsible to ensure that his ox does not gore since it isn’t the animal’s nature to do so.

However, if the ox gored three times, this shows that it has become accustomed to goring and it is considered a muad for goring too. If it gores a fourth time, its owner must pay in full for the damages.

Chazal say that if an ox gored three times and became a muad for goring, if it is sold or given as a gift to someone else, the ox is no longer considered a muad and it reverts to being a tam. If it gores again, the new owner pays only half the damages, as he does for a tam, and not full payment, as he would have to for a muad.

Isn’t this strange? The reason the animal became a muad is because its nature changed and it became aggressive and likely to gore. How did acquiring a new owner make the ox any gentler?

THE NEW OWNERS

Some explain the halacha by saying that each person treats his property and animals differently, whether with the type of work he does with them – plowing, planting, carrying loads, etc. – or how he watches over them. Some close their barns securely, some hit their animals frequently while others don’t, etc.

Consequently, the ox’s aggression is an outgrowth of its owner’s way of handling it and one can assume that the handling of a new owner will influence the ox so it won’t gore again. This is likely since the new owners know the ox’s history and will be especially vigilant with it as the *Aruch HaShulchan* writes, “the new owners will be especially watchful and it will not gore again.”

An example to illustrate this: The halacha states that an ox that gores three times on Shabbos and not on weekdays becomes a muad for

Shabbos and not for weekdays. In other words, if it gores a fourth time on Shabbos it is considered a muad whose owner must pay in full for damages, but if it gores a fourth time on a weekday the owner only has to pay half.

Why? Because it's possible that the ox's idleness on Shabbos caused it to

break forth and gore, but on a weekday, when it expends its energy on work, it won't gore. The same is true for a change in owner. It's possible that the change will make a difference in the ox's behavior and it will be calmer.

Rashi explains it differently. He briefly states, "Ownership changes the

law of his muad status. According to Rashi the sale of the ox does not change its temperament since once it got used to goring it won't stop with a change in its owner, but the Torah established as law that whoever purchases an ox can relate to it as to a typical ox which doesn't gore. A typical ox is a tam and its owner is only required to pay half of the damages if



Painting by Zalman Kleinman

it gores, and the ox becomes a muad only if it gores three times under the new owner.

MAN'S TREMENDOUS INFLUENCE OVER HIS POSSESSIONS

The Meiri and the Shita Mekubetzes write a tremendously novel idea regarding the spiritual connection a man has with his possessions. The change in the ox's owner causes a change in the very nature of the animal and this is what makes it stop being a muad for goring. "The ox's leaving one owner for another changes its mazal and nature," "just as the ox's owner changed, so too did the ox's sickness and it was healed from its muad status."

This gives us a deep understanding of the connection between a man and his possessions. It's not that a person possesses something merely because he paid money for it, but the transaction is also connected with his mazal. To some extent, a person affects his possessions and all he owns, like in the story of Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair. His donkey did not want to work on Shabbos because the holiness of the Tanna, R' Pinchas, affected his belongings to the point that the donkey – an impure animal – would not work on Shabbos. It endured beatings so as not to work on Shabbos!

Similarly with the ox that gored, which is connected with its owner's mazal. When the ox changed hands it affected its mazal so that its aggressive tendency to gore dissipated and it reverted to its natural "non-goring" state.

This is the deeper reason why the owner must pay for damages incurred by his possessions and in the case where an animal killed a man, its owner is punished with "death by the hand of Heaven." Since their possessions are connected to them, the damages caused by their animals indicate a flaw in their own soul.

(This is why, when Yaakov Avinu moved his household over the Yabok river, he returned to retrieve "small jars" despite the danger this entailed in his battle with the angel (who injured him), because a man's possessions are part of him.)

THE OX IN MAN'S HEART

From this we learn how to draw Jews close to Judaism:

On the spiritual plane, an ox is the animal soul within man. Just as an ox

So too with a Jew, the moment he changes ownership – i.e., he leaves the mundane world for a world of holiness in the service of Hashem with Torah and prayer – this causes a change in his animal soul so that it no longer desires forbidden things.

requires guarding so that it does its work and causes no harm, so too the animal soul requires guarding so that it causes no harm and doesn't draw a Jew into the pleasures of this world, diverting him from serving his Maker.

Just as an ox by nature is a tam, which is unaccustomed to goring, so too the natural inclination of the animal soul of a Jew is not for "the lusting after forbidden things ... That is the Evil Inclination of the nations of

the world" (*Tanya* Ch. 8). The animal soul of a Jew desires only permissible pleasures and not forbidden pleasures.

Just as an ox that gored three times changes its nature and becomes a muad accustomed to goring, so too with a Jew's animal soul – if he sins several times, his nature changes ("it becomes permissible to him"); the desire for sinning becomes his nature.

There are two ways to fix the evil and to cause a Jew to do t'shuva:

1) When you want to accustom an ox that is a muad not to gore anymore, you need to put in much effort to retrain it until it reverts to its original nature, which is not to gore, so that even small children can touch it and play with it and "it does not gore." So too, in order to get rid of the strength of the lust of the animal soul for sins, much toil is necessary to refine himself until he reaches the point of complete t'shuva.

At this point he will be able to go past the place where he previously sinned and will be presented with the same circumstances and opportunity to sin and will not sin. To reach this point is a long and arduous road, requiring much hard work, until the evil nature is changed.

2) An easier way is to "change ownership." When an ox changes owners, it instantly changes and the negative characteristics it acquired under its previous owner disappear and it reverts to being a tam. So too with a Jew, the moment he changes ownership – i.e., he leaves the mundane world for a world of holiness in the service of Hashem with Torah and prayer – this causes a change in his animal soul so that it no longer desires forbidden things.

When you want to bring a Jew to t'shuva it often takes a long time until you get him to correct all his sins and flaws, but if you take him to the shul and study hall, to a Torah class, etc., then simply entering the new

environment brings about an instant change, a dramatic transformation within him. He is inspired to abandon his sins and to cleave to the ways of Hashem (as the Rebbe puts it: the mighty revelation of holiness of the G-dly soul creates a change in the animal soul to restore it to its original state).

TIKKUN OF THE WORLD FOR GEULA

From this we also learn how to prepare the world for the true and

complete Redemption. We can deal with questions about the belief in Geula and all of inyanei Moshiach with debates and attempts to convince others and explain away all the doubts and questions. This approach is long and arduous and requires much effort.

There is another approach, however, which is easier and less complicated. Namely, to make a "change in ownership" and enter "a realm of inyanei Geula." In other words, to learn inyanei Geula and

Moshiach as the Rebbe instructed, and this is transformative and does away with the questions.

Since a person's property and everything he owns, even his impure animals, are influenced directly by him – "man's mazal and nature change the mazal and nature of his animal" – when a Jew prepares himself for Geula it will impact on his possessions so they too will be ready for Geula, to greet Moshiach Tzidkeinu now!

(Source: Likkutei Sichos vol. 36, p. 102)

www.MoshiachForKids.com

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URGENT:



The New York metropolitan region's blood supply is at an emergency level of less than a two-day supply of some blood types following the holidays, the New York Blood Center said yesterday.

"We are already reducing supply to our hospital customers of O negative and B negative blood," said Dr. Robert Jones,

president of the New York Blood Center. "To avoid that situation getting worse, and the possibility of expanded blood rationing to area hospitals, we need people to understand how important blood donation is to the health of their neighbors and the larger community."

Jones said the holidays are a difficult time because many employees at the large

companies that schedule blood drives are on vacation.

He said that if the public does not respond to the appeal for blood donations, some area hospitals might be forced to reschedule elective surgeries.

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‘HERE’S YOUR MEDALLION’

BY ELI SHNEURI

Itzik is a bachur in his twenties, a lively kind of guy. The Rebbe’s holy mivtzaim are an integral part of his life. Along with his sense of humor, he also has a serious side, “when necessary,” he says. His smile wins over the hearts of mekuravim and neutralizes the opposition. That’s Itzik, a positive person by nature.

This is Itzik’s story:

When I learned in Toras Emes in Yerushalayim, I would go every Friday to put t’fillin on with soldiers at army bases. We had our way of being mekarev the soldiers – we took along cold drinks and cookies.

One time, we arrived at a certain base in the Chevron area and as usual, we distributed the drinks and cookies to the soldiers. The soldiers were happy to see us as they enjoyed our weekly visits. We got to know them and used the opportunity to put t’fillin on with them and to speak about some concepts in Torah. Sometimes, a simple thing that you think every child knows was new to them.

I noticed that a certain soldier avoided us, even when we offered him a drink and cookies. He just wasn’t interested, and you could forget about t’fillin; he didn’t want to hear about that. As he spoke disparagingly, I looked into his eyes and felt compassion for him. Then and there I resolved that he was my project.

Aviv Shamash was the soldier’s

name. He was raised on a non-religious kibbutz in the north. He didn’t make our lives easy. He expressed his hatred for us and for Judaism. I responded each time with a smile and love! He would get upset and I would remain calm and pleasant. Despite his rejections we always offered him the refreshments we brought.

One day, I noticed a change in him. He agreed to partake of our



The medallion from the Rebbe

refreshments and we got into a conversation. We became friendly and spoke openly. This was the first crack in his wall of opposition.

From then on, our meetings became marathons of questions and answers about Judaism and Moshiach. He asked intensely, as he was taught to do on the kibbutz, and I answered gently as I was taught at home. A few

weeks went by and the wall of disdain melted.

Months went by and I taught him many things that the Rebbe said on various topics. Each week, when we came, he would be waiting for us in the entrance to the base with a new argument. Each week he presented us with new challenges in front of his friends.

Thank G-d, we managed, but despite it all, he still refused to put on t’fillin. Then, one day, when we arrived as usual, he greeted us happily and announced that he was ready to put on t’fillin.

We had passed a very important milestone and from there we began learning the Rebbe’s maamarim and sichos together.

It came time for Aviv to be released from the army. As the Chabadnikim on base, he invited us to his goodbye party. I began to speak to Aviv about his progress in things Jewish but he had a completely different thing on his mind.

“I’ve already gotten a dollar from the Rebbe. I already have brachos from the Rebbe. Before I return to my family I want to ask the Rebbe for something that not everybody has...”

“Like what?” I asked

“A special medallion from the Rebbe,” Aviv said slowly, as though trying to find the words to express

what he truly wanted.

I had no idea whether something like this existed and if it did, who would part with it? Yet I responded, "No problem! You commit to learning ten lines a day of Chassidus and the Rebbe will send you a medallion."

I went back to yeshiva wondering how I could get this thing "that not everybody has." I went to the library in the zal and took a volume of *Igros Kodesh*. I sat down and concentrated on writing a letter to the Rebbe. I wrote, "I want to get a medallion for the soldier Aviv Shamash." Under this line I wrote another request, "I would also like a medallion." I put the letter at random into the volume and sat down to learn.

While learning, I noticed a friend of mine, a member of our community. I suggested that he sit down and learn

From then on, our meetings became marathons of questions and answers about Judaism and Moshiach. He asked intensely, as he was taught to do on the kibbutz, and I answered gently as I was taught at home...

with me. He agreed and we began to learn. After a few minutes of learning he suddenly stood up and looked at me as though he was withholding a secret. Then he suddenly took something out of his pocket and handed it to me. "It's a present. It's a medallion that I got from the Rebbe on Lag B'Omer 5750 which he distributed through the camp counselors."

I confidently said, "And what about for me?" He looked at me in surprise and so I had to explain myself.

After I told him the story about the soldier and the Rebbe's answer, he took another medallion out of his pocket. "This is for you."

According to my friend, he himself does not know how or why he got three medallions when the Rebbe asked that the counselors give them out. "I've had them for years and now I know why!"

The next Friday I went to the base again. Aviv was waiting eagerly to hear what I had to say. I smiled and handed him a medallion. His hands shook as he held it. He looked at it incredulously. The Rebbe had sent him a medallion!

We agreed that both of us would carry the medallions on us 24-hours-a-day except for Shabbos. This is how we would keep connected 24-hours-a-day.

* * *

Itzik's firsthand story was amazing. He took out a golden medallion from his pocket and showed it to me, as though to authenticate his story.

Today, Aviv wears a kippa and tzitzis, puts on t'fillin every morning, and is shomer Shabbos.

May we see the Rebbe MH"M who will redeem us with kindness and mercy with the true and complete Redemption, now!



Itzik with soldiers

‘I AM WITH YOU AT THE CHABAD HOUSE IN YOUR COUNTRY’

Part 4 in the series “Stories from the Chabad House”

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

“I’ll tell you the truth. It says in the program that I’m supposed to speak about loneliness but I don’t feel lonely! I have a community of twenty people. I have friends, shluchim, and Chassidim throughout the world. I have the Rebbe, I have my shlichus, and I’m not alone.”



At one of the International Shluchim Conventions that took place in Crown Heights, one of the topics on the program was, “How to Handle the Loneliness,” which was going to be given by the shliach to Alaska, Rabbi Y.Y. Greenberg. I was very interested in this lecture since I knew Rabbi Greenberg from when we learned together in yeshiva. I wondered how he managed with the isolation in Alaska with no Jewish community for a radius of 2000 kilometers.

I waited for the lecture to begin, along with many other shluchim. Rabbi Greenberg approached the microphone and we could see he was hesitating. Then he began and said, “I’ll tell you the truth. It says in the

program that I’m supposed to speak about loneliness but I don’t feel lonely! I have a community of twenty people. I have friends, shluchim, and Chassidim throughout the world. I have the Rebbe, I have my shlichus, and I’m not alone.”

Rabbi Greenberg went on to tell amazing stories about his activities and challenges such as obtaining kosher food, etc., but the part that made a big impact on me was that he said he’s not lonely.

“RABBI SHMUELEVITZ IS NOT ALONE!”

Seven years ago we celebrated the bar mitzva of our son Sholom Ber in a hall in Beit Shaan. A Chabad rabbi was

invited to speak. He began by praising me for having the mesirus nefesh to leave the city where I was born and attended yeshiva to come to this isolated place to carry out my shlichus alone.

One of the guests, an Egged bus driver by profession, a good friend and a regular participant in the shiurim, stood up and said, “Excuse me, but Rabbi Shmuelevitz is not alone! He has hundreds of friends and participants in his work and shlichus...” Applause interrupted his interjection which proved to all that the Rebbe’s shliach is truly not alone.

Lonely or not lonely is a measure of one’s hiskashrus to the Rebbe as well as a touchstone for one’s Ahavas

Yisroel. If you have both these qualities, you will never be alone. But if Heaven forbid, you are weak in one of these areas, then the loneliness is difficult and one needs to turn to the Rebbe immediately.

It once happened to me, in the middle of my year on K'vutza (5744), when I had to leave my regular spot at the Rebbe's farbrengens. I had an excellent place that I got from a friend on the previous K'vutza but in the middle of the year he returned and I had to vacate it. I tried to share the place with him but that resulted in people being pushed off the bench so I was told that I had to get down.

I felt alone. What was the point in anything if I couldn't see or hear the Rebbe at the farbrengen? I sat down and wrote a note to the Rebbe, "Please arouse much mercy on...so that I will have a place at the farbrengen."

The Rebbe's blessing helped and that week, a man in 770 told me that the person who stands in front of him went on shlichus and I could take his place. I jumped at the chance and from then till this day, I have my regular spot in 770 facing the Rebbe. That is where I am at every farbrengen. Now, I

am not alone. I am not kidding. When you are connected to the Rebbe, to his teachings, to his instructions, to shlichus, then wherever you are, the Rebbe is there with you and there is no loneliness.

In my youth I heard that a certain shliach in a distant country missed the Rebbe very much (perhaps he imagined that he was alone) and he wrote to the Rebbe that it was difficult for him on shlichus and he wanted to go to 770 to be close to the Rebbe. The Rebbe circled the words, "close to the Rebbe," and wrote: **surely your intention is to my spirituality, and not to trees and stones, and spiritually I am at the Chabad house in your country.**

This teaches us that one who is truly connected to the Rebbe, according to the Rebbe's truth, learning his teachings and fulfilling his instructions, has the Rebbe with him wherever he is. Naturally, this knowledge cancels out any hint of loneliness, if there is such a thing.

TO FARBRENG BY PHONE

This happened on Hei Teives 5747. The news went out from 770 to the

world: *Didan natzach* (i.e., victory in the court case over the s'farim)! My good friend, Rabbi Yisroel Gliss was already a shliach in Dimona and was unable to leave his city or to attend any celebratory farbrengen.

R' Gliss wanted to say l'chaim but had nobody with whom to do so. Then he remembered that he had an old friend in Beit Shaan, though he didn't know that just at that moment we were making a Sheva Brachos for my brother (today a shliach in Ohr Akiva).

While greeting my guests and beginning the joyous meal, the phone rang with R' Gliss on the line. He raised a cup of mashke and told me to do the same and we began farbrenging over the phone.

My guests did not understand where their host had disappeared to for twenty minutes, but we knew that when there is Ahavas Yisroel and Chassidic brotherliness, then even in Dimona and Beit Shaan a Chassid is never alone. As it says in the *HaYom Yom* (10 Adar II), Chassidim do not part...wherever they are they are one family.



Rabbi Shmuelevitz at his son's bar mitzva.

In the picture are also Mr. Dovid Levy and his son, the mayor of Beit Shaan.

'YOU WILL BE MY AMBASSADOR IN AUSTRALIA'

BY SHAI GEFEN

*This is what the Rebbe said in yechidus to Rabbi Sholom Dovber HaKohen Gutnick, senior Chabad rabbi and Av Beis Din in Melbourne, Australia. * Rabbi Gutnick was sent by the Rebbe Rayatz to Australia 60 years ago and wrought a spiritual revolution there. He also merited special attention from the Rebbe over the years.*

"You will be my ambassador to Australia," said the Rebbe MH"M in a yechidus with Rabbi Sholom Dovber HaKohen Gutnick. If we sum up the sixty years that Rabbi Gutnick has spent in Australia, where he was sent by the Rebbe Rayatz before he was married, we must say that indeed, he is the Rebbe's loyal ambassador. He has a large share in the establishing of religious life and the institutions that were founded over the years.

As I spoke to Rabbi Gutnick, he did not cease to marvel at the spiritual revolution that has taken place in Australia under the leadership and guidance of the Rebbe. Australia was a spiritual wasteland, and thanks to the

prodigious powers of the Rebbe Rayatz and the Rebbe, it has been transformed into a religious, even Chassidishe, place for Jews. Rabbi Gutnick had the privilege of realizing the vision of the Rebbeim that Australia should become a place of Torah and Chassidus.

A FAMILY OF MESIRUS NEFESH

Rabbi Gutnick's mesirus nefesh is an integral character trait of the extended family. His father, R' Mordechai Zev a"h, was a prime example of this trait. R' Sholom Dovber did not know his father well since his father passed away at a young age and his children, Rabbi Shneur Chaim a"h and Rabbi Sholom

Dovber were still young children. Yet, the father's influence is quite apparent in his children.

R' Mordechai Zev was born in 5657 (1897) in Priaslav to a longtime Chassidishe family. His grandfather, R' Avrohom, was a Chassid of the Tzemach Tzedek.

In his youth, R' Mordechai Zev learned in Tomchei T'mimim in Lubavitch and was shown special attention by the Rebbe Rashab, the founder of the yeshiva. The acting dean of the yeshiva, the Rebbe Rayatz, wrote in a letter about R' Mordechai Zev that he received a "good chinuch" to Torah and service of the heart.

R' Zalman Shimon Dvorkin a"h, who later became the rav of Crown Heights, was one of R' Mordechai Zev's good friends in Lubavitch. In 5699 (1939), when one of his sons visited Otvotzk, the Rebbe Rayatz told him, "When your father was 18 he was already proficient in Shas and Poskim."

In addition to his outstanding accomplishments in Torah study, R' Mordechai Zev also studied law. Although in those days it was dangerous to study secular subjects, R' Mordechai did so solely as a means to spread Torah and

Chassidus. All the Torah greets who met him were amazed by his Torah knowledge and wisdom. He received letters of ordination from the giants of his time including Rabbi Chaim Ozer Grodzenski z"l, who wrote, "He is as great as one of the great ones of our time."

MISSION TO THE CAUCASIAN MOUNTAINS

R' Mordechai Zev was one of the first shluchim of the Rebbe Rashab who was sent to the Caucasian mountains in 5674 (1914) in order to save the Judaism of the Jews living there. R' Mordechai Zev was beloved

there and several years after he married he was sent a request from the community that he be their rav.

In 5681 (1921) R' Mordechai married Chaya Basya a"h, the daughter of R' Avrohom Braverman who was wealthy and had a large family. They settled in Tarashtza. When the Communist Revolution began, R' Mordechai continued his holy work on behalf of the community despite the unbearable hardships.

The Rebbe Rayatz asked him to serve as rav in Tiflis in Georgia. R' Mordechai accepted the position but

was never actually able to move there.

The situation in those days and the persecution of R' Mordechai by the secret police after he had helped build a mikva oppressed his spirit. He was warned by a friend who had connections with the police to leave Russia. He was also very concerned about the chinuch and safety of his children in Russia.

With the help of the great Rabbi Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld, rav in Yerushalayim, he was able to emigrate to Eretz Yisroel and the Gutnick family settled in Chevron and then moved to Tel Aviv. The Rebbe Rayatz mentioned when he left Russia, "His absence here is obviously apparent."

A CHASSIDIC HOME IN LONDON

Rabbi Sholom Dovber was born in 5684 (1924) when they still lived in Tarashtza. He tells of his mother's two brothers who were killed in the uprisings that were prevalent in those days.

R' Sholom Dovber was only three years old when they left Russia for Eretz Yisroel and from there they moved to London. After their father passed away in London, their mother remarried Rav Asher Abramson a"h from Disner who later became a distinguished rabbi in London and served there as a dayan.

Rabbi Abramson was one of the great Chabad Chassidim. In his youth he learned in Radin by the Chafetz Chaim z"l and when the Rebbe Rayatz lived in Otvozk, he went to see him for the holidays.

R' Gutnick remembers, as a young boy, when their father, R' Mordechai Zev began spiritually awakening the Jews of London. They were the first to make Mivtza Matza and Family Purity in London and they inspired people to observe Shabbos, long before these became accepted



Rabbi Sholom Dovber HaKohen Gutnick

campaigns.

The Gutnick home, even after the passing of their great father, was a meeting place for the wise, and the Torah greats in London would come and go from their home. R' Gutnick recalls the rabbanim who frequented their house in those days such as Rabbi Eliyahu Lopian, Rabbi Yechezkel Abramsky, Rabbi Greenspan, Rabbi Benjaminson, Rabbi Dubov and others.

"Hosting people was so routine at our house that the key was on the outside, in the mailbox, and people opened the door themselves and walked in."

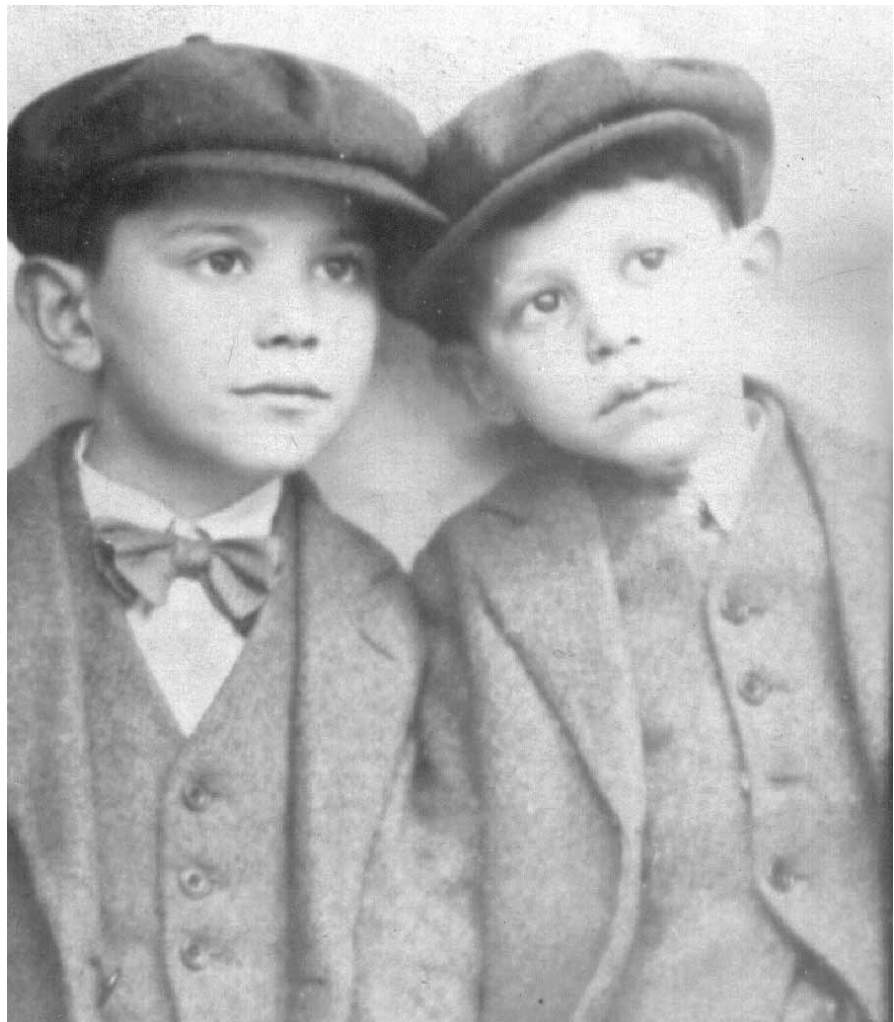
Till this day, R' Sholom Dovber remembers the inspiring Musar lessons he heard in yeshiva in London on Fridays from the famous mashgiach, Rabbi Eliyahu Lopian z"l. "I would cry each time," said R' Gutnick.

R' Gutnick relates that R' Lopian had a connection to Chabad and would refer to Tanya often in his Musar talks.

"Every Motzaei Shabbos we would have Melaveh Malka with Rabbi Yerachmiel Benjaminson. R' Eliyahu Lopian would occasionally come to farbrengens. Those were very special times when all groups got along," says R' Gutnick wistfully.

One of the moving encounters that R' Gutnick remembers from his youth in London was with the famous Chassid, R' Yitzchok Horowitz known as R' Itche the Masmid (may Hashem avenge his blood). He visited London on his travels as a fundraiser.

"R' Itche was known to be very stringent in matters of kashrus and would not eat if he did not know for certain that it met his kashrus requirements. He stayed at a hotel in London and agreed to eat only from the food that my mother prepared. I would bring him the food to his



Rabbi Sholom Dovber Gutnick, may he live long,
and his brother Rabbi Shneur Chaim a"h, in their childhood

hotel. I remember that he patted my cheek in a fatherly way."

R' Gutnick also remembers Rabbi Ben-Tzion Shemtov from the years when he lived in London between 1945 and 1948.

"One day, R' Shemtov came to a Gemara class that I gave and asked questions. Then he asked that I give classes in all the shuls. I think this request came from the Rebbe Rayatz."

DILIGENCE

It is hard to describe R' Sholom Dovber's enormous diligence in his Torah studies in his youth when he learned in yeshivas Eitz Chaim in

London, as he simultaneously began to give Torah classes. In 1946 he went to learn in yeshivas Eitz Chaim in Monterey in Switzerland. There, at the request of Rabbi Batchko, he began giving classes in Gemara.

It was at this time that he received a letter from the Rebbe Rayatz. It was 3 Av 1946 and the letter said: **I was pleased to hear that you are learning in yeshivas Eitz Chaim in Monterey and Hashem should strengthen your health and you should be diligent and succeed in your learning and inform me of your learning and conduct.**

On 16 Elul of that same year, R' Gutnick received another letter from

the Rebbe Rayatz in which the Rebbe calls him, "the distinguished talmid Mr. Sholom Dovber." The Rebbe Rayatz wrote: **the main benefit in Torah study is to know how to act according to Hashem's wishes, and not for the cleverness and the rationalizations of leniencies. Be wary of those scholars whose entire study is in order to find leniencies and permissiveness by way of various and bizarre rationalizations.**

The Rebbe goes on to say: **I was happy to hear that you are learning Tanya and surely you also learn Chassidus from time to time and Hashem should strengthen and fortify you materially and spiritually and may you be G-d fearing, a Chassid, and a scholar.**

A terrible tragedy took place during that period in Monterey, when Rabbi Batchko's son-in-law was killed by a train. It was R' Sholom Dovber who continued to maintain the yeshiva and he continued to give

classes in Gemara and even served as the main lecturer.

After about a year, R' Gutnick decided to return to London where he continued spreading Torah and was also hired as rav of the Chevra Shas shul.

From a letter that R' Gutnick wrote on Erev Shabbos HaGadol 1948 to the Rebbe Rayatz, we learn a little bit about his work in London to spread Torah.

"For Pesach 1947 I returned home (to London) from Monterey, Switzerland, and continued learning in yeshivas Eitz Chaim here. In the summer of that year I was given ordination to serve as a ruler of halachic decisions and as a judge from the roshei yeshivas Eitz Chaim and also from Rabbi Shmuel Yosef Rabinov and our friend Rabbi Yerachmiel Benjaminson.

In Kislev I was appointed rav of the Chevra Shas congregation in London. Every evening I give a class in Gemara and on Shabbos I speak of timely

subjects. Every Shabbos I give a Gemara class in English to the young working men, who previously learned in yeshivos. Nearly every day I am in yeshiva. I request the Rebbe's holy blessing that Hashem grant me merit in the study of Torah and fear of heaven, to learn and teach, to observe and do, may Hashem send me a good shidduch and to settle down to a good life, true good."

"I PICTURED HOW YOU LOOK"

At the end of 5708 (1948), R' Gutnick has his first yechidus with the Rebbe Rayatz, along with his mother. Rabbi Asher Abramson, who was already married to his mother, went to Australia a few months earlier in order to accept a rabbinic position there. After he received the Rebbe's bracha, he settled in Sydney where he worked to strengthen religious observance.

When R' Gutnick recalls the special yechidus he had with the



The Rebbe Rayatz

"From the letters you wrote to me I pictured how you looked."



Rabbi Gutnick's letter to the Rebbe Rayatz

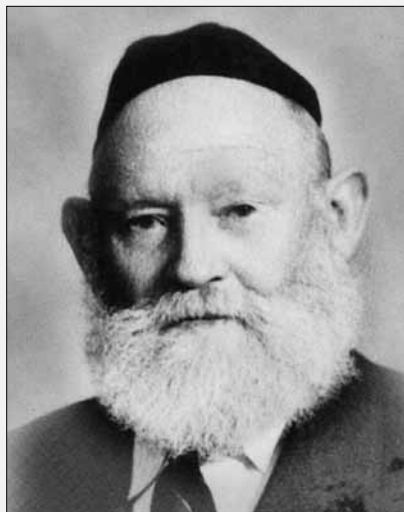
A TRUE HELPMATE

In addition to R' Gutnick's work in establishing and expanding Chabad institutions in Australia, his wife Devorah founded N'shei U'Bnos Chabad and was greatly encouraged by the Rebbe in her important work. She started an after-school program and taught children how to read.

The early baalei t'shuva in Australia first became acquainted with Judaism in those schools she taught in with tremendous mesirus nefesh, the same mesirus nefesh that she inherited from the Feiglin family. She made sure that tzitzis were made for the boys in the schools. Over the years, many copied her programs such as classes for women. Until this day there is still a weekly class for women in her home.



Children in the Jewish school in Colton who were taught by Rebbetzin Devorah Gutnick



Rebbetzin Devorah Gutnick's grandfather, R' Moshe Zalman Feiglin a"h



Rebbetzin Devorah Gutnick's father, R' Avrohom Feiglin a"h

Rebbe Rayatz, he is visibly moved. This was right before they went to Australia, as on their way there they traveled via New York in order to meet with the Rebbe for the first time. Among the things R' Gutnick remembers from that yechidus is that the Rebbe told them in connection with their role in spreading Judaism that "to be moistened so as to moisten others" means to reach a state where even the people whom you influence can also, in turn, influence others to Torah and mitzvos.

On a personal note, the Rebbe Rayatz said, "From the letters you wrote to me I pictured how you look."

In New York they were hosted by their cousin R' Mordechai Teleshevsky. R' Gutnick then traveled to Australia with his mother. When they arrived in Australia, R' Gutnick went right to work together with R' Abramson in strengthening the Torah classes and religion there. In reports that R' Abramson wrote to the Rebbe Rayatz, we find that he tells of the shiurim that R' Gutnick would give to young people and be mekarev them to Torah.

In a report from the first day of Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan 5749, he wrote to the Rebbe about "the shiur that R' Sholom gives every Thursday in English to young people who do not understand Yiddish, and we hope that the light-source within will uncover the holy spark within each one of them."

In a report of 27 Iyar 5749 he notes, "Bachurim who put on t'fillin, two lawyers, a doctor and others attend Sholom Ber's shiurim. He speaks in English and his two shiurim have gotten positive publicity, baruch Hashem."

HEADING THE YESHIVA IN MELBOURNE

R' Gutnick married Devorah



Rabbi Mordechai Zev Gutnick a"h



Rabbi Asher Abramson, Av Beis Din
in Sydney a"h

Feiglin on 23 Adar 1952. The Feiglins had settled in Australia many years earlier and were the nucleus of Chabad in Sheparton. Her parents' home was suffused with Torah and fear of heaven and hiskashrus to the Rebbeim.

By this time, the Rebbe MH"m had taken over the Chabad leadership and in a rare letter that the Rebbe wrote to him in honor of his wedding, he explained the topic of marital witnesses according to Chassidus and Nigleh.

Rebbetzin Devorah Gutnick tells of a story she heard from her father, R' Avrohom Feiglin. In 5710, when the Rebbe Rayatz passed away, her grandfather, R' Moshe Zalman Feiglin woke up that Shabbos morning, Yud Shevat, to the sound of a crash. A framed picture of the Rebbe Rayatz had fallen and the glass had shattered.

"Something happened," said R' Moshe Zalman and he was very shaken by this. All attempts to calm him were in vain. The next day, they heard the news of the passing of the Rebbe Rayatz.

*The Rebbe asked him
where he had bought
the hamantashen, and
then said that R'
Gutnick should have
told the man that he
would bring
hamantashen every
day, if he would put
on t'fillin every day.*

The home of R' Sholom Dovber and his wife soon became a house where Torah and Judaism were taught. In their home there were classes in Chassidus and a cheider for children. Australia, so far from being a place of Torah, was beginning to become just such a place.

Within two months of his marriage, the nucleus of Anash in

Australia met for an emergency meeting in order to see what could be done to get things moving and to start a yeshiva. One of the resolutions agreed upon unanimously was the appointment of Rabbi Gutnick as rosh yeshiva.

The Chabad yeshiva in Australia had many locations over the years. It began in Sheparton with the efforts of R' Moshe Zalman Feiglin. Then it moved to Burwood, a suburb on the edge of Melbourne. Later, the yeshiva moved to the heart of Melbourne.

From a rare document we discover that on 7 Nissan 1952, a few weeks after R' Gutnick's wedding, a letter was written to the Rebbe about the decision to appoint him as rosh yeshiva.

"All of Anash gathered, led by Rav Abramson, and the meeting was about the yeshiva. To our sorrow, we see that throughout this time, whether when the yeshiva was in Sheparton or afterwards in Melbourne, it has been unable to attract local boys who were born in Australia. We sought the reasons for this and how to rectify the situation.

"It was suggested that we find someone who has the ability to attract young boys who were born here. Perhaps, Hashem will have mercy and through him we will be able to attract those who haven't been attracted until now. We all agreed that the man for this job is the dynamic and ordained Rabbi Sholom Dov Gutnick of Sydney who, since he married, is living in Melbourne. He agrees to this. It's just that both sides want to know the Rebbe's holy opinion and we ask for guidance towards the true path and as the Rebbe instructs, we will do."

The entire Chabad nucleus in Australia participated in the meeting: Rabbi Asher Abramson, Rabbi Betzael Wilschansky, Rabbi Nachum Zalman Gurewitz, Rabbi Shmuel Betzael Altheus, Rabbi Zalman

Serebryanski, Rabbi Abba Pliskin, and Rabbi Isser Klugvant.

From the Rebbe's answer one can see how the appointment of R' Gutnick was seen by the Rebbe as most necessary and suitable. In a letter of 27 Nissan 1952, the Rebbe accepts the appointment and writes to R' Gutnick:

You surely know the hanhala of the yeshiva which, along with all its good qualities, according to the letters that I receive from them, sees the need to take on a rosh mesivta and rosh yeshiva who is proficient in the language of the land and its ways who can, in this way, attract Australian youth. I agree with them.

The Rebbe notes that since this is the first yeshiva in Australia and it is named for the Rebbe Rayatz, it **needs to serve as a model and symbol of his spirit, ambition and demands in regards to education.** Then the Rebbe adds superlative blessings:

So, as mentioned I approve of the suggestion that he enter into position of Rosh mesivta and rosh yeshiva in the yeshiva, and perhaps even more than that... May Hashem give him the privilege of planting in the hearts of Jewish boy and girls in Australia this feeling of love for Hashem, love for Torah, and love for Jews as they are explained and illuminated in the teachings of Chassidus of our holy leaders.

AN INSTRUCTION FROM THE REBBE ABOUT RUNNING THE YESHIVA

R' Gutnick received letters from the Rebbe regularly with detailed instructions about his holy work in the yeshiva as well as much encouragement that he merited to take this role upon himself despite the difficulties. In a letter of 1 Sivan 5712 the Rebbe wrote to him:

Without a doubt you will be successful in increasing the number

FAMILY FIGHTS FOR SHLEIMUS HA'ARETZ

When I spoke with Rabbi Gutnick, although he lives in Australia, we couldn't help but discuss the situation in Eretz Yisroel, a topic dear to the hearts of the Gutnick family.

"The things taking place in Eretz Yisroel are very worrisome. We see how correct the Rebbe was and how all concessions cause indescribable damage. The situation today cries out, 'Moshiach.' Today we all realize that the solution is the hisgalus of the Rebbe with kindness and mercy, so that we all merit going to Eretz Yisroel in joy and gladness of heart, to a complete Eretz Yisroel."

Rabbi Sholom Dovber HaKohen Gutnick's son, R' Meir HaKohen of Crown Heights, has contributed large sums of money towards the activities done on behalf of shleimus ha'Aretz and its security.



Rabbi Sholom Dovber HaKohen and his son R' Meir bringing a new Torah scroll to Chevron.



R' Sholom Dovber Gutnick. In the center: R' Abba Pliskin a"h. On the left are: R' Aharon Serebryanski, R' Binyamin Altheus a"h, R' Shmuel Gurewitz a"h



Rabbi Gutnick's first students, from left to right: Moshe Shechter, Binyamin Altheus, Leibish Friedman, Eliezer Herzog



Rabbi Gutnick, may he live long, at a farbrengen in the yeshiva with R' Zalman Serebryanski a"h

of students and afterwards also in increasing their quality.

In that same letter the Rebbe encourages him not to be despondent and promises him success in fulfilling his role:

As experience until now has shown...with the proper energy and with the appropriate persistence, Anash has ultimately always succeeded in founding their own schools and in the number of students that continues to grow. There should be no weakening and despondency because of hardships

and concealments. And based on that - my hope is strong that if they conduct themselves now too, in this place, with the strength referred to before, without a doubt they will succeed in increasing the number of students and then in increasing their quality.

The Rebbe adds that he should accept the position of rosh yeshiva of Oholei Yosef Yitzchok also "for your own personal benefit."

When R' Gutnick complained to the Rebbe that he was dissatisfied by the level of the students the year he

took the position, the Rebbe quoted the statement of Chazal, "One thousand enter to study scripture and one goes out to horaa (i.e. a rabbi qualified to render halachic decisions)."

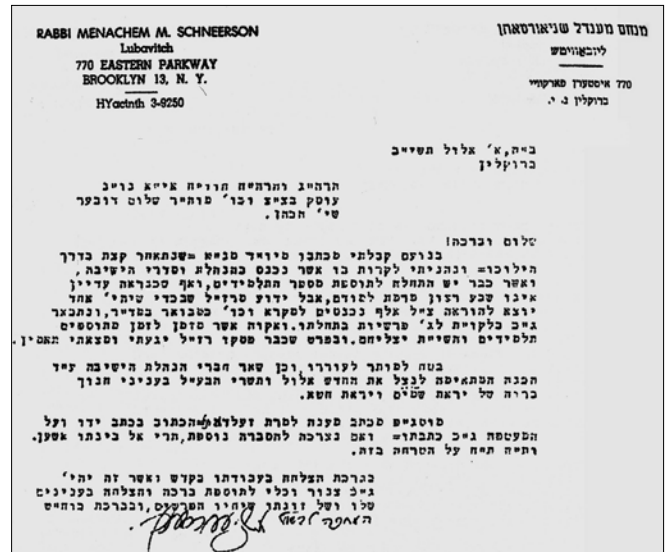
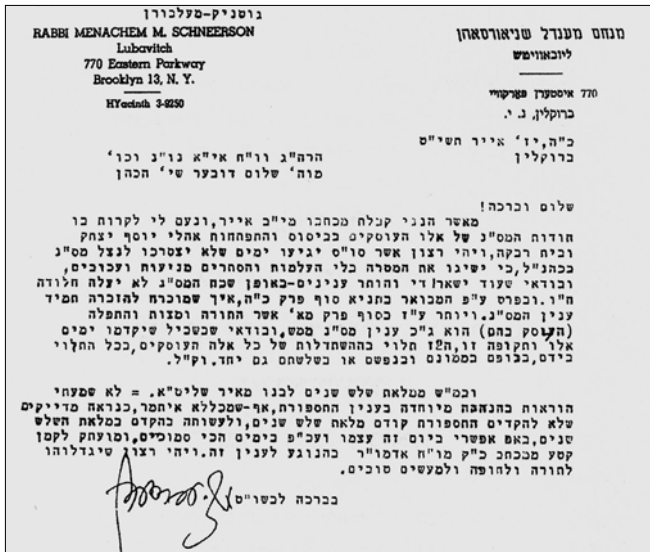
In a letter of 7 Adar 5713 the Rebbe wrote: **Every neshama has a particular mitzva which is the gate through which the effluences from Above come down. And since you have merited that your mitzva is within the tent of Torah and in an institution which was founded in the spirit of and the name of the Rebbe, my father-in-law, therefore every request and pa"n is connected with his work in this institution.**

Over the years, as the yeshiva grew, R' Gutnick was very involved in buying a new and spacious building. He was the one who located the buildings in which the yeshiva is today at Hothem Street. A number of years later, he also found a place for the Yeshiva G'dola. He put in much effort to make a spacious building and enlisted men of means to do so.

DIVINE PROVIDENCE ON MIVTZA T'FILLIN

In addition to his work at the yeshiva, with the Rebbe's bracha R' Gutnick was appointed, in 1952, as rabbi of a shul in Melbourne called Ahavas Sholom. Today it is the largest shul in Melbourne with over 3000 people attending on Jewish holidays. The Rebbe agreed to his rabbinic position on the condition that it not interfere with his work at the yeshiva.

There is practically no institution in Australia which R' Gutnick was not the first to get involved, whether he ran it, pushed for it or assisted in it. R' Gutnick founded the first Kollel Tiferes Z'keinim in Melbourne after hearing the Rebbe speaking about the need for establishing Kollelim for the elderly.



Letters from the Rebbe
Left: "The ability of self sacrifice should not become rusty G-d forbid."

In 1963, R' Gutnick went to the US to visit the Rebbe. Among the instructions he received from the Rebbe at that time was to travel about Europe and Eretz Yisroel and visit Chabad institutions and strengthen them. He did so, on his return home. He visited many institutions and encouraged people to continue in their holy work.

R' Gutnick was visiting the Rebbe when the Rebbe announced Mivtza T'fillin in 5727 (1967). R' Gutnick, who is devoted to the Rebbe's inyanim, saw it as his obligation to put t'fillin on with Jews. He went to a senior citizens center in New York to put t'fillin on with people. Before he went, he went to a local grocery store in order to buy something to eat. The store carried hamantashen even though it was a few months after Purim.

When he began putting on t'fillin, one of the old Jews refused to do so. After trying to convince him, the man said, "If you bring me a hamantash, I'll put on t'fillin." The man was apparently just joking and did not realize that this was incredible Divine Providence. R' Gutnick asked him to wait a

moment and he dashed out to his car and brought him a hamantash.

Afterwards, when he had a yechidus, R' Gutnick told the Rebbe the amazing story. The Rebbe asked him where he had bought the hamantashen, and then said that R' Gutnick should have told the man that he would bring hamantashen every day, if he would put on t'fillin every day.

The Rebbe then told R' Gutnick several stories about Mivtza T'fillin, one of them about a father who did not want to prepare his son for his bar mitzva. One day his wife saw that her husband had completely changed and she wondered what had happened. She found out he had put on t'fillin in the course of Mivtza T'fillin.

The woman located the person who had put on t'fillin with her husband and who had brought about such a change in him. Her husband became a baal t'shuva, changing his entire way of life and from then on began putting on t'fillin regularly.

The Rebbe constantly urged R' Gutnick to continue his rabbinic work and his teaching in the

yeshiva. At one of his yechiduyos, the Rebbe used a rare expression, "You will be my ambassador in Australia." On another occasion, the Rebbe said that it wasn't possible that his father, R' Mordechai Zev was a talented speaker while his children did not possess the same talent. The Rebbe urged R' Gutnick to do public speaking. R' Gutnick used his oratorical powers to spread Judaism among all types of Jews.

Rabbi Shmuel Butman related an interesting story at a Shleimus Ha'Aretz gathering in 770, in the presence of R' Gutnick. At one of the farbrengens, between sichos, the Rebbe turned to R' Gutnick and said with a smile, "Shalom, ha'kol shalom," which was a phrase said by the Kohanim before the gates of the Mikdash were opened in the morning.

CHABAD EMPIRE IN AUSTRALIA

We asked R' Gutnick to encapsulate the revolution in Australia over the more than half a century he has lived there:

"When we came to Australia the place was a spiritual desert. A barren land that was not sown."



The first talmidim-shluchim to the Yeshiva G'dola, from right to left: Aryeh Leib Kaplan a"h, Altein, Yosef Minkowitz, Shlomo Majeski, Tzvi Hirsh Morosov, Tzvi Hirsh Lipsker. Sitting are the hanhala of the yeshiva, from right to left: Rabbi Chaim Gutnick a"h, Rabbi Sholom Dovber Gutnick, Rabbi Zalman Serebryanski a"h



Farbrengen at the yeshiva in Melbourne. From left to right: Rabbis Chaim Serebryanski, Sholom Dovber Gutnick, Mr. Kagan, Yitzchok Groner, Kaplinsky, Mordechai Perlov, Yitzchok Rappaport and Krauss. In the forefront on the left is Rabbi Shmuel Betzael Altheus. The child on the right is Rabbi Sholom Ber Groner and near him is Rav Nachum Zalman Gurewitz



Rabbi Gutnick (right) convincing a group of Jewish students to learn in a yeshiva

Australia was a country where the "no" was deeply rooted – no to Torah, no to mitzvos, no to yeshiva, no to everything that had anything to do with Judaism. There were Jews who came from other countries for the purpose of distancing themselves as far as possible from a Jewish life.

"With the Rebbe's great strength we built everything from the ground up. We came to Australia when there was nothing. Boruch Hashem, shluchim came and the entire state of Judaism changed. Rabbi Abramson worked step by step in order to rectify matters and he did this together with the other Chabad rabbanim and the shluchim.

"Brick by brick the Chabad empire in Australia was built and we have reached a point where Jewish life here is just amazing. What happened here in Australia is a tangible illustration of the expression, "I'chat'chilla aribber." According to all logic, nothing should have been able to be accomplished but with the strength of the Rebbe Rayatz and the Rebbe, Australia has become an empire of Judaism."



Rabbi Gutnick learning with the seniors in Kollel Tiferes Z'keinim



Rabbi Gutnick speaking at a Lag B'Omer parade in Melbourne

FIFTEEN YEARS OF 'SWORDS INTO PLOWSHARES'

BY PROF. SHIMON SILMAN, RYAL INSTITUTE AND TOURO COLLEGE

Now we can look back over the past 15 years and ask ourselves, "Do we see a different world, a better world, a more peaceful world?" Well, if we read the newspapers and listen to the news, all we hear about is war. But the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach told us to open our eyes to see the Geula.

Fifteen years ago this Shabbos (Parshas Mishpatim, 5752), following a joint declaration by the heads of state and foreign ministers of all the members of the U.N. Security Council heralding a new era characterized by the end of wars and an emphasis on international cooperation for the benefit of all mankind, the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach announced that the "Swords Into Plowshares" prophecy of Isaiah had begun to be fulfilled.

Since 5753, the Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib Research Institute on Moshiach and the Sciences has been reporting on the progression of the Swords Into Plowshares process, in our annual conferences and in articles in this magazine.

Now we can look back over the past fifteen years and ask ourselves, "Do we see a different world, a better world, a more peaceful world?" Well, if we read the newspapers and listen to the news, all we hear about is war. But the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach told us to open our eyes to see the Geula. On the one hand, this involves more than just reading the newspapers. But on the other hand, the Swords Into Plowshares phenomenon, as described in the famous sicha of Parshas Mishpatim, was something that was clear and obvious if one just took a careful look at world events.

On October 17, 2005, the Human Security Center issued the 2005 "Human Security Report: War

and Peace in the 21st Century." Funded by five governments, published by Oxford University Press, and three years in the making, the *Report* tracks and analyses trends in political violence around the world.

"Its findings are sharply at odds with conventional wisdom. It shows that most forms of political violence have declined significantly since the end of the Cold War – and finds that the best explanation for this decline is the huge upsurge of conflict prevention, resolution and peace building activities that were spearheaded by the United Nations in the aftermath of the Cold War," according to the Human Security Centers own description. And this is exactly how the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach described the Swords Into Plowshares phenomenon in the sicha.

I must admit that I too was worried about the wars and their implication for the progression of the Geula, but when I read the Human Security Report I felt a sense of exhilaration. The Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach tells us to open our eyes and we think it means something mystical. All it means is to look beneath the

surface. Read the right reports. Get the right information.

The following is a selection of quotes and paraphrasing from the report:

The post World War II era witnessed an extraordinary increase in the number of wars – most of them civil wars. *This was followed by a steep decline after the end of the Cold War.* This was around the time of the “Swords Into Plowshares” declaration.

There are two key questions to be asked:

1) How do we explain the decline in the use of force in relations *between* states since the end of the colonial era?

2) What brought about the remarkable post Cold War decline in wars *within* states?

Strangely, neither of these important trends has been the subject of much scholarly investigation. Scholars have generally been more interested in explaining the causes of war than the determinants of peace. This is particularly true with respect to the remarkable post Cold War decline in civil wars.

The report then suggests some possible reasons for this dramatic decrease in wars in this era. One of them is that the end of the Cold War removed a major cause of armed conflict from the international system.

Approximately one-third of all wars in the post World War II period had been driven wholly, or in part, by the geopolitics of the Cold War. The end of the political confrontation between East and West in the late 1980s not only removed the only real threat of war between the major powers, but also meant that Washington and Moscow stopped supporting ‘proxy wars’ in the developing world. Denied the external assistance that had long sustained them, many of these conflicts simply petered out, or were ended by negotiated settlements.

Furthermore, the end of the Cold War set off an explosion of international activism directed toward stopping ongoing wars and preventing wars that had ended from starting up again. This little analyzed but

critically important development appears to offer the most compelling explanation for the steep decline in warfare that started in 1992.

How do we explain this drop in the number of international wars? Much of the research on the causes of international peace over the past 20 years has used large datasets and statistical inference models to examine the “correlates of war” – the economic, political, and sociological factors associated with interstate war – and peace. This research points to a number of long-term global trends that are associated with reduced risks of international conflict:

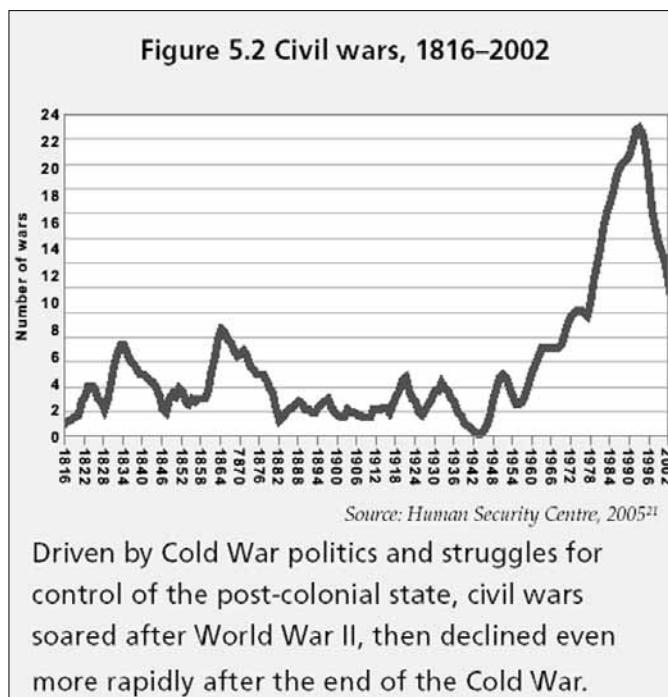
*A dramatic increase in the number of democracies.

*An increase in economic interdependence.

*A decline in the economic utility of war.

*Growth in international institutions. The greatly increased involvement by governments in international institutions can help reduce the incidence of conflict. Such institutions play an important direct role in building global norms that encourage the peaceful settlement of disputes. They can also benefit security indirectly by helping promote democratization and interdependence

But then the report goes on to give a different explanation which is along the lines of the explanation given by the



Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach in the sicha:

THE POWER OF IDEAS: A WAR-AVERSE WORLD

A quite different explanation for the decline in interstate war stresses neither the role of liberal economic and political institutions, nor military deterrence, but a gradual normative shift against the use of violence in human relationships. Among the key indicators of this general shift in attitude that the report mentions are the outlawing of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. These anti-violence norms play an important role in constraining behavior. They also inform the creation of laws and institutions – which in turn can provide the

monitoring and enforcement mechanisms to help encourage compliance.

Nowhere is this normative shift more evident than in changing public attitudes toward war. Prior to the 20th century, warfare was a normal part of human existence. For governments, war was simply an instrument of statecraft. Today the forcible acquisition of territory is universally perceived as a blatant transgression of international law, and resort to force against another country is only permissible in self-defense, or with the sanction of the UN Security Council.

There has been a similar change in attitudes to colonialism. While colonial subjugation is now universally abhorred, such conquests were once accepted as a normal part of empire and were often depicted as morally justified, in that they brought the benefits of civilization to the colonized.

Ideologies that glorify violence and see war as a noble and virtuous endeavor are today notable mostly by their absence. Insofar as similar ideologies still exist they are mainly found not in governments but in small, fanatical, terrorist organizations, such as those associated with al-Qaeda. In addition, the sort of hyper-nationalism that drove Nazi German and Imperial Japanese aggression in the 1930s and 1940s is now extremely rare.

Some scholars argue that the

“Its findings are sharply at odds with conventional wisdom. It shows that most forms of political violence have declined significantly since the end of the Cold War – and finds that the best explanation for this decline is the huge upsurge of conflict prevention, resolution and peace building activities.”

rise of war-averse sentiment in the industrialized countries has been the critical factor in the worldwide decline in international war. The reason that liberal democracies live in peace, according to this view, is not because they have democratic modes of government, but because their leaders and peoples have become more averse to war.

From this perspective, interdependence and the rapid growth of membership in

international institutions are a consequence of the peace achieved by increased war-aversion, not its causes.

THE RISE AND DECLINE OF CIVIL WAR

Until now we have been discussing international conflicts. But the decline in civil wars immediately after the Swords Into Plowshares declaration was even more sudden and more dramatic.

The number of civil wars taking place around the world initially increased after World War II - from 2 in 1946 to 25 in 1991. Prior to World War II the maximum number of civil wars in the world in any one year had never exceeded 10. As the figure shows, the escalation in the number of civil wars from 1946 to 1991 was the largest in the entire 1816 to 2002 period. This increase was due mainly to the rise in Cold War-related conflicts and to struggles for control over the new states created by the end of colonialism.

But the decline in civil war numbers that began after 1992 was steeper than the considerable increase from 1946 to 1992. In just 10 years, the number of civil wars fell by 80%!

The 2006 Human Security Report will emphasize all the above to an even greater extent. Let's open our eyes. See the Geula. Believe in its immediate completion.

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SOUL ENCOUNTER WITH THE REBBE

BY NOSSON AVROHOM

*Thousands of people had yechidus with the Rebbe, that soul-encounter between the Nasi HaDor, the “general soul,” and the individual neshama. For Chassidim it was an awe-inspiring event which required mighty spiritual preparations. * Beis Moshiach spoke to five Chassidim and asked them for some tidbits from their encounters with the Rebbe. We share their stories with you.*



Rabbi Meir Bostomsky of Kfar Chabad describes his first yechidus with the Rebbe, about his request that the Rebbe tell him his life’s mission and what he discovered his father had concealed from him for years:

I had yechidus two times with the Rebbe. The first yechidus setting me on the road that I walk till this day. I don’t remember the precise date of the yechidus but it was in the summer of 5727 (1967). I was in the process of switching over to Chabad.

I grew up in Chaifa. I lived at the Ben Dor Yishuv, near Chaifa, and attended the Technion, where I met the shliach Rabbi Michael Katz, who

introduced me to Rabbi Yechiel Michel Dobroskin of Hertzliya. Later on I met Rabbi Reuven Dunin and it was through them that I began to get involved with Chassidus.

The process was a slow and deep one and when I finished my studies at the Technion, I decided to spend more time in the search for true meaning in my life. I came to the conclusion that I had to leave Chaifa and free myself of the material bonds that did not enable me to progress spiritually. Naturally, the first step in my search, after I met such great Chassidim, was to travel to 770.

I arrived at Beis Chayeinu only at the end of Tishrei and I stayed there

for eight months until the late summer. From the very beginning I knew this was my place. At one of the t’fillos with the Rebbe in the small zal, the Rebbe gazed at me for a long time. I felt that the Rebbe was cleansing me, scouring me from the inside.

I arrived at 770 without knowing what Rashi is and certainly not Tosafos, and there I acquired the basis for my spiritual knowledge. The Six Day War broke out during my stay and when I submitted a note to the Rebbe about whether to return home to participate in the war, the Rebbe did not reply.

The big moment was when I was given an appointment for a yechidus, a month before I was to

return to Eretz Yisroel. I was tremendously excited.

At first, I asked the Rebbe whether I should research my roots in Poland, because it was possible that they were connected with Chabad, which could possibly explain why I was drawn to Chabad. The Rebbe did not respond to this. Then I asked three questions which the Rebbe answered in detail.

The first topic was a request for a bracha for my aunt who was sick with cancer. The Rebbe asked me to convey five things to her, the first – that her husband find out whether his bris had been done properly, that she be careful to light candles every Erev Shabbos, that she observe kashrus on the food in her house, and two other things.

My second question was about my beard that I had started growing. I told the Rebbe that I was afraid that my father, who had heart trouble, would be adversely affected if he saw that I had become a Chassid. Should I remove my beard for this reason? I added that in the past, my father had been extremely upset when I began wearing a kippa and grew a French goatee.

The Rebbe first wished my father health and success and then firmly said, “If you go home with an attitude of compromise, it will provide him with an opening and lead to complaints from your father. However, if you go with determination and truth, no one will bother you since they will understand that you are serious about what you’re doing.”

Then the Rebbe added that my standing strong and unyielding on my principles would enable my father to be healthy. Indeed, the Rebbe’s bracha was fulfilled in a most amazing way and despite his ill health he lived till the age of 84, over twenty years more.



“If you go with determination and truth, no one will bother you since they will understand that you are serious about what you’re doing.”

The Rebbe explained what the Tzemach Tzedek said that the beard is a man’s shleimus.

My third question was what was my purpose in life. What was I supposed to do? I had a degree in mechanical engineering. If I went to work in the private sector I could make a nice living but I wanted to

know what the Rebbe thought about my future.

The Rebbe said as follows, “If you want to make a living and money is what you want, then you have a profession, but if money is not the most important thing to you, then you should work in chinuch.”

When I returned to Eretz Yisroel I consulted with friends and mashpiim, including Rabbi Moshe Naparstek and the mashpia Rabbi Shlomo Chaim Kesselman, and they all told me that I was suited for chinuch.

Later on I found out something from which I understood how well the Rebbe knows people. I had taken an aptitude test when I was younger but my father refused to show me the results. The testers concluded that I was more suited to spiritual pursuits than material pursuits but my father wanted me to attend university and learn a profession, which is why he didn't tell me the results. I studied a profession and was successful, but I knew it wasn't what I really wanted to do.

Chinuch really suited me and that is what I am involved in. I run the Tzemach Tzedek Talmud Torah in Petach Tikva. I was fortunate in that the Rebbe directed me towards my mission in life.

The mashpia Rabbi Avrohom Meizlich tells of a surprising and quick change in roles. He describes a yechidus with the Rebbe which shook him up until the Rebbe agreed with him.

I had my first yechidus during the Aseres Yemei T'shuva of 5721 (1960). It was rare in those days for the Rebbe to hold yechidus on all the three weekdays of the Aseres Yemei T'shuva. I went to the Rebbe on the first charter that went to New York in 1960. The Rebbe treated our group with special care and we saw how much pleasure the Rebbe had from our visit.

I won't describe the welcome farbrengen that the Rebbe held in honor of the guests from Eretz Yisroel and about the additional goodbye farbrengen, but about my own yechidus.

My yechidus was on the second night of the three nights that the Rebbe received people during the Aseres Yemei T'shuva. Before the trip I had been working in chinuch in the Talmud Torah in Kfar Chabad, a job I held since I was married.

One fine day, about two weeks before our trip to the Rebbe, R' Itzke Gansburg said to me, "A new school of the Reshet was opened in Nes Tziyona and I want you to be the menahel and begin working there today." I was stunned and I asked him if he had lost his mind! What?! All of a sudden? And I was going to the Rebbe, so I should be asking the Rebbe about this.

There were several problems. First, I couldn't suddenly abandon my talmidim in the Talmud Torah. Second, the administration in Nes Tziyona had to be recognized by the Education Ministry and I had no degree or official schooling. If I thought I had convinced R' Itzke that I wasn't the man for the job, I was mistaken. He didn't want to hear anything and he decided that he would find a replacement for me at the Talmud Torah and I would leave to run the school in Nes Tziyona.

On Friday I went to the supervisor from the Ministry who

knew me from the Talmud Torah and he agreed to accept me for an administrative position.

The new school had only two classes at first, first and second grades. Consequently, for the purposes of government registration, it was considered a branch of the government-religious school that was located in the old district of the city. Nevertheless, the school was called a Chabad school.

Tishrei was approaching and I was getting ready for my trip to the Rebbe. I wasn't able to tell anyone about the trip since if the Education Ministry knew that the menahel who had just arrived was leaving for a month to the US, they would not have allowed me to go. I asked the teacher of the first grade to find a substitute for me and said that if they came down from the Ministry they would have to figure out what to say about my absence.

During the course of the yechidus I asked the Rebbe where I should be working, as a menahel in Nes Tziyona or as a melamed in the Talmud Torah. The Rebbe began a fascinating monologue:

"You have little children and your wife is a teacher in Beis Rivka. She begins teaching at eight o'clock in



Rabbi Meir Bostomsky receiving a dollar from the Rebbe

the morning and you at the Talmud Torah begin at eight-thirty, because you need to daven and get ready. Therefore, you have time to feed the children in the morning and are able to take them to gan.

“In the afternoon you have a recess and you are able to help your wife, but if you travel to Nes Tziyona you will have to leave at 6:45 or at 7:10 in the morning and from the first stop you will have to take another bus to Nes Tziyona. Then all the work with the children will be your wife’s responsibility and the learning in some of the classes ends at 12 noon. Nu, there are things to arrange and then with the bus you arrive at the entrance to Kfar Chabad where you will need to wait for a ride into the Kfar. In the winter and rain you will come home later and all the work will be your wife’s responsibility...”

I stood there listening to this in amazement. I saw the Rebbe’s sensitivity, how he was familiar with the smallest details, when the buses left the Kfar and what my schedule would have to be. It was just incredible.

Another thing that astounded me was I was asking the Rebbe a spiritual question, where my neshama belonged, and the Rebbe answered me with details of material concerns.

The Rebbe sort of aroused me from my thoughts and asked several questions regarding the school, how many students we had and how many the government-religious school (that we were officially associated with) had. Our school was in the new section of Nes Tziyona where the immigrants lived. We had two classes with close to fifty students, while they had eight classes from first till eighth, but very few students attended the younger grades.

I told the Rebbe that they had

over 100 students while we had 50 but the Education Ministry had promised that within a few years their building would be given to us. When I said this, the Rebbe gave me a sharp look and asked: How is that possible? It goes against the natural order of things – how can the few be victorious over the many?

I was taken aback by what the Rebbe said. I knew what prodigious efforts those working for the Reshet were making to register children despite all the obstacles on the part of the big and established

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educational networks such as the government-religious schools and Chinuch Atzmai, and it sounded like the Rebbe was arousing judgment and siding with them!

I couldn’t restrain myself and I said, “Rebbe, we don’t ask questions about the Rebbe’s kochos.” The Rebbe gave me a look I will never forget. Now, as I recall it, I’m still trembling. I was very frightened and my whole body trembled. I became dizzy and felt that I was about to faint. My knees started to buckle and I grabbed hold of the Rebbe’s

desk. I thought, that’s all I need is to faint now!

After a few moments which seemed like forever, the Rebbe smiled and said, “So shall it be!”

That brought the color back to my cheeks and restored my strength. Then the Rebbe asked some more technical questions and I answered that I wasn’t informed about them. Before the end of the yechidus I asked the Rebbe what I should do – whether to leave the Talmud Torah and go to Nes Tziyona or stay where I was. The Rebbe said that the next day Rabbi Dovid Chanzin would be coming for yechidus and he would discuss the schools with him and I would be given an answer.

In the meantime, I heard that the supervisor and administrator had discovered that I had left for New York and they were most unhappy about this. The teacher sent me a letter describing what was going on and I gave it into the Rebbe but did not receive a response.

On Motzaei Shabbos B’Reishis, the Rebbe distributed kos shel bracha. I passed by the Rebbe holding two cups, one for myself and the other for someone who had asked me for it. I held out the cup in my right hand and the Rebbe poured. Then I held out my left hand and said, “This is for so-and-so,” and the Rebbe said, “with the right hand,” and I switched hands.

Then, when I wanted to say l’chaim with my cup which was in my left hand, the Rebbe motioned to me to switch it to my right hand. I began to walk on and suddenly heard that I was being called back. The Rebbe motioned me over to him and he took a bottle of mashke and said, “This is for Nes Tziyona.” That’s when I found out that the Rebbe wanted me to be the menahel of the school.

Rabbi Berke Mendelsohn of Kfar



Rabbi Avrohom Meizlich standing behind the Rebbe

Chabad tells of his second yechidus with the Rebbe, about the dilemma he had, and the Rebbe's surprising answer.

I don't want to discuss my first yechidus which I had in 5738 because it was quite personal. This yechidus was when I was on K'vutza. Of course I made all the preparations a Chassid, especially a Tamim, makes before a yechidus. Before entering the Rebbe's room I was in a state of extreme emotion, feeling that I was going to give over everything to the Rebbe, all desires or thoughts; everything one plans or

wants to have happen, all is nullified before the Rebbe's opinion. Where the Rebbe leads you is where you go.

The yechidus took six minutes, a long time for those days, and there were many specific horaos for me, but as I said, they are personal and private.

The second yechidus was very interesting because it directed me towards chinuch which I worked in and still work in. In those years, the K'vutza began and ended on Pesach. When I finished K'vutza I spent a few months in Eretz Yisroel and then

returned to 770 for Tishrei.

During the time I spent in Eretz Yisroel, the mashpia Rabbi Zushe Posner, who ran the Vocational School at that time, pressured me to work at the school. I refused, saying I had no experience in chinuch and anyway, it wasn't what I planned on doing in life.

We agreed that since we had different opinions about this, as to whether I was suited for chinuch or not, I would ask the Rebbe when I had a yechidus, and whatever the Rebbe said I would do.

I had a yechidus after the Yomim Tovim. I wrote to the Rebbe about the offer I had gotten and explained why I wasn't interested. I said I wanted to know what the Rebbe thought and that I would do whatever he said.

The Rebbe read my note and answered me in Yiddish. "It's a good thing for you to work in chinuch, the holy work at the Vocational School in Kfar Chabad, but since it depends on the hanhala of the yeshiva in Eretz Yisroel, tell the hanhala that I think it's a good thing that you work in chinuch, avodas ha'kodesh, especially because you will have set times for learning. It should be with great success and simcha, and the decision should be made by the hanhala in Eretz Yisroel."

Naturally, after this clear answer from the Rebbe, I went straight to the Vocational School as soon as I returned to Eretz Yisroel.

The Tishrei that I had the yechidus, my future father-in-law, Rabbi Shlomo Maidanchek also had a yechidus. He saw the Rebbe with his daughter, my future kalla. It was before Sukkos and in the Rebbe's room the four minim were ready for distribution.

The Rebbe suddenly said to him, "Since your daughter is here too,

give her a hadas (myrtle).” He left the Rebbe’s room wondering what his daughter would do with a hadas. He asked the secretary, Rabbi Chadakov and the mashpia R’ Mendel Futerfas, but neither knew what to tell him. They said that in such cases it was better to go back to the Rebbe and ask him what he meant.

The Rebbe said, “She should come to the davening every day during Sukkos with the hadas and put it in the Siddur in such a way that it doesn’t stick out, and after Yom Tov she should preserve the hadas in a spices box for Havdala.”

A short time after that, in Cheshvan, I became engaged. At that point, my kalla and I were faced with a dilemma. My kalla worked as a teacher in a Chabad school in Taanach and I worked in Kfar Chabad. One of us would have to leave our job depending on where we lived.

We wrote to the Rebbe that since she worked on behalf of the Ministry of Education, she could not leave her job in the middle of the year, while I could ask for a vacation until after we married and had reorganized.

Days went by and we did not get an answer from the Rebbe. We didn’t know what to do. We wanted to have the wedding in Shevat but the Rebbe wasn’t answering our question and we didn’t know how to proceed. We decided to wait until the summer when my kalla would finish the year in Taanach. Her parents put on pressure and so did the rav of the Kfar but we had no other choice since we did not receive an answer from the Rebbe.

After we decided to postpone the wedding, we received an unusual answer, “They should look into setting a date for the wedding close to the end of the school year, I will mention it at the Tziyun.” The

answer was clear. The Rebbe said the wedding should be postponed which went against the Rebbe’s usual view that the time between the engagement and the wedding should be short. This answer surprised all who heard it.

Rabbi Chaim Noach Maatuf of Kiryat Malachi tells of his first yechidus with the Rebbe, about the questions that bothered him, his request that the Rebbe say what he

The Rebbe gave me a look I will never forget. Now, as I recall it, I’m still trembling. I was very frightened and my whole body trembled. I became dizzy and felt that I was about to faint. My knees started to buckle and I grabbed hold of the Rebbe’s desk. I thought, that’s all I need is to faint now!

should do in life, and also – about a miracle.

I must say from the outset that the atmosphere that characterized the trip to the Rebbe was uplifting and especially moving. Going to the Rebbe was almost like the simcha of a wedding. This is how I felt in 5736 when my friend, R’ Avrohom Cohen and I went for a year of K’vutza to 770. I will never forget

how our friends in Eretz Yisroel came to the airport in Lud to see us off, and spontaneously burst into a lively dance of, *Tai’ere Bridder*.

Tickets were 5400 liros back then, a sum that equaled two or three monthly salaries, and so a trip required quite a bit of preparation. There weren’t many bachurim in our K’vutza and on Rosh Chodesh Shevat 5737, when the last of the guests left 770, R’ Leibel Groner gave us a closed envelope from the hanhala which had a report about our learning and attendance.

In a separate envelope we had to write our life story and give it to the secretaries. Of course, on the day of our yechidus we made all the preparations a Chassid makes: mikva, T’hillim, fasting, etc. I’ll never forget how we bought new clothes and a suit in honor of the occasion. For a Chassid, yechidus is a personal holiday.

R’ Groner had us stand in a line near the Rebbe’s room and went back to his work. Each of us went in to the Rebbe and emerged a few minutes later and the next person went in.

I spent nine whole minutes in the Rebbe’s room, which seemed like an eternity. Aside from the letter of the hanhala, I had also written about my life (I also prepared a separate paper so I could write down what the Rebbe said as soon as I left). The Rebbe looked at the papers I submitted about my life, three pages, and the three questions I asked at the end.

At the Bareket Yishuv there is a shul which davens Nusach Chabad but the pronunciation is Yemenite. My first question was whether there was a problem pronouncing the Arizal’s nusach in the Yemenite way.

The second question was that in this shul they read the Torah with the Ashkenazi trahp and Yemenite

pronunciation. Was this a problem?

My third question was connected to my past. I had learned for two years in the Yeshivas Chazon Ish in B'nei Brak, where they read Parshas Zachor in all the nuschaos. The Yemenites heard a Yemenite reading, the Ashkenazim heard an Ashkenazi reading, and the Moroccans heard a Moroccan reading. They repeated Parshas Zachor three times so everybody could fulfill their obligation. My question was whether this was correct and whether we should do the same thing.

The Rebbe said that every pronunciation has a holy source and it makes no difference what pronunciation a person davens with, the main thing being it should be one pronunciation and not changing from time to time or during the course of the davening. This way, the person davening can understand the t'filla and have the proper kavana, whereas changing the pronunciation can confuse him.

As far as the second question, the Rebbe said it's not a problem especially when they already started with it, and as far as the third question, the Rebbe did not respond.

I brought a mezuzah to the

yeichidus which I had written and invalidated while writing it. This was my practice period in writing Stam and I wanted to know whether this was my mission in life. The Rebbe looked at the mezuzah for a few moments and said, "This is a mezuzah you found in a store?" I answered that I had written it.

The Rebbe looked at it and then said, "It's nice writing." Then the Rebbe added, "Why did you write that it's pasul?" I went closer to the Rebbe to show him that on the first line one letter was invalid. The Rebbe put on his glasses and then gave me the parchment and said, "As far as continuing, consult with an expert sofer and be tested by one who gives tests, and if both agree, continue to write. There aren't enough mezuzos available, especially in Eretz Yisroel."

The yeichidus ended and I left the room. From the Rebbe's final words I understood that the Rebbe wanted me to be a sofer.

I will relate an amazing thing in connection with my writing. After I got married I began writing, as the Rebbe had told me to do in yeichidus. After a few years of writing I began to feel strong pains in three of my fingers. It felt like sharp pricks and was very painful. I couldn't write any more. Each time I

tried, the quill would fall from my hand.

I wrote to the Rebbe and asked him what to do. A few days later the answer I got was, "Continue as you did until now, bracha."

As soon as I received this answer the pain became less disturbing and I could continue writing. As the days went by the pains lessened. It was most amazing.

Rabbi Yitzchok Lieberman relates the story of his birthday yeichidus when to his surprise, the Rebbe refused to accept the date and told him to check into it, as well as two miracles.

Until I was 19 I knew that my birthday was 4 Cheshvan. In 5734, I went on K'vutza for a year with the Rebbe. In those days, every bachur had a yeichidus on his birthday. This was the only time the T'mimim were allowed to have a yeichidus. This special day and the days preceding it were days of intense preparation.

I had a yeichidus on my birthday and on the paper I gave to the secretaries I wrote that my birthday is 4 Cheshvan. I asked for a year of bracha and hatzlacha.

As soon as I gave the Rebbe the note, the Rebbe asked me, "When is your birthday?" I innocently answered that I had written 4 Cheshvan. The Rebbe continued to ask in a tone of surprise, "4 Cheshvan is your birthday?"

I was taken aback and afraid, and the Rebbe asked again, "When is your birthday?" I had caught on to the fact that something was going on here and I said that my bar mitzva had taken place on 4 Cheshvan and that as far as I knew, that was my birthday. The Rebbe made it clear that this was not my birthday.

The Rebbe answered all my questions and towards the end of the



Rabbi Berke Mendelsohn receiving a dollar from the Rebbe

yeichidus he said the nusach that he said to those who came on their birthday, "You certainly observed the birthday customs," but he said it with a motion of his hands that indicated his surprise.

The yeichidus lasted over ten minutes and later on I went to Rabbi Chadakov and told him what had happened and asked him what I should do. Rabbi Chadakov said: If the Rebbe indicated that the date is incorrect, there was no need for you to argue or respond. What you need to do is find out what the correct date is!

I sent an express letter to my brother in Eretz Yisroel in which I told him what took place in yeichidus and asked him to go to Hadassah Hospital in Tel Aviv (which no longer exists) and to find my birth certificate.

In those days, the date of birth was not written on the parents' ID, which is why I had to get the information from the hospital. After a while, I received the birth certificate from my brother and wonder of wonders, the date of my birth was the 14th of Cheshvan, not the 4th.

The mistake apparently happened because my father had written the Jewish date of my birth on the form and the letter Yud looked like part of the Dalet.

That same day I submitted a letter to the Rebbe in which I thanked him for revealing my true date of birth. What I saw was open ruach ha'kodesh. The Rebbe sees the neshama that comes to him and knows precisely when it came down to this world. It took me a long time to recover from this incident.

Another amazing thing happened to me. I was in 770 for four years in a row. When I came at age 20-21, my friends began getting engaged and I asked the hanhala whether I



Rabbi Chaim Noach Maatuf receiving kos shel bracha

Of course, on the day of our yeichidus we made all the preparations a Chassid makes: mikva, T'hilim, fasting, etc. I'll never forget how we bought new clothes and a suit in honor of the occasion. For a Chassid, yeichidus is a personal holiday.

should also look into shidduchim. The hanhala referred me to the Rebbe for these are matters for the Rebbe. I wrote to the Rebbe but did not receive an answer. I did not receive an answer the second year either.

Before traveling to Eretz Yisroel in the winter of 5737/1977, I had a yeichidus in the course of which I asked a number of personal matters

including whether I should look for a shidduch. The Rebbe answered me with a broad smile and said surely, when I arrived in Eretz Yisroel, I should look into it and it should be with success.

I felt that the Rebbe was giving me a big bracha, like he was opening doors before me. Not surprisingly, the first shidduch I looked into turned out to be the woman I married.

After the wedding I thought about my having asked the Rebbe twice about shidduchim and that the Rebbe did not answer me. He hadn't said no, he just hadn't answered. I came to the conclusion that the first year I asked, my wife was only 16 and the second year I asked, she was 17, and it was only the third year, when she became of age for a shidduch that the Rebbe, who is the leader of the Jewish people and knew she was my zivug, said I should look into shidduchim.

I will conclude with an amazing miracle that I had with the Rebbe. In the summer of 5738 I sent the Rebbe a letter about various personal matters. After sending the letter I called the secretary, Rabbi Binyamin Klein who said the Rebbe had answered in four parts. I asked what the response was and he said he

didn't remember and that he had sent me the answer already.

I waited one week and then another, checking the mail box every day, but each time I was disappointed.

After a few weeks I called R' Klein again and asked him what happened to the letter. He asked me to be patient and the letter would surely arrive.

In the meantime it was Elul and I sent my t'fillin to a sofer in Kfar Chabad so he could check them. The sofer said the t'fillin were fine and mehudaros.

That month, I asked some people who were going to the Rebbe for Tishrei to try and find out what had happened to my answer from the Rebbe but nobody was able to solve the mystery. I was extremely disappointed.

In Kislev I got a letter from R' Klein which said, "Regarding what you asked, here is the answer from the month of Tamuz with four points and instructions."

One of the instructions was for me to check my t'fillin. I thought that since the Rebbe had written this in Tamuz and I had checked my t'fillin in Elul, I didn't need to check them again. However, when I went to work in the Talmud Torah, my fellow melamdim urged met to have

them checked again since the letter had just arrived and I should do what the Rebbe said.

"You need to consider when the letter arrived and not when the Rebbe wrote it, because when you got it was the time decreed in Heaven."

I went to another sofer in Kfar Chabad that day and asked him to check my t'fillin. He told me there was a word missing! I had to change

all the parshiyos.

Afterwards, I sat and thought about this in amazement. If I had received the letter before Elul, I would have sent the t'fillin to the other sofer who found nothing wrong with my t'fillin. By Divine providence I received the letter in Kislev and had discovered that they were pasul. Who knows how many more years I would have worn pasul t'fillin, Heaven forbid?



Rabbi Yitzchok Lieberman receiving a dollar from the Rebbe

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THE URGENT TASK OF THE NEW CHIEF OF STAFF

BY SHAI GEFEN

ERADICATING POLITICS FROM THE ARMY

The government approved the nomination of Major-General Gabi Ashkenazi as the 19th Chief of Staff, after the resignation of his predecessor, Dan Chalutz. Ashkenazi was Deputy Chief of Staff from 2003 to 2005 and left the IDF when he was not chosen as Chief of Staff in 2005. He thus did not take part in the expulsion of Jews from Gush Katif.

His appointment certainly represents an opportunity that could reshape the army's image after the disintegration and the transformation of the army from a defense force to a political machine. Since the jolly Oslo days, the army has slowly become more politicized. Generals and senior officers were captivated by the prospect of peace and marketed the concept.

Senior officers would sit with senior murderers and joke around with them and cut deals. It was only following the second Intifada that people finally got it and began speaking of the misguided concept, but the political poison was already deeply ensconced within the army and those in power find it hard to drop it.

When the Disengagement was on the table, we saw how the army had become problematic. Similarly in the northern sector, we saw the result of all the misguided political calculations. We didn't see the army leading the

charge for bolstering the defense of Israel. Rather, it was dragged in and enthralled by the wiles of the politicians and ended up enthusiastically adopting their corrupt plan. Too many people in the army thought and still think about their personal advancement over what is truly best for Israel.

The two events that exposed the rot in the army were the Disengagement and what took place at that time in the Gaza Strip, and then what happened in the north when the army was humiliated. In recent months, senior officers have spoken a great deal about the politicizing of the army, from the Right and the Left.

There's no question that part of the serious security problems and the ongoing withdrawals and concessions are dependent, to a great extent, on the army's might and its utter disconnection from politics. The army must be completely removed from the political arena. Its role is precisely that of a doctor who must give his unbiased diagnosis of a condition without getting sidetracked.

In recent years, the military brass engaged in exercises and deals in order to advance, in the desire to pursue political aspirations following their stints in the military. Senior generals made sure to appease the political leaders and put national defense second to that.

This week I spoke to a

distinguished businessman who sat at a meeting a few years ago along with army officers and Mohammad Dachlan to discuss a deal that was going to take place in the PA. This businessman was going to pay Dachlan personally for the rights he received. He asked Dachlan where the money would go and Dachlan answered, without batting an eyelash, "to kill Jews." All the officers sat around laughing with that arch-terrorist and told him, "Don't take it to heart."

Those who politicize the army shouldn't be surprised on "judgment day" when the IDF can't supply the answers. Those who claim that the budgetary problems prevented the army from winning the war are mistaken. The ones who emasculated the army over many years and brainwashed its soldiers and officers paid the price. In recent years, peaking with the Disengagement Plan, in which the settlers were turned into the enemy whom the army fought, the situation has only deteriorated.

Gabi Ashkenazi said that he hopes he will meet people's expectations of him. We also hope, for the sake of Israel's security, that he proves himself. This depends on the army's refusal to be turned into the pawn of the corrupt. An army needs to be concerned with one thing: its country's defense. And it is only when focused on this goal that it has a chance of succeeding.

The less Gabi Ashkenazi has to do



with politicians, setting a clear line between his professional role and them, and the more he expresses the views of professionals who speak only in terms of security, the better for all of us. It's no easy task to rehabilitate the army from the destruction wrought upon it by the architects of Oslo-Disengagement, but it must be done.

BETWEEN GAZA AND YEHUDA-SHOMRON

The internal fighting in Gaza in recent weeks between Hamas and Fatah and the serious dangers we face on our southern border, are quite worrisome. The power of Hamas and the Iranian agents in Gaza training the Hamas army are increasing. In Gaza today are huge stockpiles of weapons, including long-range missiles, which are being brought into the Strip via Egypt.

Israeli news reported that the army is preparing an emergency evacuation plan for Sderot and the settlements surrounding Gaza in the event of a large scale military campaign, for the Arabs have the wherewithal today to shoot missiles at these settlements. It's amazing to think how a year and a half ago the Arabs did not have the means to carry out their plans for the simple reason that there were flourishing communities in the Gaza Strip. Intelligence information was forthcoming and the army was in charge of the Philadelphi Corridor and the breadth of the Strip.

Obviously, even then the situation wasn't ideal since Israel gave most of the Strip to murderers in the Oslo Accords, but despite that, Israel still prevented Gaza from being transformed into the largest terror base in the world – that is, until the Disengagement.

In Yehuda-Shomron on the other hand, where arming terrorists would seem to be a priority, they don't

succeed in arming as they do in Gaza as deputy head of the Shin Bet said recently in a government session, "Hamas does not have power on the West Bank as they do in Gaza. It has 5% of the strength it has in the Strip. They tried organizing a similar force, but we thwarted that."

The simple reason is: the army is present throughout Yehuda-Shomron and thanks to this they succeed in thwarting most terror attacks.

Let it be clear, any agreement that withdraws IDF forces from Yehuda-Shomron will turn the area into another Gaza Strip. A strong military presence in the area is the only guarantee of peace. The Convergence Plan which various politicians are trying to promote will bring on an unprecedented tragedy. In order to preempt this, we must take advantage of the momentum of a weak leadership and the breakdown of all the governmental systems in order to warn people and bring the *d'var Hashem zu halacha* to as many people as we can, explaining that every concession leads to terror and destruction.

THE END OF THE "ARCHITECT"

There was once a smooth and polished politician with a vision of "two states for two nations," with them over there and us over here. This politician constantly pushed for separation, withdrawals and disengaging. He was proud of the fact that his extreme position became the position of the State of Israel and was actually carried out. On his personal website he describes himself as the "architect of the separation and disengagement," no less. Baruch Hashem, we are rid of him.

This politician's name is Chaim Ramon, the man who was largely responsible for the serious tragedies we endured since Oslo. It was he who

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urged fleeing from Lebanon and disengaging. Just half a year before the war broke out in Lebanon, he explained why we need to continue making unilateral withdrawals and as a proof to his stance he noted how quiet it is on the northern border.

This is what Ramon said to Ari

Shavit in *HaAretz* about the government's intention to make withdrawals from Yehuda-Shomron, shortly after the Hamas victory in the Palestinian elections:

"I don't ignore the fact of the victory by Hamas. On the contrary. This victory simply makes it clear to me that there is almost no chance to arrive at an agreement. I will try. I will try, because the best possible outcome is to arrive at mutual understandings according to the vision of Ari Shavit. And I will try so that Ari Shavit and Yossi Beilin and the settlers and the world will know that I tried. Perhaps I will send you, personally, to attempt to reach that mutual understanding. But when you come back and say we failed, I will do whatever I did in Lebanon. Then too, they warned me that I was supporting Hezbollah just as you are warning me now that I am supporting Hamas. Then too they told me there would be buses blown up in Avivim, just as you are telling me there will be shoulder launched missiles in the West Bank. But on the northern front it's quiet. Nasrallah is telling himself he won but he doesn't dare to attack Israel. He knows what the reaction will be."

It's unbelievable to read and see in retrospect the shortsightedness of these pathetic politicians. It's a pity that the newspapers, who are enlisted unilaterally in their support, don't bother to mention their delusions which failed to materialize. We still remember Yitzchok Rabin arrogantly laughing at the Right who promised missiles on Ashkelon if they withdraw from Gaza. We all know what happened. The problem is that nobody presents the follow-up.

Chaim Ramon! As you leave the political arena, how about you and your friends thinking about where you've led us, what resulted from the separations and the disengagement and the Oslo Accords that you brought upon us.

TEN YEARS SINCE THE WITHDRAWAL FROM CHEVRON

Yud Shvat marked one decade since Netanyahu's government withdrew from Chevron and then signed the Wye agreement. The same Netanyahu who should have learned a thing or two from his political downfall continued to promote withdrawals. He supported the Disengagement (and quit before

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it was implemented in order to buy votes from the Right which didn't exactly help him); he announced that he was in favor of negotiating with Syria over withdrawing from the Golan, and as we saw when he served as PM, he agreed to withdraw from the entire Golan and even sent an emissary to Damascus.

Netanyahu had the ability to bring about real change in the government in shattering the Oslo

lie, but he wanted to show his sophistication and continued along the same lines, while fooling the Chabad Chassidim and other religious people into supporting him. If there is someone who destroyed the camp of the Right that promoted Eretz Yisroel HaShleima, it's Mr. Netanyahu who is trying, once again, to become Prime Minister. He continues to make declarations that have nothing to back them up.

We stopped believing all politicians. We've already learned the hard way that whoever does not champion shleimus ha'Aretz the Rebbe's way, which means there is no discussion about giving up land, ultimately ends up worse than those on the extreme Left. The Rebbe said this to Mr. Katzav – that when believing Jews do this, aside from the enormous danger involved, there is a *chilul Hashem* and the declaration of open war on G-d.

We cannot put our trust in two-faced people who say one thing and do another. We must do all we can to publicize the Rebbe's view and fight all the politicians who try to give away land.

RABBANEI YISROEL WILL NULLIFY THE GENTILES' DECISION

In recent weeks there have been various conferences in which representatives of nations repeat that Israel must continue to implement the Road Map and the establishment of a Palestinian state.

On Yud Shvat 5736 the Rebbe asked that 70 rabbanim from around the world should declare that it is forbidden to give away land, thus nullifying the view of the nations of the world. The Rebbe empowered the rabbanim to nullify the decree of the representatives of the nations:

... So too with regard to

shleimus ha'Aretz: when they speak about Eretz Yisroel and Yerushalayim the Holy City – we need to speak in a way of “they clamored” – with noise and strength – that Eretz Yisroel belongs to Am Yisroel with Toras Yisroel – an everlasting inheritance for an everlasting people!

Since there are several dozen Jews in this Beis Midrash (770), and especially when it is known that “the Divine Presence rests on every group of ten,” and all the nations together are no more than 70 nations – therefore, 70 rabbanim here ought to get up, for they represent the Jewish people, to correspond to the 70 nations, to

make a halachic statement regarding shleimus ha'Aretz. Since this will be in the form of a p'sak din in Torah, therefore “it will be established.”

This is the reason we are talking about what the goyim are doing and saying, even though (seemingly) precious time of Jews is wasted when they could have learned more Torah and fulfilled additional mitzvos, because we need to speak more about that which the goyim are talking about. Even children – when they spoke truly in the name of the Torah of truth – they affected the goy! When one paskens with the strength of Torah regarding these matters, it affects the goy.

Practically speaking: a rav should get up who will say a Torah statement about Eretz Yisroel belonging only to the Jews and then the other 71 rabbanim will agree to this and everybody else will respond with “amen, amen.”

A p'sak din in the name of Rabbanei Anash was read at the national gathering on Yud Shevat in Tel Aviv by Rabbi Yigal Pizem. It said that the government must collapse, since it continues to speak about giving away land.

May we see the return of the Kingdom of the House of Dovid with the Rebbe MH”M at the head.

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